

# Greener Places Design Guide

What We Heard

Consultation Report

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February 2021



GOVERNMENT  
ARCHITECT  
NEW SOUTH WALES



# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| About this report                               | 3  |
| Engagement approach                             | 4  |
| Submission analysis                             | 4  |
| Key themes                                      | 5  |
| The way forward                                 | 10 |
| Appendix: Organisations that submitted comments | 11 |

February 2021

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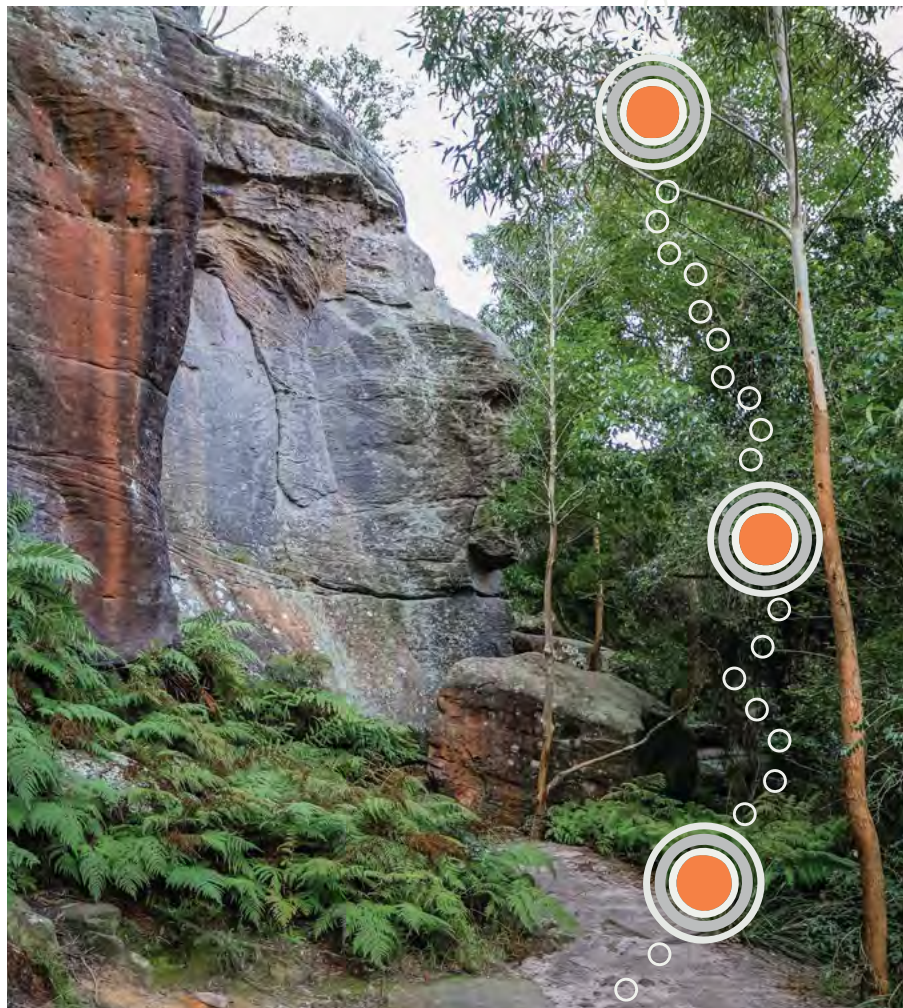
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Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. We honour Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to our society. To that end, all our work seeks to uphold the idea that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

