

A TIME FOR ACTION

Australian Institute of Architects

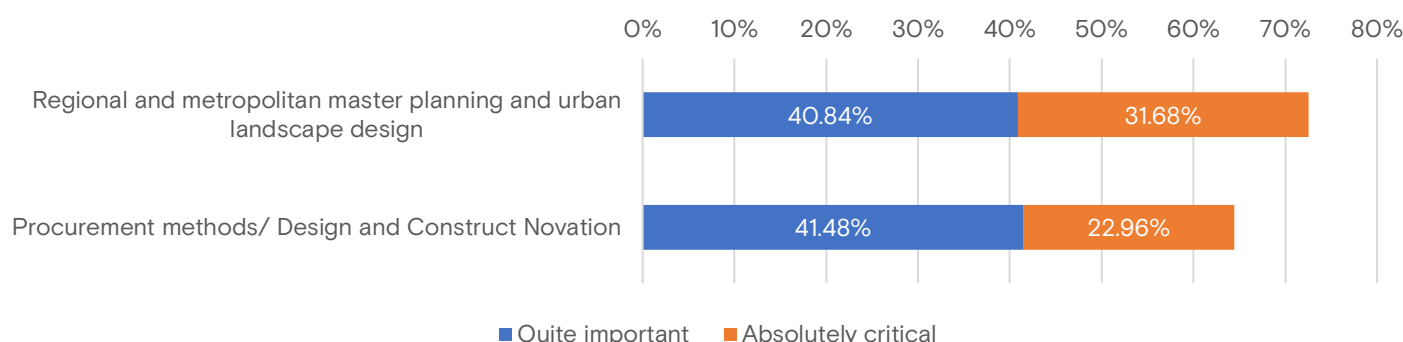
2022 Federal Election Policy Statement

PRIORITY 3 – BECOME A LEADER FOR NATIONAL DESIGN INITIATIVES

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

Results from the Institute's member survey show that regional and metropolitan master planning and urban landscape design and procurement methods (including novated design and construct procurement) are important to members. Combined 'quite important' or 'absolutely critical' ratings show these issues to be of high importance for around three-quarters (72.5%) and two-thirds (64.4%) of members respectively. These are both issues which government architects can play a very important role in gaining the best built environment, economic and social outcomes.

Figure 4 – Rated importance of issues for the Architectural Profession



The Institute calls for the next Australian Government to:

fund \$14 million over the next four years to establish an Australian Government Architect's office that will:

- advise the Australian Government and statutory agencies on best ways to achieve great designs and outcomes from government owned or government funded buildings
- provide leadership and cultural advice to government on connecting with Country to inform the planning design and delivery of built environment projects for all government owned or funded projects.

Australian and international research provides evidence that good design and architecture leads to improved liveability. Almost all Australians (97 per cent) believe that

cities and towns are better to live in when public buildings and public spaces are well designed.

Governments are a central influence in delivering on community expectations of how the built environment will support Australian society and economy. In part, this is because governments across Australia are a large procurer of buildings accounting for one third of non-residential buildings. In turn, well-designed, liveable places become centres of social and economic activity creating sustainable, long-term returns on taxpayer funded investments.

Most Australian states and territories maintain the position of a Government Architect to provide leadership and independent strategic advice to government in relation to architecture and urban design.

Including a role for an advisor on connecting with Country at a national level will support better work practices, relationship building and delivery of better built environment outcomes that are informed and guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's knowledge.

BROADER CONTEXT

Governments must play an increasing role in shaping Australia's cities and towns of the future. Good design is essential to creating buildings and spaces that are safe, economically and socially sustainable and culturally rich.

The appointment of government architects in all states and territories and the federal jurisdiction allows for expert, professional and independent strategic advice on design, planning and development across policy, programs and projects, to ensure best practice and high-quality outcomes.

Government architects also add value for taxpayers through their advice to governments and their agencies on best procurement strategies. The Office of the Victorian Government Architect, has published its well-known [Government as 'Smart Client'](#) and [Architecture Design Competitions – a guide for government](#)

Architecture helps define a society and, in this context, must be recognised by government as playing a vital role in shaping our built environment. The onus is on governments to lead by example through support for high quality design outcomes. The role of government architects helps achieve this, providing high level design advice, helping governments better understand building design and delivery and promoting best practice in the built environment

The Australian Institute of Architects endorses the appointment of a government architect to:

- Promote a whole-of-government approach, ensuring design quality and awareness of the value of good design

- Provide strategic advice on best practice in relation to the built environment, urban design, procurement and heritage issues
- Provide leadership and connection to cultural advice to government on connecting with Country to inform the planning design and delivery of built environment projects for all government owned or funded projects
- Advocate for high quality buildings and public spaces that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, as well as innovative and culturally rich
- Develop and implement national standards for design review
- Foster collaboration between governments, industry, community and other stakeholders to improve sustainability outcomes and help prepare for climate change impacts
- Encourage the development of regional design

The Australian Institute of believes that governments in all jurisdictions – federal, state and territory – should appoint government architects to:

- Work with government agencies to develop clear policies in relation to the built environment and future development
- Consult with governments, industry and other bodies to effectively implement built environment policies
- Work with government agencies to identify and develop parameters to assess design quality
- Provide a whole-of-government approach to the built environment, encouraging innovative design of public buildings and spaces
- Promote community awareness and foster partnerships and collaborations among governments, professional, academic, industry and community bodies