



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

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17 December 2021

Sarah McEvoy
Executive Director – Strategic Policy
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Prime House, 8 Davidson Terrace
Joondalup WA 6027

Dear Ms McEvoy

**RE: SHAPING WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S LOW-CARBON FUTURE: DEVELOPING
SECTORAL EMISSIONS REDUCTION STRATEGIES TO TRANSITION THE ECONOMY
TO NET ZERO (SERS)**

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation representing over 12,500 members across Australia and overseas. More than 1,100 of these are based in Western Australia and are supported by the WA Chapter.

The Institute, alongside its Climate Action and Sustainability Taskforce (CAST) advocates for a zero-carbon construction industry by 2030, as our built environment accounts for 39% of all carbon emissions, globally, with operational emissions accounting for 28%¹. Members are actively committing to Carbon Neutral practices² and the Institute has also embarked on its own “Carbon Neutral” journey. The Institute has called on the Australian Government to establish a national plan towards zero carbon buildings by 2030 that can be supported and led where appropriate by state and local government.

The Institute congratulates the State on the proactive approach in the release of the SERS and subsequent planned consultation, which is an important step towards achieving a net zero economy. We note that this is a continuation on strategies that address the issues of the Climate Emergency discussed in the Climate Change in Western Australia – Issues Paper, which the Institute made a submission on in 2019³.

We are pleased to see that the governance arrangements outlined on page 16 of the released SERS Report calls for a whole-body government collaboration, which we recently also recommended in our submission to Infrastructure WA⁴.

¹ WorldGBC (2019). New report: the building and construction sector can reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Source: <https://www.worldgbc.org/news-media/WorldGBC-embodied-carbon-report-published>

² <https://www.architecture.com.au/about/carbonneutral>

³ Industry Profile: Architectural Services in Australia, IBISWorld April 2019

⁴ Australian Institute of Architects. Submission on Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow – State Infrastructure Strategy. September 2021. https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Aust_Inst_Architects_Submission_to_IWA_Draft_Infrastructure_Strategy_FINAL.pdf



Albeit the consultation process for the SERS is not commencing until early 2022, the Institute responds to the published whitepaper to highlight the requirement for the built environment sector to be identified as a separate industry, which is targeted with clearly set-out strategies and policies; to share our research and advocacy approach, highlighting the Institute as a resource to the State as a credible stakeholder in the built environment; and to ensure participation during the stakeholder engagement phase.

The SERS plan acknowledges on page 12, the contribution of carbon footprint and challenges in decarbonisation of the built environment. The profession of architecture, represented by the Institute, can assist government with this challenge and bring forward the reduction in carbon emissions created in these sectors.

Some key focus areas stemming from architectural practice and knowledge that may assist in shaping policy to reduce emissions in the built environment sector include:

1. Requirement for life cycle assessments for all new buildings at Planning Approval / Building Permit approval processes;
2. Focus on zero carbon operation of buildings;
3. Zero (or low carbon) construction methodology (including waste) and materials (which connects to incentivisation of new material industry e.g. green concrete, cross-laminated timber, and others);
4. A commitment to a 2030 zero-carbon construction industry via timely adoption of the National Construction Code (NCC) updates and stronger proactive advocacy with the ABCB Board to accelerate necessary regulation change to this effect;
5. Urban design and master planning focussed on higher density urban and suburban development to reduce urban sprawl, manage the heat island effect, respond to stormwater, address transport and connectivity.

We would be pleased to connect in the new year and present expanded proposals to the above items with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Mining, Industry Regulation and Safety – Building and Energy teams. Beata Davey, National Policy and Advocacy Manager will be in touch in January 2022 to arrange this.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Hobbs FRAIA

STATE PRESIDENT WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CC: Saj Abdoolakhan, Executive Director Building and Energy
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety