

URBAN DESIGN

Key lessons learnt	Urban design is the holistic effects and benefits of a project on the landscape and how it is used. To achieve good urban design outcomes a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach is paramount. Failure to consider urban design in the scoping and costing of projects can lead to sub optimal place, significant scope changes, cost impacts, reputational damage and down the line, social degradation.
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Current as of	February 2019

Introduction

The role of urban design in contributing to successful cities and towns is important, valued and recognised. Government policies (e.g. Beyond the Pavement) are main reference work on this matter for roads in New South Wales.

The 'Beyond the Pavement' policy has guided New South Wales roads projects since 1999. It has been beneficial and the main driver of road infrastructure design quality.

The examples of work produced under the 'Beyond the Pavement' policy have demonstrated that the best outcomes occur when urban design is adopted at the earliest stages of choosing alignments, options and forms for road and bridge projects.

Excluding urban design in the initial planning stages limits outcomes by restricting work to landscape mitigation rather than adding urban environment.

Both are important, but the former has the most significant cost and value benefits to the community and state.

Key considerations

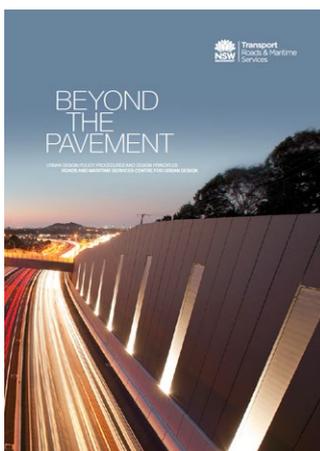
Urban design is both a process and outcome which applies in both urban and rural contexts.

Urban design as set down in 'Beyond the Pavement' seeks to achieve project outcomes that fit sensitively into their context, provide good connections and accessibility, while creating high quality, refined design outcomes.

It emphasises the need to achieve this in a sustainable (endemic species, durable materials, low energy, renewable resources, minimal ongoing maintenance), cost effective (whole life costs) and safe (security, customer safety, worker safety, healthy communities) manner.

Urban design is only achieved by multidisciplinary teams working together in meaningful collaboration from conception to implementation.

Urban design isn't intended to add costs and inputs – Key outcomes are durability, simplicity and elegance. The cost for urban designer input is needed to avoid cheap short term outcomes which soon degrade projects and community characteristic.





Two project outcomes that helped drive the development of ‘Beyond the Pavement’ and urban design in RMS in the late 1990s. The original M2 on the left, is where urban design process and outcomes were not delivered with consequent community severance, ongoing shotcrete maintenance and reputational issues. The Eastern Distributor on the right, is where an urban design process was followed influencing the alignment, connectivity, form and finishes. An integrated landscape, revitalisation of neighbourhoods and ongoing reputational benefits resulted.

Source material

It is important for all industry stakeholders to possess and implement a consistent understanding of the purpose and role of each of these documents:

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/planning-principles/centre-for-urban-design/index.html>

Policy

- ▶ ‘Beyond the Pavement Urban Design Policy Process and Design Principles’ sets down the method, values, broad objectives and design principles for projects, extensively illustrated by completed work. This is a government produced document providing content to be used as a road map for the development of business cases and supporting analysis.

