

Overview of GANSW advisory notes – Creating better places

“Despite the number of parties involved and potential changes in role, the client is pivotal in creating a successful place.”

– Creating Successful Masterplans: A Guide for Clients (CABE 2004)

Good design contributes to the creation of better places.

The process of creating better places relies on the contributions of many people, working in collaboration to achieve good design outcomes, and ultimately improving the condition of our built environment.

Good design is integral to this process, through engaging in collaborative processes that are focused on people and communities.

As a client, the government has a significant role in helping to deliver good design processes and outcomes.

How can GANSW help?

Government Architect NSW (GANSW) provides leadership for the NSW Government in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, and design thinking. In this role, GANSW supports the government in creating better places through delivering quality, managing risk and fostering innovation to maximise the public value of investment in the built environment.

The role of GANSW is critical in helping to deliver world-class design and planning for NSW as our population and economy continue to grow. Located within the NSW Government planning cluster, GANSW works in a strategic advisory role across government, the private sector and the community to improve social, environmental, and economic outcomes for NSW.

Supporting government to be a better client?

One of the GANSW primary functions is supporting government, and other public organisations, to be a better client.

These advisory notes provide advice to help organisations implement good practices consistent with NSW Government policies on good design. These policies are set out in Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW (GANSW 2017) and Greener Places: Establishing an urban Green Infrastructure policy for NSW (GANSW 2017).

GANSW advisory notes provide guidance for government agencies on a range of subjects related to the built environment. They are brief, aiming to highlight fundamental issues and opportunities. They set out considerations rather than prescribing procedures, and provide a starting point for conversations about how best to approach a specific project, or a task within that project. Many of the advisory notes are interrelated, and where relevant they direct you to further information on the topic.

Topics covered by the advisory notes

The advisory notes provide advice on a range of specialist subjects, including:

- determining when to get design advice
- ensuring collaboration between project stakeholders
- determining the required expertise for your project
- selecting consultants for your project
- developing briefs for consultants
- developing a strategic vision for your project
- understanding the role of design excellence in the planning system
- determining whether you need a master plan, design framework or implementation plan.

Why do we need strategic design advice?

- Design advice is an integral part of the project process – and should be factored in throughout the life of the project.

- Design is a problem-solving activity, but also a problem-defining and problem-seeking one. Understanding the different conditions which surround a project, and balancing these, is fundamental to ensure that design outcomes improve the built environment.
- Good design outcomes depend on a good design process – good advice can help you to tailor this process for your specific project requirements.
- Good design delivers long-term value to the public. Real design value is a balance of three factors – social, economic, and environmental – and benefits each of these.
- Exploring possibilities through the design process enables you to test different ideas, so your project can reach its full potential.
- Innovation through the design process can help you explore new and different ways of coming at a problem. This is particularly important when challenges and constraints are appearing to impede good design outcomes.

Further information

For more information see Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW (GANSW 2017) available on the GANSW website: ga.nsw.gov.au.

Government Architect NSW

GANSW provides design leadership in architecture, urban design and landscape architecture. In this role, GANSW works across government, the private sector and the community to establish policy and practice guides for achieving good design. GANSW provides strategic advice across design, planning and development to support good policy, programs, projects and places.

Contact GANSW

GANSW makes every effort to keep its advice up to date. From time to time we will release new versions of these advisory notes. For further advice, or if you think there is information missing, please contact GANSW.

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