

# Urban Green Infrastructure for resilient communities

## A SHARED CROSS-SECTOR POSITION

The National Urban Green Infrastructure Roundtable (NUGIRT) brings together organisations from across the Urban Green Infrastructure (UGI) sector around a shared mission: driving coordinated national action on UGI by aligning industry, influencing policy, and enabling investment in greener, more resilient cities.



## Collectively, we ask that UGI be preserved, enhanced and expanded.

**UGI is one of the most scalable and cost-effective solutions to transform our growing cities into resilient, nature-positive spaces where communities flourish, and natural-hazard impacts are reduced.**

UGI is the network of natural, designed or cultivated vegetated urban landscapes that range in scale from a single street tree to large parklands and include vegetated stormwater systems and other blue-green infrastructure types.

A significant proportion of UGI in our cities is located on private land. Therefore, NUGIRT strongly advocates including vegetated residential and commercial landscapes in the broader resilience debate.

UGI is critical for mitigating natural hazards like fire, flood, heat and drought. It nurtures biodiversity, enables recreation and social inclusion, and improves public health and wellbeing. Yet despite its immense value, UGI is often an afterthought, with no clear accountability for its delivery, maintenance or protection.

In rapidly growing cities, UGI is often compromised by competing priorities like housing development, transport

infrastructure and renewal projects. But UGI and development are not mutually exclusive. UGI complements and enhances development - if we make it a priority.

To create resilient urban landscapes that adapt to and recover from climate impacts, public and private UGI must be embedded as a core component of urban policy, planning, investment, design, delivery, asset management and maintenance regimes, and its long-term protection must be ensured.



## **Our overarching ask: A National UGI Strategy**

Federal and state policies call for resilient and sustainable urban development. UGI is an instrument that delivers it. A National UGI Strategy is needed to provide a coordinated national framework and direct public and private sector organisations towards its delivery.

The Strategy should be supported by five key policy levers:

### **1. National UGI standards**

Create data-driven performance standards that define best practice for planning, building and maintaining UGI, including minimum benchmarks for canopy/green cover, biodiversity, connectivity, vegetation health and quality. Incorporate these into Local, State and Federal planning schemes and policies, including the National Construction Code, where appropriate.

### **2. Establish UGI as an asset class**

Include UGI in Local, State and Federal Asset Management Frameworks and value it using nationally consistent methods. Complementing public-realm action, establish an open national UGI asset register capturing its value on private land.

### **3. Make UGI an essential provision in housing development**

Better protect existing UGI in new development and require new UGI to be delivered on both public and private land according to mandatory requirements. Deferral or offsetting of UGI should not substitute for its delivery.

### **4. Recognise UGI for hazard resilience**

Federal and State disaster adaptation and risk reduction strategies should recognise UGI as an effective tool to protect people and their homes from natural hazards including heat, flood, drought and fire.

### **5. Secure UGI funding**

Infrastructure budgets need to provide for protecting, maintaining, regenerating and expanding UGI. Clear accountability and recurrent funding for maintenance will ensure long-term performance and community benefits.

## **Enabling delivery**

Two further actions will help build the capacity and support needed to deliver UGI at scale:

### **6. More training opportunities and stronger supply chains**

There is a significant shortage of skilled UGI professionals, limiting growth of the sector. High-quality, consistent training opportunities across all states are needed, alongside better coordination across the full UGI supply chain.

### **7. Raise the profile of UGI**

Demonstrate to communities and decision-makers that UGI is viable, attractive and able to address an array of challenges. We must reach beyond professional circles to celebrate wins, share best practice and showcase public benefits.

## **UGI is essential infrastructure.**

Urban Green Infrastructure is a necessity, not a luxury. Public and private sector organisations must act now to ensure existing UGI is protected and managed sustainably, while high-performing UGI is expanded.

Through a National UGI Strategy and coordinated action across these key levers, we can redefine how Australia values, plans, funds and manages UGI - recognising it as essential infrastructure and creating liveable, resilient cities for generations to come.

