



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

NSW

ABN 72 000 023 012  
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects  
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

Tusculum,  
3 Manning Street,  
Potts Point NSW 2011

P: (02) 9246 4055  
[nsw@architecture.com.au](mailto:nsw@architecture.com.au)  
[architecture.com.au](http://architecture.com.au)

Thursday 7 September 2023

Ms. Anna Burns,  
Deputy Director Communications and Engagement  
Office of the Hon John Graham MLC  
52 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000  
via email: [nna.burns@minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nna.burns@minister.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms. Burns,

Thank-you for the opportunity to respond to the NSW Government's consultation to develop a new arts, culture, and creative industries policy and the accompanying discussion paper, *A New Look at Culture*.

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) is the peak body for the Architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with more than 14,400 members across Australia and overseas including 4,500 members in the NSW Chapter.

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.

We provide our submission to this important consultation by way of response to the three key questions in the discussion paper as set out below.

***1. A new look at people: How can we create better, more inclusive pathways and support for practitioners in the arts, culture and creative industries?***

Better and more inclusive pathways and support for practitioners in the arts culture and creative industries needs to address diversity as a potential barrier to inclusion. The Australian Institute of Architects' national Gender Equity and Diversity Committee concurrently is undertaking its own research to examine the extent to which various groups of people within the architecture profession experience impaired participation and inclusion as well as some form of discrimination and the factors surrounding these experiences.

The Institute is also examining contextual information. Taking the example of disability, background indicative information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, shows that as one marker of more

moderate to severe forms of disability, are people who have need for assistance with a core activity of daily living to be independent. In the 2021 Census, only 0.3% of the 19,337 people nationally who recorded their main occupation as Architect in the 2021 Census also had need for assistance with a core activity of daily living amongst the 11,638,693 people who recorded a main occupation in the 2021 Census.

This data compares unfavourably to 0.65% for Professions as a whole, and 0.95% for the whole workforce. This suggests that at the threshold of entry to the architecture profession, people with a moderate or more severe or disability may be being excluded from the profession. Amongst the 6,760 people in NSW in the 2021 Census whose main occupation was recorded as Architect, there was a similar proportion, to that nationally, of 0.28% of architects who also had a need for assistance with a core activity.

It is encouraging that proportional participation of people with a need for assistance with a core activity nationally appear to be higher among the Arts Professionals occupational groups as shown in the table below. However, in NSW these rates of participation are lower amongst most Arts Professionals of the as this table shows:

**Need for assistance with core activities amongst Art Professionals - 2021 Census<sup>1</sup>**

Arts Professions	Actors, Dancers and Other Entertainers	Music Professionals	Photographers	Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals	Total
<b>Australia</b>	2.36%	1.33%	0.83%	2.99%	1.73%
<b>NSW</b>	1.57%	1.35%	0.68%	2.38%	1.35%

However the numbers of people nationally with a need for assistance are abysmally low. Only 31,705 people recorded their main profession as an Arts Professional meaning that only 549 nationally whose main occupation was an Arts Professional had a need for assistance with a core activity. In NSW this was a mere 127 of 9,428 persons whose main occupation was as an Art Professional.

The Institute also notes the extensive part of the New South Wales geographic area which is classified as remote or very remote, comprising about one third of the state, and especially to the north-west<sup>2</sup>

The Institute has previously submitted in its response to this current Federal Government’s Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia (December 2022) that there are at least two types of disadvantage that could impede workforce development and participation as practitioners in remote areas. These could equally apply to the arts, culture and creative industries.

*According to the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training report into access to quality secondary education Australians growing up in regional and remote areas have lower educational attainment rates in school, in Year 12 and in tertiary education, compared to those living in metropolitan areas. They are around 40% less likely to gain a higher-level tertiary education qualification and less than half as likely to receive*

<sup>1</sup> Generated using Australian Bureau of Statistics TableBuilder with datasets from the 2021 Census. See: <https://tablebuilder.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/login.xhtml>

<sup>2</sup> See Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 (2021) Remoteness Structure interactive map at:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3e64dfb19529465dbcc09ed838da6557>

*a bachelor and above qualification by the time they are 35 years old. These figures were also considerable worse for indigenous Australians living in remote regions of Australia.*

The Institute also noted in its submission that the lack of access and/or the costs of digital services can be a major impediment in remote areas, Architecture is one of, but not alone among the many creative industries that heavily relies upon digital technology and access with other noted examples including many forms of digitally created art and media, as well as visual and acoustic performing arts. Even if the creative output is 'handmade' the marketing, distribution and engagement with regional, state, national and international communities of practitioners, clients and patrons relies significantly on digital access.

**The NSW Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects recommends that a starting point to create better, more inclusive pathways and support for practitioners in the arts, culture and creative industries is to examine more closely the available data about participation and inclusion, especially by groups of people who may risk experiencing some form of disadvantage or challenge by virtue of their experience of diversity or where they live.**

**2. A new look at infrastructure: How can we create and improve sustainable access to spaces, programs and other support for all aspects of artistic and cultural activity?**

The profession of architecture, and its key representative body the Australian Institute of Architects, does not need to make a statement about the contribution of architecture to creating and improving sustainable spaces for artistic and cultural activity. This is considered to be assumed. What is important is how architecture is best positioned to make this contribution.

The NSW government could take a leading role in Australia by ensuring that contemporary design principles are used by the state and NSW local governments, and their creative industries departments/ agencies and programs, when creating or improving spaces which are accessible and sustainable.

