

## PREAMBLE

In recent years, a number of national governments have recognised the need to focus on the built environment and the cultural heritage contained in the built environment through policy statements aimed at ensuring the maintenance of standards. Growing international concern about the need for sustainable development and the impact of the built environment on the ozone layer have also focused attention on the need for governments to develop policies that go beyond minimum standard development controls (refer Appendix).

The history of the built environment in Australia is uniquely different from European, Asian and American cultures. Whilst we are now a very urbanised country, the density and concentration of development has not reached that of other countries, allowing Australia the opportunity to become a world leader in its policy toward the built environment, its architecture and infrastructure.

Australia is a world leader in its attitude and policies towards promotion of a better green environment. The opportunity now exists to project that leadership role into the issues of the built environment.

## Policy

As the buildings constructed by and for the community are the most obvious and eloquent statement of prevailing cultural standards, Australian Governments will foster architecture that expresses the developing cultural values of the Australian people.

Australian Governments have become smaller and their role increasingly strategic in setting the standards and quality levels to be achieved by the public and private sectors. Governments will therefore act as the custodians of design excellence and create conditions for the continuous improvement of the quality of the built environment.

The Council of Australian Governments identifies the following principles for an Australian Built Environment Policy:

### Regional and National Identity

*As architecture and the built environment are the strongest physical manifestations of Australian culture and national identity, encouragement will be given to architecture, which contributes to and develops regional and national identity.*

### Sustainable Development

*As it is no longer an effective policy to continue to determine the quality of the built environment by regulations which set minimum construction standards, the objective of sustainable development will be encouraged by promoting architecture and infrastructure which:*

- ▶ *minimises pollution of soil, air and water*
- ▶ *minimises the consumption of non-renewable resources*
- ▶ *maximises the health, safety and comfort of the community.*

### Heritage and Conservation

*As urban, rural and natural environments form a significant part of Australia's cultural and physical heritage, future Australian architecture will conserve, interpret and contribute to the existing natural and built environment.*

### Quality of Life Issue

*As the built environment impacts on the comfort, well-being and amenity of all Australians, many of whom might be disenfranchised in the development process, Governments will promote architecture and infrastructure which responds to the changing social, economic and cultural needs of the community.*

### Innovation

*As a demonstration of the dynamic thinking behind the Australian economy and Australian business, innovation in design, construction and use of materials will be encouraged to demonstrate a community continually searching for improvement.*

In order to give effect to these policy principles, Australian Governments have adopted the following objectives:

### **Strategic Objectives**

The strategic objectives outlined below will produce results in the medium to short term and, more importantly, in the long term values and attitudes will be changed so that good design of the built environment will become the rule, not the exception.

#### **2. Value for money**

As the design process determines the potential asset value of buildings and infrastructure in social, cultural and economic terms, the Government will adopt and promote architectural competitions and selection arrangements which ensure that sufficient and appropriate resources are applied to the design of projects in the public and private sectors.

#### **3. For future generations**

Governments will foster and develop primary and secondary school programs on built environment education to enable children to understand the design process that determines the quality of their environment. This program is not intended to produce designers but, rather, culturally aware consumers, capable of demanding higher standards from Government agencies, developers, and designers.

#### **4. Better use of our intellectual resources**

Governments will review the statutory arrangements controlling the practice of architecture, engineering, landscape architecture and planning to ensure that the community receives a proper return on the investment made in training the built environment design professionals.

In accordance with world's best practice, controls will be introduced to ensure that the knowledge and talent of those trained to design our buildings and infrastructure are properly utilised by both the private and public sectors.

#### **5. Export**

As Australia is a major centre in its region for architectural, engineering and design education and a significant exporter of architectural and engineering services, governments will promote and assist:

- ▶ universities and colleges of advanced education in attracting overseas students
- ▶ Australian architects, engineers and landscape architects in delivering their services into overseas markets.

#### **6. Research and Development**

Australia faces enormous challenges with regard to human settlement and the future of cities, quality of the built environment, ecological responses to human existence and the need for clever responses to these issues.

Acknowledging that research and development is essential to formulate new solutions for the present and future of our built environment, governments will encourage partnership research arrangements between themselves, the profession and the higher education sector.

Governments will retain in all levels of the public service appropriate expertise to advise and inform Government policy and decision making relating to the Government's role as custodian of the quality of the Australian built environment.

Governments will draw upon the resources and advice of the architectural engineering, landscape architecture and planning professions to develop specific action plans and programs to achieve these strategic objectives. Funding will be provided through departmental budgets and by seeking private sector support on a project by project basis.

It is the intention of Australian Governments that these initiatives will set in place lasting arrangements and programs, which will ensure a better built environment for all Australians and the recognition of Australian knowledge, skill and ability in the global market.