



The Value and Benefits of the OVGA: 2021 Refresh

Office of the Victorian Government Architect

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1. Executive Summary

This report appraises the wide-reaching impact of the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA) to ensure its activities are well-resourced in the future and to maximise the benefits of good design to benefit the broader Victorian community. It forms an update to research conducted in 2018 by SSGS Economics and Planning (SGS) for OVGA.

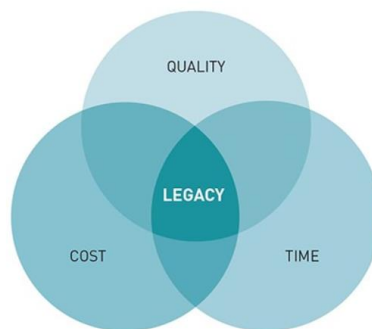
1.1 OVGA services

As an administrative office attached to the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the OVGA provides an independent voice within state government on a range of projects, from broader strategic discourse to project specific design thinking. The OVGA's primary purpose is to support government as a smart client, encouraging the delivery of high-quality buildings, infrastructure and public space, and embedding expectations of design quality in projects of state significance.

‘A important legacy for any government can be seen in the quality and design of the public projects they deliver’.

OVGA (2021), *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02*

FIGURE 1: QUALITY DESIGN – AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT, NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA



Source: OVGA (2021), *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02*

The OVGA plays an active role in contributing to better design outcomes by offering strategic advocacy and advice on projects of significance across Victoria. Its core activities fall within two key service areas:

- **Advocacy:** promoting the value and importance of good design and establishing processes to embed design thinking within government and across the private sector.

- **Advice:** providing advice primarily to state government, but also to a broader range of public and private sector stakeholders, to improve design outcomes for capital works programs, including design review by the Victorian Design Review Panel (VDRP).

The OVGA also works with departments and agencies to identify special projects that require dedicated alternative arrangements including:

- A dedicated service for the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority through a collaborative partnership with the project design teams at the Level Crossing Removal Project, Rail Projects Victoria, North East Link Project and Major Road Projects Victoria.
- Dedicated specialist resources for the Future Homes Project overseen by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The OVGA, through its advocacy, advisory and collaborative functions, has been involved in over 452 engagements across 187 unique projects, including 152 VDRP design reviews, over the past three years. Operating across Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, the total value of projects to which the OVGA has provided input exceeds \$25 billion.



The OVGA's client and stakeholder base is diverse and includes state government departments and entities, councils, industry bodies and universities, and the private sector through its work with responsible authorities in the planning approval process.

1.2 OVGA's contributions to good design

Good design is more than aesthetics; it considers the current and future context, establishes an overarching vision for a place, and creates a solution to achieve this vision.

As previously described by the OVGA:

"Good design comes in many forms and is defined by much more than how something looks. It starts from refining the purpose and aspiration of a project, improves how it works, creates additional benefits, and elevates how people feel and behave in the outcome. Good design creates inspiring places and greater lasting financial value. And of course, good design also looks and feels good."

OVGA (2019), *Good Design: Issue 01*

There is extensive academic and scientific research that explores the benefits of well-designed places, and the effect of poor design on our lives. This research demonstrates that good design has far-reaching benefits, such as supporting health and wellbeing, improving environmental quality, and improving productivity.¹

Examples of the many benefits generated from good design outcomes include:

- **Amenity, identity and pride:** Good design can ensure development is more contextually integrated, improve access to areas and amenities, and boost social well-being and civic pride.²
- **Crime prevention and safety:** Good urban design can enhance social inclusiveness and perceptions of safety in an area, reducing the need for highly visible security cameras and security personnel.³
- **Education:** Well-designed buildings and classrooms have been shown to improve learning and test score outcomes.⁴
- **Health:** Good design in hospitals has been shown to help patients recover more quickly and reduce stress in hospital staff, improve staff performance and retention and reduce operational costs.^{5 6}
- **Housing:** Elements of good design such as daylight penetration, natural ventilation, noise reduction and thermal comfort provide wide health and economic benefits to residents.^{7 8}
- **Economics and employment:** Good urban design can promote physical and social regeneration, as well as attract and retain employment in an area.⁹

While achieving good design may cost more in the short term, it has been demonstrated that good design does not cost more when measured across the lifetime of a building or place. Construction costs are typically two to three per cent of the whole-life costs, while operating costs are estimated to be in the order of 85 per cent. In comparison, design costs are small, between 0.3 to 0.5 per cent, yet they can significantly affect the function of a project across its lifespan, and the operating costs associated with this.¹⁰

Precisely valuing the net benefits generated by the OVGA is a challenging task given the difficulties in attributing built outcomes directly to the OVGA. Consequently, the OVGA's value has been assessed using two broad quantitative methods:

- Reductions in project risk margins
- Savings in project operating costs.

¹ Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2019), *The case for good design: A guide for governments*.

² CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning.

³ CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning.

⁴ The University of Salford (2015), *Clever Classrooms*

⁵ Lawson, B. (2002), *Healing Architecture*, Sheffield University School of Architecture research, pp. 72-75.

⁶ CABE (2002), *The Value of Good Design*

⁷ Brown, M. J. and Jacobs, D. E. (2011), *Residential Light and Risk for Depression and Falls: Results from the LARES Study of Eight European Cities*, Public Health Reports, 126, pp. 131-140.

⁸ Wargocki, P. et al. (2002), *Ventilation and health in non-industrial indoor environments: Report from a European multidisciplinary scientific consensus meeting (EUROVEN)*, Indoor Air, 12(2), pp. 113-128

⁹ CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design: Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning*

¹⁰ Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2019), *The case for good design: A guide for governments*

OVGA client surveys indicate that, over the past three years, the OVGA has ‘greatly’ or ‘moderately’ improved the design quality of projects with construction costs of approximately \$17.5 billion. The analysis suggests that for the OVGA’s benefits to outweigh its costs on projects:

- Risk margins would need to reduce by 0.08 per cent, or
- Operating costs would need to reduce by 0.008 per cent.

Given that project risk margins for construction projects can range between 10 per cent and 25 per cent plus, and operating costs often comprise more than 85 per cent of overall lifecycle costs in the built environment (e.g. office or hospital buildings), this strongly suggests that the OVGA’s services generate a net benefit for the Victorian community. This is supported by feedback from survey respondents, which found that the OVGA’s contributions assisted in enhancing the durability of projects (78 per cent agree) and prioritising whole-of-life considerations / future maintenance / operation costs (66 per cent agree).

Survey respondents strongly endorse the OVGA’s contributions to improved design outcomes for both **capital projects** (such as public realm improvements, and development of building or infrastructure assets) and **other projects** (such as policy development, research and advocacy projects).

For capital projects, most recent clients (70 per cent) believed that the OVGA’s services either ‘moderately’ or ‘greatly’ improved design quality. Clients agreed that the OVGA supported positive contributions across a range of design aspects including:

- Improving the integration of projects with the surrounding context (97 per cent agree)
- Prioritising the quality of experience of end users (94 per cent agree)
- Improving the aesthetic value generated by the project (89 per cent agree)

For other projects, 100 per cent of clients ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that OVGA services helped advocate and drive design quality at a strategic or systemic level, stemming from the Office’s:

- Demonstration of a deep understanding of the design quality issue (94 per cent)
- Promotion of creative and best practice approaches to achieving design quality (94 per cent)
- Demonstration of the benefits of a changed approach to achieving better design quality (88 per cent)

Moreover, all (100 per cent) OVGA clients reported that they were ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to use the OVGA services again.

Survey responses and stakeholder interviews found that clients believe firmly that the OVGA contributes to better design outcomes through the following means:

- Contributing to good design outcomes and improved progression of ‘capital’ projects
- Improved consideration of design for ‘other’ projects
- Supporting fair and transparent procurement processes
- Supporting good decision-making and planning approval
- Setting up projects for success (good design governance)

- Valuing diverse perspectives
- Providing an independent voice
- Offering design expertise and gravitas
- Building skills through knowledge-sharing.

1.3 Enabling OVGA's contributions to good design

According to stakeholders, several factors contribute to the success of the OVGA in generating good design benefits. These include:

- Early involvement in projects
- Providing practical examples of good design
- Maintaining internal expertise
- Professional, measured and clear advice
- Flexibility in responding to client and project needs
- Co-locating OVGA staff within client design teams
- Maintaining cross-disciplinary lens within the OVGA
- Attendance by senior members
- Commitment to collaboration and developing solid relationships.

1.4 Opportunities for enhancing OVGA's contributions

Key suggestions for future improvement include:

- Enhancing the public profile of the OVGA
- Providing guidance on 'engaging for design'
- Improving clarity, consistency, and timeliness of design advice for planning assessments
- Continuing to build relationships in government and industry, including expanding the number of government projects with embedded OVGA team members
- Clarifying the relationship between design review and planning assessment processes
- Increase team resourcing and capacity

1.5 Future directions and recommendations

Feedback received from stakeholders, as well as growing state government infrastructure expenditure, suggests that there is an ongoing and increasing need for OVGA services.

Financial contributions and support from state government departments and special projects over the last three financial years have enhanced the OVGA's reach, capacity and level of service - enabling it to achieve its core objectives and outcomes and address the growing need for OVGA services.

For the OVGA to continue providing valuable contributions to the built environment of Victoria and government's priority projects and objectives, ongoing additional funding or financial contributions will need to be secured. Ongoing additional funding will allow the OVGA to maintain, customise and expand its current level of operations to keep pace with demand and to explore and implement the service improvements identified above.

2. Introduction

This section introduces the aims and service offerings of the OVGA and the scope of this report.

2.1 Overview of the OVGA

The OVGA is a well-recognised leader in the Victorian built environment context, providing advocacy and advisory services that embed expectations of design quality in all stages of a project's lifecycle. The OVGA also has national reach and impact through the Government Architect Network of Australia – a formalised, national collaborative exchange that meets regularly to share valuable information and transfer knowledge and research.

The purpose of the OVGA is:

“... to ensure that the places we build today are inspiring, functional, sustainable and enjoyable for generations to come. High-quality design ensures a positive legacy, becoming the heritage of the future.”

OVGA (2018), *OVGA Strategy 2018-2021*

The OVGA aims to encourage high-quality buildings and public spaces that are:

- Engaging, diverse and inclusive
- Promote confidence, health and well-being in the community
- Culturally rich and delightful
- Environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, and
- Adaptable to a changing climate and championing the necessary path to zero emissions by 2050.¹¹

As an administrative office attached to the DPC, the OVGA provides an independent voice within state government on a range of projects, from broader strategic discourse to project-specific design thinking.

The OVGA's services fall under two broad and interlinked headings: advisory and advocacy.

OVGA clients and stakeholders span not only various government departments and agencies, across portfolios such as housing, health, justice, education, transport, precincts, government procurement, regions, and local government, but also the private sector through the planning approval process. The OVGA's key partners are listed in Table 1.

¹¹ OVGA (2018), *A Decade: Victorian State Government*

TABLE 1: KEY PARTNERS

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)	Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)	Office of Projects Victoria (OPV, Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)	Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), Department of Education and Training (DET)
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)	Development Victoria (DV)	Department of Transport (DoT)	Homes Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
Regional Development Victoria (RDV)	Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)	Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA)	Court Services Victoria (CSV), Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)
Parks Victoria	Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA), Department of Health (DH)	Creative Victoria	Suburban Rail Loop (SRL)

OVGA (2018), *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*

In 2018, in response to a demonstrated need for its services, the OVGA gained support and financial contributions from the Victorian Secretaries Board (VSB) totalling \$0.85 million per annum. This funding complements the OVGA's core ongoing output funding of \$1.2 million per annum that sits within DPC.

The OVGA's primary funding streams are listed in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2: OVGA PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
DPC (Ongoing output funding)	\$1.2 million	\$1.2 million	\$1.2 million
VSB (Fixed-funding 2018-21)	\$0.85 million	\$0.85 million	\$0.85 million
TOTAL	\$2.05 million	\$2.05 million	\$2.05 million

Source: OVGA (2021)

The financial contributions received from the VSB allowed the OVGA to expand its core services and develop an enhanced service model promoting closer collaboration with state government departments and other entities.

This modified approach to its service delivery required the OVGA to develop a new Strategic Plan and work program for the 2018 to 2021 period in consultation with departments and agencies. The OVGA's strategic priorities are set out in the *OVGA Strategic Plan 2018-2021*.

For the period 2018 to 2021 the strategic priorities of the OVGA were to promote:

1. Positive design outcomes in Victoria's infrastructure and priority projects, including design ambitions stemming from people and place
2. Awareness and 'design literacy' across state and local government to support good design ambition and processes
3. Priority of public transport and active transport infrastructure
4. Considered higher density housing solutions in underdeveloped middle suburbs
5. Principles of sustainability, resilience and low carbon pathways
6. Awareness of the protocols of working with first nation peoples
7. Improved engagement, design ambition and built outcomes in regional Victoria.

The OVGA worked with departments and agencies to identify priority projects or capital programs (and processes) that would significantly benefit from OVGA involvement, including the Federation Square Review, New Footscray Hospital Project and NGV Contemporary Design Competition.

The OVGA's enhanced service model also enabled the OVGA to respond to increasing demand and shifting priorities. For example, in 2020 the OVGA collaborated with the newly formed Homes Victoria to embed design quality principles and processes, including design review by the VDRP, in Victoria's Big Housing Build – an unprecedented \$5.3 billion investment in social housing announced in the November 2020 State Budget as part of a broader stimulus package responding to the economic impact of COVID-19 in Victoria.

The OVGA's enhanced service model also provides scope for the OVGA to work with departments and agencies to identify special projects that require dedicated alternative arrangements or financial contributions between departments or agencies and the OVGA.

In 2019 the OVGA entered a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DELWP for dedicated and specialist OVGA resources to support the delivery of the Future Homes Design Competition over the period 2019 to 2021. OVGA received a total of \$484,899 over the period May 2020 to June 2021 to support the deployment of these resources specifically for this project.

In 2019 the OVGA also renewed its MOU with the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (in place since 2016) supporting an additional dedicated resource to service Victoria's Big Build including the Level Crossing Removal Project, Rail Projects Victoria, Major Roads Projects Victoria and North East Link Project. The OVGA has received a total of \$2.15 million over the period July 2018 to June 2020 to support resources dedicated to Big Build projects and initiatives.

2.2 Purpose and scope of this report

This report appraises the wide-reaching impact of the OVGA for the period July 2018 to June 2021, to ensure its activities are well-resourced in future and to maximise the benefits of good design.

Following this introduction, the substantive chapters of this report are structured as follows:

- Section 3 overviews the OVGA's primary **areas of service**, including a summary of activities undertaken under its core advocacy and advisory functions.
- Section 4 provides a summary of relevant literature relating to the **benefits of good design** outcomes in the built environment.
- Section 5 documents the findings of consultation with recent OVGA clients and stakeholders demonstrating **how the OVGA contributes to enhanced design outcomes**, and potential areas to enhance its service offering.
- Section 6 summarises the **key findings** of the report and future directions.

3. OVGA Service Profile

The OVGA's activities span various services, sectors, clients and locations. This section provides a summary of this service profile.

3.1 Services

As the largest procurer of design services, buildings and infrastructure in Victoria, the state government has significant influence and impact on the design quality and long-term value of the built environment.

The 2021-22 State Government Budget includes new capital projects with a total estimated investment value of \$22.5 billion, averaging \$7.1 billion a year over the budget and forward estimates. This represents more than four times the 10-year average to 2014-15.¹²

Such significant expenditure emphasises the need to ensure that Victoria leads by example, setting a high design standard in its projects and ensuring high quality outcomes are delivered to continue Victoria's reputation as a distinctive and liveable place with quality design and amenity.^{13 14}

As will be discussed further in Section 4, well-designed buildings and places promote a range of benefits to the community and offer an enduring legacy.¹⁵ Achieving good design requires skilled practitioners, robust quality assurance processes, targeted procurement practices and passionate advocacy.

The OVGA has an important role to play in delivering these services in Victorian to support quality-built environment outcomes through the broad range of advisory and advocacy functions it undertakes.

Advocacy and Advice

The OVGA seeks to embed design awareness and culture within government through its ongoing **advocacy** of the value of good design, as well as the establishment of consistent and integrated design procurement and quality assurance processes.

The OVGA also recognises the influence of public expectations and private sector activities on achieving good design outcomes and seeks to promote and educate on best practice design to a wide audience. Broadly this can take the form of lectures to the public, publications, events, and strategic partnerships, as well as identifying and considering options for policy reform.