Guidelines

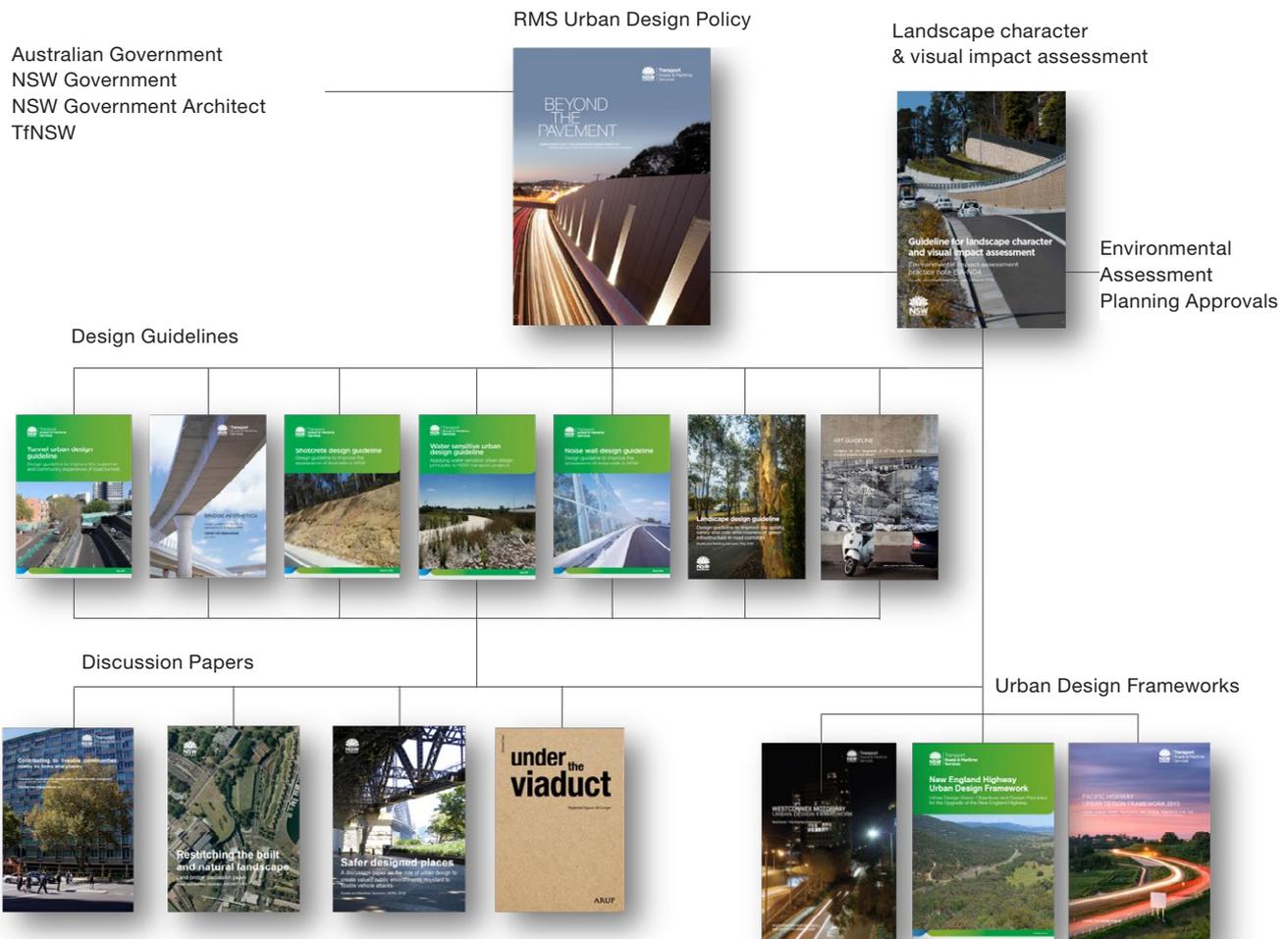
- ▶ Guidelines describes the urban design policy the government wishes for its projects. Examples include:
 - Bridge Aesthetics
 - Noise Wall Design Guidelines
 - Landscape Guideline
 - Tunnel Urban Design Guideline
 - Water Sensitive Design Guideline

Templates

- ▶ Templates provide direction to stakeholders as to the structure, format and content required to complete a business case. Examples include:
 - Corridor Planning Studies
 - Visual Impact assessment

Other material

These provide business case stakeholders with a range of supplementary/additional information developed for supporting the processes of delivery and the gateway review process. There are discussion papers on Land-bridges, urban design approaches to avoid the incidence of hostile vehicle attacks, use of viaduct undercroft space, urban design frameworks for corridors and programs (e.g. WestConnex).



► About the author:

Gareth is the head of urban design in RMS and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. He has worked on a range of projects in government including the Sydney Motorways, Pacific Highway upgrade, town bypasses, the bus Transitways, the Light rail projects as well as range of smaller projects easing congestion, providing noise walls and pedestrian bridges. Gareth was the co-author of Beyond the Pavement, Bridge Aesthetics and the Landscape Guideline and is a recipient of the Australian Award for Urban Design for Beyond the Pavement.