

# Evaluating the benefits of the OVGA

Office of the Victorian Government Architect

December 2025



Cover image: Bang Street, Prahran / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, Photography: Tom Blachford



Independent  
insight.



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# Contents

1.	Introduction.....	8
1.1	Introducing the OVGA.....	8
1.2	Government and good design .....	9
1.3	Purpose and scope of this report .....	10
2.	The value of good design.....	11
2.1	What is good design? .....	11
2.2	The value of good design.....	11
3.	OVGA service profile.....	14
3.1	OVGA organisational context and funding.....	14
3.2	OVGA services overview .....	15
3.3	OVGA service delivery .....	17
3.4	Design Review.....	22
3.5	Urban Design Advisory Panels .....	23
3.6	Performance indicators .....	23
4.	Benefits generated by the OVGA.....	26
4.1	Overview.....	26
4.2	OVGA generation of good design benefits .....	28
4.3	OVGA success factors .....	43
4.4	Opportunities to enhance the contribution of the OVGA.....	44
5.	Summary and conclusion.....	46
5.1	Collaboration on Heritage & Planning Approvals .....	47
5.2	Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project.....	50
5.3	Frankston Hospital redevelopment .....	53
5.4	Ground Lease Model 1: Bangs Street, Prahran.....	56
5.5	Post occupancy evaluation of schools .....	62
5.6	Development Facilitation Program.....	65
5.7	Future Homes.....	69
5.8	Metro Tunnel Project .....	73
5.9	Overview.....	77

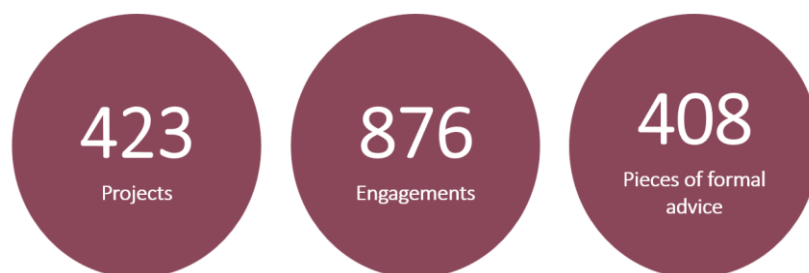
5.10	Results summary .....	77
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# Executive summary

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA or the Office) is Victoria's expert advisor for exemplary design in Victoria's public places and buildings.

The OVGA is a division with specialist design expertise located within Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). Its core multidisciplinary team provides advocacy, advice, and expert review to ensure state and locally significant projects deliver long-term economic, social, and environmental value to the Victorian community.

Despite its small team size, the Office continues to deliver a significant and impactful body of work. Between July 2021 and June 2025, the Office completed 876 engagements across 423 individual projects with a combined value of approximately \$130 billion. This included 408 pieces of formal advice through the design review process.



To expand the team's expertise and reach, OVGA draws on an expert pool of over 70 leading built environment specialists. Experts cover different building types, design and construction stages, project scales, procurement models and technical areas. The diversity and quality of the experts allow OVGA to match design review expertise with project needs.

**Evaluations over the past 10 years have demonstrated that the OVGA consistently delivers benefits to the Victorian community.**

SGS Economics and Planning has conducted three evaluations of the OVGA's services over the past decade. These have consistently identified OVGA's contribution to improved design processes and outcomes across public and private sector projects.

This evaluation, examining activities over the past four financial years, highlighted that the OVGA continues to generate significant benefits and public value for Victorians by:

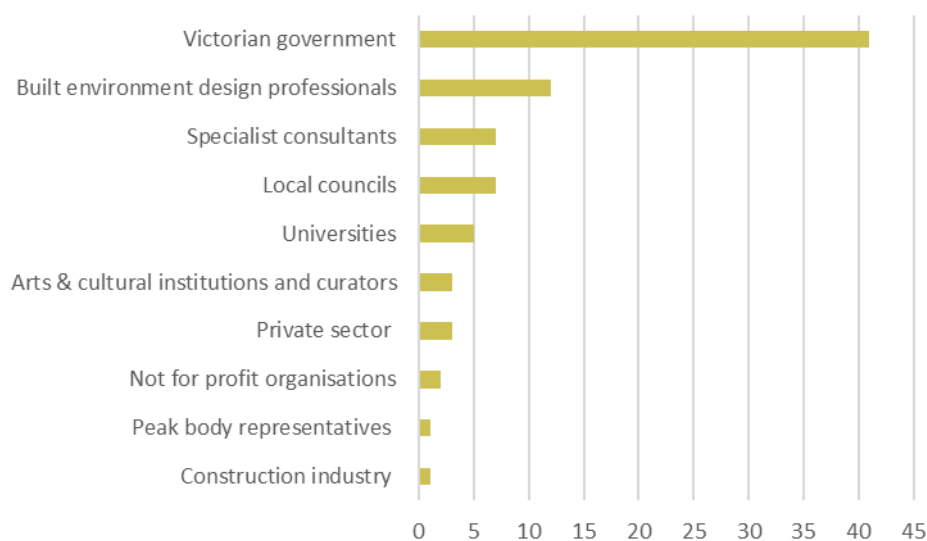
- **Maintaining social license and public trust in Government projects:** Involvement of the OVGA in major projects provides assurance to project clients, government decision makers and Victorian communities that design processes and built form outcomes will be robust and serve the public interest.