¹² State Government of Victoria (2021), *Victorian Budget 2021-22: Budget Paper No. 5 – State Capital Program*

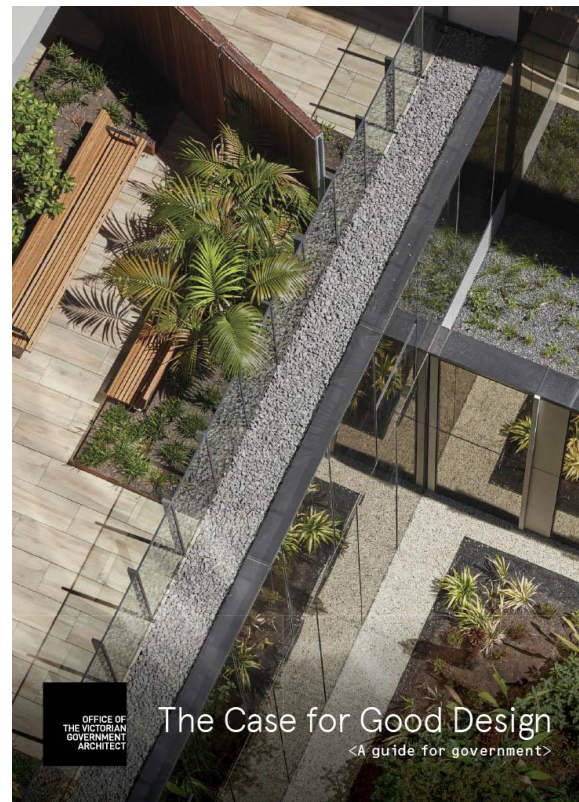
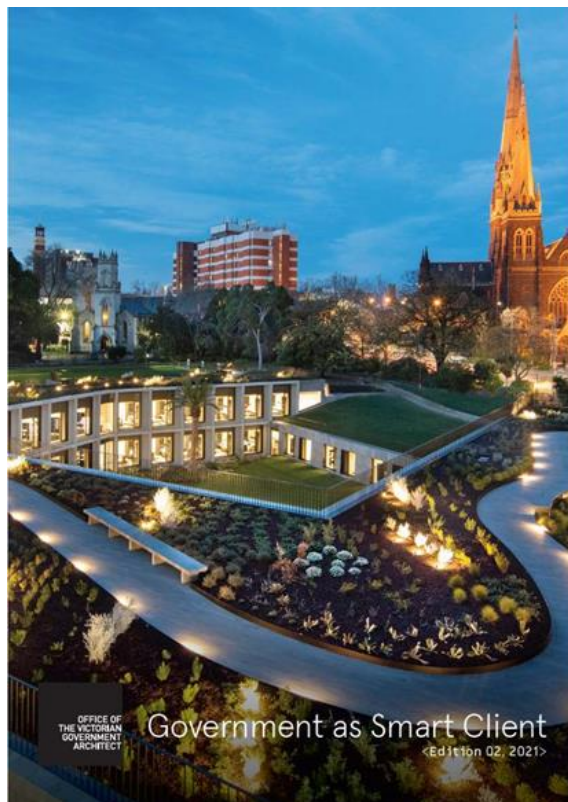
¹³ State Government of Victoria (2017), *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: Direction 4.3 Achieve and promote design excellence*, Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning, Melbourne: Australia

¹⁴ State Government of Victoria (2017), *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, Melbourne: Australia.

¹⁵ Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02*

For issues and initiatives requiring a more tailored advocacy response, the OVGA also publishes materials, such as the *Good Design* or *Lessons Learned* brochures, as sector-specific guides for broader public reach and access. In the last three financial years, the OVGA has developed several new publications including:

- *The Case for Good Design: A guide for Government (2019)* – An overview of the research on the impact of design of our surroundings. It explores findings on healthcare, education, workplaces, housing, justice, urban design and transport projects.
- *Good Design and Local Government (2021)* – A refresh to a publication first published in 2008 looks at the role that local government can play in supporting good design and the opportunity to deliver high-quality built environments for the communities it serves.
- *Good Design and Design Review (2021)* – This new publication looks at the role that Design Review has in contributing to good design outcomes.
- *Good Design and Health (2021)* – A new publication highlighting key principles and effective approaches to achieving good design to suit a variety of healthcare settings and building types.
- *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02 (2021)* – An update to *Government as Smart Client* (first published in 2013) reflecting topical issues around procurement of high-value-high-risk projects, proposed reforms to the Building Act and the impact on design professions.



Providing **advice** is a core service of the OVGA. The OVGA provides strategic procurement or design advice to Ministers, state government departments and agencies, local government, and Responsible Authorities on public sector and private sector development.

The OVGA also assists clients and stakeholders to support the development of business cases, feasibility studies, project scope and budget development.

The OVGA has undertaken 452 engagements across 187 individual projects between July 2018 and June 2021, including 137 advocacy engagements and 315 individual pieces of advice. This figure includes 88 engagements that are currently underway.



TABLE 3: ADVOCACY AND ADVICE ENGAGEMENTS JULY 2018 TO JUNE 2021

	ADVOCACY	ADVICE	TOTAL
Completed	96	268	364
In progress	41	47	88
Total	137	315	452

Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

Sixty per cent of projects have been undertaken by the OVGA for projects funded by the public sector. Much of the OVGA's advocacy work focused on influencing strategic design outcomes, and its advisory services, were primarily directed towards providing design advice for transport infrastructure projects.

FIGURE 2: ADVICE - PROJECT TYPE

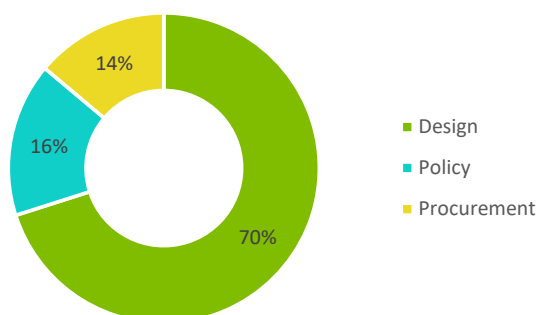
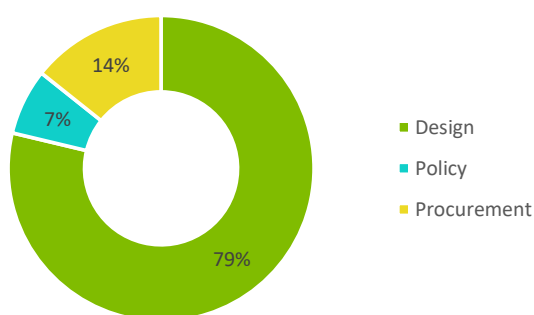


FIGURE 3: ADVOCACY - PROJECT TYPE



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

In total, the OVGA has serviced 196 individual clients between July 2018 and June 2021, with clients including a range of state government departments, councils, industry bodies, universities, and private sector proponents. Table 4 shows examples of key projects and clients.

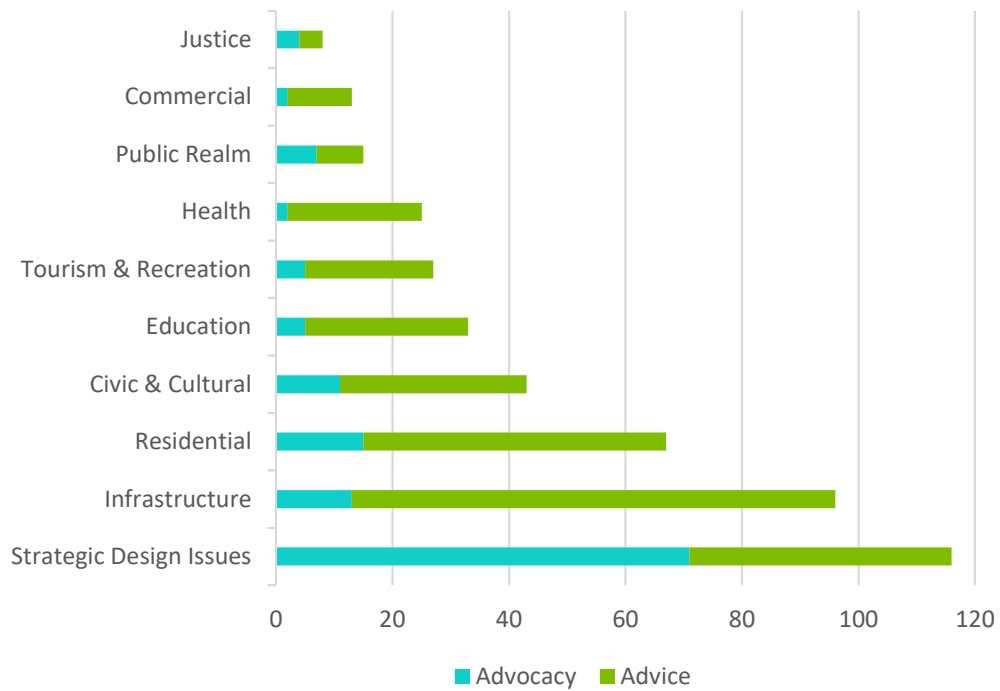
Figures 3 and 4 detail the sectoral composition of the OVGA's service delivery by service area and project value.

TABLE 4: PROJECT AND CLIENT EXAMPLES

ADVICE PROJECT EXAMPLES	
Project / Engagement	Client
Public Housing Renewal Program	DFFH
New Footscray Hospital	VHBA, DH
Geelong Station Precinct Master Plan	DELWP
Post Occupancy Evaluations of Public Schools	VEBA, DET
Bendigo Law Court Development	CSV, DJCS
Federation Square Review	Creative Victoria, DJPR
Geelong Arts Centre	Development Victoria; Creative Victoria, DJPR
Suburban Rail Loop	SRL, DOT
ADVOCACY PROJECT EXAMPLES	
Project / Engagement	Client
Future Homes Design Competition	DELWP (Partner)
Future Homes Demonstration Project	DELWP, DFFH
Digital Build	OPV, DTF
Good Design Publication Series	OVGA
Victorian Premier's Design Awards	Creative Victoria, DJPR
Future Parks Design Competition	Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and University of Melbourne
ASBEC Research Working Group	Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC)
Melbourne Design Week	Creative Victoria, DJPR

Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

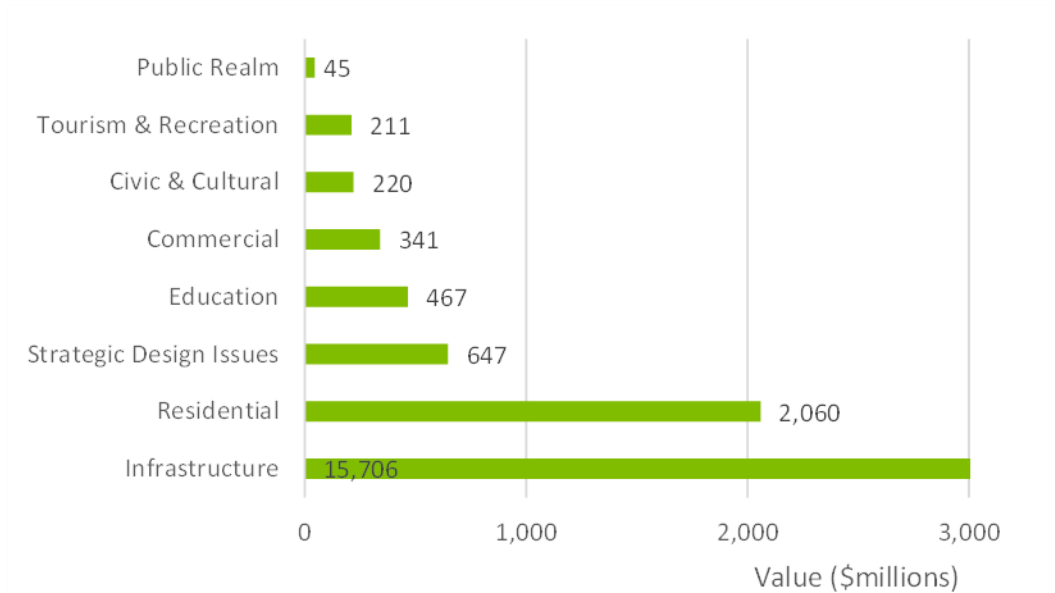
FIGURE 4: ADVOCACY AND ADVICE ENGAGEMENTS BY SECTOR



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

* Strategic Design Issues include urban design, urban renewal, precincts, strategies, guidelines.

FIGURE 5: PROJECT VALUE BY SECTOR



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

Note: Data was not available for some projects within select sectors at time of publication. As such, some sectors may not be represented in the chart above, or otherwise underrepresented.

Design review - Victorian Design Review Panel

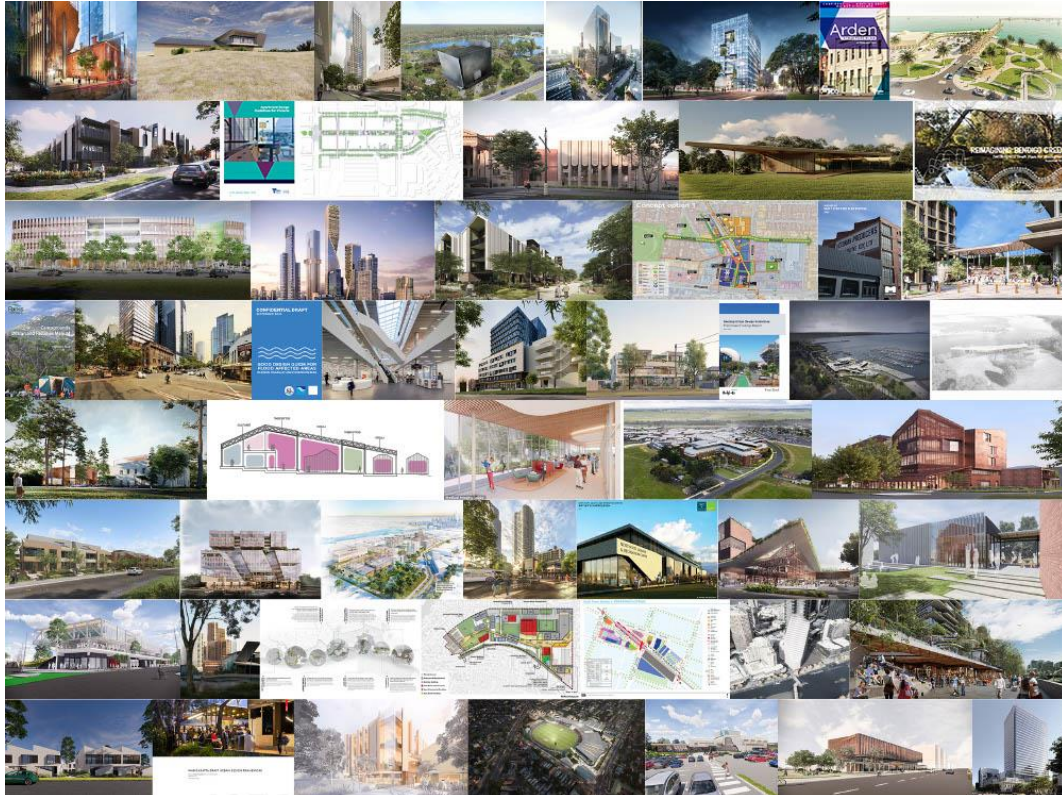
The OVGA also plays an instrumental role in improved built environment outcomes through its design review service by the Victorian Design Review Panel (VDRP). This service is integral to the OVGA's broader advisory functions.

The VDRP comprises 78 highly experienced design professionals (increased from 65 in June 2018) drawn from various built environment fields including: architecture, landscape architecture, planning and urban design, as well as specialists in sustainability, universal design, health, placemaking, heritage and indigenous cultural heritage.

The overarching mandate of the VDRP is to improve design outcomes and provide design advice through design review on significant public and private projects across the state at key stages of the design and development process. While the advice of the VDRP is not statutory, it carries weight and provides expertise and an independent, authoritative voice to government and statutory decision-makers. The VDRP also supports the OVGA's advocacy role by capturing and sharing common issues and project learnings through the design review process.

The OVGA's design review offers a structured process of design critique using the VDRP, which involves briefing the panel and providing written advice to the design team, stakeholders and decision-makers. The VDRP provides constructive advice that considers the project history, the site context, as well as budgets and timelines. A dedicated team in the OVGA with professional and multi-disciplinary design expertise works with project proponents to guide them through the review process.

FIGURE 6: MONTAGE OF VDRP PROJECTS 2018 TO 2021



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021)

The OVGA adapts the process of design review to fit a project’s specific needs considering projects of all types, scales and with various delivery methods. Depending on the size and complexity of a project and project stage, design review is typically provided by the VDRP through the following channels:

- **Formal design review sessions** – regularly convened (typically monthly), with session panellists drawn from the VDRP pool, and a range of projects reviewed each session.
- **Customised design review** - undertaken by a small team for less complex projects.

A total of 152 reviews were undertaken by the VDRP between July 2018 and June 2021. Eighty per cent were full reviews, with 61 per cent conducted for private sector projects determined to be of significance to the public and referred to the OVGA by responsible authorities for planning approvals.

FIGURE 7: VDRP REVIEW TYPE

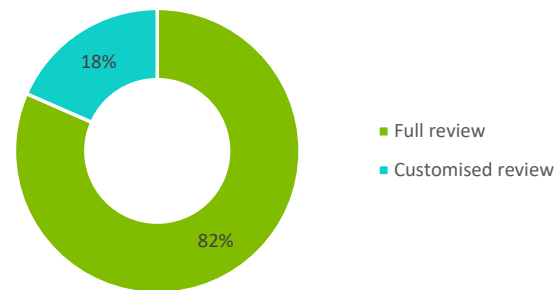
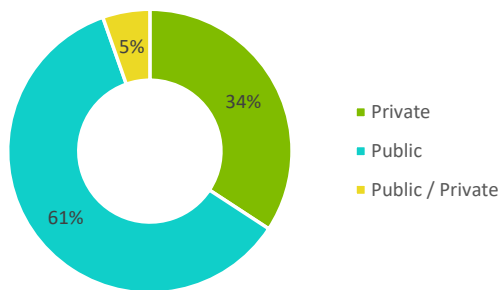
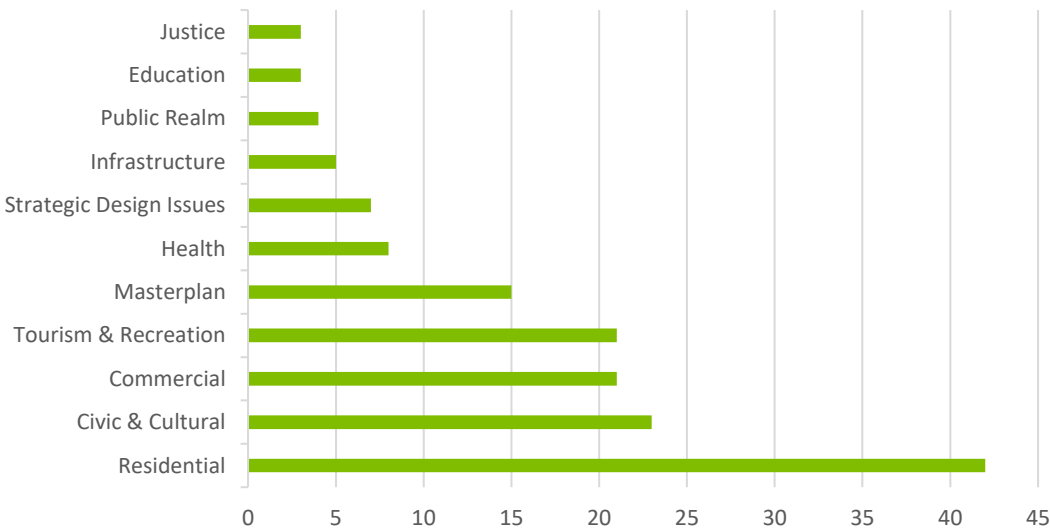


FIGURE 8: VDRP PROJECT TYPE



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

FIGURE 9: VDRP REVIEWS BY SECTOR



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

Following a design review, the VDRP delivers a short recommendations report to the project proponent, the design team and relevant decision-makers. The average number of business days to

issue formal advice is 10 days, consistent with the timeline targets specified in the *2021-22 State Government Budget* and applicable to all advice issued by the OVGA.¹⁶

The projects reviewed by the VDRP were from a range of sectors, with the majority being tourism & recreation, commercial, civic & cultural, and residential developments.

