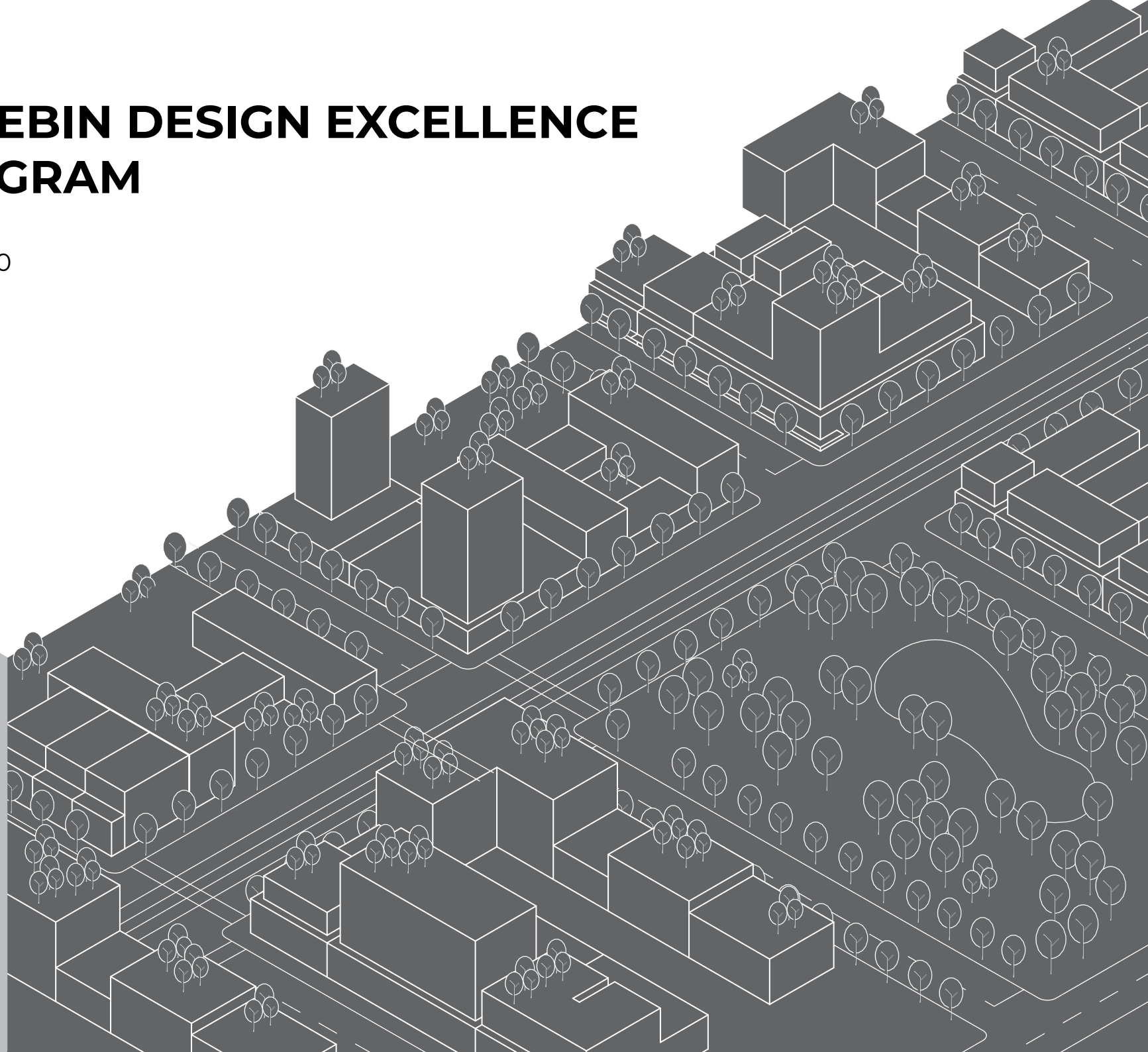




the place
to live

DAREBIN DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

AUG 2020



CONTENTS

1. Purpose

2. What is good design?

3. Why good design matters

4. Achieving design excellence at Darebin

5. Design Excellence Initiatives

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Darebin Design Excellence Program is to improve the quality of development within Darebin so that we create sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods that will stand the test of time and help address Climate Emergency.

As part of the Design Excellence Program, Council has developed a range of initiatives that can meet the social, economic and environmental needs of our growing population.

This document provides detail about the initiatives in this program and how they will be implemented.



2. WHAT IS GOOD DESIGN?

“Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.”¹ Everything we make is designed by somebody, but not everything is well designed.

Design is not about taste and fashion but it is about how we want things to be. Taste varies and fashion changes, but the fundamentals of good design remain the same.

Good design is as much about the process as it is about the outcome developed by the input of key stakeholders within a certain context.

3. WHY GOOD DESIGN MATTERS

New development has the potential to transform the quality of life for people, stimulate the economy and enhance the environment. The design of the built environment shapes the places where we live, work and meet. The quality of design affects how spaces and places function, how they integrate, what they contribute to the broader environment, and the users, inhabitants and audiences they support or attract. Buildings affect the lives of the people who live in them as well as people who move around them.

