

**LOCATING
AGENCY**

Over 200 years ago Sydney was established as a penal settlement, and much of its development since then has been the result of a mixture of opportunism and speculation. The incredible landscape and environment seemed, until recently, immune to any impact, regardless of the extent and type of city development. But the world-wide challenges experienced as a result of rapid urban growth of the recent past demand a more considered response to resourcing sharing, sustainability and resilience.

— SEOUL BIENNALE, CITIES EXHIBITION:
SYDNEY, CURATORIAL STATEMENT,
GERARD REINMUTH.

Today, Sydney's estimated population is over 5 million — the most populous city in Australia. And one of the most dense with 8,800 people per square kilometre, compared to the rest of Australia where there are approximately 2.9 people per square kilometre.

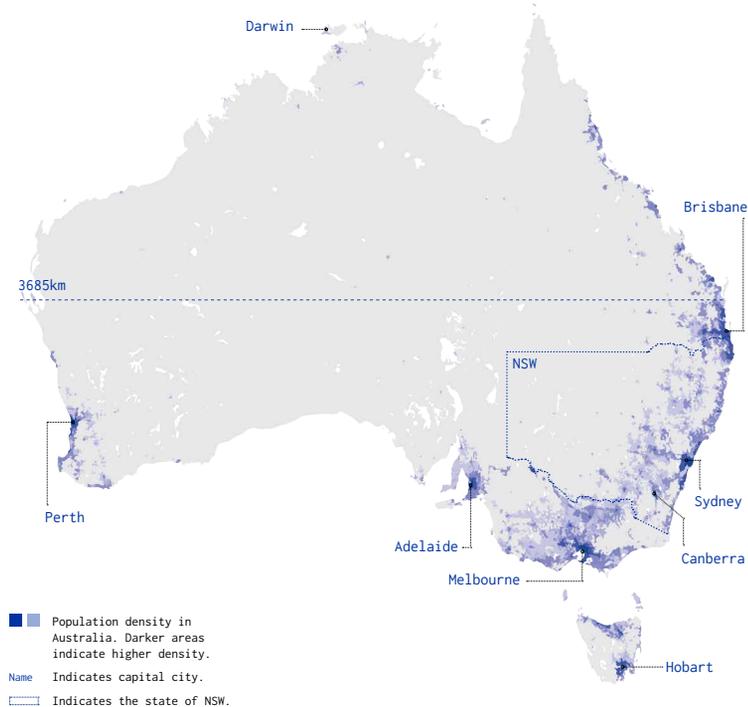
In the New South Wales State Government Department of Planning, Government Architect NSW (GANSW) deals with issues of urbanisation across the whole of the state, but most particularly Sydney. While some local government areas of Sydney also have City Architects, GANSW is uniquely able to consider the whole of Greater Sydney.

In its 2008 Government Architect's Policy the Australian Institute of Architects declares that architecture helps define a society and Governments play a vital role in shaping our built environment. The Institute believes that Government Architects within each State and Territory and Federal Government will enrich the lives of all Australians placing Australia in an international design leadership position.

While there is no Government Architect appointed at a federal level, since 2011, Government Architects have been appointed in each state and territory across Australia. Key functions of Government Architects differ from state to state, however the common objective is to improve the procurement and design of public buildings and spaces, to enhance the quality of the built environment and to help build a legacy for the future.

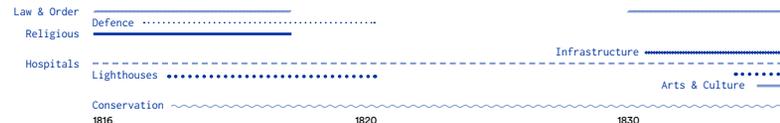
Australia

The world's sixth largest country on the smallest continent with a national population of 24 million.



Timeline of NSW Government Architect Projects 1886–2016

Reproduced with kind permission from Architecture Bulletin, Autumn Winter 2016, p20–21.



In 1816, the Governor of New South Wales appointed architect, stonemason and convicted forger, Francis Greenway, as civil architect and assistant engineer to the colony of New South Wales. The appointment was an investment in shaping the city through design and established the role of Colonial Architect which has endured for 200 years. Although the title has changed since then, the role remained unchanged: providing the government with design, management and direction for architecture, infrastructure and planning.

