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26 February 2018

Greener Places  
Government Architect New South Wales  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Draft Greener Places Policy - Submission by the Healthy Planning Expert Working Group**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Greener Places Policy.

As Chair of the Healthy Planning Expert Working Group (HPEWG), I advise that the HPEWG strongly supports the draft Greener Places Policy as the urban Green Infrastructure Policy for NSW. The HPEWG is an independent group comprising healthy planning experts from across NSW in the academic, planning, health, local and state government sectors. The HPEWG's vision is that built environments should be planned, designed, developed and managed to promote and protect health for all people. Further background information on the HPEWG is included in Attachment A.

As a Group, it is one of our core activities to be involved in promoting the provision and benefits of green infrastructure to improve the health and wellbeing of communities across NSW.

The Group are pleased to note the following sections of the draft Greener Places Policy:

- the section on "Health" on page 16 under the heading of 1.2.1 NSW priorities;
- the environmental, economic and social benefits listed on pages 18-19;
- objective 3 on page 20:
  - 3. To encourage healthy living, encouraging physical activity, social cohesion, and enhancing wellbeing by providing liveable places for the NSW community;*
- the sections on pages 44-50 relating to "Implementation"; and
- the sections relating to the "Green Grid".

**Implementation**

**Statutory Measures**

The HPEWG strongly supports the implementation of the policy through statutory measures and endorses the sections in the draft policy on pages 44-46 relating to this strong approach to implementation. The Group is concerned that if the final Greener Places Policy is not given statutory weight, the policy may not be given appropriate consideration in strategic planning and development processes. The Group recommends that the implementation of this policy be enforced through mandatory provisions in the legislation rather than implementation being discretionary.

It is recommended that consideration be given to including an explicit statement in the introduction of the Greener Places Policy linking the policy to the following new object in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act* relating to “good design”:

*(g) to promote good design and amenity of the built environment.*

This new Object, in section 1.3 of the amended Act is scheduled to commence on 1 March 2018. It is considered that inclusion of an explicit statement in the policy as recommended provides the opportunity to define “good design” and give the Greener Places Policy greater weight.

### **Funding**

The sections relating to “funding” on pages 44 and 50 are supported by the HPEWG to assist delivery and provide incentives for the implementation of the policy.

### **Performance Criteria and Indicators**

We recommend inclusion of appropriate performance criteria and indicators within this policy to provide greater direction for local government and other stakeholders. It is considered that the inclusion of performance criteria and indicators (e.g. in relation to strengthening the open space network and improving tree canopy) would provide a more robust policy for NSW. Inclusion of a performance framework will make it easier to understand existing conditions; to track changes; to identify successes; and to recognise where closer attention or intervention is needed. It is further recommended that any supporting manuals/toolkits also include best practice strategies and processes to assist with implementation of the policy.

### **The Green Grid**

The “Green Grid” is mentioned throughout the draft policy, with a definition provided on page 55 being:

*Green Grid: “strategic planning document for the greater Sydney region, and a precursor to the Greener Places policy comprising a cohesive map of green assets across metropolitan Sydney”.*

We consider that this definition is important as it clearly defines the relationship between the Green Grid for metropolitan Sydney and the broader Greener Places Policy for NSW.

We look forward to maintaining our involvement in the process as the Government Architect NSW drafts the associated manuals/toolkits and finalises the Greener Places Policy.

Kind regards,



Norma Shankie-Williams  
Chair, Healthy Planning Expert Working Group

## **Attachment A**

### **Background on HPEWG**

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The HPEWG is an independent NSW expert group, comprising healthy planning experts from the academic, planning, health, local and state government sectors. The group originally formed in 2012 in response to the comprehensive review of the NSW planning system undertaken by the State government at that time, to advocate for the consideration of health outcomes in planning legislation and policy. The group successfully advocated for the inclusion of a health objective in the draft NSW Planning Bill (2013) and, following that, the inclusion of Action 3.3.1 in A Plan for Growing Sydney: “to develop guidelines for planning, designing and developing a healthy built environment” released in 2014. The group sees its role as one of advocacy and provision of expert advice and continues to engage with the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) and the Department of Planning and Environment around healthy planning matters in planning policy and legislation. The HPEWG’s vision is that built environments should be planned, designed, developed and managed to promote and protect health for all people.