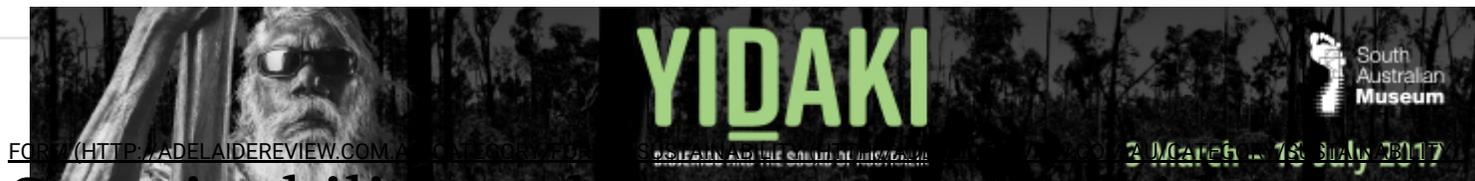


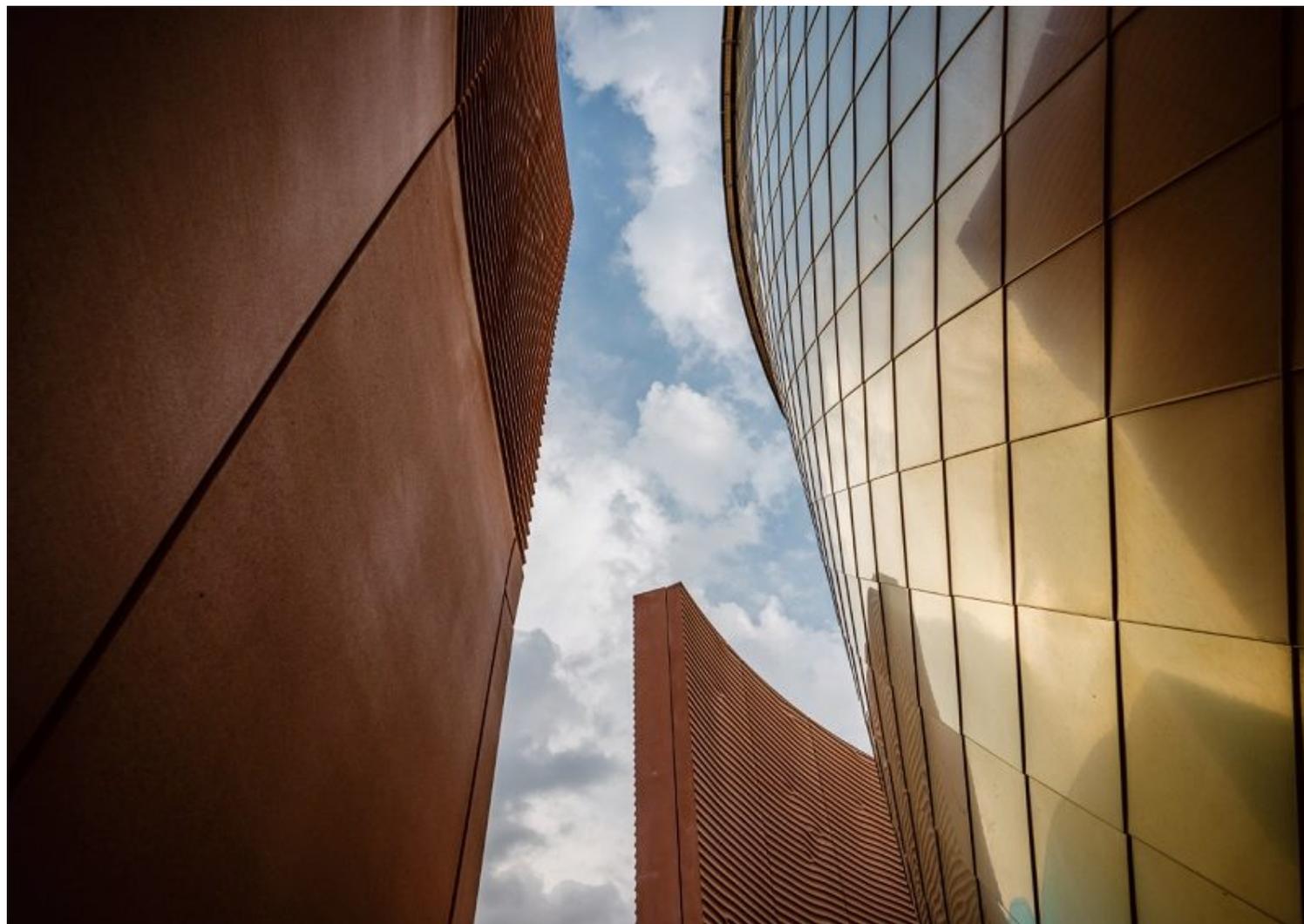
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# Sustainability and Strategy in Adelaide's Green Infrastructure

