

# 2025 WA STATE ELECTION PRIORITIES

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Australian Institute of Architects

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THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS ACKNOWLEDGES FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LANDS, WATERS, AND SKIES OF THE CONTINENT NOW CALLED AUSTRALIA.

WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THEIR ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS WHOSE WISDOM, ACTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE HAVE KEPT CULTURE ALIVE.

WE RECOGNISE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AS THE FIRST ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS. WE APPRECIATE THEIR CONTINUING WORK ON COUNTRY FROM PRE-INVASION TIMES TO CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS ARCHITECTS, AND RESPECT THEIR RIGHTS TO CONTINUE TO CARE FOR COUNTRY.

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The Australian Institute of Architects exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture.

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The WA Chapter of the Institute supports the state government's efforts to promote liveable communities, whether through enhancing public transport options; driving planning reform; and more broadly having a critical conversation with Western Australians about density, liveability, and the holistic benefits of quality design.

Our priorities in summary form are set out below.

1. Access to more affordable homes for Western Australians
2. Reduce the cost of living through more energy efficient homes
3. Address the housing crisis with connected communities
4. Build quality apartments through sector reform
5. Build skills for the future by expanding access to the Construction Training Fund
6. Support the State Government's Urban Greening Strategy
7. Support the State Government's sectoral emissions reduction strategy
8. Support the State Government as Model Client
9. Support Good Design and Design Review
10. Recognise the crucial role of the Western Australian Government Architect

# ACCESS TO MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIANS

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- **Procure demonstration homes, together with an awareness campaign, to showcase the economic and lifestyle benefits of cleverly designed smaller homes.**
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On average, new houses built in WA today are nearly 50 per cent bigger than they were 40 years ago, and we now have the greatest proportion of four-bedroom homes in the country at 36 per cent.

But with an average household size of 2.5 people, an increasing proportion of single person households (currently at 24 per cent) and a supply crisis, we need to turn this around.

Smaller homes are quicker to build, provide opportunities for greater density and, importantly, reduce the financial strain for their owners in terms of mortgage. Smaller homes also require less energy for heating and cooling, reducing the cost of living.



Peta's House | Emily Van Eyk | Photographer: Dion Robeson

# REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING THROUGH MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

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- **Move to 7-star energy efficiency and condensation provisions from 1 May 2025**
  - **establish a State Government delivery agency to work with the construction sector to increase capability and capacity for delivering more energy-efficient homes to facilitate the move beyond 7 stars**
  - **procure demonstration homes, together with an awareness campaign, to showcase the economic and lifestyle benefits of more energy efficient homes, 7 stars and beyond**
  - **adopt mandatory disclosure of energy efficiency ratings of properties for sale or rent to enable consumers to make an informed choice.**
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Energy efficient homes maintain a more comfortable internal temperature throughout the year, with less reliance on mechanical heating and cooling.

This means less energy used so homeowners and tenants save money on power bills – and the State’s overall energy demands are reduced.

Building more energy efficient homes doesn’t have to be costly or complicated.

This has been proven in Victoria where Sustainability Victoria, a delivery agency of the Victorian Government, has been working with businesses in the construction sector via the HIA and MBA to increase capability and capacity for delivering energy-efficient homes.



Farrier Lane House | MDC Architects | Photographer: Dion Robeson

# ADDRESS THE HOUSING CRISIS WITH CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

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- **Promote the opportunities afforded by the Medium Density Code**
  - **continue to support build to rent.**
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We need to change the way we plan for housing. We can't keep building out.

Urban sprawl comes at a cost for all Western Australians with the state government subsidising the cost of providing essential and community infrastructure.

We need to create capacity for more infill, providing alternate, denser forms of housing while maintaining urban canopy.

Architects have led the way in innovative apartment design across Perth for decades – and the state government's new Medium Density Code now provides even more options for well designed, sustainable infill.



Hope Street Housing | Officer Woods Architects and MDC Architects | Photographer: Robert Frith

