



Australian
Institute of
Architects

Australian Institute
of Architects,
Tasmanian Chapter

Designing
Tasmania's Future
– 2018 Tasmanian
Election Platform



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Tasmanian architects have an outstanding reputation for innovative design solutions, making them well placed to assist governments in addressing key challenges we are facing in our cities and towns. Primary issues include:

- strategic planning
- development and rapid change
- economic growth
- heritage and the built environment
- housing affordability
- health/ageing demographic
- education
- climate change.

Good urban policy and design are the key to delivering a built environment that can sustain Tasmania's communities into the future. Best practice planning and delivery can help alleviate and minimise potential problems, ensuring equitable access, positive liveability, affordability, productivity, sustainability, education and health outcomes. Integrated strategies and policies are required across all levels of government, supported by actions to ensure that what is delivered in physical form is appropriate, enduring and of the highest design quality. We need to make the most of the money invested in our infrastructure and communities to maximise the return and design a future that benefits all Tasmanians. Good urban design goes well beyond the location and aesthetics of buildings – it addresses functionality, performance, build quality, access to services and public transport, and is critical to creating liveable, productive, sustainable and resilient communities. It is sustainable and resource efficient and can help to anticipate and accommodate further growth in our cities and towns. In the context of Tasmania's unique and diverse settlement character, it is vital to preserve and enhance the existing qualities valued by our resident population and to reinforce investment and economic confidence in the Tasmanian 'brand'.

Economically, socially and environmentally sustainable design is a core value underpinning appropriate policy and strategic development of the built and natural environment. It addresses changing needs in a rapidly changing world, ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities, services and facilities. It supports delivery of comfortable, healthy environments at home, school, work or play, which can lead to increased wellbeing, business turnover and staff productivity, and decreased absenteeism both at school and work. The benefits can be seen in outcomes that address climate change and through the smallest to the largest of projects. They include cost-saving energy efficiencies and maintenance reductions, carbon emissions reduction, more efficient use of space, and the use of potentially economically beneficial innovative technologies as well as natural and recycled materials.



Yvette Breytenbach RAIA
President, Tasmanian Chapter,
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Strategic planning

A well-designed built environment encourages development suited to the people and the place and is therefore sustainable. The development of good design guidelines and the application of good design criteria for the procurement and assessment of all projects ensure the best outcomes for development of our unique environment, for the community and for economic growth. Other Australian states are actively determining and regulating clear good-design development procedures and are reaping significant tangible benefits in their built environments and economies as a result. The NSW government's recently launched statewide architecture and design policy for high-quality urban design, [Better Placed](#), lays the foundation for a design-led planning strategy to support good built environment outcomes, establishing seven key principles to inform their approach to future design: better fit, better performance, better for community, better for people, better working, better value and better look and feel. The Institute believes a similar design policy in Tasmania would benefit the state and its communities.

Development and rapid growth

With Tasmania's population growing, governments working to entice more people to the state, potential climate change migration, and significant offshore developer interest in Tasmania, we need to develop long-term strategies, policies and processes that coordinate and support this growth. Issues for consideration include coordinated infrastructure investment that supports strategic planning, planning for density in the urban environment, protection of our productive agricultural land and natural environment and developing communities in a way that enhances connection and equitable access, liveability, sustainability and productivity. With the skills to provide specialised input in this regard, architects should be integral to providing long-term state strategic planning, policy and implementation process development, and have the capacity to add value throughout the construction industry and for the common good of the state.

Economic growth

The Tasmanian construction industry employs almost 23,000 people and the value of commercial construction work underway in the state in June 2017 was \$3.166 billion. This contribution to the economy does not end when building work is completed. Coordinated strategic development and infrastructure investment, good urban design and well-designed buildings determine likely best value, cost effective and appropriate outcomes. These could include providing energy efficiencies, ensuring that buildings make the most of their locations and opportunities and provide the best outcomes for owners and users, planning for and implementing sustainable and best use of water and land resources, and adapting and reusing materials and buildings. The more innovative buildings and spaces also make an enormous active contribution to the economy. The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) has been widely credited with leading Tasmania's tourism renaissance; according to Tourism Tasmania, visitors to the acclaimed museum spent \$719 million in the state in the year to mid-July 2015. Architects have the skills to design innovative products and construction systems for the local workforce, specify local products and materials where appropriate, including sustainably grown and harvested local timbers, and work with all in the sector to grow it in a manner that is agile, relevant and mutually supportive. They also have the capacity to drive strategic initiatives that benefit the construction industry and, ultimately, the state.