A number of existing resources are readily available through the Government Architect of NSW. For example Evaluating Good Design (2018)<sup>3</sup> is a twelve page guideline that elaborates on the following seven design objectives which define the key considerations in the design of the built environment for NSW:

- Better fit contextual, local and of its place
- Better performance sustainable, adaptable and durable
- Better for community inclusive, connected and diverse
- Better for people safe, comfortable and liveable
- Better working functional, efficient and fit for purpose
- Better value creating and adding value
- Better look and feel engaging, inviting and attractive

Another critical "need-to-know" resource to create and improve sustainable access to spaces for artistic and cultural activity is Connecting with Country (2023)<sup>4</sup>. This 92 page resource was launched in July this year by The Hon. Paul Scully MP Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. It provides good practice guidance on how to respond to Country in the planning, design and delivery of built environment projects in NSW.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-evaluating-good-design-2018-03.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/case-studies/connecting-with-country-framework.pdf?la=en>

A further element to creating and improving sustainable access to spaces includes best-practice methods for procurement.

The NSW Government Architect' Strategy and Design Prequalification Scheme<sup>5</sup> is focused on the delivery of strategic advice, design quality and innovation in the built environment. It offers a pool of prequalified service providers to assist NSW Government agencies and statutory corporations in engaging external expertise to assist in delivering 'good design' outcomes in the built environment. There are also advisory notes for procurement<sup>6</sup> including the development of design briefs and master plans as well as a specific advisory note on *Local Government Procurement of State Pre-qualified designers*<sup>7</sup>.

The NSW Government Architect also endorses and provides a direct link to the Australian Institute of Architects' *Guidelines for Expressions of interest and requests for tender for architectural services*<sup>8</sup>. The Institute also publishes client and architect templates for expressions of interests and requests for tender<sup>9</sup> as well as *Model Conditions for an Architectural Competition and Guidelines for the Conduct of Architectural Competitions*<sup>10</sup>. Further assistance and advice on competitions is available by contact the Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter office.

**The NSW Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects recommends that NSW Government Architect and Australian Institute of Architects' policies, guidelines and resources are actively promoted to state and local governments and their creative industries departments/ agencies and programs when creating or improving accessible and sustainable spaces for all aspects of artistic and cultural activity.**

**3. A new look at audiences:** *How can we grow local, national and international audiences for cultural experiences, for the benefit of our community and the broader economy?*

This year, being the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Opera House, is symbolic of New South Wales' legacy and strength at a national and international level with respect to its architecture. Sydney Open<sup>11</sup> since 1997, has seen more than 89,000 locals and tourists explore more than 550 buildings and is supported by the NSW Government. Programs such as Sydney Open are an important means to grow local, national and international audiences for this type of cultural experience.

Aligned to our response to the first key question, the opportunity to expand NSW Government support for Open House tours of buildings and their surrounds could be considered for regional NSW. This would have benefits for these local communities in terms of valuing their own local buildings and architecture as well as fostering general flow-on impacts for tourism.

However, these cultural experiences can have other important benefits. As has been seen with Australia's recent hosting of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Women's World Cup, the participation as spectators to an event may also lead to increased participation.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/procurement/prequalification-scheme>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/advisory-notes>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/other/advisory-notes/advisory-note-local-government-procurement-of-state-prequalified-designers-2020-07-01.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Australian-Institute-of-Architects\\_EOI-RFT-Guidelines-2019.pdf](https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Australian-Institute-of-Architects_EOI-RFT-Guidelines-2019.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Australian-Institute-of-Architects\\_EOI-RFT-Guidelines-2019.pdf](https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Australian-Institute-of-Architects_EOI-RFT-Guidelines-2019.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> See: Competitions Policy sub-menu at: <https://www.architecture.com.au/advocacy-news/policy>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sydneyopen.com.au/faqs/>

Participation in cultural experiences through the visiting of architecture should be seen as an opportunity to improve the NSW public's general literacy in respect of design and the built environment.

The Danish Architecture Centre, which is funded by the Danish Government, now hosts a year round open house in Copenhagen called Copenhagen in Common<sup>12</sup>,

*Copenhagen in Common is about what we have in common – namely architecture. It is what frames our lives. A good place to live, work and learn. A nice place to hang out. A safe place to move about. In the exhibition, we present a wide range of Danish architects who are designing Denmark now and in the future.*

Denmark places great value on its architecture and the public's general design literacy. Given the important impacts of good design for our wellbeing, liveability, social and economic inclusion, climate resilience and sustainability then it is important to strengthen public education to promote greater design literacy.

The general public also become direct consumers of design whether they are selecting a home to rent, building or upgrading a home, sitting on a school council or community association that is upgrading or building new facilities. By extending and developing architectural cultural experiences a more educated and design literate citizens will demand not necessarily bigger, but higher quality and more sustainable homes and apartments and community infrastructure.

We conclude therefore with the recommendation that,

**The NSW Government seizes the opportunity to grow local, national and international audiences for cultural experiences that focus on architecture by:**

- **supporting expansion of the Open Sydney model into the NSW regions,**
- **creating a year round Open Sydney model similar to Copenhagen in Common, and**
- **focussing on fostering greater design literacy in the population so that NSW people demand good design quality in their own homes and communities to deliver improved outcomes for wellbeing, liveability, social and economic inclusion, climate resilience and sustainability.**

Again, thank-you for the opportunity to make a contribution to this important consultation.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Adam Haddow FRAIA  
NSW Chapter President**

*We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging*

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://dac.dk/en/>