Commitment to Best Urban Design Welcomed

Australia's peak planning body has welcomed the Federal Government's launch of an Urban Design Protocol for Australian cities and towns.

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) said the protocol called Creating Places for People comes after two years of cooperation and collaboration between governments, industry and the community.

PIA National President Dyan Currie said the initiative demonstrates the Australian Government's enhanced understanding of the need for improving the design of spaces that are used by people and the value in planning for future communities that takes into account the quality of the built environment, from the layout of a new suburb through to the placement of street lights.

"Better planning and design for our cities and towns is the key to a better future for all of us," Ms Currie said.

"Creating Places for People is about aiming for world class urban design which in turn brings sustainability, economic prosperity and liveability."

The Urban Design protocol was today launched by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese who said these protocols are an initiative by the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

"They provide broad principles for urban design that recognise a location's unique characteristics and the needs of the people who use it.

"This document is a guide to best practice urban design and is the result of consultation with planners, community groups, industry organisations and governments at all levels to improve the lives of all Australians," Mr Albanese said.

Ms Currie said PIA was proud to be able to contribute to Creating Places for People through participation on the editorial board and work it had done in establishing a national guide to designing places for healthy living.

"We worked with the National Heart Foundation and the Australian Local Government Association to put together 'Healthy Spaces & Places', which was made possible with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

"Creating Places for People makes the point that good urban design has an important influence on our physical and mental health and provides opportunities for healthy lifestyles and community interaction.

"The bottom line is that good urban design is firstly about people. As the famous Danish Architect and Urban Design consultant Jan Gehl is quoted - 'First life, then spaces, then buildings: the other way around never works'."

The Urban Design Protocol has been drawn from an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments, between each of the States and Territories, to undertake reforms in capital city strategic planning systems to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth.

The document states it is designed to complement other planning strategies and guidelines such as the Australian Government’s strategic policy document for the eighteen major cities of Australia. 'Our Cities, Our Future: a national urban policy for a productive sustainable and liveable future'.

Ms Currie said PIA not only strongly supports the Urban Design Protocol but urges people with an interest in the built environment to embrace it.

"It's not just for planners, designers, architects, industry consultants and politicians to implement, but also for individuals or community groups affected by decisions about the built environment.

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