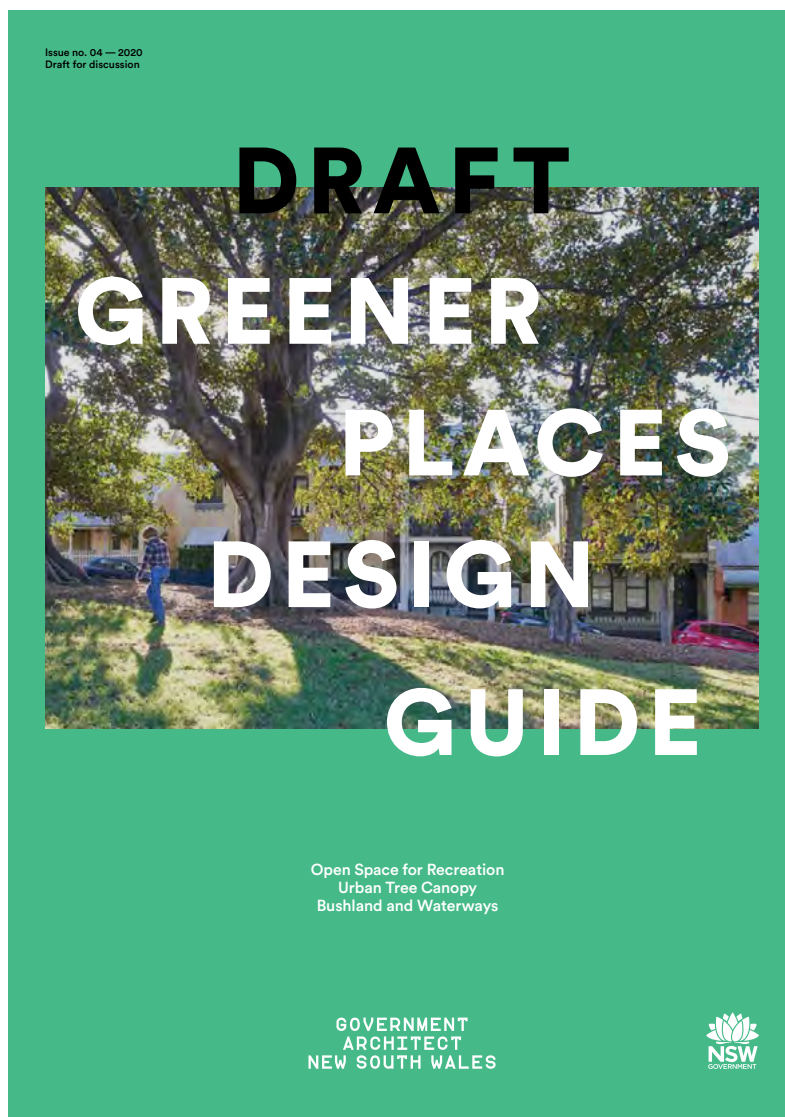


## About this report

This report summarises feedback received by Government Architect NSW (GANSW) on the draft Greener Places Design Guide (GANSW 2020).

The report consists of:

- a brief outline of the engagement undertaken with NSW Government agencies, local government, industry, peak bodies and others during the development of the draft guide;
- a summary of the key themes arising from the submissions received during the draft guide's public exhibition in 2020, and NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's responses; and
- next steps for the development of the guide.



### About the draft Greener Places Design Guide

The draft guide was developed by GANSW in collaboration with other NSW Government agencies responsible for the planning and design of public spaces and green infrastructure. It presents strategies, standards, targets and actions for the planning, design and provision of green infrastructure across NSW, including open space for recreation, urban tree canopy, and urban bushland and waterways.

This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the draft guide. It acknowledges the key themes that arose from consultation rather than repeating any sections of the draft guide.

# Engagement approach

## Developing and reviewing the draft Greener Places Design Guide

### 2017-2018

Collaboration across NSW Government agencies on the development of Greener Places: an urban green infrastructure design framework and draft guidance on open space for recreation, urban tree canopy, and bushland and waterways.

Nine workshops (30 attendees) and a symposium (400 attendees) – engaging with government agencies, local government, industry and peak bodies to present the draft guidance.

### 2019-2020

Collaboration across agencies to incorporate stakeholder feedback and review and reframe an integrated Greener Places Design Guide.