- **Creating public value through exemplary design for long-term impact:** The OVGA consistently promotes whole-of-life project considerations by encouraging design decisions that prioritise long-term performance, adaptability, and community value beyond immediate project pressures.
- **Providing design expertise for practical impact and problem-solving:** The expertise of the OVGA team and the Office’s strong reputation enable it to engage effectively with clients and design professionals on major projects, offering practical, informed advice and ensuring consistent, high-quality design direction throughout all phases of the project lifecycle.
- **Advocating for good design, procurement and delivery capability:** Through policy submissions, presentations, events, and publications, the OVGA promotes the value of design by translating specialist knowledge into accessible, practical guidance for a broad range of stakeholders.

Clients continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the OVGA, with 90% reporting being ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ and 90% stating that they are ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to use OVGA services again in the future.

These findings are based on survey responses from 84 project clients and stakeholders who have engaged with the OVGA across the reporting period. Respondents represented a diverse range of organisations (Figure 1), with those from the Victorian Government representing 14 different departments, agencies and authorities (listed below). In addition to the survey, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals involved in one of the seven case study projects (summarised in Appendix B).

**Figure 1: Number of survey respondents, by organisational type, 2025**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

**As the governance environment in Victoria grows more complex, it is essential that governments maintain a clear focus on good design to ensure enduring public value.**

The value of good design is often underestimated, especially in the context of a challenging fiscal environment. Taking a long-term and holistic view, good design processes and decisions play a key role in addressing many of the challenges faced by governments. Good design processes and outcomes:

- Reduce whole-of-life project costs for government and the community
- Promote transparency and mitigate short and long-term project risks
- Facilitate sound decision-making and social licence
- Realise the full benefits of major public infrastructure investments for the community
- Promote environmental and social sustainability.

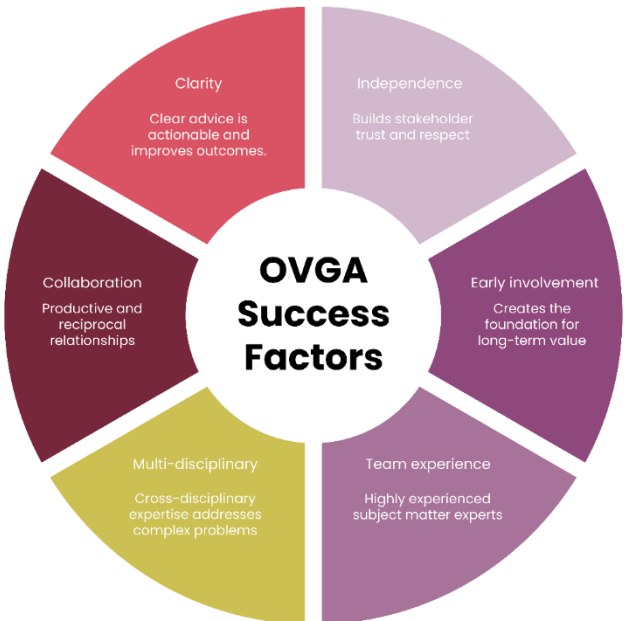
Quantifying the exact value of the benefits generated by the OVGA to the Victorian Government and community is difficult, given the complex and collaborative nature of major project delivery processes. However, the OVGA would need only to reduce project risks by 0.05% for the OVGA’s benefits to outweigh its service delivery costs. This outcome is likely, given:

- 64% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA helped to manage design risks
- 44% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA reduced project delivery risks
- 40% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA helped to overcome a project impasse.

Despite consistently demonstrating the benefits to Victoria, the OVGA continues to face budget and staffing constraints, as well as operating uncertainties. This evaluation of the OVGA’s services highlights the key factors driving its sustained impact and success (Figure 2). Foremost among these are the retention of the core team’s design expertise and experience, and the Office’s sustained role as an independent advisor and advocate within Government (Figure 2).

The Office’s ability to sustain these and continue delivering value to the Victorian public sector requires stable and consistent funding.