For projects with a long lifecycle that require ongoing and consistent engagement with the OVGA, a **Design Quality Team (DQT)** – chaired by the OVGA and composed of design specialists from within the OVGA and the VDRP – may be established to provide design advice; from project inception through to final design and delivery. DQTs allow for the customisation of the VDRP service and are guided by a clear Terms of Reference. DQTs also provide the opportunity to deepen the expertise of VDRP members, while also extending the Panel's reach.

Between July 2018 and June 2021, several DQTs were established to support the design and delivery of several projects of strategic significance. These projects include the New Footscray Hospital, Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, Marvel Stadium, Public Housing Renewal Program and Major Schools Post Occupancy Evaluation.

Dedicated arrangements - Major Transport Infrastructure Authority

The OVGA plays an important role in advocating for excellent design outcomes for state-significant projects such as the Major Transport Infrastructure Program (MTIP). Delivered by the Office of the Director General, the MTIP program encompasses the design and delivery of significant transport infrastructure projects. These projects include the Melbourne Metro under Rail Projects Victoria, the Level Crossing Removal Project, Major Road Projects Victoria and the North East Link.

This dedicated arrangement for the MTIA, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding, sees the OVGA co-located with project teams to develop strategies for embedding design quality in project lifecycles, advocate for good design and share lessons across the program.

The OVGA works with the MTIA and across its projects to develop strategic approaches that consist of the following core pillars:

- **Common vision:** create a legacy for Melbourne through great urban design and place making in our major transport infrastructure projects.
- **Accountability:** collaborate on urban design strategies and documents to guide the planning, design and evaluation of major transport projects.
- **Transparency:** integrate a program of stakeholder and community engagement with the design of major transport infrastructure projects, including identifying key local considerations and opportunities to involve the community in the projects.
- **Governance:** establish a clear framework that articulates the processes and systems for achieving high quality, integrated urban design outcomes for the whole of project life cycle, retaining consistent design expertise from the OVGA, industry and stakeholders at all stages of the project including development, procurement and delivery.

¹⁶ Victorian Government (2018), *Getting It Done: Victorian Budget 18/19 – Service Delivery Budget Paper 3*

- **Independent design review:** ensure a robust design review process through a design advisory panel, including the use of the Victorian Design Review Panel at key milestones throughout the project lifecycle.

The OVGA's role and engagement with the MTIA spans across its core service areas – advice and advocacy – with project advice the most common service provided (72 per cent). Input from the OVGA was primarily sought for design aspects of the MTIA program (77 per cent).

FIGURE 10: MTIP BY SERVICE SECTOR

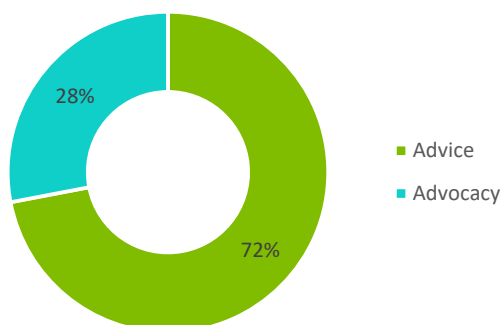
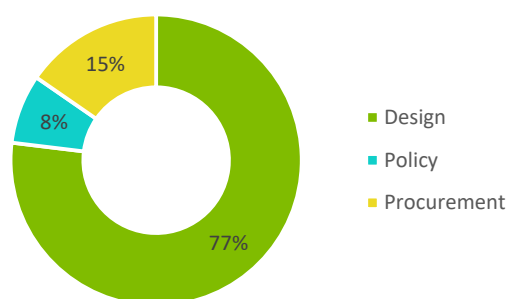


FIGURE 11: MTIP ENGAGEMENT TYPE



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

Other design advisory panel processes – Urban Design Advisory Panels

Design advisory panels such as the **Urban Design Advisory Panel (UDAP)** are an engagement model used for major transport infrastructure projects. Some are chaired by OVGA while, in other instances, another design expert is nominated chair. Panel membership often includes government design and planning professionals with design expertise. Local government representatives are invited to contribute to the UDAP process to provide critical local knowledge.

The key focus for UDAP is to provide collaborative, multi-disciplinary, iterative, and consistent advice. UDAP is intended to function as an expert panel and is not focussed on representation but on critical insights that can be brought from experts in a whole-of-government and local government context. The model is used on major projects including Melbourne Metro, Level Crossing Removals, North East Link and Major Roads Projects Victoria and Suburban Rail Link, amongst others.

3.2 Project location and value

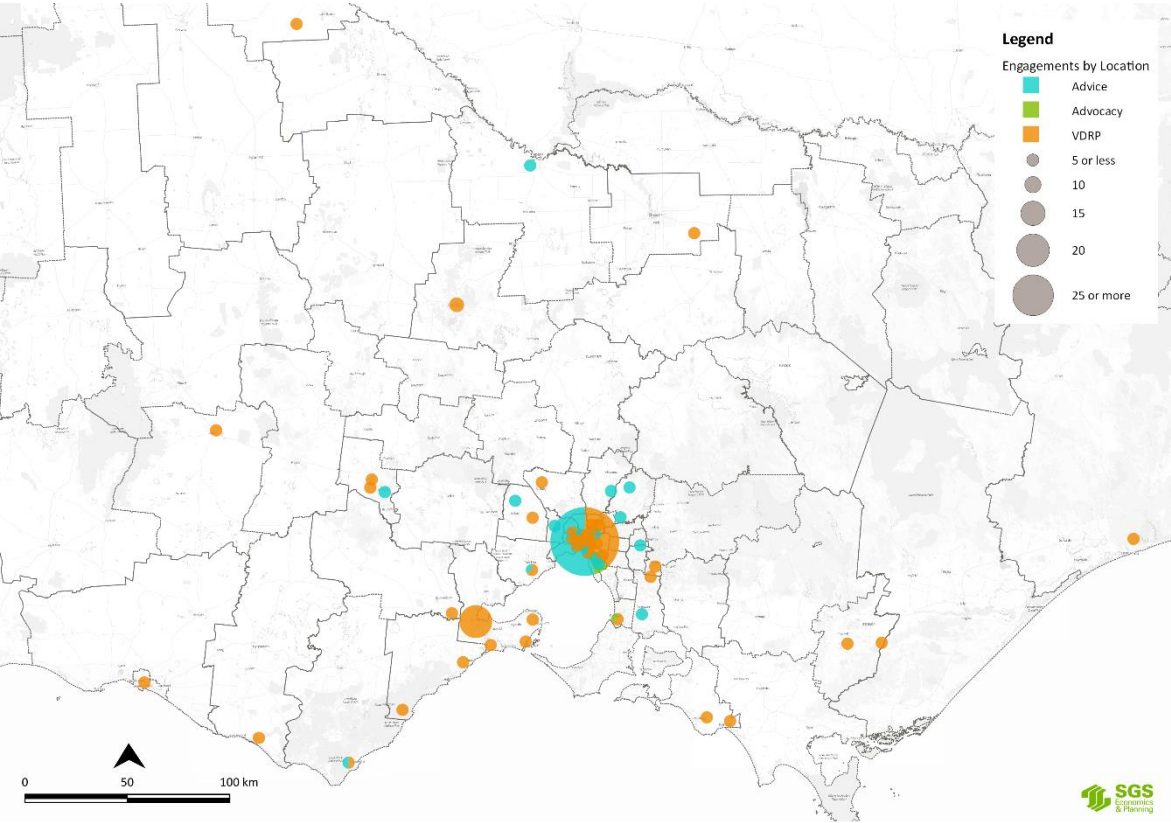
Project location

The geographic spread of OVGA engagements across Metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria is shown in Figure 12 and Figure 13.

OVGA project locations are distributed across metropolitan and regional locations, although the majority (94 per cent) are within the metropolitan area. This concentration reflects the development activity in Melbourne but also demonstrates the presence of the OVGA in regional Victoria.

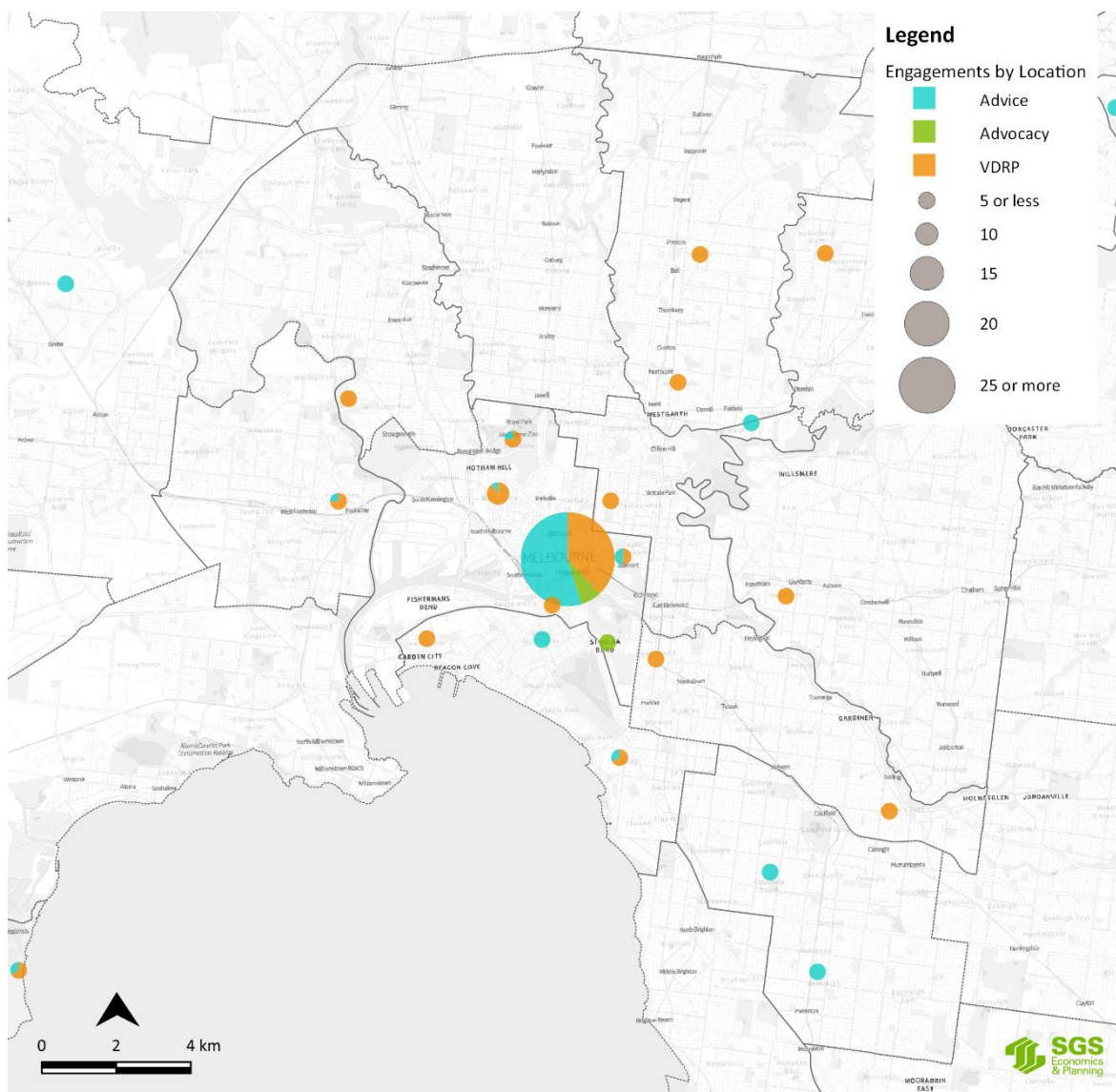
The regional reach of the OVGA is extended through design review by the VDRP which has a greater presence outside Greater Melbourne, with 44 per cent of OVGA projects reviewed through the VDRP process located in regional Victoria.

FIGURE 12: PROJECT LOCATIONS – VICTORIA



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

FIGURE 13: PROJECT LOCATIONS – CENTRAL MELBOURNE



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

TABLE 5: PROJECT LOCATION PROPORTIONS

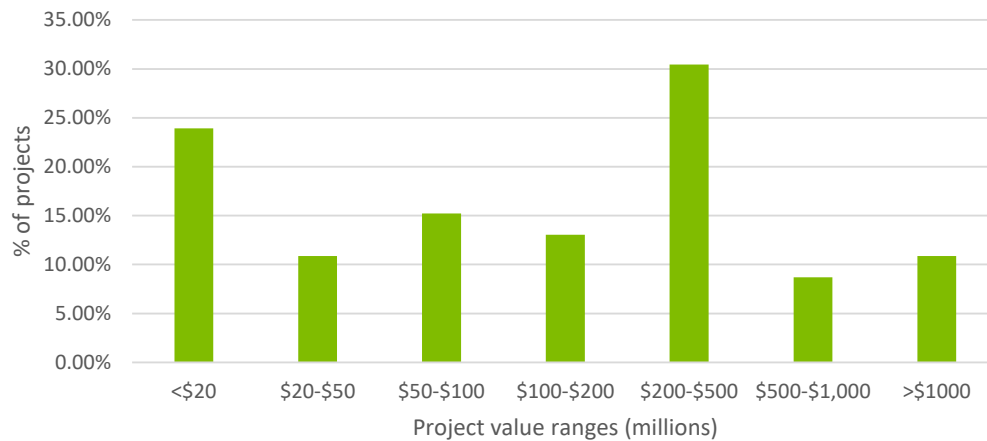
LOCATION	ADVICE	DESIGN REVIEW (VDRP)	TOTAL
Greater Melbourne	94 per cent	56 per cent	65 per cent
Rest of Victoria	6 per cent	44 per cent	35 per cent
Total	100 per cent	100 per cent	100 per cent

Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data. (Note: Not all advocacy and advice work can be tied to a geographic location, with only 85 of the total 106 represented in the above maps).

Project values

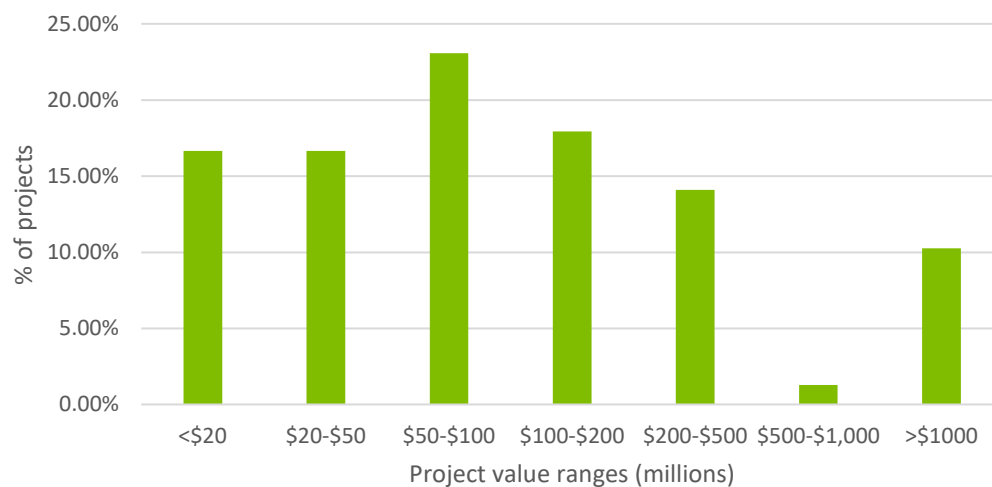
The OVGA has provided design advice to greater than \$25 billion worth of projects, with VDRP reviews accounting for \$88 million and other advisory services accounting for the remaining \$24.9 billion.¹⁷

FIGURE 14: PROJECT VALUE RANGES – ADVICE



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

FIGURE 15: PROJECT VALUE RANGES - VDRP



Source: Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2021), Internal data.

¹⁷ Note: Project value data was not available at the time of publication for all projects undertaken during the review period. As such total project value estimates cited above are an underestimate.

4. The value of good design

This section presents a summary of literature exploring the value of good design.

4.1 What is good design?

The concept of ‘good design’ is often mistaken for a narrow band of its overall purview. It is concerned with more than just aesthetic appeal.