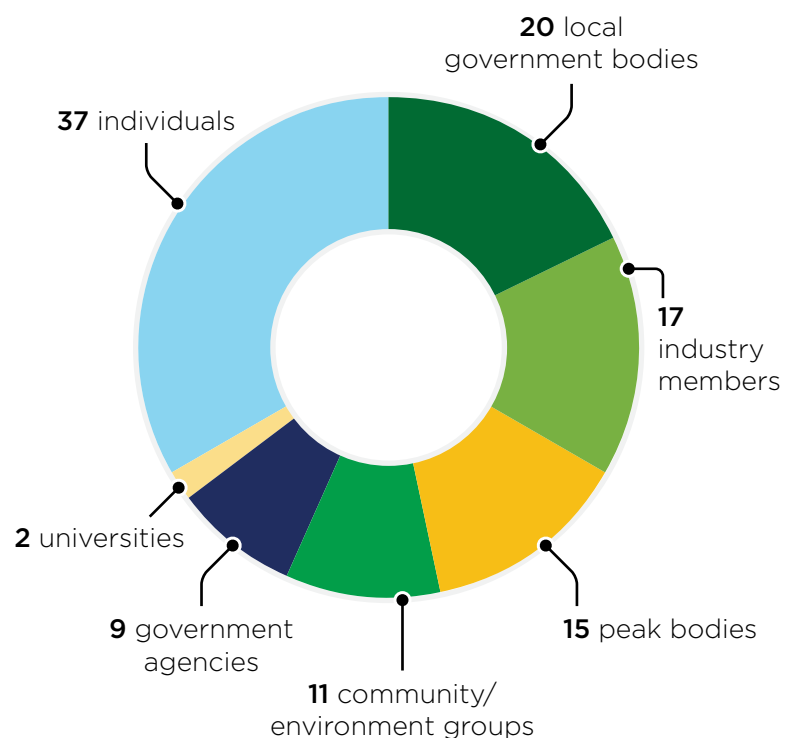
**July 2020:** Webinar for local government and industry (500 attendees) – release of Greener Places Design Framework and draft Greener Places Design Guide.

**June to August 2020:** Public exhibition of Greener Places Design Guide (110 submissions received).

# Submission analysis

## Submissions received

A total of 110 submissions were received during the public exhibition of the draft guide between 25 June and 28 August 2020 across the following groups, organisations and individuals:



See Appendix for a list of the organisations that made a submission.



## Strong support

The majority of comments received contained positive feedback, demonstrating a strong level of support for the guide's green infrastructure strategies and integrated approach.

Many of the submissions were detailed, reflecting a high level of interest and engagement across government, industry and other stakeholders including professional design practitioners and academics.

## Greatest concerns and valuable suggestions for change

Comments received were mainly requests for further clarification or changes to the scope of the guide. Various concerns were also expressed – focusing on how the planning and design standards are prescribed, and how implementation of the Greener Places strategies will be supported.



## Key themes

Valuable feedback from public exhibition of the guide is summarised in this report under key themes:



### **Scope and definitions –**

clarification and expansion of key issues, benefits and definitions.



### **Role and relationships to other guidance –**

greater clarity on the role of the document and its relationships to other policies and guidance.



### **Guidance approach –**

the need for an evidence base that informs an appropriate response to different urban contexts.



### **Geographical scope –**

clarity on how the guide applies to regional areas and various urban contexts across NSW.



### **Design process –**

further guidance on the design processes for green infrastructure.



### **Communication –**

the need for more diagrams, pertinent images, actions and examples.



### **Implementation and support**

– further guidance on how the strategies and criteria will be implemented.

Your suggestions and our considerations are summarised below, grouped under the key themes that emerged from your feedback. These considerations are the starting point for the next phase of review and development of the guide.

# Scope and definitions



## What you told us

The scope of the draft guide needs to be clarified and expanded for several important aspects of green infrastructure, particularly the role of water.

Greater emphasis is needed on several issues, e.g. climate change adaptation.

Some definitions need to be more consistent, including across government and throughout the NSW planning framework.

The benefits that green infrastructure can provide need to be better articulated.

## We need to consider:

**Standardising definitions**, and where possible aligning them across the NSW planning framework, for:

- trees;
- open space, types of open space, open space typologies;
- urban typologies and settings;
- urban habitat, core habitat, transition zones; and
- recreation types.