APRIL 7, 2017 by [NATHAN JAMES CRANE \(HTTP://ADELAIDEREVIEWS.COM/AU/WRITERS/NATHAN-JAMES-CRANE/\)](http://adelaiderreview.com.au/writers/nathan-james-crane/)



**As our state moves into a new phase of sustainable thinking, we are in need of a solution that draws together a cohesive set of ideas to develop and maintain healthy living in our communities. The answer to this may be green infrastructure.**

The concept is an ideological proposal that would involve State Government, developers and the community to create a city that is greener, more comfortable, healthier and more liveable. James Hayter, director of Oxigen Studios and a key member of a team responsible for preparing proposals for several city councils, describes green infrastructure as a “way of looking at the city and articulating the benefits of sustainability from a number of perspectives”.

“It has widespread benefits that go beyond parks and green spaces, and is not just the domain of any one discipline,” Hayter says.

Focussing on the liveability of the city, the idea of green infrastructure encompasses a number of areas such as public and private spaces, including residential backyards. There are also a number of exciting implications for issues as widespread as population displacement, food security and dealing with extreme climate change; issues that are relevant to both domestic and international cities.

Essentially, green infrastructure looks at the development and planning of a city’s green spaces on a large scale. It explores ways of connecting regions through ‘green corridors’ – public and private parks, playgrounds and gardens which link together in an interrelated way, as opposed to a more typical insular approach to city planning.

The notion behind the ‘systems-based approach’ is driven by collaborative efforts from all disciplines including architecture, planning, urban design and governance and policy. These all contribute valuably to the formation and implementation of any future legislation relating to engaging this strategic thinking.

This idea, however, is not necessarily brand new, as Dr Louise Bird, an urban environment historian, suggests: “These ideas emerge out of the post-war city planning of the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s. I believe that Golden Grove, a joint project by the SA Government and Delfin Lend Lease, was the first example of green infrastructure in a suburban setting in Adelaide. It was born from ideas presented by the Monarto Development Commission and the SA Housing Trust, in parts of Noarlunga and Elizabeth.

“From my perspective, it is exciting to see a lot of these ideas are emerging to create better urban environments.”



Hayter points out the potential for green infrastructure to be a means by which to test planning decisions and urban spread in more regional areas of the state, stressing what he says is the “viability and compelling nature of the philosophy” underpinning the movement.

In a broad sense, the aim of the strategy is to create more cohesive, connected and well-articulated conversations about sustainable living; to provide a way to organise government and council project teams to respond to things like storm-water retention and play-space programs that are already in operation. It provides a tactile sense of what this systematic approach can offer to potential future planning and legislation, leading to a more refined and responsive presence within the governance of sustainability issues for our state.

The implementation of the ideas still faces some challenges though. “I worry that while there’s a reasonable dialogue around the opportunities that green infrastructure provides for the community, there is still limited action,” says Stephen Forbes, a botanist and former director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. “In Adelaide there is no real shared vision for what we’re trying to achieve, governance arrangements are focussed on statutory hierarchies rather than resolving conflict and on-going challenges for community and industry capacity, such as plant selection and supply.”

That said, Forbes is positive about the availability of great design practices in South Australia.

“There are some great landscape architectural practices and garden designers in Adelaide and accordingly some great projects but I’m not seeing this translate into substantial change. Investment in a few major iconic greenspace projects would help build leadership and capacity and prepare Adelaide for the future.”

An exciting implication of this is that there is the potential for all stakeholders (councils, government, designers, planners and the general public) to be invested in the formation of this movement leading to a greater level of pride, concern and ultimately accountability for the greening of our city.

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