As previously described by the OVGA:

“Good design comes in many forms and is defined by much more than how something looks. It starts from refining the purpose and aspiration of a project, improves how it works, creates additional benefits and elevates how people feel and behave in the outcome. Good design creates inspiring places and greater lasting financial value. And of course, good design also looks and feels good.”

OVGA (2018), *Good Design: Issue 01*

Good design establishes an overarching vision for a place, considers its current and future context, and creates a solution to achieve this vision as a long-term ambition.

As described by the OVGA in its *Good Design* publication, good design is:¹⁸

- **Inspiring:** embedding the very essence of a project into a narrative and vision.
- **Contextual:** informed by its location and site-specific conditions.
- **Functional:** meeting the requirements of a building or place through efficient spatial arrangements.
- **Valuable:** marrying aesthetics and functionality, reducing the lifecycle costs of a project, and adding value to place.
- **Sustainable:** respecting our environment and resources by embedding efficiency and enhancing local ecology.
- **Enjoyable:** increasing amenity through the creation of healthy and safe places that are always enjoyable.
- **Enduring:** providing an enduring legacy which will continue to serve, inspire, and delight.

Importantly, to achieve high-quality design outcomes, these good design principles must be considered throughout the lifecycle of a project, from initial concept phases to project delivery and beyond, including long term operation and maintenance.

¹⁸ OVGA (2018), *Good Design: Issue 01*

4.2 The value of good design

There is a trove of academic and scientific literature exploring the benefits of quality urban and architectural design and the consequences of poor design. From a whole-of-Victorian community perspective, these benefits can be divided into two categories: improved public good and reduced long term costs to government.

Improved public good

All built form and infrastructure have an impact on the urban realm and those who occupy it. Wide evidence demonstrates the importance of design on the function of places and the well-being of people. As links between design and neuroscience, health and human behaviour continue to emerge, this evidence base must inform decision-making about the shape, nature and function of our cities, buildings and landscapes.¹⁹ Good design can have wide-reaching benefits – from increased activity in the public realm to costs savings in the health care and justice systems.

Examples of the many benefits generated from good design outcomes are described below:

- **Amenity, identity and pride:** Good design can ensure development is more contextually integrated, improve access to areas and amenities, and boost social well-being and civic pride.²⁰ Poor design, on the other hand, “locks in owners, the local community and cities into substandard urban environments for decades”.²¹ This can lead to less inclusive, less functional and less attractive spaces for the public, residents, workers and employers.²²
- **Crime prevention and safety:** Good urban design can enhance social inclusiveness and perceptions of safety in an area, reducing the need for highly visible security cameras and security personnel.²³
- **Education:** Well-designed buildings and classrooms have been shown to improve learning and test score outcomes.²⁴ A study of learning progress of 751 students at seven schools in the UK, found that six design factors – colour, choice, complexity, flexibility, light and connectivity – impact a student’s learning progress by 25 per cent.²⁵ There was a difference in the learning progress between a student in the best-designed classroom to the worst-designed classroom (which was the equivalent to the typical student progress over an entire academic year).
- **Health:** Good design in hospitals has been shown to help patients recover more quickly and reduce stress in hospital staff, improve staff performance and retention and reduce operational costs.^{26 27} A seminal study found that patients with a view of nature were discharged almost 1 day earlier from the hospital, and required less pain medication, than patients facing a brick wall.²⁸ In another

¹⁹ OVGA (2019), *The Case for Good Design. A guide for government*

²⁰ CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*, Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning

²¹ Horne, R., London, G., Moore, T., Martel, A. and Alves, T. (2014), *Placing a value on good design for cities: Evidence and prospects*, Paper presented at the 7th Making Cities Liveable Conference, Kingscliffe, NSW, 10-11 July 2014.

²² CABE (2006), *The Cost of Bad Design*. Report by John Sorrell, Richard Simmons, Jake Desyllas and Robin Nicholson

²³ CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning

²⁴ The University of Salford. (2015), *Clever Classrooms*

²⁵ Barrett, P, et al. (2013), *A holistic, multi-level analysis identifying the impact of classroom design on pupil’s learning*, Building and Environment, 59

²⁶ Lawson, B. (2002), *Healing Architecture*, Sheffield University School of Architecture research, pp. 72-75.

²⁷ CABE (2002), *The Value of Good Design*

²⁸ Ulrich, R. (1984), *View through a window may influence recovery from surgery*, Science, New Series, 224(4647), pp. 420-421

study, patients had hospital stays on average 2.6 days or 15 per cent shorter when they were in a sunny room compared to a dull room.²⁹

- **Housing:** Elements such as daylight penetration, natural ventilation, noise reduction and thermal comfort provide wide health and economic benefits to residents.^{30 31} At a wider scale, good neighbourhood design can serve to encourage positive interaction between neighbours, through factors such as a high-quality natural environment, high architectural quality, and community involvement in management and design processes.³²
- **Economics and employment:** Good urban design can promote physical and social regeneration, as well as attract and retain employment in an area.³³ Good lighting can increase productivity by up to 20 per cent.³⁴ Good air quality has also been found to increase productivity by 20 per cent.³⁵

Reduced long-term costs to government

Good design in public projects further benefits the community by reducing long-term costs.

Indicatively shown in Figure 15, the operating and maintenance costs of a building project (in this case an office building) account for most costs incurred across a project's lifetime. While design costs are small in comparison, design has a significant influence on the successful function of a project across its lifespan, and the costs associated with this.³⁶ While operating and maintenance costs vary as a proportion of overall costs by building and infrastructure type, the relationship between these cost categories are generally similar.

While it is often asserted that design increases the cost of a project, an understanding of whole-of-life costs suggests that investing in good design at the outset of a project can generate long-term financial benefits to government. According to Brookings, "good design is sometimes more costly in the short term, but generally pays off over the lifetime of the building or place."³⁷

²⁹ Beauchemin, K., and Hays, P. (1996), *Sunny hospital rooms expedite recovery from severe and refractory depressions*, *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 40.

³⁰ Brown, M. J. and Jacobs, D. E. (2011), Residential light and risk for depression and falls: Results from the LARES study of eight European cities, *Public Health Reports*, 126, pp. 131-140.

³¹ Wargocki, P. et al., (2002), Ventilation and health in non-industrial indoor environments: Report from a European multidisciplinary scientific consensus meeting (EUROVEN), *Indoor Air* 12(2), pp. 113-128.

³² Groves, R., Middleton, A., Murie, A., and Broughton, K. (2003), *Neighbourhoods that work: A study of the Bournville estate, Birmingham*, The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³³ CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning.

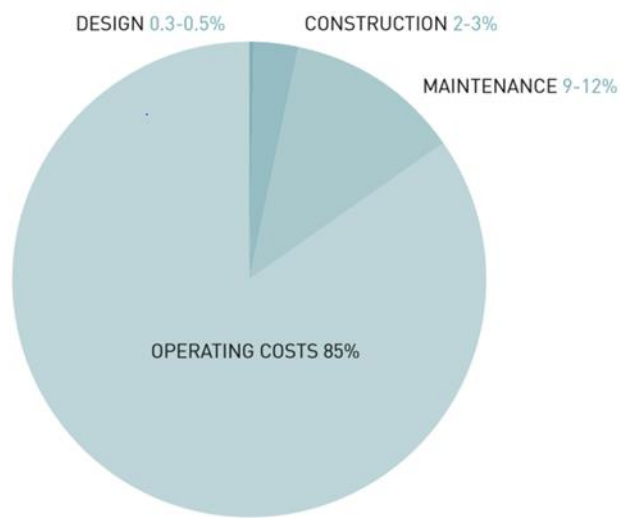
³⁴ Oseland, N. (2001), "To what extent does workplace design and management affect productivity?". Available from: www.officeproductivity.co.uk

³⁵ Commission for Built Environment and British Council for Offices (2005), *The impact of office design on business performance*.

³⁶ OVGA (2021), *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02*

³⁷ Leinberger, C. (2001), *Financing Progressive Development*, Capital Xchange, Brookings Institution.

FIGURE 16: TYPICAL LIFECYCLE COSTS OF AN OFFICE BUILDING



Source: OVGA (2021), *Government as Smart Client*, Edition 02.

5. Benefits delivered by the OVGA

This section presents how the OVGA delivers value to the Victorian community through its design advisory and advocacy functions. These findings are drawn from a survey conducted with clients who have engaged with the OVGA within the past three years, as well as from interviews with stakeholders from key case study projects.

5.1 OVGA generation of good design benefits

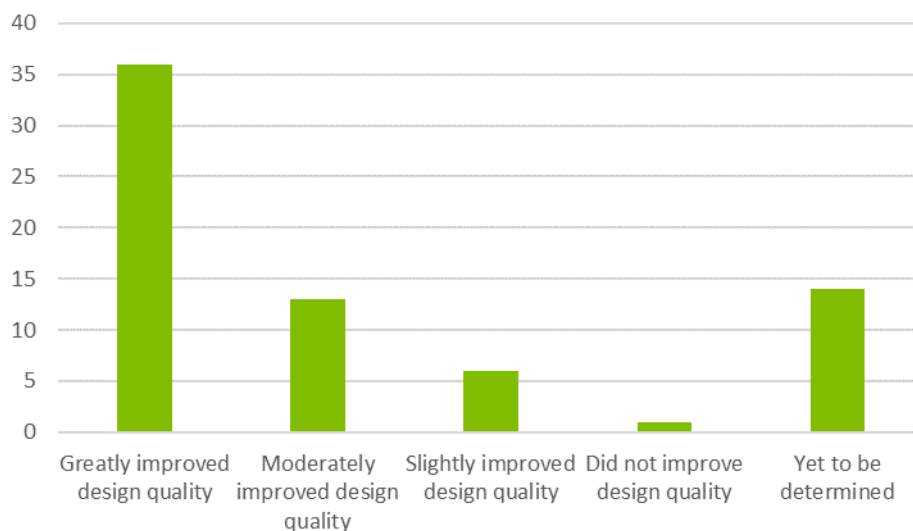
Contributing to good design outcomes for capital projects

The OVGA's contribution to good design is widely recognised. A survey of recent stakeholders found that, for projects where an outcome had been realised, 70 per cent of respondents agreed that the OVGA's contributions 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved the design quality of projects (Figure 17). Only one respondent felt that the OVGA's contributions did not improve design quality.

In the 2018 review of OVGA service undertaken by SGS, 95 per cent of respondents for completed projects felt that the OVGA 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved the design quality of projects.

It is noted that there is a considerable difference in the sample size between the 2018 survey (49 responses) and the 2021 survey (88 responses).

FIGURE 17: CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES - TO WHAT DEGREE DID THE OVGA'S SERVICES IMPROVE THE DESIGN QUALITY OF THE PROJECT?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Survey respondents agreed that the OVGA supported positive contributions across a range of design aspects, improving:

- Improving the integration of projects with the surrounding context (97 per cent agree)
- Prioritising the quality of experience of end users (94 per cent agree)
- Improved the aesthetic value generated by the project (89 per cent agree)

Stakeholders qualified these responses by noting that the OVGA advanced good design outcomes by:

- Clarifying design ambitions and ensuring design proposals are holistic, adaptable and “future proof”.
- Testing and validating design proposals with design teams and prompting consideration of alternative or innovative design solutions.
- Bringing to focus and challenging the clarity of information shown and advocating for a higher level of design resolution.
- Ensuring draft designs translate to built-form outcomes that meet client needs.
- Ensuring good design was not sacrificed for the sake of project expediency or value management.

Stakeholders particularly valued the OVGA’s advice regarding the design integration of projects with the broader urban context by recommending approaches such as removing hard boundaries, improving ground floor activation and wayfinding, and creating connections with places in surrounding precincts. This is evident from the survey results summarised above and exemplified in the Federation Square Review Project (case study description on the next page).

CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT*: FEDERATION SQUARE REVIEW

Client: DJPR and Creative Victoria

Sector: Civic & Cultural / Tourism - Strategic Design Issues

Location: Melbourne

In 2019, after concerns were raised regarding several proposed building projects across the larger site, the Heritage Council of Victoria found 'Federation Square is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and should be included in the register for its historical, aesthetic, technological and social significance'.

In April 2019, the Victorian government launched a comprehensive Review of Federation Square overseen by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. The review examined the core purpose of Federation Square and how the built environment, governance and operational arrangements could be strengthened to meet community and stakeholder expectations and the demands of a complex community asset. The OVGA led the Stream One: Public Purpose and Built Form review.

OVGA services

- Scoped and led Stream One of the Review, tasked to consider the public purpose and built form of the place.
- Took part in consultation processes with community, tenants, and stakeholders - overseen by specialist community engagement consultants Capire.
- Established a panel of experts to guide built form research and contribute to opportunities and reform.
- Produced a set of precinct-wide design principles and strategies to remove boundaries and connect with experiences found in surrounding precincts.
- Published the *Principles for Change* report.

Benefits generated by OVGA involvement

- Facilitated a better understanding of the current state of the precinct, including identifying that the design for Federation Square was only partially delivered - the original design ambition extended beyond the current site boundary to better engage adjacent places, including the river. This led to changes in legislation and a revised governance model for Federation Square as part of an expanded arts precinct.
- Strong, evidence-based guidance for future precinct changes and development at Federation Square through design principles and strategies document.
- Positioning of Federation Square as more than a Melbourne icon and as a portal to the cultures and histories of Victoria. Introduced the need for the Square to elevate the status and exposure to Victoria's First Peoples and Traditional Owners.

*See Appendix C for more detail on this project case study.

In the absence of input from the OVGA, many surveyed stakeholders felt that the project design quality would have greatly diminished resulting in designs that were:

- “less world class”
- “more engineering focussed” and with
- “less consideration for the positioning of the project site within the broader context/ precinct”.

“[In the absence of the OVGA] the project's design quality, including impacts on public realm and sustainable performance, would not have improved. Instead, the project would've only been steered based on legal advice on technical readings of prescriptive controls”

Survey respondent (2021)

Contributing to improved progression for ‘capital’ projects

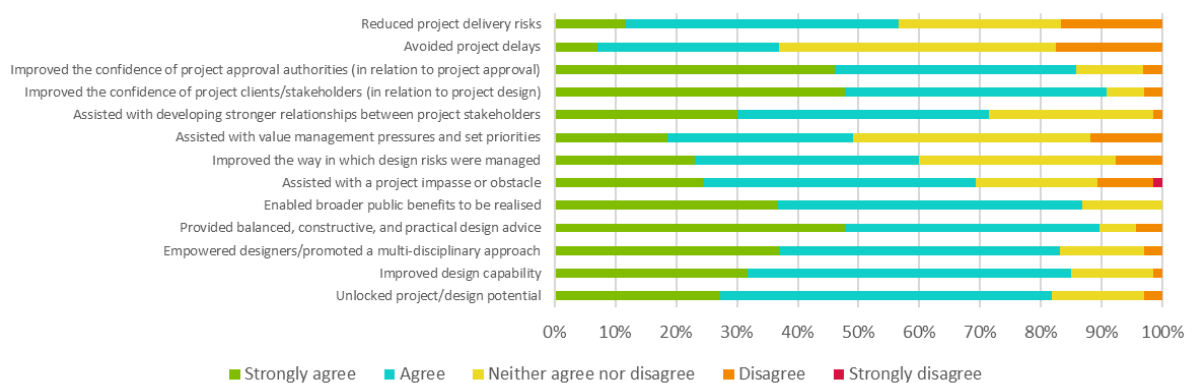
A well as contributing to good design, the OVGA was found to support a range of other positive outcomes for capital projects relating to project progression.

Findings show that the OVGA’s most significant contributions in this space relate to:

- Improving the confidence of project clients/stakeholders regarding design (91 per cent agree)
- Providing balanced, constructive, and practical design advice (90 per cent agree)
- Enabling broader public benefits to be realised (87 per cent agree)
- Improving the confidence of project approval authorities (re: project approval) (86 per cent agree)
- Improving design capability (85 per cent agree)
- Empowering designers/promoted a multi-disciplinary approach (83 per cent agree).

It was felt that the OVGA performed less strongly in avoiding project delays (37 per cent agree); however, 57 per cent agreed that the OVGA assisted in reducing project delivery risks.

FIGURE 18: CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES - HOW DID THE OVGA’S INPUT ASSIST PROJECT PROGRESSION AND THE DESIGN PROCESS?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Improved consideration of design for ‘other’ projects

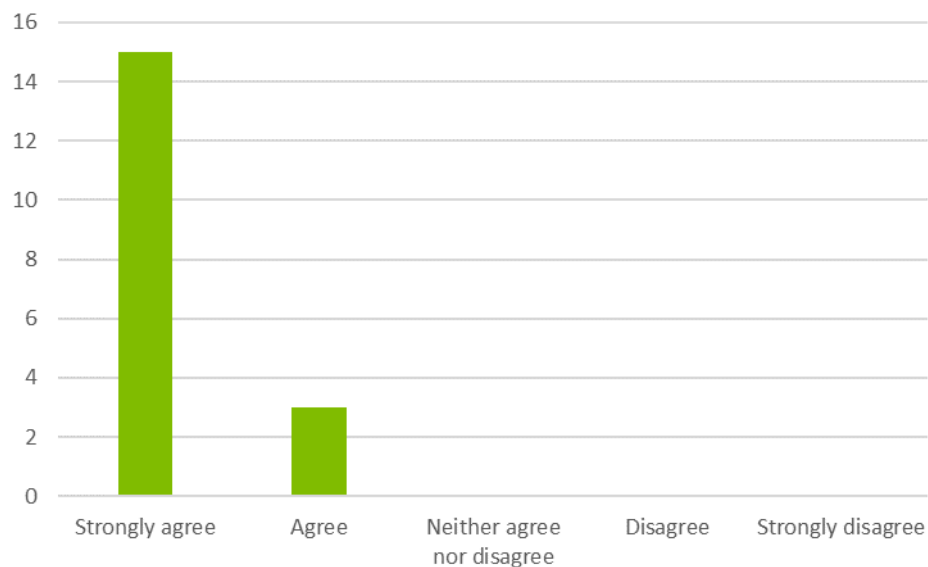
As noted in earlier sections, the OVGA’s contributions extend beyond providing design advice on capital projects to supporting the development of policy that appropriately considers design, and advocating for the benefits of design across government and industry.