### **Expanding guidance** on:

- sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and managing bushfire risk;
- biodiversity, habitat creation, use of urban bushland and riparian areas, and creating new ecosystems;
- water and green infrastructure, blue-green corridors, water-sensitive urban design, integrating stormwater management, water quality, sustainable water management;
- specific aspects of enhancing tree canopy including strategies and spatial data to inform actions; this could include updating the Greater Sydney Region Urban Vegetation Cover to Modified Mesh Block 2016 dataset;
- urban tree canopy plans, including adequate resourcing and support for councils to develop these plans;
- the role of streets, use of constrained lands, and urban green cover e.g. green roofs;
- creating urban green networks, connecting linkages, lineal corridors for walking and cycling, land acquisition, and the long-term management and maintenance of corridors; and
- interrelationship between green infrastructure elements.

**Better articulating the multiple benefits** of green infrastructure for individuals and communities.

# Role and relationships to other guidance



## What you told us

The guide's policy context and relationships to related NSW planning policies and guidelines needs to be clarified and explained in more detail.

## We need to consider:

### **Clarifying how the guide relates to other policies and advice,**

including the policy framework document: *Greener Places – An urban green infrastructure design framework for NSW* (GANSW 2020) and its principles. Other linked documents, policies and programs include the Premier's Priorities (Greener Public Spaces and Greening our City), the draft *NSW Public Spaces Charter*, draft *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*, Sydney Green Grid, draft *Greater Sydney Recreation Report*, Five Million Trees Program, *Everyone Can Play*, *State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land* and draft *Connecting with Country*.

### **Highlighting relationships to existing legislation and**

processes that govern green infrastructure e.g. the Exempt and Complying Development Codes State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

### **Explaining the relationship to the Design & Place SEPP:**

the guide is one of a set of design-related documents that are proposed to support the implementation of the proposed new Design and Place SEPP that is currently being developed.

# Guidance approach: performance-based metrics



## What you told us

Inner metropolitan councils, regional councils, industry and peak bodies support the guide's performance-based approach (allowing greater flexibility and encouraging innovation, focusing on quality rather than quantity).

Outer metropolitan councils suggest using a balance of performance-based and quantitative spatial standards for open space.

The performance indicators need to be reviewed for clarity and consistency and to broaden their scope and application across different contexts.

The way they work together (i.e. not as multiple extra requirements) needs to be more clearly explained.

More information is needed on the evidence base used to derive the indicators and targets.

The guide should include a method and evidence base for developing urban tree canopy targets that are more refined, based on different land use types and contexts.

## We need to consider:

**Reviewing the use of performance-based metrics versus quantitative spatial standards** to define requirements and targets, e.g. for open space provision and tree canopy.

**Testing the application of the metrics** across various urban contexts (inner urban, outer urban, regional centres) and reviewing whether a balance between the two approaches is appropriate.

**Further developing the evidence base and refining guidance** on urban tree canopy targets for different scales and contexts.

**Reviewing the scope, consistency and relationships** between the metrics, particularly between different components of the guide.

## Providing further guidance on:

- how the performance criteria work together;
- how they relate to the green infrastructure design strategies;
- safeguards, so metrics can not be misused to downgrade delivery requirements; and
- the evidence base: how the metrics have been determined, and how they will be reviewed.

# Geographical scope



## What you told us

The guide needs to make greater reference to regional areas, providing more information on how the strategies and standards are relevant to regional towns and villages as well as metropolitan urban areas.

## We need to consider:

Including further guidance and examples **specifically relating to regional urban centres**, including how statewide principles apply to those areas and also considering issues specific to regional areas e.g. bushfire risk.



# Design process



## What you told us

Further guidance is needed on particular aspects of the design process for green infrastructure.

## We need to consider:

**Expanding guidance on particular aspects of the design processes** that contribute to providing and improving green infrastructure:

- Connecting with Country and how to embed culture and heritage
- community engagement in relation to assessing community needs
- assessing open space capacity.

