



Australian
Institute of
Architects

TAS

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

1/19a Hunter Street
Nipaluna/Hobart, Tasmania 7000

P: (03) 6214 1500

tas@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

20 June 2025

Jaime Parsons
Principal Advisor Urban Design
City of Hobart

By email: urbandesign@hobartcity.com.au

Re: Hobart Design Guidelines

Dear Jaime,

The Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Hobart Design Guidelines (the Guidelines).

The Tasmanian Chapter is committed to helping create a positive future for our state that benefits all Tasmanians. The Institute advocates for the built environment, and works to shape policies, foster collaboration, and promote design excellence that benefits society as a whole. As such, the Institute applauds the City of Hobart for developing the Hobart Design Guidelines and is broadly supportive of them. The Institute is also pleased to see that these Guidelines are supported by the City of Hobart's Urban Design Advisory Panel.

In other jurisdictions, it is common practice to engage with the relevant professional bodies (i.e., the Institute) when developing documents of this nature. This collaboration usually takes place in the early phases of preparation of the document. The Institute understands that the Guidelines are currently in a draft format, however, suggests that they would benefit from a professional edit and proofread to ensure clarity.

The Institute is pleased to see many examples of local architecture included within the document and is appreciative of the effort made to credit the relevant architects responsible for the design. We note that the architect credit is missing from Hytten Hall

on figures 20 and 41, which should reference nettletontribe – refer to [Tasmanian Architecture Awards entry](#) – along with that of the [Murdolo Apartments](#) by Rosevear Stephenson, at figure 49. While it is noted that there is a statement at the start of the document attributing that ‘unless otherwise stated the photos in this document have been supplied by photographer Adam Gibson for the City of Hobart and by staff,’ the Institute questions whether there is a need to attribute each photo with the relevant photographer in each figure caption.

The Institute would like to iterate that architects strive to meet the priorities outlined in the Guidelines, however, these aspirations are often compromised by the financial viability of implementation, and the realities of conforming to the planning scheme. The stepped setbacks and heritage ‘datums’ that are often required means there is less space available to maximise urban greening, and consolidate the built form, while maintaining financial viability.

The Institute has previously advocated for incentives to encourage high-quality private development in the right locations. This could take the form of increased height, reduced development application fees, fast track approvals etc, in return for high-quality design that provides community benefit. For example, the creation of open usable public space is to be lauded at ground level, but certain sites would preclude this due to the scale or shape of the site, unless permission were to be given to go a little higher. A proponent should be able to negotiate for a “rule” breaking component by offering another community beneficial aspect that somehow “pays” for the development. The Institute suggests that (while perhaps outside the remit of the Guidelines) there should be some form of methodology for this kind of negotiation to allow for projects that don’t specifically comply with the planning rules, to allow for benefits for both the neighbourhood and its people, and the site.

Clever, well thought-out, and designed opportunities that give back to the neighbourhood and the public, (as indicated in the Guidelines) have the potential to create a positive impact. These types of negotiations require a high-level of design intelligence to assess and would benefit from the assistance of the Urban Design Advisory Panel. Western Australia’s Residential Design Codes outlines guidance for ‘Development Incentives for Community Benefit’, that could form a useful precedent.¹

The Institute has also previously advocated for the implementation of ‘demonstration projects’, to illustrate to proponents and the community exemplary development across a range of scales and contexts. From this, opportunities for incentives could be identified (through expedited planning or mechanisms that improve project feasibility, as above) for proponents who adopt desired principles/design exemplified in demonstration projects as a means of encouraging desirable development.

¹ [R Codes Vol 2 2024 Mar2024](#), p. 28–29

The Institute understands that the Guidelines are non-statutory, however hopes that they help to pave a way forward to improve minimum standards in the future. Our cities require high quality designed outcomes that incorporate innovative design responses. The quality of design affects how places and people function, is able to stimulate the economy, enhance the environment and improve wellbeing for all. Good design adds value for all people and can play a transformative role in the lives of every person. The Institute hopes that these Guidelines will assist in making these things happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Guidelines. We'd be more than happy to discuss any of the above further. Please contact us if you would like us to assist in any way.

Kind regards,



Daniel Lane
President, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects



Jennifer Nichols
Executive Director, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with over 13,500 members across Australia and overseas. The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design. To learn more about the Institute, log on to www.architecture.com.au.