For these projects, 100 per cent of stakeholders ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that OVGA services helped advocate and drive design quality at a strategic or systemic level (Figure 19). OVGA’s contributions in this space were seen to stem from its:

- Deep understanding of design quality issues (94 per cent agree)
- Promotion of creative and best practice approaches to achieving design quality (94 per cent agree)
- Offered practical advice on implementation processes and initiatives (83 per cent)

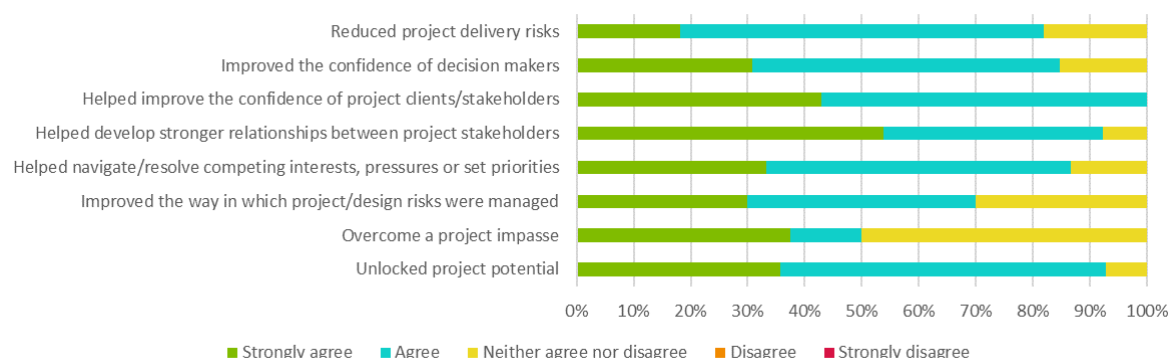
As with capital projects, stakeholders who engaged with the OVGA on non-capital projects found that involvement by the Office assisted project progression across several domains. Key areas of influence related to supporting “stronger relationships between project stakeholders”, “enhancing the confidence of project stakeholders/ clients”, and “unlocking project potential”. It is important to note that no stakeholder surveyed disagreed with any of the project delivery statements listed in Figure 20.

FIGURE 19: CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES – TO WHAT DEGREE DO OVGA SERVICES HELP ADVOCATE AND DRIVE DESIGN QUALITY AT A STRATEGIC OR SYSTEMIC LEVEL?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

FIGURE 20: CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES - HOW DID THE OVGA'S INPUT ASSIST PROJECT PROGRESSION?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Supporting fair and transparent procurement processes

The Victorian government is the largest procurer of design services in the state. The OVGA has expressed a commitment to enhancing design outcomes by improving government procurement practices that impact design quality.

“The total price impacts borne by government as a result of poor procurement practices are estimated at around \$239 million per annum. In addition, it is estimated that better procurement can lower the costs of rectifying design errors in construction, an annual saving of around \$87 million.”

Deloitte Access Economics (2015), *Economic benefits of better procurement practices*, Consult Australia.

The OVGA leads on Plan Melbourne’s commitment to achieve and promote design excellence ensuring that the Victorian Government can lead by example – setting a high design standard in its own projects and improving its own design procurement practices.³⁸

The OVGA has significant knowledge of the various methods used to procure programs of works and projects and how each of these methods can impact the ultimate delivery of good design outcomes. The Office shares this knowledge broadly by publishing procurement guidelines for government including:

- *Government as Smart Client*: Guidelines for building procurement processes (OVGA 2021; 2013)
- Architecture design competitions: A guide for government (OVGA 2018)

As part of its advisory functions, the OVGA also offers procurement services to government clients. These services include clarifying design objectives, establishing fit-for-purpose governance arrangements, preparing design briefs and other tender documentation, assessing tender submissions and participating in evaluation workshops.

³⁸ The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019). *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: Five-year Implementation Plan*.

Stakeholders noted that government can be perceived by external architectural consultants as “just going through the motions” of design procurement rather than offering processes that are truly fair and open. However, involvement by the OVGA in procurement was seen by stakeholders to signal fair and transparent competition. Moreover, the OVGA’s involvement was seen to result in:

- Enhanced profile of the project under tender
- Increased number and quality of tender applications
- More innovative solutions to design problems
- Increased representation from established and/or reputable firms
- Enhanced design awareness and internal government design capacity
- Enhanced justification of procurement approach to government.

“The OVGA provided advice on firms experienced in complex court building typologies. This advice broadened the pool of experienced firms selected for a short-listed tender. The OVGA also took part in the assessment of the tenders and spoke at the tender information session. I believe this provided confidence and inspired tenderers to submit in a tender.”

Elena Kalnin, former Senior Project Manager: Bendigo Law Courts Development, Court Services Victoria

Supporting good decision-making and government planning approval

The OVGA arms community leaders and key decision-makers with the necessary knowledge and confidence to pursue high-quality design outcomes for the community.

When the OVGA is involved in reviewing a business case, project or process, it often assures decision-makers that a concept has undergone a robust process of testing and scrutiny. Oversight from the OVGA is often seen to provide a degree of comfort that the outcomes of a decision have been thoroughly considered, independently assessed and will be reasonable. This is particularly pertinent for decisions that are subject to heightened public scrutiny or are of political sensitivity.

Several stakeholders commented on the role of the VDRP in supporting the planning assessment and approval of major projects, including those where the Minister for Planning is the Responsible Authority. The VDRP’s technical inputs were found to provide significant benefits in terms of:

- Informing state government’s assessments and recommendations
- Assisting the identification of key design issues or improvements to be made
- Assisting negotiations with developers.

As well as streamlining planning approvals processes, VDRP involvement helped stakeholders in funding requests, providing confidence that designs were appropriately progressed and were approaching “construction readiness” and that design risks and delivery issues had been thoroughly considered.

The OVGA’s Victorian Design Review Panel plays an important role informing State government decisions on major development applications submitted to DELWP for approval. As a champion for design excellence, the OVGA provides advice that influences superior design solutions, assists

negotiations with key stakeholders and provides expert weight and confidence in recommendations put to the Minister for Planning.

Lachlan Forsyth, Manager Development Facilitation, DELWP

Setting up projects for success (good design governance)

A primary function of the OVGA is to provide advice to government on projects of state significance. Because of this, the OVGA is frequently involved in large-scale projects with a long lifecycle.

For larger, more complex projects that involve multiple partners and stakeholder groups, the OVGA provides expertise in project design governance. The OVGA assists client teams in establishing end-to-end project governance processes that facilitate decision-making, foster a high level of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders, and structure design contributions, enhancements and workflows throughout a project lifecycle.

By supporting good design governance, the OVGA is seen to provide a strategic line-of-sight to ensure that good design is not lost – a challenging task for projects which often involve a multitude of design and construction teams and priorities.

In the example of the Federation Square Review, the OVGA provided governance recommendations, including expanding the Board's skills and capacity with a Design Advisory Panel. This was intended to achieve more informed, cohesive, and holistic decision-making on design, events, hospitality and the arts.

Valuing diverse perspectives

Many of the projects in which the OVGA is involved are subject to heightened public interest and scrutiny due to their significance.

As an extension of its role in supporting good project governance, the OVGA is also seen by stakeholders to be proactive in promoting meaningful consultation and engagement with diverse project stakeholders, including internal government agencies, corporate and community interest groups, and members of the community more broadly.

Results from the client survey highlight that the OVGA adds the additional benefit of elevating the voices of Victoria's First Peoples and Traditional Owners through engagement processes. One stakeholder noted the "invaluable contribution [of Traditional Owners] to the design, landscaping and consequent co-naming [of the building]" because the OVGA championed First Peoples voices and culture.

"What is an enduring quality and strength of the OVGA team is their great intuition about stakeholders at large, and how to navigate consultation processes in a tactful and meaningful way."

Lung Ong, Senior Manager Infrastructure Strategy, Creative Victoria.

Providing an independent voice

The distinct positioning of the OVGA, situated within DPC but functioning with a high degree of autonomy from government, provides a level of independence that is highly valued and respected by its

clients. This positioning affords the OVGA a level of impartiality and allows it to carry out its advisory and advocacy functions with a high degree of objectivity in the interests of the Victorian community.

The proximity of the OVGA to government also provides it with a unique position to advocate and lobby government for policy change and funding to assist in delivering positive built form outcomes; a situation not afforded to other industry bodies.

Offering design expertise and gravitas

The OVGA employs some of the most highly recognised and regarded individuals within the built environment design industry. Not only are these individuals highly qualified within their respective fields, their clients and peers also see them as individuals with a deep passion and caring for the outcomes for which they advocate.

Due to the wealth of experience and the high standing of OVGA's members, and its unique governance structure, the OVGA is in an exceptional position to provide design review and advice to project teams and advocate for design quality improvements.

The OVGA has an authoritative voice within government and the built environment industry, which helps ensure its advice is considered and allows them to make value judgements when required.

"The OVGA's input provided the weight of expert opinion which assisted in persuading key stakeholders to reach consensus regarding the design and understand the importance of engaging with Traditional Owners to achieve wider community benefits."

Survey respondent (2021)

Access to the OVGA's services can also help to fill identified skills gaps and to provide technical balance within project teams. The OVGA's involvement is often seen to provide additional credibility and weight to decision-making processes.

Building skills through knowledge-sharing

The OVGA uses both its advisory and advocacy functions to share knowledge and practical experience to educate stakeholders on the benefits and importance of good design.

The OVGA helps professionals within the built environment industry, internal government stakeholders as well as the community more broadly expand their design skills. This knowledge-sharing raises awareness and expectations around design and provides individuals with the skills to:

- Demand better design outcomes
- Challenge poor design, and
- Ensure that design considerations remain at the forefront in decision making and city building activities.

"We benefitted from the education we received about design, place-making and legacy. In our organization, design is considered when something either needs to be constructed or fixed. The big picture thinking is not quite there (despite the "Strategic Plans"!)."

Survey respondent (2021)

The OVGA shares not only technical knowledge but also experience and learnings from past projects and understanding the mechanisms of government.

The OVGA also supports knowledge-sharing by publishing materials such as project and procurement case studies, lessons learnt, and design principles on their website.

5.2 Contributing factors to good design benefits

Several factors contribute to the success of the OVGA in generating good design benefits. These include:

<p>Early involvement</p> <p>The OVGA was engaged ‘early’ in the project development process for 78 per cent of the projects identified in the stakeholder survey, while 17 per cent were engaged midway. Positive contributions to design quality outcomes were found to be most pronounced for projects in which the OVGA was engaged early, particularly for aspects such as project durability, end user experience, project ambition, sustainability, and functionality.</p>	<p>Providing practical examples of good design</p> <p>The OVGA has prepared a repository of materials demonstrating examples of best practice design and overarching ‘lessons learnt’ from key projects. Stakeholders found these materials, as well as case studies of past projects, useful for informing and benchmarking current projects and proposals.</p>	<p>Flexibility in responding to client and project needs</p> <p>The OVGA is perceived by stakeholders as being highly adaptable to meeting project needs. The OVGA can mobilise at short notice, is willing to provide advice via a range of formats and is flexible as the scope of projects evolves.</p> <p><i>“Phone advice at a couple of key moments in the project, and knowledge that the OGVA were available for support, advice and monitoring of all aspects of the design and construction processes”</i></p> <p><i>Survey respondent (2021)</i></p>
<p>Co-locating OVGA staff within client design teams</p> <p>Having OVGA members co-located within an organisation provides for a transparent conduit for information sharing between agencies and allows for project-specific advice to be received almost immediately.</p>	<p>Professional, measured and clear advice</p> <p>The expertise of the OVGA is not only reflected in their technical knowledge, but also in the highly professional manner of their staff, and the measured clarity of advice provided.</p>	<p>Maintaining cross-disciplinary lens within the OVGA</p> <p>OVGA staff understand various disciplines and issues that interrelate with and impact on design delivery.</p>
<p>Attendance by senior members</p> <p>Senior OVGA staff members are visible and active in the industry. This visibility provides a strong signal of the OVGA’s commitment to its cause and helps to garner buy-in from senior members of partnering stakeholders.</p>	<p>Commitment to collaboration and developing strong relationships</p> <p>The OVGA understands that cooperation and collaboration is fundamentally the most successful strategy in achieving its aims. The OVGA commits to fostering strong reciprocal working relationships.</p>	<p>Maintaining internal expertise</p> <p>The high standing and authoritative industry voice of the OVGA is tightly linked to the high calibre of the professionals within the OVGA. The unique and impactful role of the OVGA necessitates continuing to employ staff with these exceptional skills.</p>

5.3 Opportunities to enhance the contribution of the OVGA

As an outcome of the 2018 evaluation, SGS suggested several improvements for how the OVGA could enhance its services. Many of these areas of improvement reflected a desire by engaged stakeholders for the OVGA to further expand its service offering and reach.

Table 6 summarises the recommendations from this previous work, steps the OVGA has taken to respond to each since and identified tasks for further action.

TABLE 6: OVGA RESPONSES TO PAST SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Suggested improvement	OVGA actions/ response	Further work required
Taking a greater strategic role in shaping the future of cities	<p>High level of involvement in design and delivery of funded city-shaping projects such as the Big Build – Transport and the Big Housing Build.</p> <p>Strategic planning and urban design advice on the aspirations for priority precincts (e.g. Arden) and growth cities (e.g. Geelong – CBD strategy and advice on key buildings).</p> <p>Involvement in pilot projects that demonstrate project delivery and policy reform such as Future Homes Design Competition.</p>	Seek opportunities to influence city-shaping strategic planning, urban planning and policy issues, and investment or divestment decision-making processes (e.g. business cases; land disposal and community assets; speculative, future-focussed projects)
Exploring alternative engagement methods	OVGA has undertaken consultation with stakeholders to better tailor engagement methods to project needs (e.g. Big Housing Build).	Moving to an online design review model during COVID-19 pandemic has allowed the OVGA to test alternatives and broaden our reach. Further work will be undertaken to determine the longevity and sustainability of alternative methods.
Tailoring the VDRP process to project delivery stage	The OVGA customises Panel processes to suit project needs.	No further actions identified at this time.
Aligning the advisory panel members' expertise with project requirements	The OVGA tailors Panel member composition to suit a project's requirements.	Undertake a refresh of the panel to include expertise in cultural heritage, structural engineering, etc. Tailor DQT's and UDAP's composition.

Expanding services in regional areas	<p>There has been good take-up of design review by regions that lack capacity and expertise.</p> <p>OVGA has limited capacity and will prioritise projects based on significance and impact.</p> <p>Moving to an online design review model during the COVID –19 pandemic has enabled the OVGA to engage deeply more with regional Victoria and broaden our reach.</p>	Encouraging Local Government and other Responsible Authorities to create design excellence programs which look at embedding design quality initiatives into processes and outcomes.
Addressing tensions between the focus on design, project constraints and commercial realities	The OVGA works with clients to achieve project aims within budget. We provide advice that has an awareness that design decisions are also financial decisions. The OVGA advocates early involvement to assist with decision-making processes around scope and budget alignment.	Consultation with departments indicates an opportunity for a qualitative, design-led approach to business case development and scope definition, value creation and value capture. A similar lens can be applied to feasibility work undertaken in a commercial context.
Ensuring clarity of advice	A specialist adviser was hired to advise OVGA on tailoring advice for the audience and clear messaging.	No further actions identified at this time.
Creating a repository of information and embedding learnings into policy	<p>Since 2018 the OVGA has released several publications including: Good Design Series; Lessons Learned; Case Studies.</p> <p>Updated <i>Government as Smart Client</i>, reflecting topical issues around procurement of high-value-high-risk projects; proposed reforms to the Building Act and impact on design professions.</p> <p>Guidance for local government including best practice procurement and design review processes.</p>	<p>Sharing learnings across government to encourage a holistic and consistent approach to achieving high quality outcomes.</p> <p>Potential collaboration with centralised agencies (e.g. OPV/DTF) to embed learnings, design quality principles and review processes in the investment lifecycle of public projects.</p>
Increased powers/ expanding the remit of the OVGA	<p>Increased influence through increased visibility in design advocacy</p> <p>Expanding OVGA reach through design review of publicly funded projects across government through the VDRP panel process.</p>	No further actions identified at this time.

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2018), *Assessing the impact of the OVGA*

Recent stakeholder engagement identified several additional areas for focus:

Enhance the public profile of the OVGA

Engaged stakeholders suggested the OVGA take a more active approach to raise awareness of the role of the Office and its contributions to improving design outcomes across the state within government. Stakeholders see an important task for the OVGA in building the awareness of the value of good design amongst the public and other built environments professionals (in particular, land use planning and engineering). Greater engagement with the news media was one potential advocacy channel identified.

Provide guidance on 'engaging for design'

As noted above, the OVGA is seen to value and promote the views and contributions of diverse stakeholders. Although recognising that community and stakeholder engagement is not the core mandate of the OVGA, several survey respondents suggested that the OVGA could share learnings, provide guidance and create templates for undertaking consultation for design. Specifically, stakeholders sought advice on engaging with architects, and with First Nation's People and Traditional Owners, on design matters

Improve clarity, consistency and timeliness of design advice for planning assessments:

Frankness and clarity of advice are valued. Stakeholders noted that the best design advice reports provide clear, succinct and theme-based advice, and avoid long or overly descriptive advice that can be subject to misinterpretation. Reports which clearly state key issues and potential solutions are greatly appreciated.