**Figure 2: Factors for OVGA success and impact**



# 1. Introduction

This report presents an evaluation of the services provided by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect from July 2021 to June 2025.

## 1.1 Introducing the OVGA

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA or the Office) is Victoria’s expert advocate and advisor for exemplary design in Victoria’s public places and buildings.

The OVGA is a division with specialist expertise located within the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). OVGA works across government in Victoria – including local and state government, as well as public authorities – to ensure that significant projects are well designed and deliver long-term economic, social, and environmental value for the Victorian community. It does this through its core functions: advocacy and advice, which include expert design review.

The OVGA recognises that good design is both a deliberate process and a considered outcome that integrates function, amenity, context, visual and aesthetic appeal, along with enduring value. It aims to promote the creation of public spaces, places and buildings that:

- Are functional and integrated
- Are environmentally and socially sustainable
- Are resilient to climate change and support the shift to zero emissions
- Are inclusive, engaging, and diverse
- Support community confidence, health, and wellbeing
- Celebrate culture and bring joy
- Are flexible and able to adapt over time
- Deliver long-term financial value.<sup>1</sup>

OVGA clients and stakeholders span various government departments and delivery agencies, including portfolios such as housing, health, justice, education, transport, precincts, government procurement, regions, and local government, as well as industry and the private sector through its advocacy and the planning approval process.

The OVGA also has national reach and impact through the Government Architect Network of Australia (GANA) – a formalised, national collaborative exchange that meets regularly to share valuable information and transfer knowledge and research. In 2025, Government Architects across Australia, through GANA, were awarded the

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<sup>1</sup> OVGA (2023), *The Government Architect’s Office*.

National President's Prize by the Australian Institute of Architects for their 'exceptional leadership and dedication in the field of architecture and urban design. Their contributions have significantly shaped the built environment of Australia, enhancing the quality of life for all Australians and setting standards for good design, great architecture, and sustainable, resilient cities.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Government and good design

The role of governance and government is becoming increasingly complex, shaped by a growing number of responsibilities and evolving public expectations. Building and maintaining social licence is more important than ever. At the same time, governments are operating in a constrained fiscal environment, often required to do more with less. The level of risk has increased, and the pace of change, particularly in relation to climate and environmental pressures, is accelerating. Longstanding legacy issues – such as infrastructure deficits and social inequality – are becoming more urgent, requiring thoughtful and coordinated responses.

Within this context, the value of good design is often underestimated. Taking a long-term and holistic view, good design decisions play a key role in addressing many of the challenges faced by government. Good design processes and outcomes:

- Reduce whole-of-life costs to government and the community
- Promote transparency and reduce short and long-term risk
- Facilitate sound decision-making and enhance social licence
- Promote environmental and social sustainability.

Governments concerned with creating long-term benefits in the public interest must maintain a focus on good design. The Victorian Government is the largest procurer of design services in the state, with enormous impact on the construction industry and on Victoria's standing as a state with which to do business.<sup>3</sup> The Victorian Budget 2025/26, Budget Paper No.2, identified the significant investment by the Victorian Government over the past 20 years (Figure 3).<sup>i</sup>

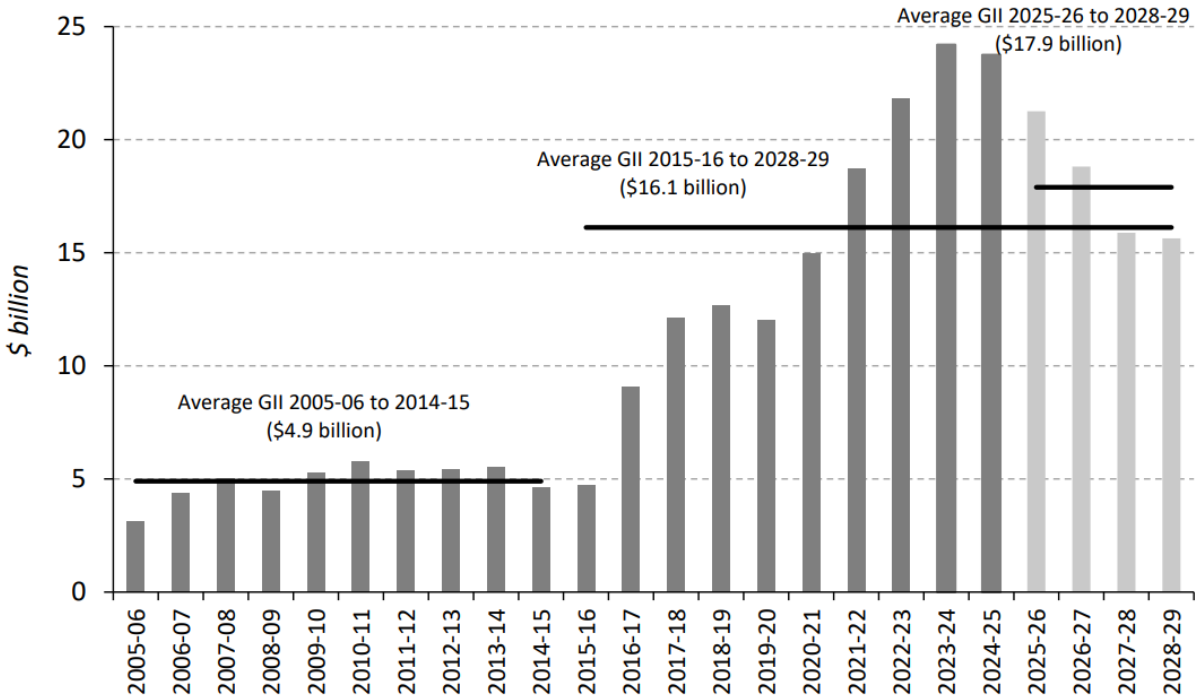
Also included is the projected future investment to 2028-29. While total state infrastructure investment is expected to reduce over the coming years, the total value of projects remains high compared to historic rates. Such significant investment in public infrastructure projects emphasises the need for Victoria to lead by example, setting a high design standard in its projects and ensuring quality outcomes reinforce Victoria's reputation for innovation and liveability.