As one of the oldest architectural practices in the world, the NSW Government Architect has provided architectural services for most public buildings in NSW — hospitals, schools, churches, defence buildings, court houses, government offices as well as arts, cultural and memorial buildings.

Between 1862 and 1911 was a period of confidence and economic boom for Australia — many sandstone buildings were erected and Sydney matured into a city. The period between 1935 and 1974 saw the introduction of radical ideas of modernism and experimentation.

In the late 1950's, the office began to explore innovative approaches to educational, hospitals and religious buildings. The Government Architect's Office, as it was then known, was renowned as a training ground for talented young Architecture students to begin their careers.

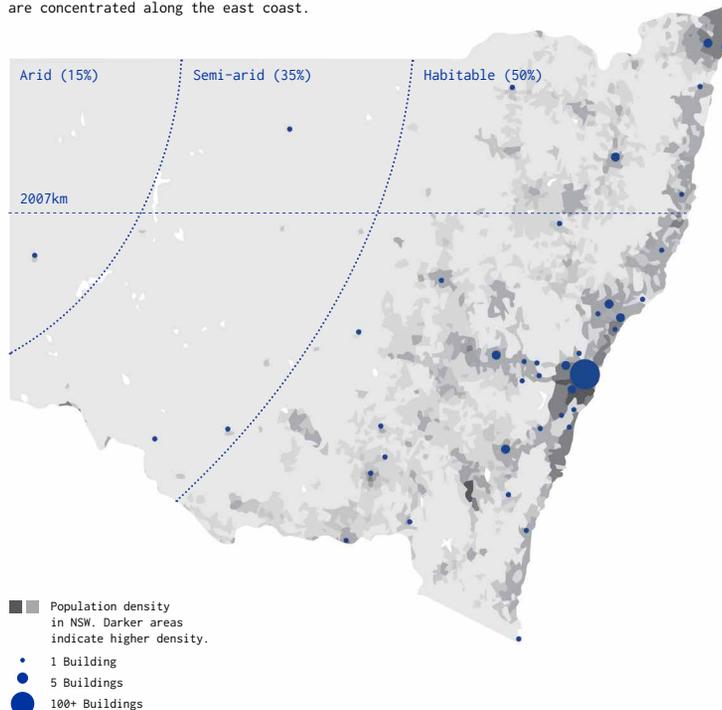
A changing economic landscape and a competitive and highly skilled Australian architectural industry from the late 20th century both helped to create a context that allowed the Government Architect to be repositioned to a strategic leadership role.

“THE GANSW HOLDS A UNIQUE POSITION IN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE EXPERTS IN DESIGN THINKING AND PROCESSES, BUT ARE ALSO TASKED WITH MAKING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, INDUSTRY EXPERTISE AND CAPABILITY, ACADEMIA AND OUR FUTURE CREATIVE THINKERS AND COMMUNITIES.”

— PETER POULET, 23RD NSW GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

New South Wales

With 50% of NSW being arid or semi-arid desert, the states' 7.8 million residents are concentrated along the east coast.



Designed by NSW Government Architect 1886-2016.

Education

Post Offices

1840

1850

1860

1870

1880

1890

1900

In response to the challenges associated with rapid urban growth, a design-led methodology is being developed in Sydney for place-based and spatial strategies that operate at the scale of the precinct. A key opportunity of the work is the embedding of these strategies and resultant logics into political processes and planning systems. The Spatial Framework process outlined here synthesises this spatial intelligence with substantial engagement processes across the political and bureaucratic realms to foster the equitable consideration of commons – which are understood to be the unique environments and places that characterise our city.

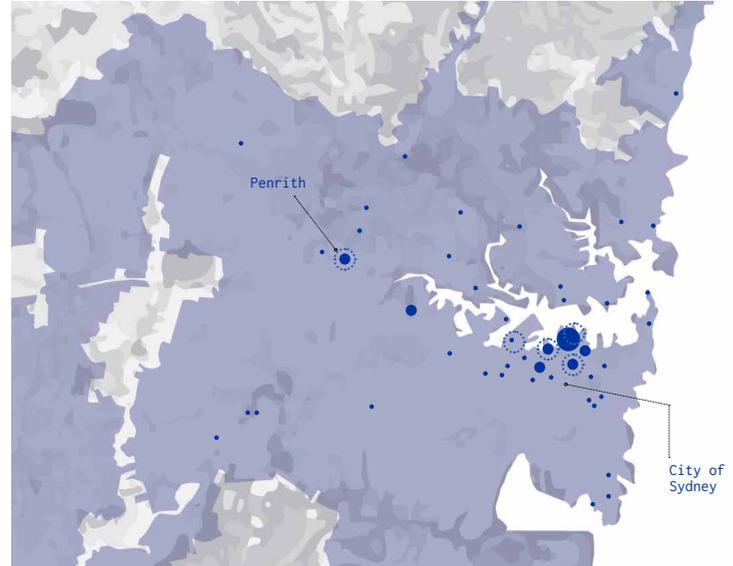
— SEOUL BIENNALE, CITIES EXHIBITION:
SYDNEY. CURATORIAL STATEMENT,
GERARD REINHUTH.