The need for greater clarity, consistency and timeliness of advice to support streamlined planning approvals processes was raised as a matter for consideration. Stakeholders suggested there was a need to ensure greater consistency of advice for projects subject to repeat review, where the composition of a VDRP may change, or where advice shifts over time.

Continue to build relationships in government and industry

The strength of the OVGA's existing working relationships with government and industry, and the potential to further develop these relationships, was identified as a way for the Office to expand its impact.

Relationship building was raised as an area of focus at multiple operational levels. Stakeholders noted that constant vigilance was required in maintaining relationships at the executive level, particularly with leaders within government where there is often considerable staff movement.

It was also noted that support for more longer-term, collaborative forms of working between OVGA staff and other areas of government would be beneficial. Possible approaches suggested by stakeholders included expanding the number of government projects with embedded OVGA team members.

Clarify the relationship between design review and planning assessment processes

For projects that engage with the VDRP, clarity is needed about the design evaluation process and the relationship between the outcomes of design review (VDRP recommendations) and the design requirements of the planning system.

Increase team resourcing and capacity

Stakeholders have raised the need for the OVGA to be well resourced to ensure the Office continues to have sufficient personnel to service the increasing number of significant and priority projects. It was noted that the ability of OVGA is currently limited by staff capacity constraints.

Other matters

Several other relevant suggestions were raised by stakeholders:

- Potential to make findings of VDRP review and review reports discoverable to other government agencies, and to provide publicly available summary reports
- Establish a credit system that provides acknowledgement when OVGA advice is incorporated by project proponents/ design teams (perhaps alluding to an incentive system that motivates design teams to take on board design advice)
- Strengthen influence on issues relating to internal amenity
- Greater involvement in post-occupancy evaluation, research and methods
- Develop a broader design vision for central Melbourne

6. Conclusions and future directions

Delivering good design offers many benefits to the people of Victoria. More than just aesthetic appeal, good design can improve the public good and reduce costs to government.

The analysis undertaken in this report suggests that the OVGA, through its advocacy and advisory functions, plays a significant role in contributing to good design outcomes across the state, providing input into more than \$25 billion in built investments between July 2018 and June 2021.

While it is difficult to estimate an exact value of the benefits generated by the OVGA's services, recent OVGA clients strongly endorse the OVGA's contributions to project outcomes.

OVGA client surveys indicate that the OVGA has 'greatly progressed' or 'greatly improved the design quality' of projects with construction costs of approximately \$17.5 billion.

Survey responses and stakeholder interviews found that clients believe firmly that the OVGA contributes to good design outcomes through the following means:

- Contributing to good design outcomes and the improved progression of 'capital' projects
- Improved consideration of design for 'other' projects³⁹
- Supporting fair and transparent procurement processes
- Supporting good decision-making and government planning approval assessment
- Setting up projects for success (good design governance)
- Valuing diverse perspectives
- Offering design expertise and gravitas
- Building skills through knowledge-sharing

Overwhelmingly feedback received on the OVGA's contributions to project and design outcomes was positive.

With metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria undergoing rapid rates of development, the need for strong advocacy and advice supporting built environment outcomes is paramount. While the need for the OVGA's unique service offering is growing, the OVGA's core funding has remained limited and challenged as government stakeholders change over time.

Ongoing WOVG support through additional funding or financial contributions should be pursued to allow the OVGA to continue its essential work for the Victorian community.

³⁹ Capital projects refer to projects such as: public realm improvements, and development of building or infrastructure assets. 'Other' projects refer to projects such as: policy development, research and advocacy projects.

Appendix A: Estimating the Value of The OVGA's Services

The results of the survey of clients (serviced over the past 3 years) found that 70 per cent of respondents agreed that the OVGA's contributions 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved the design quality of capital projects, and 100 per cent of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that OVGA services helped advocate and drive design quality at a strategic or systemic level for non-capital projects.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to use these results to precisely quantify the value generated by the OVGA given the:

- Collaborative nature of the design process – meaning that the extent to which the OVGA can be attributed to a good design idea is unclear, and
- Responsibility for actual project delivery remains with the OVGA's clients – meaning that these clients should surely be attributed the primary responsibility for delivering good project design.

Consequently, the value of the OVGA might better be examined by examining the degree to which its services reduce project risk. The OVGA's clients highlight that the OVGA improved the confidence of project clients/stakeholders in relation to project design and provided balanced, constructive, and practical design advice. Moreover, our analysis of client survey results indicates that the overall construction cost of projects for which clients 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' OVGA reduced overall delivery risks in the last three years was ~\$14.25 billion. Given that the delivery risks of projects are priced into their construction costs, we have broadly estimated that project risk margins would need to reduce by 0.08 per cent for the OVGA's benefits to outweigh its:

- Service delivery costs (\$6.15 million over three years), and
- Client's costs in engaging with the OVGA (assumed to be two times the OVGA's service delivery costs [SGS 2013, p. 38] including time costs in preparing for, participating in and responding to OVGA services).

Given that project risk margins for construction projects can range between 10 per cent and 25 per cent plus, it is highly likely that the OVGA's services contribute to a collective project risk reduction of >0.08 per cent.

Another way to assess value is to consider how good design elements reduce the overall project lifecycle costs. While the costs of owning and operating a building or infrastructure can vary, research (CABE 2002) indicates that ongoing operating costs (including maintenance) may comprise about 85 per cent of a built project's overall lifecycle costs. Our analysis of OVGA client survey responses highlights that some \$17.5 billion worth of projects had their project designs 'greatly improved' through the OVGA's engagement over the past two years. If the aforementioned relationship between upfront capital costs and operating costs applies to the OVGA's recent projects, an operating cost savings of just

0.008% would need to be generated to make the OVGA's services worthwhile. Again, this seems eminently plausible.

Appendix B: Client survey results

Overview

A survey was circulated to recent clients of the OVGA to help it understand how the office has fulfilled its purpose and to identify how it might improve its service delivery into the future.

The survey comprised 17 questions and received 83 responses: a response rate of 48 per cent from 173 potential respondents.

The survey questions were broadly structured as follows:

- **Personal and contact information:** name, role, organisation, contact email address and contact phone number.
- **Project information:** project title, timing of engagement with the OVGA, depth and method of engagement.

- Assessment of OVGA's **contribution to good design outcomes**, and **stakeholder satisfaction**:

Given the breadth of the OVGA's services and the tailored nature of the Office's contributions, respondents were required to select the appropriate project category, as per below. Subsequent questions relating to design outcomes were tailored to each project category.

- Capital Project (for example, public realm improvements, building or infrastructure asset)
- Other Project (for example, policy development, research or advocacy)

- Likelihood of **future engagement** with the OVGA and **final comments**.

The following sections presents the overall survey results, as well as the results for Capital Projects (81 per cent of survey responses), and Other Projects (19 per cent of project responses).

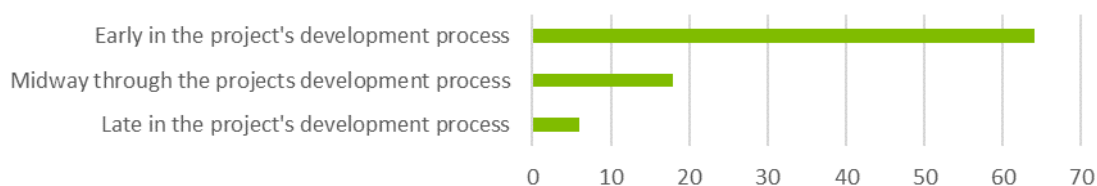
Overall results

The following section presents the combined results for all survey responses.

OVGA engagement timing

As shown in Figure 21, 73 per cent of the respondents engaged the OVGA early in their project's development process. Only 7 per cent of survey respondents engaged with the OVGA late in their project's development process.

FIGURE 21: QUESTION 2.2 - AT WHAT STAGE DID YOUR NOMINATED PROJECT FIRST COME TO THE OVGA?

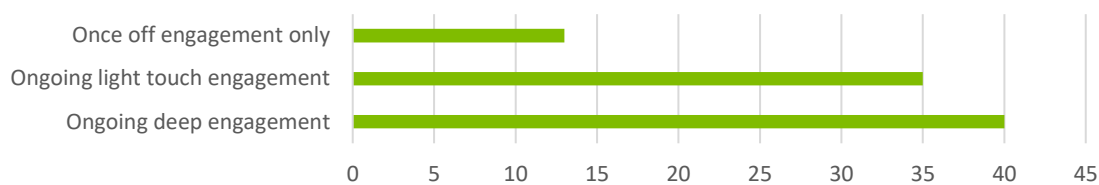


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

OVGA level of engagement

As shown in Figure 22, 85 per cent of the respondents have an ongoing engagement with the OVGA, with over half of them deeply engaging the OVGA. In comparison, only 15 per cent had a once-off engagement with OVGA.

FIGURE 22: QUESTION 2.3 - HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE LEVEL OF OVGA'S ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROJECT?



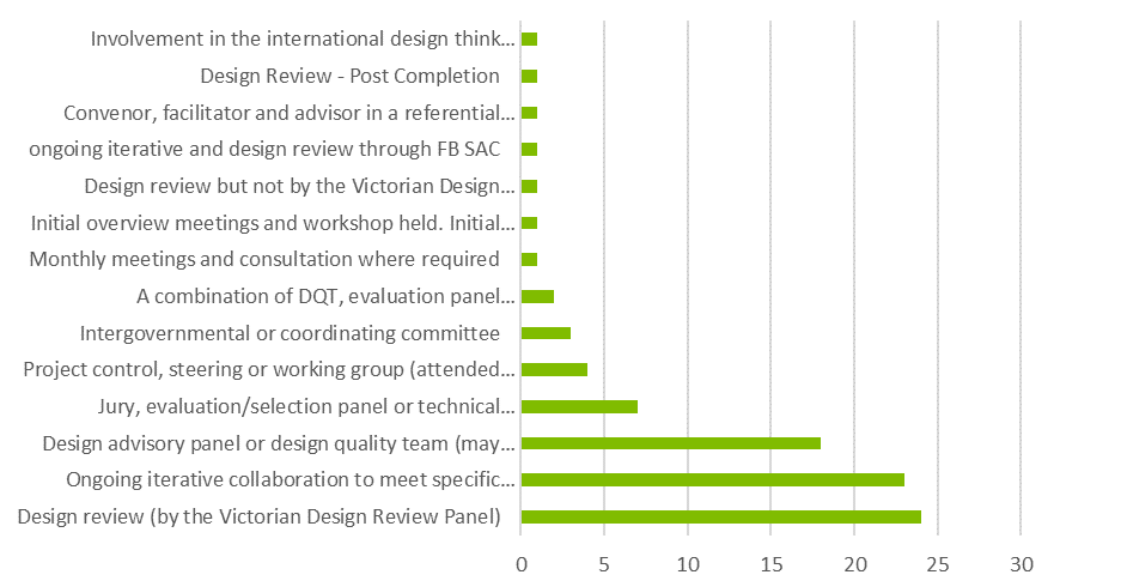
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

OVGA services engaged

As shown in Figure 23, respondents mostly engaged the OVGA through:

- Design review (by the Victorian Design Review Panel) (27 per cent)
- Ongoing iterative collaboration to meet specific project needs (26 per cent).
- Design advisory panel or design quality team (may incl. membership from the Victorian Design Review Panel) (20 per cent)

FIGURE 23: QUESTION 2.4 - WHAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU ENGAGED WITH THE OVGA ABOUT THIS PROJECT?

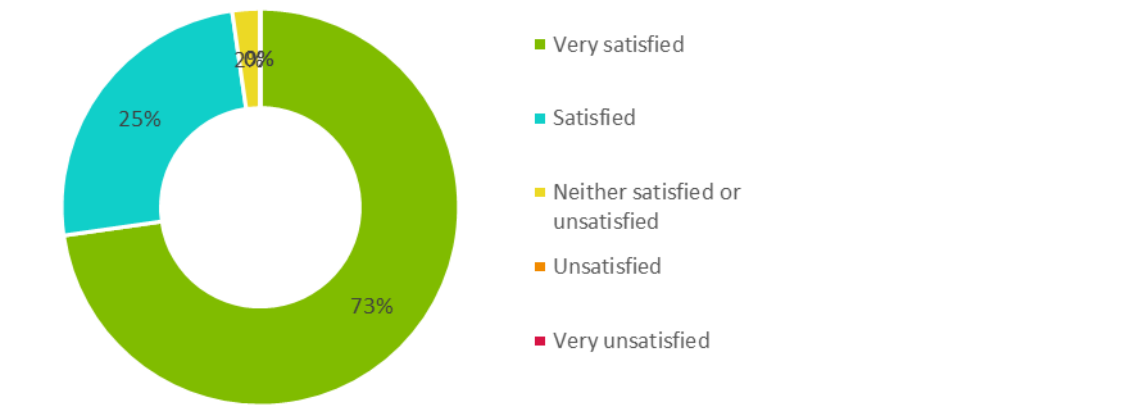


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Stakeholder satisfaction

Almost all (98 per cent) of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the OVGA. No stakeholders indicated their dissatisfaction (Figure 24). It is noted that there were five respondents who indicated “very unsatisfied” in their original survey response. However, when reviewed against responses to other questions in the survey (which presented highly favourable opinions of the OVGA’s performance), it was clear that “very unsatisfied” was selected in error. These responses were accordingly adjusted to “very satisfied”.

FIGURE 24: QUESTION A9/C9: HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OVGA?

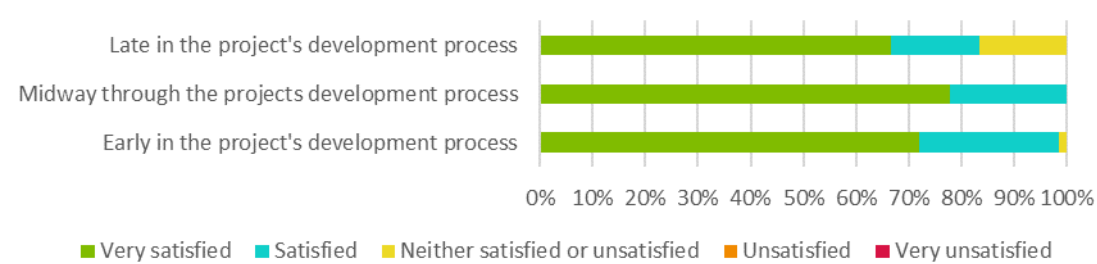


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

There was some variation in depending on the project stage at which the OVGA were engaged (Figure 25). A higher proportion of stakeholders who engaged with the OVGA late in the project process reported being “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” than those who engaged early or midway through a project process.

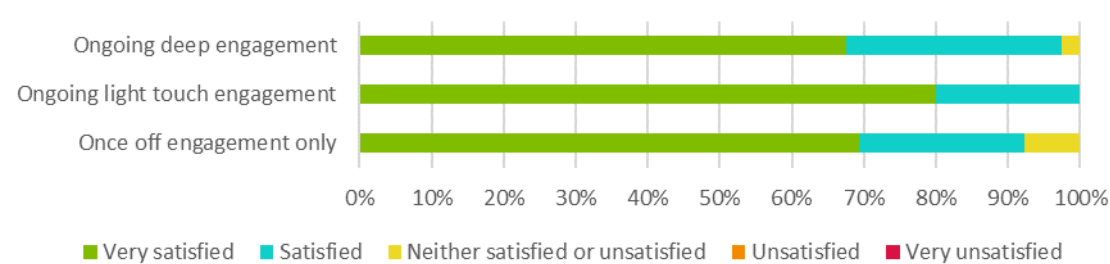
Likewise, stakeholders reported slightly lower levels of satisfaction when engaging with the OVGA as a once-off rather than ongoing engagement (Figure 26).

FIGURE 25: STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION VS ENGAGEMENT TIMING



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

FIGURE 26: STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION VS ENGAGEMENT DEPTH

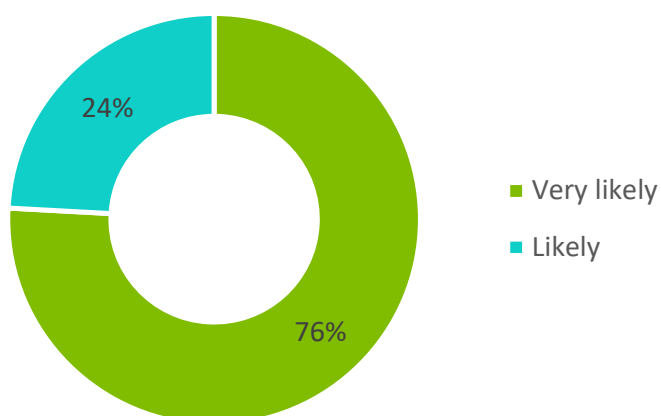


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Likelihood of future engagement

All survey respondents indicated that they would “likely: or “very likely” use the OVGA’s services in the future (Figure 27).

FIGURE 27: QUESTION 3.1 – WOULD YOU USE OVGA’S SERVICES IN THE FUTURE?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

General suggestions for amplifying benefits

Table 7 provides a summary of suggestions for improving the OVGA’s service offering and enhance its impact.