Good design has a range of varied benefits, including:

- It makes spaces that are long lasting and enjoyable, helping improve liveability and quality of life.
- It can enhance economic performance by attracting new people and businesses to the area.
- It promotes healthy living and productive economies.
- Has the potential to reduce communities fear of change and growth.
- It can reduce economic cost such as maintenance and energy consumption.
- It can help build resilience by creating adaptable spaces.
- It can improve the natural environment by improving green space and biodiversity.
- It can promote community interaction to foster a sense of community.
- It can enhance land value and returns.



4. ACHIEVING DESIGN EXCELLENCE AT DAREBIN

Design Excellence is a concept that represents the aspiration of achieving high quality design for our built environment.

Every Council or organisation has a different benchmark for what design excellence means, hence it is very important to establish what Design Excellence looks like at Darebin.

At Darebin, Design Excellence is about creating developments and neighbourhoods that are sustainable, liveable and resilient.



A range of principles have been developed to meet the design excellence initiative. Achieving these principles will mean that our city, public realm, and buildings will be sustainable, liveable and resilient.

Designed to fit in the context

Good design for built environment is informed by its physical and social context. It is appropriate for the place and contributes to existing and desired future character.

Designed for performance

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of this generation. Any development should be designed with highest performance standard to ensure it can meet current and future requirements of a changing climate.

Designed to create a community

Good design should address the growing socio-economic inequity to create places, and incorporate diverse uses and housing types to create a sense of community and belonging.

Designed to meet the function

Places and developments should be designed to meet the need of their occupiers and be fit for purpose. They should be designed to be efficient, usable with a potential to adapt for future needs.

Designed to be beautiful

Places and developments should be welcoming and aesthetically pleasing to create a sense of pride and ownership for users. They should contribute positively to the surroundings and promote positive engagement.

Designed to be robust

Good design should be robust, durable and use high quality materials to increase lifespan and reduce ongoing maintenance cost for users. This will generate ongoing value for people and reduce cost over time.

Designed to be resilient

The built environment should be designed to be resilient in terms of changing economic, social and climate situation.



5. DESIGN EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES

Design Excellence is a concept that represents the aspiration of achieving high quality design for our built environment. Every Council or organisation has a different benchmark for what design excellence means. At Darebin, Design Excellence is about creating developments and neighbourhoods that are sustainable, liveable and resilient.

Council has developed a range of initiatives categorised under following themes:



LEADERSHIP

Council recognises that it is important to show leadership in terms of good design if it were to expect these outcomes of private developments. Council has kick started the process by setting up the City Designer role to develop and oversee the Design Excellence Program and work closely with applicants on planning applications.

Walk the Talk

Leadership is required at the highest level to ensure high quality design outcomes for our built environment.

Council will demonstrate design excellence through delivery of high quality projects for its own infrastructure projects.

It will advocate for high quality design outcomes through delivery of demonstration projects and using design led processes for development of strategies and precinct plans.

Design Competition

Architectural design competitions are common world wide for large and prominent projects. Although they are not regularly used by local governments.

Design competitions can be a great way to promote innovative ideas and create a conversation around design excellence.

Council will explore competitive design for its major projects.

Design Review

Design review is a process of critical review by multi-disciplinary panel of experts to raise design quality.

Council will set up internal design review panel chaired by the City Designer to create alignment on design excellence and will look at -

- Council major projects
- Streetscape and open space projects
- Planning applications for key sites.



GUIDANCE

As responsible authority it important for Council to articulate and clarify expectations in terms of good design. Council will develop design guidelines as part of Darebin Good Design Guide that will become the basis for design excellence and clarify expectations. Darebin Good Design Guide includes a range of guidelines with focus on specific development or theme.

Apartment Development

Design guidelines focused on apartment and mixed use developments.

Medium Density Development

Design guidelines focused on medium density development including townhouse type developments.

Landscape Design

Detailed guidelines for integrating landscaping within private developments to promote greening of the city.

Streetscape Design

Detailed guidelines focused on streetscape improvements within the city including material palette, street furniture, etc.

Environmentally Sustainable Development

Detailed guidelines on environmentally sustainable development specific to Darebin and address the climate emergency.





CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity and skills of staff can have a huge impact on delivering good design outcomes within the organisation. High quality design requires a shared understanding on design excellence. This can be done through regular training and workshops that will provide skills and tools for internal staff to assess and deliver good design outcomes.

Design Workshops

Regular training can contribute significantly to professional development and create a shared understanding about design excellence.

The City Designer will facilitate regular training and workshops for internal staff and key decision makers on good design principles to develop skills and create awareness about good design.

Professional Coaching

Ensuring alignment between various departments in key to deliver quality design outcomes within a large organisation.

The City Designer will work closely with other areas on key projects to create a shared understanding about good design and build capacity within the organisation.

Site Visits

Reflecting on the outcomes of ones decisions is critical to ensure learning and improving outcomes.

Regular site visits of finished developments will be organised for staff and Councillors to see actual built outcomes for major Council projects and key planning applications. This will provide an opportunity to witness the end outcomes and hear from the designers about what worked well and what needs to be improved.