# BUILD QUALITY APARTMENTS THROUGH SECTOR REFORM

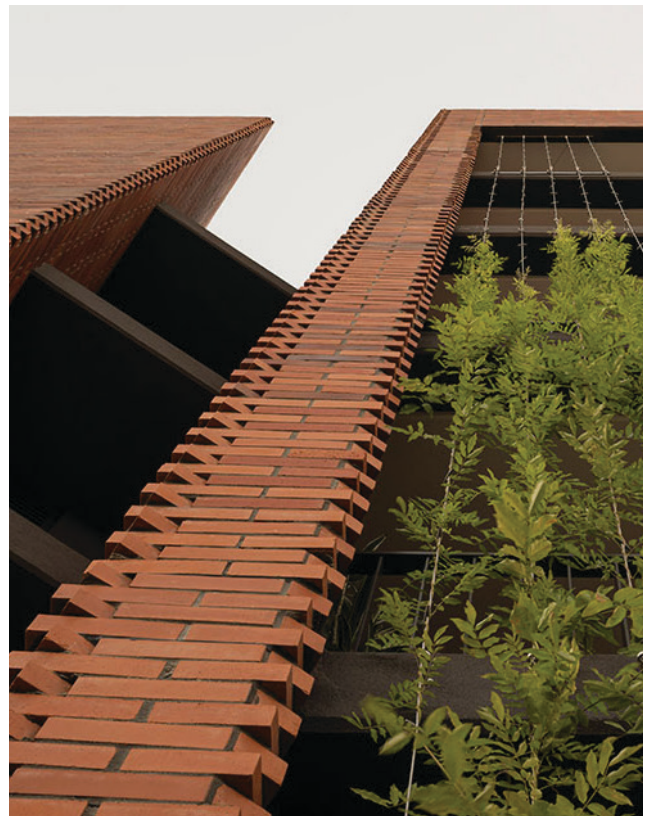
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- **Support State Government’s “Building Better reform package” to enhance building design documentation and procurement**
  - **mandate that architects are required to prepare plans and specifications for specific types of building work of a certain scale and complexity, including all apartments of three or more storeys.**
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A critical part of the proposed “Building Better reform package” is enhancing building design documentation and procurement. We believe this can be best achieved by mandating engagement of architects for buildings of a certain scale and complexity.

The architecture profession already has the systems in place to ensure appropriate education, training, and registration, overseen by the Western Australian Architects Board established and governed by state government legislation.

Mandating architects for certain buildings has been in place in NSW for decades. This recognises that due to their scale, permanence and complexity, the design and construction of apartment buildings is different to a single home.



Victoria House | MJA Studio and FINESPUN and PLACE Laboratory with Palassis |  
Photographer: Dion Robeson

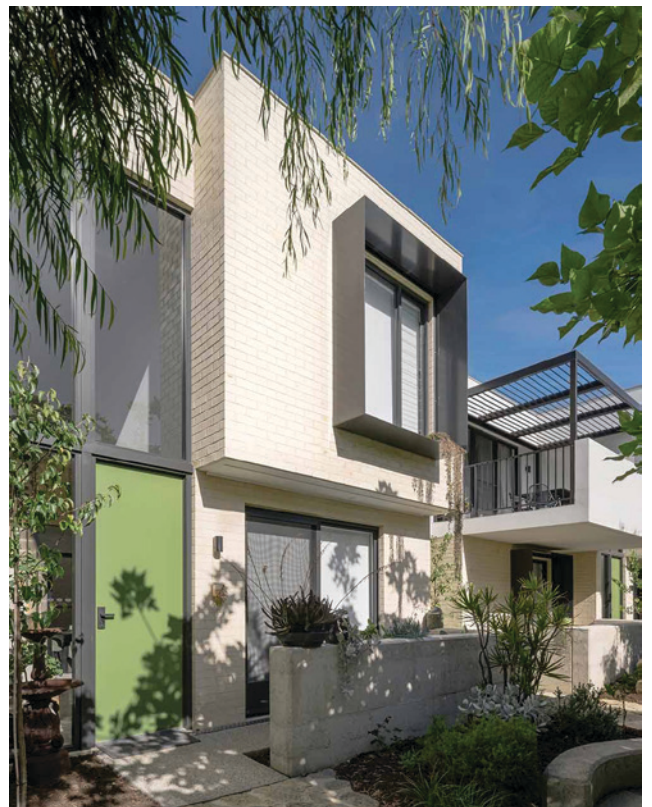
# BUILD SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE BY EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE CONSTRUCTION TRAINING FUND

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- **Amend the legislation to include a definition of the construction industry in the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990 to permit architects, design professionals, and other relevant off-site workers to be included in this definition – equipping our state for the future**
  - **include this initiative in the state government’s “Building Better reform package” to enhance building design and construction.**
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Architects are currently part of a group of key offsite workers excluded from the definition of “construction worker” under the Construction Industry Portable Paid Long Service Leave Act 1985 rather than being defined directly as “construction worker” in the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990.

At this time of significant challenge in the construction sector, a focus on skills and training for all participants is crucial, particularly as we move in new directions including AI and prefabrication.



Salt Lane at Shoreline | Gresley Abas with Development WA | Photographer: David Deves



# SUPPORT THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S URBAN GREENING STRATEGY

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- **Implement the proposed Urban Greening Strategy**
  - **help build community understanding of the benefits – social, environmental and economic – of WA's urban canopy**
  - **support Local Governments in establishing tree planting/urban forest strategies**
  - **continue to support urban canopy through the Residential Design Codes**
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The State Government's proposed, whole-of-government Urban Greening Strategy recognises the importance of tree canopy and green spaces, providing a variety of significant social, economic and environmental benefits for people and the neighbourhoods in which they live.