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# Communication



## What you told us

The guidance could include more diagrams, more pertinent images, and more concrete actions and examples.

## We need to consider:

**Reviewing how the guidance is presented**, including using more diagrams (e.g. to explain relationships between different elements), using local images that specifically illustrate the concepts, and incorporating case studies of NSW examples that address specific issues.

**Reviewing the actions** to make them more concrete and tangible.

**Clarifying interdependencies** between the different parts of the guide.

# Implementation and support



## What you told us

Further information is needed on how the greener infrastructure strategies and targets will be implemented across NSW, including governance arrangements, relationship to statutory planning controls and funding.

## We need to consider:

Providing further advice on how the NSW Government plans to **implement and support other stakeholders to plan for, deliver and maintain green infrastructure**, including

- governance, e.g. clarifying roles and responsibilities, as well as ensuring the NSW Government plays a part in planning for, delivering and maintaining green infrastructure
- relationships to existing and proposed planning policies and legislation
- integration with statutory planning controls e.g. model clauses for LEPs and DCPs
- funding strategies and sources
- government assistance and assistance from others, e.g. partnerships
- support for local councils, e.g. developing skills and capacity.

## The way forward

The Department's Place, Design and Public Spaces Group will consider in further detail the issues raised in the submissions, and will use this input to progress a variety of work occurring across the Group, including the Design and Place SEPP and delivery of the Premier's Priorities, as well as to develop the final Greener Places Design Guide. The final guide will seek to address stakeholder feedback and provide the requested level of guidance needed to ensure that green infrastructure is essential infrastructure that is planned for, delivered and maintained like other forms of grey infrastructure e.g. roads and rail.

During this next phase of development, the guide's performance indicators and targets will be further tested to ensure guidance about open space, urban tree canopy, and urban habitat needed to ensure healthy and liveable communities throughout NSW, is best practice and fit for purpose.

The guide will support the implementation of the proposed Design and Place SEPP throughout NSW.



# Appendix: Organisations that submitted comments

Thank you to the following organisations that submitted their valuable suggestions and comments in response to the 2020 public exhibition of the Greener Places Design Guide. Responses were also received from 37 individuals (not listed here) - and we thank them too.

## Local councils, regional councils and regional organisations of councils:

- Blacktown City Council
- Blue Mountains City Council
- Camden Council
- Campbelltown City Council
- Cessnock Council
- City of Canterbury Bankstown
- City of Parramatta
- City of Sydney
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Georges River Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Inner West Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Lane Cove Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast City Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Parramatta River Catchment
- Penrith City Council
- Randwick City Council
- Shellharbour City Council
- Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
- Sydney Coast Councils
- The Hills Shire Council
- Upper Lachlan Shire Council

- Willoughby City Council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Woollahra Council

## Peak and professional bodies:

- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
- Birdlife Australia
- Doctors for the Environment
- Green Space Alliance NSW
- Greener Places Better Places
- Housing Industry Association
- Living Sea Wall - Sydney Institute of Marine Science
- Local Government NSW
- National Trust (NSW)
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Parks and Leisure Australia
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Property Council of Australia (NSW)
- Total Environment Centre
- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- Water Services Association Australia

## NSW Government agencies:

- NSW Environment Energy and Science (DPIE)
- NSW Health Kidsafe NSW
- Office of Sport
- Sports NSW
- TfNSW Centre for Urban Design
- Water NSW

## Community groups:

- Better Planning Network
- Greenwich Community Association
- Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society
- Lane Cove Bushland Management Advisory Committee
- Pennant Hills District Civic Trust
- Saving Moore Park
- STEP Inc.
- The Walking Volunteers
- Willoughby Environmental Protection Association

## Universities:

- University of Technology Sydney
- Western Sydney University

## Industry:

- Cville
- ClimateWise Design
- Cred Consulting
- EcoPlan
- Hassell Studio
- JMD Design
- John Maynard Consulting
- Junglefy
- McGregor Coxall
- Mirvac
- Republic of Everyone
- SGS Economics and Planning
- Stockland
- Urbis
- Wade Ryan