RECOGNITION

Recognising good design is a key step to creating awareness about design excellence and promoting high quality design outcomes. This can help shift focus on quality design and encourage private developments to achieve higher standards.

Good Design Awards

Design awards are a key tool for promoting the achievement of design excellence. They help create awareness around good design and build design literacy within the organisation and broader community.

Over next year, Council will explore the possibility of setting up Darebin Architecture and Design Awards.

Good Design Case Studies

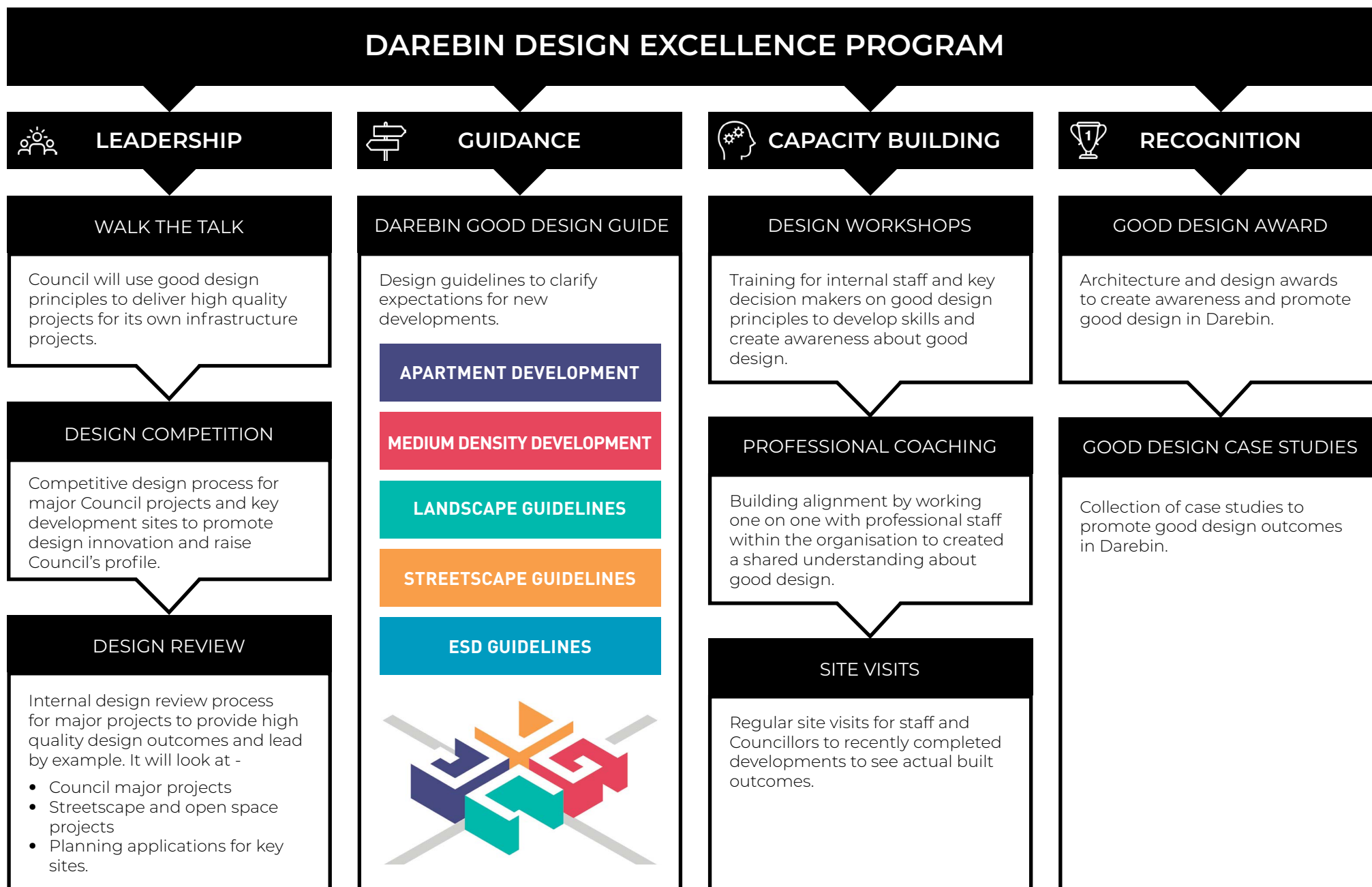
Best practice case studies is another way of recognising developments that deliver high quality design and influence future projects.

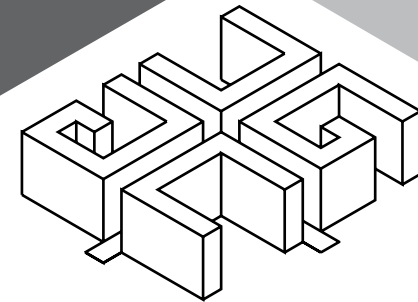
Over next year, Council will compile best practice case studies that exemplify good design within Darebin and make it available on Council website.



Heller Street, designed by SIX Degrees Architects, photo by Patrick Rodriguez

Below is a one page summary identifying the key initiatives as part of the Design Excellence Program:





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