Celilo Springs | Western Architecture Studio | Photographer: Peter Bennetts

# SUPPORT THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S SECTORAL EMISSIONS REDUCTION STRATEGY

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- **Support, through WAPC, collection of data from Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) at the Development Application stage at local governments**
  - **State Government as model client to showcase sustainability initiatives, including LCA assessment for all state government projects**
  - **establish a government procurement principle of adaptive re-use as the default option for re-developing state-owned assets with a 'show-cause' principle for full-demolition and new building**
  - **extend LCA assessment to infrastructure projects including roads.**
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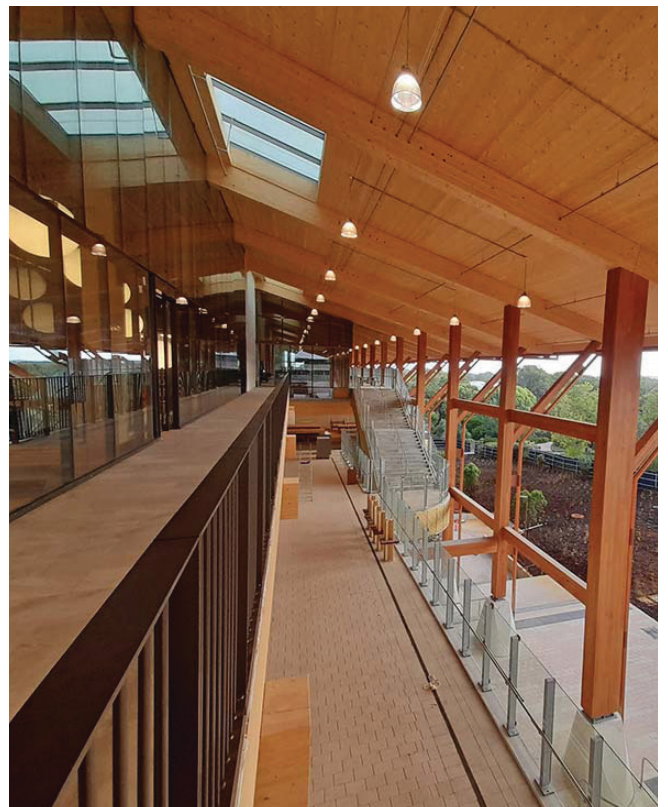
As the built environment accounts for 39 per cent of all carbon emissions globally, the sector is uniquely positioned to lead in targeting a zero-carbon economy.

The pace of change required cannot be left to individual initiatives to decarbonise. Action by all levels of government is required. This has been commendably recognised in this state in the Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy.

In considering the pathway for managing carbon in the construction industry downwards, measuring the current performance of buildings through Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is crucial. There is already one local government in WA already requiring LCAs to be submitted with Development Applications.

But it's not just new builds. The built environment needs to play a central role in the push to net zero through the adoption of more sustainable alternatives to traditional demolition and redevelopment.

Adaptive reuse is one way to reduce carbon emissions, significantly reduce embodied carbon compared to a ground-up scenario.



Boola Katitjin | Lyons with Silver Thomas Hanley, Officer Woods, The Fulcrum Agency and Aspect Studios | Photographer: Lyons

# SUPPORT THE STATE GOVERNMENT AS MODEL CLIENT

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- **As one of the largest principals in WA, State Government to take a leadership role in supporting a more sustainable building industry by setting the standard in assessing design tenders across multiple criteria, providing true value for money in the long term.**
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The ongoing cost implications for the project in its entirety must be considered – given that the quality of construction drawings and contract administration impacts the overall project cost.

High quality documentation and contract administration, and sufficient budget for this, protects all parties, resulting in fewer variations. Incomplete and substandard documentation ultimately leads to more variations and an increase in the overall project cost.



Bob Hawke College Stage 2 | Hassell | Photographer: Peter Bennetts

# SUPPORT GOOD DESIGN AND DESIGN REVIEW

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- **Continue to recognise the importance of performance-based design principles, allowing flexibility for designers and developers to provide innovative solutions to design challenges, addressing the complexities of individual sites and context**
  - **continue to support Design Review as an essential component of development approvals.**
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Good design is not a subjective idea; it can be defined and measured.

Design quality is not judged solely on aesthetics; it encompasses functionality, sustainability, response to context, structural integrity, flexibility in use, and cost efficiency, both during construction and over the life of the building.



Bob Hawke College Stage 2 | Hassell | Photographer: Peter Bennetts

# RECOGNISE THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

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- **Continue to recognise the whole-of-government leadership role of the Government Architect in Western Australia**
  - **support the Government Architect in providing strategic, independent and expert design advice to government and industry about architecture, landscape architecture and urban design**
  - **promote awareness of how good design contributes to successful urban environments for public benefit.**
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The Western Australian Government Architect plays a crucial role in shaping an integrated approach to planning, architecture, and urban design to enhance and improve our built environment.

The creation of design value increases amenity, supports economic development, and enhances liveability for all residents of our state.



Emma Williamson

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