TABLE 7: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT – OVERALL RESULTS

THEME	SUMMARY OF RESPONSES
Service expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Establish regional office– Increase resourcing– Reposition the OVGA to be more central to the process of development in Victoria– Requirement for approval by OVGA for major projects– More embedded in project team during key project stages– Attendance at post-occupancy evaluations– Opportunity to engage with the OVGA at a more granular level with a broader range of representatives.– Need for early involvement, including project conception stages– Ongoing involvement of the OVGA through the progression of projects– Continued involvement at a strategic planning level especially for community assets– Current work focused on projects that are underway or planned. It would be useful for the Office to be involved in more speculative, future focussed work.– Have a role as part of the project delivery when government Business Cases refer to design benefits to gain project approval

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop design vision for central Melbourne, and advice from the OVGA on how reviewed projects “fit in”.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to maintain relationships and build new relationships at executive level. - Work to promote design thinking (in partnership with universities and other institutions) in other built environment professions. - Publishing material to promote the value of design for the public. - Continue to utilise the website to share resources, particularly case studies. - Greater engagement with the media - Strengthen influence on issues related to internal amenity.
Design review by the VDRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional opportunities for review as projects progress - A more “friendly” design review process (review can be intimidating) - Include scope in design review for more tangible credit to be associated with incorporation of OVGA advice - Need for more frank advice - Have greater regard for project cost implications - Adhere to reporting timelines - Nominate project leads/single points of call and accountability to avoid double handling and miscommunication.
Clarity of advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early pre-application coordination with the lead gov agency to ensure advice addresses relevant matters (comments made with reference to ongoing iterative and design review through FB SAC) - Clarification of the relationship / hierarchy of design review report with other advice provided through the development approvals process (comments made with reference to the VDRP) - Provide direct advice regarding design challenges (comments made with reference to design advisory panels or design quality team) - Work with DELWP to develop approval conditions that provide an alternative to obtaining the Planning Minister's approval of urban designs at detailed design stage (comments made with reference to design advisory panels or design quality team) - Consistency of advice (e.g. particularly for repeat reviews of a project where panel members may have changed, or advice varies) (comments made with reference to design advisory panels or design quality team) - Clarity of advice (e.g. the best reports provide clear, succinct and theme-based advice, rather than long descriptive advice that requires deciphering to identify key issues or potential solutions and may lead to difference in interpretations) (comments made with reference to design advisory panels or design quality team)
Team management and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having clear project team reporting lines. - Expand the size of the OVGA team; recognising the existing team is at capacity.
Project management/scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying where there could be stronger alignment between different large-scale projects within the precinct.

- Practical assistance to anticipate potential project delivery risks and delays and working with the project team to actively mitigate risks
- Templates to guide organisations through an engagement process
- Opportunities for collaborative partnerships between OVGA and DELWP
- Develop metrics in the design process and guide achievement of metrics through project governance structure

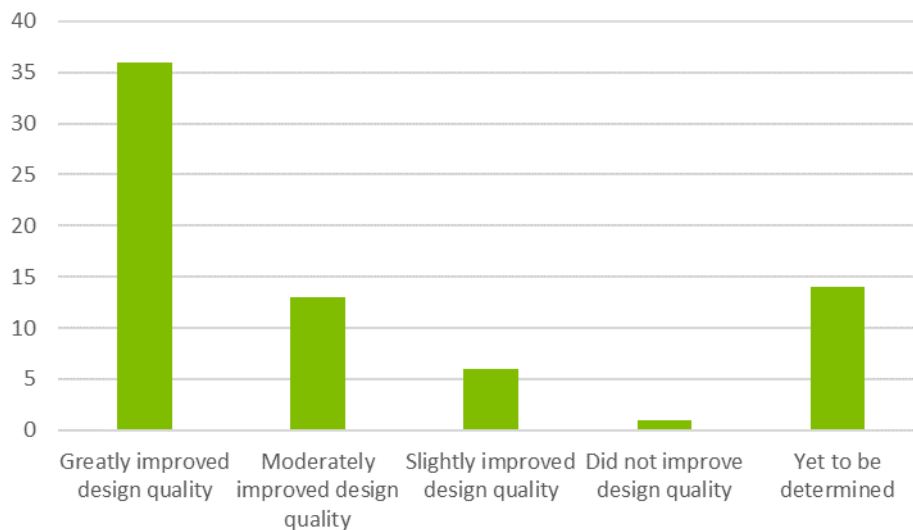
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Capital projects

Contribution to design quality

A survey of recent stakeholders found that 70 per cent of respondents agreed that the OVGA's contributions 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved the design quality of projects (Figure 28). Only one respondent felt that the OVGA's contributions did not improve design quality.

FIGURE 28: TO WHAT DEGREE DID THE OVGA'S SERVICES HELP IMPROVE THE DESIGN QUALITY OF THE PROJECT?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Design quality improvements

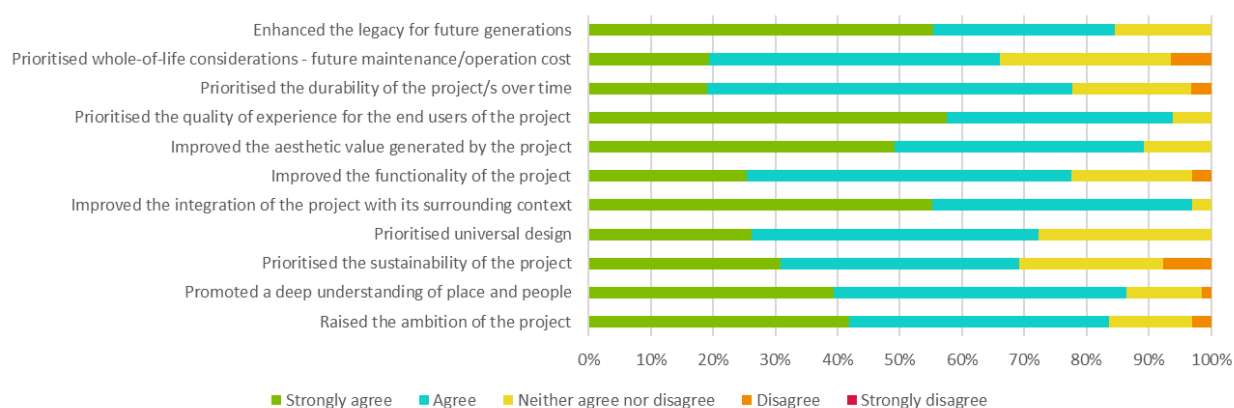
For capital projects, the OVGA displayed positive benefits on design quality across the board, as shown in (Figure 29):

- Improving the integration of projects with the surrounding context (97 per cent agree)
- Prioritising the quality of experience of end users (94 per cent agree)
- Improved the aesthetic value generated by the project (89 per cent agree)

FIGURE 29 OVGA was considered by stakeholders to make the greatest contributions to capital projects with relation to:

- Improving the integration of projects with the surrounding context (97 per cent agree)
- Prioritising the quality of experience of end users (94 per cent agree)
- Improved the aesthetic value generated by the project (89 per cent agree)

FIGURE 29: QUESTION C2 - HOW DID THE OVGA'S INPUT BENEFIT THE DESIGN QUALITY OF THE PROJECT?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Generation of benefits

The following table provides a thematic summary of the benefits generated by the OVGA.

TABLE 8: GENERATION OF DESIGN BENEFITS - CAPITAL PROJECTS

THEME	SUMMARY OF RESPONSES
Shared learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OVGA shares learnings from relevant past projects. – Ability to draw on a wide range of examples and learnings from others to support policy and concept development. – Practical examples of design principles (case studies) and benchmarking against other OVGA and capital projects.
Stakeholder education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OVGA involvement helped to educate and upskill internal government stakeholders. – Enhancing appreciation and importance of design.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OVGA supported greater understanding of design concepts amongst stakeholders, aiding the resolution of issues and overall project progression. – The OVGA is “an independent party [enabling] the Department, project managers and architects on the project to educate the end users on the value of good design and urban planning”.
Expert design advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Independent design advice. – Always bringing conversations back to best design outcomes as baseline. – Early design feedback to flag potential issues. – Provide advice on design integration with broader precinct/ sites, ensuring integration with surrounding context. – Confirmation regarding the design proposition and supporting the project vision. – Clear articulation of design principles. – Challenging designers to “think more broadly”. – Providing insight into the importance and impact of design. – Improved built outcomes (design quality, public realm activation sense of place). – Valuing heritage-built form and supporting design outcomes that better consider and integrate heritage components. – Respected independent voice providing unbiased advice. – Added authority to design and aided broader acceptance. – Supporting adaptable and future proof design. – Providing positive and constructive feedback. – “Maximising the value and quality contribution of each project to the broader community and urban context through enhanced architectural and urban design outcomes”.
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OVGA involvement with and endorsement of design competition and procurement processes provided confidence to stakeholders. – Streamlined developer selection process. – With regard to design competitions, the OVGA “demonstrated to architects that the local Council client was keen to set up a rigorous and respectful process, and one that would encourage key organisations to be a part of.”
Development assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assisted in obtaining statutory approvals. – OVGA advice aids planning assessment discussions with community members and negotiations with developers. – Assisted with government negotiations with developers regarding design aspects. – Informed consideration by the Minister for Planning. – Providing community confidence. <p>Note: These responses were made in relation to formal advice delivered as part of the OVGA’s involvement in juries, design advisory panels and intergovernmental and co-ordinating committees.</p>
Balancing project priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting project partner design aspirations in the context of value management processes. – Balancing input from other areas of expertise within a project (i.e. engineering).
Stakeholder relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Facilitating project partner relationships. – Building consensus. – Cross-government collaboration and support. – Advocacy at the highest levels of government. – Meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners. – OVGA reports aided discussions with Councillors and community members / support for engaging with other government agencies.

Other

- Appreciation of business case and PPP processes.

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Without the OVGA's contributions, respondents felt that the following project design outcomes would have been realised:

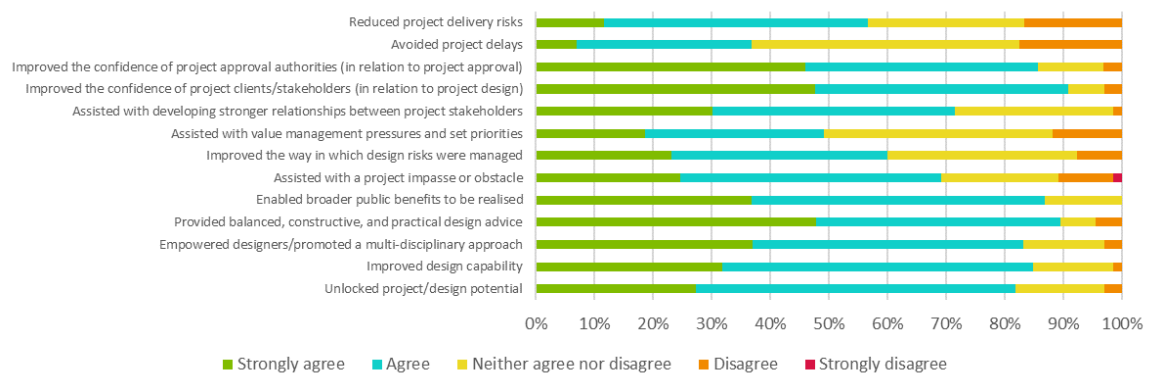
- Poorly designed project scope.
- Poor selection of development consortia through procurement processes.
- Design outcomes that were less "world class", were "engineering-led" or subject to cost management processes.
- Poor or business-as-usual design outcomes that do not appropriately address precinct integration, government design advice, design resolution.
- Less confidence in design outcomes.

Project progression and design process improvements (C6)

Figure 30 shows that OVGA primarily improved the confidence of project clients/stakeholders in relation to project design and provided balanced, constructive, and practical design advice. This is consistent with the engagement benefits for non-capital projects.

However, the OVGA also has slightly less impact on assisting with value management pressures and setting priorities, improving the way which design risks were managed, and reducing project delivery risks. OVGA has had mixed or neutral impact on avoiding project delays and delivery risks.

FIGURE 30: QUESTION C6 - HOW DID THE OVGA'S INPUT ASSIST PROJECT PROGRESSION AND THE DESIGN PROCESS?



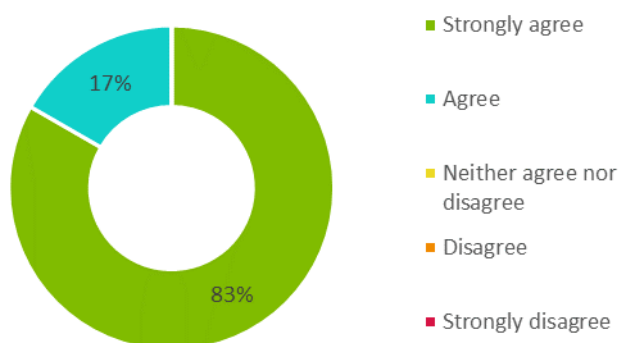
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Other projects

Contribution to design quality

As shown in Figure 31, 100 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that OVGA services helped advocate and drive design quality at a strategic or systemic level. It is noted that there were two respondents who indicated “strongly disagree” in their original survey response. However, when reviewed against the respondent’s responses to other questions in the survey (which presented highly favourable opinions of the OVGA’s performance), it was clear that “strongly disagree” was selected in error. These responses were accordingly adjusted to “strongly agree”.

FIGURE 31: QUESTION A1 - TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: OVGA SERVICES HELPED ADVOCATE AND DRIVE DESIGN QUALITY AT A STRATEGIC OR SYSTEMIC LEVEL.



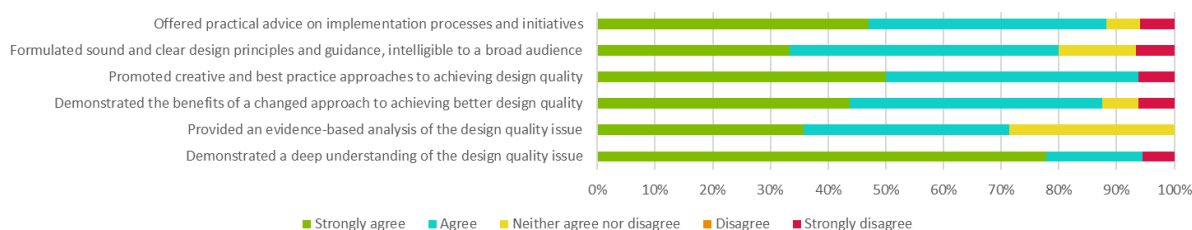
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Design quality improvements

When asked how OVGA’s input helped to achieve the statement in Question A1 (Figure 32), respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that the OVGA:

- Demonstrated a deep understanding of the design quality issue (94 per cent)
- Promoted creative and best practice approaches to achieving design quality (94 per cent)
- Offered practical advice on implementation processes and initiatives (83 per cent)

FIGURE 32: QUESTION A2 - HOW DID THE OVGA’S INPUT ASSIST IN ADVOCATING AND DRIVING DESIGN QUALITY AT A STRATEGIC OR SYSTEMIC LEVEL?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Generation of benefits

Due to the small number of respondents for Other Projects, there were limited qualifying comments related to significant project benefits. Responses received note the following key benefits:

- Providing a strong and authoritative design quality advice and advocacy, and always bringing conversations back to achieving best design outcomes as the baseline
- Helping to build consensus and drive better design outcomes and built form legacy
- Ability to reference a wide range of examples and learnings to support policy and concept development.
- Providing projects with increased gravitas and promoting the wider dissemination of ideas through increased media attention
- Facilitating cross-government collaboration and support
- Providing a common visual language
- Leading approaches to joint advocacy on key issues.

Without the OVGA's contributions, respondents felt that the following project design outcomes would have been realised:

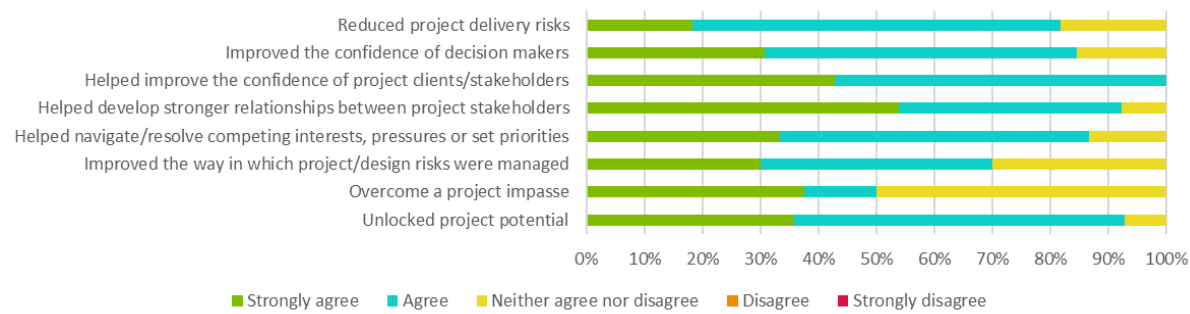
- Architectural perspective and consideration of design quality would have been lost or considered from only a superficial perspective.
- Less interest in the project by government and the media.
- Less confidence in project output
- Loss of independent champion of design
- Project would have taken longer with more resourcing requirements from State government

Project progression and design process improvements

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements to understand how the OVGA's input has or has not benefited the project.

In terms of project progression for non-capital projects, OVGA primarily improved the confidence of project clients/stakeholders and developed strong relationships with them, as shown in Figure 33. However, 50 per cent neither agree nor disagree that OVGA's input helped overcome a project impasse.

FIGURE 33: QUESTION A4 - HOW DID THE OVGA’S INPUT ASSIST PROJECT PROGRESSION?