Rapid urban growth and its impacts on the way we live have been especially evident in Sydney since the 1970s with people increasingly encouraged to transition from the traditional single dwelling on a quarter-acre block to apartments and new suburban commercial centres. This has created an opportunity for strategic urban planning. Accordingly, policy and legislative changes over the past 10 years have recognised the critical importance of design in the earliest phases of city making — notably the statutory requirement for ‘design excellence’ in apartment buildings across NSW.

No longer restricted to the boundary of the project site, the expertise of the Government Architect is now deployed at a precinct scale through such mechanisms as Strategic Frameworks. GANSW has also developed policies for integrated design and the provision of green infrastructure in the built environment of NSW that respond to the unique environment of the State, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. Through these policies, design expertise now provides a framework for defining and supporting delivery of the great and resilient places expected by the people of NSW.

Sydney Basin

The capital of New South Wales with an increasing population of 5 million, projected to be 7.8 million by 2030.



- 1 Building
- 5 Buildings
- 100+ Buildings
- Greater Sydney Area.
- Strategic Framework locations.

Designed by NSW Government
Architect 1886–2016.

Developed by GANSW for the Minister of Planning, **Better Placed – an integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW** defines good design and its fundamental role in the creation of high quality built environments. It establishes the importance of understanding design as both process and outcome with an evaluation framework and objectives to support the delivery of great places to live, work, visit and invest in across NSW. An accompanying set of case studies are positioned as reference documents for all users of Better Placed (property and related industries, government agencies, the public).

Better Placed defines a well-designed built environment as being healthy, responsive, integrated, equitable and resilient and the objectives of good design are aimed at achieving these qualities.

Central to Better Placed are the seven objectives of good design:



Better fit
contextual, local
and of its place



Better working
functional, efficient
and fit for purpose



Better performance
sustainable, adaptable
and durable



Better value
creating and
adding value



Better for community
inclusive, connected
and diverse



Better look and feel
engaging, inviting
and attractive



Better for people
safe, comfortable
and liveable

Design plays a critical role in achieving the aspiration we have for our future, because good design is about deep understanding and a creative synthesis of ideas, issues and people. Design offers both a stand-alone and contributing process to planning our future by bringing together creative intelligence, lateral thinking and capturing the collective imagination. Importantly, design is an iterative and inclusive process with much to offer to decision making and planning in government.

GANSW deploys those iterative and inclusive processes to work across agencies and integrate multiple agendas. Consequently, collaboration, engagement and knowledge sharing are fundamentally important to good design outcomes, and these are processes central to the spatial and strategic frameworks explored in the Sydney exhibit for the 2017 Cities Exhibition, Seoul.

Our collaboration with architects at Terroir, designers at Rodeo and our colleagues in the Department of Planning and Environment and with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, NSW in the development of this exhibit showcases a design-led methodology for place-based spatial strategies that organize people, resources and space at the scale of the precinct, beyond the site of the singular building project.

“IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT AS THE NSW GOVERNMENT, THE COMMUNITY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WE ARE AMBITIOUS, THAT WE PUT GOOD DESIGN FRONT AND CENTRE, LEAVING A LEGACY THAT WE CAN LOOK BACK ON AND BE PROUD OF 200 YEARS FROM NOW. A LEGACY OF GREAT PLACES AND SPACES.”

— ANTHONY ROBERTS,
MINISTER FOR PLANNING 2017

The policy and case studies are available for download from the GANSW website governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au

GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECT
NEW SOUTH WALES

TERROIR

Rodeo



NSW Government Architect ceases 'building' and starts 'strategic' role.