Heritage and the built environment

Tasmania's built heritage assets have played a major role in attracting visitors from interstate and overseas and contributed significantly to the state's tourism resurgence. Many of these, such as the Henry Jones Art Hotel, have become much-loved icons of the state's tourism industry and are wonderful examples of the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. The challenge for governments and developers is to provide sensitive, well-considered projects that integrate and enhance the unique characteristics of our natural and heritage context. With the increasing regulation of the building industry, successful adaptive reuse is a highly skilled design process. Tasmanian architects are uniquely placed to ensure high quality architectural outcomes for our built heritage, having an unparalleled understanding of the Tasmanian built and natural context. The

Institute supports and encourages the use of good design processes and review panels for the development of sensitive and significant natural and built heritage sites.

Housing affordability

Housing is a basic need and universal human right and, in the rapidly expanding cities and towns of the 21st century, there is a critical need for more flexible and diverse housing solutions. New housing stock needs to be integrated with transport and social infrastructure and much greater diversity, beyond simple models of homogenous suburban housing. In the face of social and demographic change, growing economic inequality and global issues such as climate change, the architectural profession offers innovative and strategic thinking, specialist design and problem-solving skills to contribute to astute policy making and to deliver more affordable, dignified and accessible housing. All financial levers, including reduction of both up-front and ongoing costs to make housing more affordable for owners and renters, need to be examined regularly for their effectiveness and within the context of the best wholistic long-term impact on the state's economy, environment and communities.

Health/ageing demographic

Strategically co-ordinated state-wide provision of physical and mental health-care facilities, services and programs is essential to achieving improved population health and equitable access to comprehensive health care by our regional and urban communities. With an ageing population and spiralling public health costs, the importance of preventative measures is well known. In its publication [Blueprint for an active Australia](#) Second edition, the Heart Foundation argues that part of the solution is to reshape the built environment in which most Australians live, work, learn and play, by adopting healthy planning and design. The Institute understands the importance of having a built environment that supports healthy lifestyles and the role architecture can play in improving health outcomes. We support and encourage the adoption of healthy planning and design through embedding design quality requirements in legislation.

Education

Good design is essential to improving education outcomes by providing high-quality environments that support all students. The publication [Good Design + Education](#) by the Office of Victorian Government Architect points out that as well as saving money in the longer term and adding real value, well-designed learning spaces support students' physical, intellectual and emotional wellbeing. It says close links between a school and its community can enhance student learning, public safety, health and economic wellbeing, and that interconnectivity between the school and community can assist in culturally diverse and disadvantaged areas. The Institute believes schools developed in collaborative partnerships, involving architects, educators, policy makers and students, will lead to better education outcomes and, in turn, better communities.

Climate change

The challenges presented by climate change require urgent action. The building sector is a key part of the climate change problem, with residential and commercial buildings accounting for almost a quarter of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions. If Australia is to meet its international obligations under the Paris Climate Change agreement, the building sector must achieve major improvements. Modelling from the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) shows that without further action, buildings would consume almost half of Australia's total national carbon budget. However, the sector also offers significant potential for achieving deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. If we are to achieve truly sustainable cities, all levels of government, industry, community and other stakeholders need to work together to enhance the resilience of our built environment and communities to extreme weather events and predicted future climate change impacts.

Recommendations

Good design yields a dividend for all stakeholders, which is returned not just in the immediate term, but over the lifetime of a well-designed and delivered built environment and through strategically coordinated infrastructure delivery. High quality urban design, public buildings, infrastructure and spaces add value by stimulating the economy, as well as improving quality of life, and social, environmental and health outcomes in the community.

In order to achieve this, the Institute recommends:

- the introduction of a statewide architecture and design policy for high-quality urban design
- and, architectural input into future development.

We believe it would be timely to review the best options to achieve Tasmania's full potential. Architectural input could take many forms. One such option is a State Architect, which could facilitate interdepartmental cooperation around strategic asset planning, provide policy input and support for development initiatives such as medium density projects and public housing, and provide high-level advice on planning and major developments. Another option is to ensure effective procurement and design review through an appropriate advisory body, design review panels or other methods. The Institute supports assessment panels comprising suitably qualified, interdisciplinary experts; architects and urban design specialists have the complex problem-solving skills required to assess projects and should be included on assessment panels.

The Institute always values the opportunity to talk to government, local government and the public productively to ensure we can achieve what we all ultimately want, which is to maintain and enhance the qualities that make Tasmania so special.

Resources

[Better Placed](#), NSW Architecture and Design Policy

[Good Design + Education](#), Office of Victorian Government Architect

Australian Institute of Architects, Tasmanian Chapter [Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment \(Major Projects\) Bill 2017](#) submission

Australian Institute of Architects [Smart Cities Plan \(National\)](#) submission

[Blueprint for an active Australia Second edition](#), the Heart Foundation

Australian Institute of Architects [Affordable Housing Policy 2017](#)

- Australian Institute of Architects [Affordable Housing Advocacy Points 2017](#)

Australian Institute of Architects [Multi-Residential Standards Policy 2017](#)

- [Multi-Residential Standards Advocacy Points 2017](#)