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Appendix C: Project case studies

Public Housing

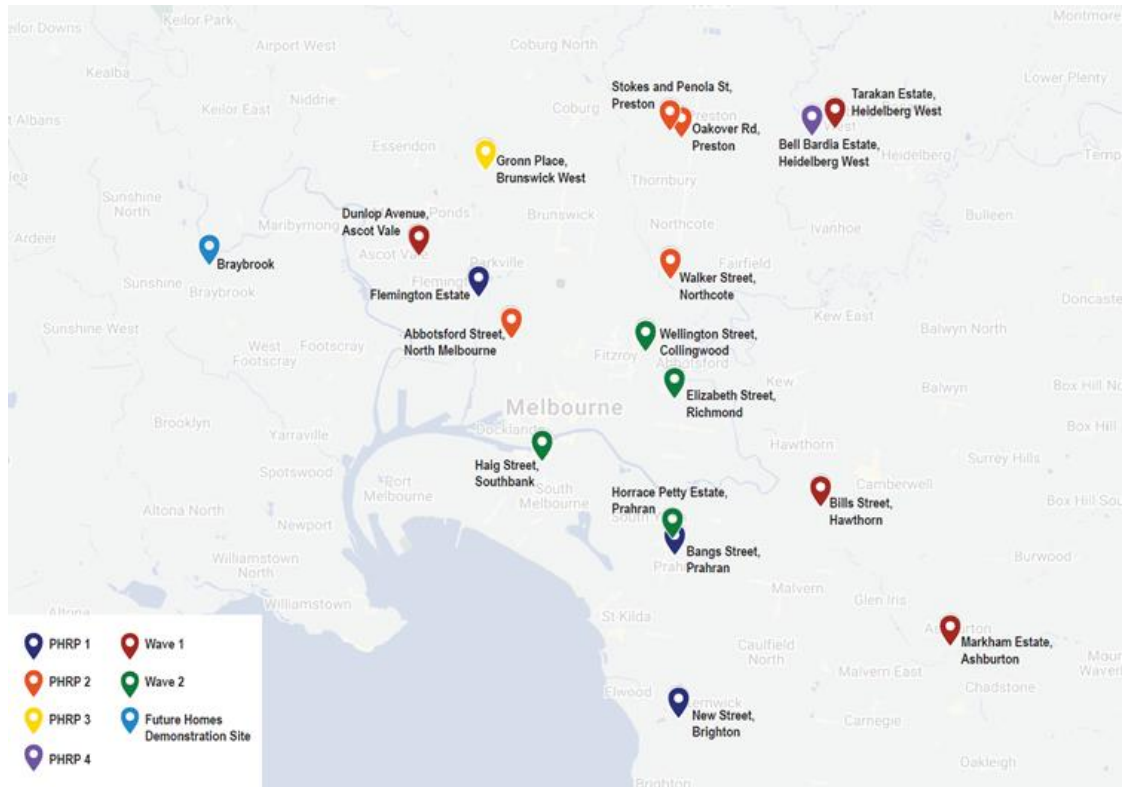


Image: Map illustrating scope of OVGA involvement in new social housing work and related projects. Copyright OVGA.

Project details

Client:	Homes Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) (formerly part of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS))
Project:	Big Housing Build & Public Housing Renewal Program
Sector:	Social and affordable housing
Project phase:	Planning, procurement and design
Location:	Metropolitan Melbourne
Completion status:	In progress

Project description

In the 2020 State Budget, the Victorian Government announced a commitment of \$5.3 billion to build new social housing – the single biggest investment in social housing in Victoria’s and Australia’s history. The package will boost the State’s social housing supply by 10 percent in just four years.

A new government agency, Homes Victoria was established to work across government and sectors to deliver this package and manage existing public housing. The program, called the Big Housing Build (BHB), will construct 12,000 new homes across metropolitan and regional Victoria over a four-year period comprising:

- 9,300 social housing homes replacing 1,100 old public housing units that are no longer fit for purpose; and
- 2,900 new affordable and low-cost homes built to help low-to-moderate income earners.

The OVGA has had significant involvement in the Big Housing Build’s projects known as the Wave 1 and Wave 2 projects.

In addition to the Big Housing Build, the OVGA has also had significant involvement in programs such as the Public Housing Renewal Program (PHRP) currently underway. The PHRP will transform some of the oldest public housing estates across metropolitan Melbourne into vibrant, well connected neighbourhoods with homes that are comfortable, modern and energy efficient. The program will create approximately 1,200 new public housing homes, including social, private, and affordable housing.

The OVGA’s collaborative work with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to deliver the Future Homes design competition has resulted in exemplar apartment building designs that are highly replicable and will be made available to the market with a fast-track planning process. Targeted at maximum replicability across Victoria’s General Residential Zoned (GRZ) suburbs, the OVGA is also supporting DFFH and Homes Victoria in adapting and constructing one of the competition-winning designs as a demonstration project on publicly owned land.



Images: One of the Future Homes competition winning designs that Homes Victoria is adapting and constructing as a demonstration project. Copyright LIAN.

Services provided by OVGA

OVGA services for the Big Housing Build (Wave 1 & Wave 2 projects) include:

- Advising Homes Victoria on lessons learned from the PHRP 1,2,3 and 4 to inform Wave 1 and 2.
- Independent design review of Big Housing Build projects. Design review was aligned with key project milestones and a project-specific consistent design review panel was used.
- The Victorian Government Architect (VGA) was a member of the evaluation panel to select design teams for the Wave 2 projects. The OVGA provided advice on the capability criteria for a shortlist of architects.
- The VGA worked with the panel to assess proposals and recommend preferred architects. Next steps will include design review aligned with key project milestones and a project-specific design review panel for each proposal.

OVGA services for the Public Housing Renewal Program (PHRP) include:

- Co-developing Design Principles and embedding these in the Request for Proposals.
- Reviewing procurement documentation to embed design evaluation criteria prior to going out to market.
- Briefing tenderers on design principles and Government expectations
- Establishing a Design Quality Team (DQT) comprised of experts in housing, architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture drawn from the Victorian Design Review Panel and the OVGA to assist with the evaluation process.
- Supporting interactive tender workshops and negotiations.
- Providing advice on developing concept plans informing planning controls, and on draft planning controls.

Benefits of OVGA involvement in public housing include:

- Across both streams of work (both the Big Housing Build and the PHRP) strong and multidisciplinary design expertise and presence in design review, tender workshops and evaluation processes allows design responses to move beyond a business-as-usual approach and ensures the focus stays on design quality to:
 - Improve the liveability and amenity outcomes of apartments and shared spaces
 - Create better ground floor frontages improving safety and amenity
 - Improve pedestrian and cyclist connections and circulation through sites to assist with navigation and wayfinding.
 - Support an integrated approach to landscape architecture and architecture resulting in better open space
 - Prioritise building massing impacts on the broader context to support contextual fit, neighbourhood integration and enhance existing streetscapes.
 - Encourage refinements to architectural expression that support notions of identity and 'home'.

- Improved asset sustainability and life cycle costs.
- Review and focus on the detail of the designs enables the OVGA to advocate for a higher level of design resolution and improvements to amenity.
- Assisting in a streamlined planning process provides confidence in the design to key decision makers (including DELWP and Council).
- Providing confidence to Homes Victoria that designs achieve the intended aspirations to be good quality and tenure blind.
- Levering other project involvements such as the Future Homes design competition to promote and develop a demonstration project on publicly owned land creates significant opportunities for housing more broadly. Given DFFH's significant land holdings of similar sites, there is significant opportunity for a pipeline of a suburban Future Homes public housing renewal projects. The OVGA is advocating for this approach to increase supply.

Key lessons learnt

- The recognition by Homes Victoria and project managers of the importance of good design has been identified as key in achieving the program's ambition and ensuring project teams design expectations throughout the project process.
- An ongoing role for the OVGA in the design development and delivery phases may be beneficial to ensure project ambitions are retained.
- Design teams who used VDRP panellists as a resource and the design review process as an opportunity for design discussion benefited most from the process.
- Panellists with hands on recent housing experience gives assurance about the quality of the designs. It also de-risks the implementation and ensures that the advice is current.
- Knowledge sharing of common design themes and issues, amongst design teams, Homes Victoria and OVGA builds capability and skill. Developing a clear strategy for capturing and sharing knowledge is a priority.
- Further demonstration of the creation of good homes for people to live in is required.

Federation Square Review



Project details

Client:	Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions/Creative Victoria
Sector:	Civic & Cultural / Tourism - Strategic Design Issues
Location:	Melbourne
Completion status:	Completed (August 2020)

Project description

In April 2019, the Victorian Government launched a comprehensive Review of Federation Square overseen by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).

The review was considered necessary as Federation Square, which is principally self-funded, faced increasing financial pressure to meet significant asset maintenance and renewal costs. As a result, over time FSPL has increasingly prioritised commercial activities over community, cultural or artistic activities.

Also, at this time, after concerns regarding several proposed building projects across the larger site, the Heritage Council of Victoria found *'Federation Square is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and should be included in the register for its historical, aesthetic, technological and social significance'*.

The OVGA led the *Stream One: Public Purpose and Built Form* review, collaborating with the *Stream Two: Financial Base and Governance* investigations led by Tim Eddy.

The review examined the core purpose of Federation Square and how the built environment, governance and operational arrangements could be strengthened to meet community and stakeholder expectations and the demands of a complex community asset.

The review identified recommendations for:

- A community-informed vision that defines Federation Square's core civic and cultural purpose
- Design principles and strategies that acknowledge the heritage status of the place and enhance the built environment
- Improvements to governance arrangements
- A more sustainable business and operating model

Services provided by OVGA

- Led Stream One of the Federation Square Review, tasked to consider the public purpose and built form of the place
- Took part in consultation processes with community, tenants, and stakeholders - overseen by specialist community engagement consultants Capire.
- Established a panel of design and city experts to guide built form research and contribute to an agenda of short-term and long-term opportunities and reform.
- Preparation of the Principles for Change report, accompanying the Conservation Management Plan and Statement of Design Principles.

Benefits generated by the OVGA

- Expanded the scope to include an understanding of the public purpose of Federation Square and its role within a broader arts and cultural precinct.
- Prepared precinct-wide design principles and strategies that sought to connect Federation Square with experiences found in surrounding precincts (in recognition of the original design ambition).
- Identified and elevated the need to commit to processes and structures of good design governance and care.
- Provided a flexible framework of principles and strategies to guide the built-environment and programming that allows for future enhancement and change while acknowledging the heritage status of the site.
- Advocated a strengthened focus on respecting and celebrating the unique architecture of the buildings on site and Victoria's First Peoples and Traditional Owners culture (art, heritage and continuing education to the site) and making it core to Federation Square's future.
- Reinforced the need to align government stewardship of Federation Square with that of other major civic and cultural institutions within the creative industries portfolio.
- Promoted a collaborative approach to coordinate with tenants and the adjacent precincts more strategically.

- Initiated a catalogue of previous proposals for revisioning works in and around Federation Square to bank previous investigations and design thinking that may inform future planning.

Key lessons learnt

- Significantly more time is required to achieve meaningful engagement with First Peoples
- Early and separate engagement with tenants and key stakeholders (outside of formal engagement strategy) was key to receiving frank and first-hand insights into the operations of FSPL.
- More time and engagement with key external stakeholders are required to get sign-off or in-principle agreement on the more ambitious precinct propositions and long-term ambitions related to traffic management and car parking.

Victorian Design Review Panel



Image: Design Review in action – from left to right, Kirsten Thompson, Billie Giles-Corti, Tony Styant-Browne, Ron Jones, John Denton and Jill Garner.

Program details

Client:	State Government and Local Government
Sector(s):	All
Project phase:	Jul 2018 - Jun 21 (Established in 2012)
Completion status:	Ongoing
Location:	Victoria

Program description

The Victorian Design Review Panel (VDRP) was established by the OVGA in 2012 as a service to government to provide expert independent peer review of built environment projects. Since its inception, the VDRP has reviewed hundreds of state significant projects in Victoria.

Design review is an internationally tried and tested process that improves the quality of design outcomes in the built environment.

The VDRP currently consists of 78 experienced professionals selected through a rigorous process. Architects, urban designers, landscape architects, planners, as well as specialists in sustainability, accessibility, health, place making, heritage, indigenous heritage and master planning allow for multidisciplinary input.



Image: The OVGA's VDRP comprises experts in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and planning, along with technical specialists in sustainability, accessibility, health, placemaking, cultural and indigenous heritage and art.

Design review by the VDRP is an independent and impartial process that provides advice on the design of new buildings, landscapes, public spaces, and strategies. It draws on the experience of the expert panel. Design review is a free and confidential service.

Services provided by the OVGA's VDRP

In addition to Design Review, the VDRP process supports the OVGA in projects as follows:

- Peer review and advice on projects including feasibility, master planning and business case development.
- Review of project briefing requirements – embedding design quality ambitions within briefs.
- Participation in procurement processes including selection processes, interactive tender workshops, and tender evaluation.
- Participation in design workshops and competition juries to select and advance the design outcomes of significant projects

Benefits generated by the OVGA's VDRP

Design Review by the VDRP offers breadth of expert insight as well as support. The strength of design advice through the VDRP lies in its independence, objectivity, and ability to analyse a scheme within the context of wider good practice and knowledge. Expert peer review will highlight design strengths, challenge weaknesses and can lead to quicker negotiation of processes that can facilitate and expedite

project delivery. Design teams, stakeholders and decision-makers benefit from the constructive input of design review.

Common positive themes emerging from review are:

- Support and an increase in confidence of stakeholders and decision-makers in delivering high quality, inspiring developments and public spaces that meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- Support and encouragement of good designs and innovative proposals.
- An increase in commitment to improved public amenity.
- Effective site analysis informing contextually appropriate design.
- Support in the recognition of good design outcomes and, when exercising discretion, the appropriate weight that might be applied to outstanding or innovative solutions that benefit the area.
- Design quality better supported in the procurement process.
- Benchmarks and case studies of other projects that have been done well.

Other benefits generated by the VDRP include:

- Provides an accessible pool of design experts in the design and built environment industry.
- Increases the capacity and scope of the OVGA's activities enabling it to be more impactful.
- Skills up industry when engaging and designing for government.
- Encourages the design profession to do their best.
- Builds understanding within industry how to engage with government projects.
- Helps to build a design culture and elevate expectations for good design.
- Supports state government, local government, and other decision makers enabling access to a centralised, prequalified and government-endorsed panel of quality design professionals for peer review of projects.

Amplifying the OVGA's impact

Design review is an important part of many Government projects but is not used by all departments. For example, the Department of Education produces many significant buildings but has only used design review in a limited way. For wide usage design review relies in part on individuals to champion its use and endorse the positive impact on design.

Design review has most impact when used at an early project stage, and when follow up design reviews use the same panel providing continuity of advice. Sometimes projects do not return to design review when the projects could benefit.

Clarity is sometimes needed about the process of design evaluation. Design review is complementary to the planning scheme, but it is not a regulatory process. The OVGA/design review team could better

articulate the basis for design evaluation to help some departments and teams better understand the process.

Key lessons learnt

The VDRP provides expert design review of projects at key stages of the design and development process. Design review is most effective early in the project process when ideas are fluid and there is openness to the process. Changes can be adapted more easily, and the value and quality of a design proposal increased before the cost of changes outweighs the benefits gained. Therefore, projects are encouraged to come to review at an early stage, then at key stages or milestones in the design process. However, design review has value throughout the entire project life cycle. Design review has a different focus and impact depending on project phase.

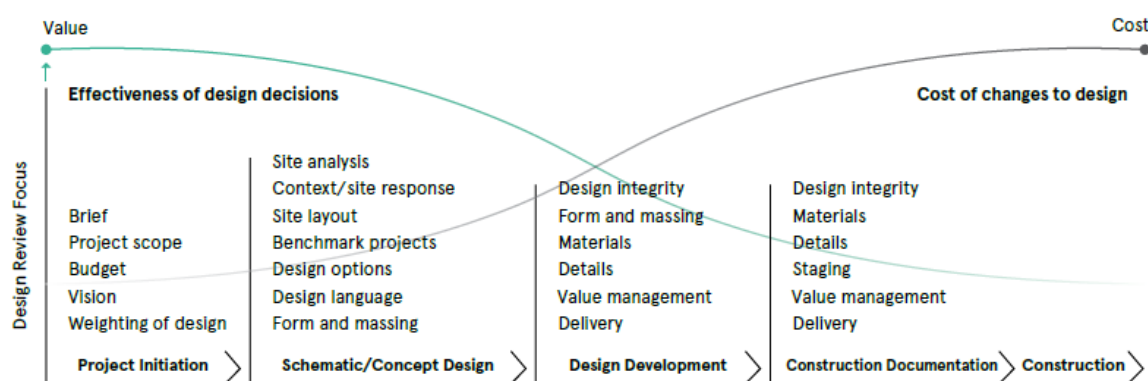


Image: Design review has a different focus and impact depending on project phase. Copyright OVGA.

The design review team has adapted the design review process to suit projects and client needs. This has also included running design review online for the past year. Adaptation of the process for less formal reviews and on-the-spot feedback has also been used for stakeholders such as DELWP who want design assurance but come to projects with a strong built environment foundation.

The following common design quality issues and lessons have emerged from the design review process:

- A clear vision for the project early in the design process is needed to drive the design outcome.
- A masterplan helps integrate a project with the broader precinct.
- Site analysis and consideration of the context are an integral part of the siting and design response. It should inform the design principles and the site strategy,
- The project should respond respectfully to the heritage elements on and around the site.
- Occupiable building frontage should be maximised to contribute to an active ground plane and positive pedestrian experience.
- Broader urban renewal opportunities should be realised in significant infrastructure projects.
- An integrated multidisciplinary approach to architecture and landscape architecture and allied professions is needed.

- Functional requirements and public contribution need to be balanced.
- Cultural narrative is important in any project. The design should consider connection to Country.
- The delivery of high-quality outcomes must be understood to be equal to issues of time and cost.
- Consideration should be given to procurement methods that give both client and architect better control and certainty of what will be delivered and at what cost.
- There are significant gaps in the Victorian Planning Policy Framework and Provisions around design quality (e.g. the OVGA has reviewed several planning applications and a common theme is the difficulty in arguing for design quality – there are few hooks in the planning regulatory framework that articulate the features of good design, particularly architectural and urban design. Design review often highlights examples and case studies of good design)
- Environmentally Sustainable Design features need to be integrated early and not be an optional extra.

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