

SAFER PLACES BY DESIGN GUIDELINES



Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
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Western Australian Chapter



Australian
Institute of
Architects

SUBMISSION BY

This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects, WA Chapter.

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 13,000 members across Australia and overseas.

The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate for 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.

PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) in response to *Safer Places by Design – Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Planning Guidelines* published by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH).
- At the time of this submission the Institute National President is Tony Giannone FRAIA and the WA Chapter President is Sandy Anghie RAIA. The A/Chief Executive Officer is Barry Whitmore.

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COVER PHOTO

The Australian Institute of Architects' recipient of 2021 George Temple Poole Award, the John Septimus Rose Award for Urban Design and the Jeffrey Howlett Award for Public Architecture. WA Museum Boola Bardip. Hassell + OMA.
Photographer: Peter Bennetts.

CONDITIONAL SUPPORT

The Institute supports the Draft Guidelines with some suggested improvements around themes of place activation/attendance, designing for diversity and pedestrian prioritisation.

The general format and content is legible, detailed with a good use of diagrams to explain concepts. The successful and broad future use of the Guidelines will be underpinned by ease of comprehension and quality of content.

DETAILED RESPONSE

Big Picture Principles

There is an opportunity for the Guidelines to emphasise broader place-making principles that create safe spaces and active precincts that do not require defensive safety strategies. Examples include streetscape activation, diversity of use, local community development, encouraging community participation and implied community ownership. Areas that have active Town Teams¹ have seen a clear uplift in safety.

The Department has an opportunity to cross-reference and utilise strategies outlined in SPP 7.2 Precinct Design and the Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy.

There is little guidance on the role of local authorities and how they reference the Guidelines when updating their Town Planning Schemes. Many of the issues in relation to surveillance, activity, etc need to be controlled from that level.

Activation / Attendance

Place activation via increased attendance is a key principle in increasing safety and security of public spaces². As noted above, the Guidelines need to further explore how urban design and master planning can be utilised to activate spaces. For example, complementary uses that generate continuous day-time and well as night-time use / activity are very important.

Designing for Diversity

The Guidelines need to further explore the role of diversity of use and diversity of demographics in creating safer spaces. From the perspectives of legislated requirements³ and social responsibility, there is a requirement for public spaces to be accessible and safe for all.

¹ Town Team Movement <https://www.townteammovement.com/>

² European Forum for Urban Security, *Designing safer public spaces: A PACTESUR guide by Eric Valerio*. <https://efus.eu/topics/public-spaces/designing-safer-public-spaces-a-pactesur-guide-by-eric-valerio/>

³ Refer Age Discrimination Act 2004, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Racial Discrimination Act 1984 and Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender.

Designing for diversity will have additional attendance benefits by attracting a broad range of community members, leading to both day and night place activation⁴.

It is therefore essential to consider designing for diverse demographics, including:

- Women⁵
- Youth, including teenage girls and boys⁶
- LGBTQI+ community⁷
- Disabled persons
- Persons from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Pedestrian Prioritisation

The diagrams contained in the Guidelines demonstrate a high proportion of engaged pedestrians without addressing principles of walkability or pedestrian prioritisation (as opposed to vehicular prioritisation).

Medium to higher density residential developments and diverse land use zoning within every neighbourhood will promote the sustainable establishment of shops and recreational areas, thus promoting walkability. Uses such as cafes, alfresco dining, shops and parklets provide pauses along pedestrian journeys and activate streetscapes. It is important to consider whole journey planning when addressing walkability.

Cities such as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Zurich, Hamburg and Vancouver have introduced urban design and integrated planning strategies to minimise urban car use and create exclusive pedestrian areas⁸. Cities such as Hong Kong have created safe, highly activated underground walkways for pedestrians safe from traffic and weather⁹.

A broader planning and urban design vision is necessary, beyond the limitation of these Guidelines to ensure activated streetscapes.

Language

We note that some of the language used throughout the Guidelines requires further review to ensure alignment with current urban design ethos and social appropriateness, as well as ensuring a proactive (as opposed to defensive) focus. As an example, we

⁴ European Forum for Urban Security, *Designing safer public spaces: A PACTESUR guide by Eric Valerio*.

<https://efus.eu/topics/public-spaces/designing-safer-public-spaces-a-pactesur-guide-by-eric-valerio/>

⁵ Refer for example: <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/designing-safe-cities-women/1052876/>

⁶ Refer for example: <https://www.pps.org/article/young-people-and-placemaking-engaging-youth-to-create-community-places>, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-05-28/we-need-more-public-space-for-teen-girls> and <https://www.childinthecity.org/2015/12/02/parks-for-teens-10-features-teens-want-to-see/?gdpr=accept>

⁷ Refer for example: <http://spacing.ca/national/2016/07/18/build-safer-cities-lgbtq-residents/> and <https://theconversation.com/the-queer-city-how-to-design-more-inclusive-public-space-161088>

⁸ Refer examples: <https://thecityfix.com/blog/five-cities-show-future-walkability-active-transport-priscila-pacheco/> and <https://www.narcity.com/vancouver/most-walkable-places-in-canada-has-metro-vancouver-cities-in-the-top-5>

⁹ Refer <https://weburbanist.com/2014/05/13/groundless-city-a-guidebook-to-underground-hong-hong/>

would recommend replacing terms such as “Territorial Definition”, “Target Hardening”, “Access Control” with terms such as “Spatial Definition”, “Penetrability” and “Surveillance”. Terms such as “Penetrability” go beyond aesthetics and visual surveillance issues, encompassing inclusive design and accessibility.

Case studies

We recommend a broader case study review be referenced within the Guidelines. The case studies need to present a diverse range of public spaces and could be broadened to projects from different cities, countries, and different demographical foci.

Based on consultation with WA Institute members, it was not clear whether some of the images and case studies represented positive or negative examples.

Some local positive case study examples, of various scales, may include:

- Mary Street Piazza public space on Beaufort Steet
- Optus Stadium masterplan
- Small interventions such as the ‘hole in the wall’ coffee shops or parklets (e.g., the location of Standby Espresso on Beaufort Street was a neglected corner and since opening is a popular locale).

Figures / Diagrams

The figures / diagrams are not consistently clear, nor do they consistently present as good benchmarks.

Specific comments as follows:

FIGURE NO.	COMMENT
Figure 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5	Historical main street is illustrated in all examples. Suggest showing a contemporary successful response.
Figure 2.6	Photo 2.13 does not match spatial definitions demonstrated in diagram (i.e., no footpath in image – suggest using image shown on page 18). It is not visually clear as to where the zones start and end – suggest using vertical dashed lines. Private zone should be indicated as starting at fence line, not eave line.
4.1 Neighbourhoods and precincts – page 47	Poor built form examples shown – residential buildings have no balconies or awnings shown, civic building appears hidden and not legible from neighbourhood centre, some built form not articulated with blank walls or inaccessible with no driveways shown. Public space looks under budgeted, shade limited and water unconvincing as an asset. Park / square is fronted

	<p>without roads and does not seem to consider a variety of responses.</p> <p>Limited lights in public spaces shown.</p>
4.2 Residential and mixed-use streets – page 49	The first building (left) is the only built form that demonstrates good engagement at ground floor, articulation and ‘territorial definition’.
4.3 Public spaces – page 51	<p>Poor example of well activated park which caters to a diverse population. Café is in a dead end, limiting its commercial viability. There is little useful shade in activity areas.</p> <p>Passive surveillance provided by adjacent land uses appears limited and compromised. Clear sightlines appear limited and compromised.</p>
4.4 Activity centres – page 53	<p>Balconies on primary building not legible (does not demonstrate surveillance).</p> <p>Spatial buffers to footpath not consistently or diversly demonstrated.</p>
4.5 Public transport hubs – page 55	<p>Station has limited engagement with streetscape.</p> <p>Direction of curved roof hinders sightlines.</p>
4.6 Pedestrian and cycling networks – page 57	<p>Space appears to be in-between space between bus stop and rear of building, rather than a purposeful place. The adjoining building is a poor example of ground floor engagement or surveillance.</p> <p>Limited shading demonstrated on movement paths.</p> <p>Fencing appears to be segregating pedestrians, cyclists, streetscape and street. There is little integration of movement / use demonstrated.</p>
4.7 Pedestrian Access Ways – page 59	<p>Limited interface between residential lots and pathways.</p> <p>Low back fences are an intruder risk and not commonly accepted by residents. This is not a typology to promote.</p>
4.8 Community infrastructure – page 61	Overall, a very poor image. Confusing number of paths and service access, no awnings and little useful shade in space. Building on left appears to lack real ground floor activity. Building on the right has limited surveillance and appears not connected to space.
4.9 Car parking – page 63	Poor example of carparking. A sleeved multi-storey parking solution provides best outlook to habitable space and improves street safety. At grade parking on street will

	provide best land use diversity, be more shaded by adjoining built form and provide surveillance.
4.10 Crowded places – page 65	The image appears to depict a temporary event / structures and it is confusing if it is the most appropriate example. The example is a poor-quality built form outcome and has undermined sightlines.