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Architects (2025), National President's Prize. Available: <https://www.architecture.com.au/prizes/national-presidents-prize#:~:text=Its%20work%20has%20not%20only,awarded%20the%20National%20President's%20Prize>:

<sup>3</sup> Source: OVGA (2021), Government as Smart Client, Edition 03.

Figure 3: Government infrastructure investment (GII), Victoria, 2005-06 to 2025-2026



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance (2025), State Budget, Strategy and Outlook, Budget Paper no. 2

Notes:

Includes general government net infrastructure investment and the estimated cash flows for public private partnership projects.  
 Includes the estimated private sector construction-related expenditure associated with the North East Link held in the PNFC sector.  
 Excludes the impact of the medium-term lease over the operations of the Port of Melbourne and the divestment of Victoria’s share of Snowy Hydro Limited.

### 1.3 Purpose and scope of this report

This report evaluates the OVGA’s impact from July 2021 to June 2024, aiming to support future positioning, funding, and resourcing to maximise the benefits of good design.

Following this introduction, the remaining chapters of this report include:

- **Section 2** reviews literature on the benefits of good design in the built environment
- **Section 3** outlines the OVGA’s main services, advocacy, and advisory activities
- **Section 4** summarises feedback from clients and stakeholders on the OVGA’s impact and opportunities for improvement
- **Section 5** highlights the report’s main findings and provides conclusions.

## 2. The value of good design

This section provides an updated summary of the literature on the value of good design and the benefits of design-led approaches in government.

### 2.1 What is good design?

The concept of ‘good design’ is often mistaken for a narrow band of its overall purview. 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:<sup>ii</sup>

- **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 embedded and applied throughout the lifecycle of a project, from initial concept phases through to project delivery and beyond, including long-term operation and maintenance.

### 2.2 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 wellbeing 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.<sup>iii</sup> Good design can have wide-reaching benefits – from increased activity in the public realm to cost 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 creates well-integrated, accessible places that enhance social well-being and civic pride. In contrast, poor design can result in long-term, substandard environments that are less inclusive, functional, and appealing for communities and users.<sup>iv v vi</sup>
- **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.<sup>vii</sup>
- **Education:** Well-designed buildings and classrooms have been shown to improve learning and test score outcomes.<sup>viii</sup> Design factors including colour, choice, complexity, flexibility, light and connectivity have been shown to impact a student's learning progress by 25%, with the difference between the best- and worst-designed classrooms equal to a full year of academic progress.<sup>ix</sup>
- **Health:** Good design in hospitals has been shown to help patients recover more quickly, reduce stress in hospital staff, improve staff performance and retention, and reduce operational costs.<sup>x xi xii xiii</sup>
- **Housing:** Elements such as daylight penetration, natural ventilation, noise reduction, and thermal comfort provide wide health and economic benefits to residents.<sup>xiv xv</sup> At the neighbourhood scale, good design can foster social connection through quality architecture, natural environments, and community involvement.<sup>xvi</sup>
- **Economics and employment:** Good urban design can promote physical and social regeneration and attract and retain employment in an area, supports physical and social regeneration and helps attract and retain jobs.<sup>xvii</sup> Elements like quality lighting and air circulation can boost productivity by up to 20%.<sup>xviii xix</sup>

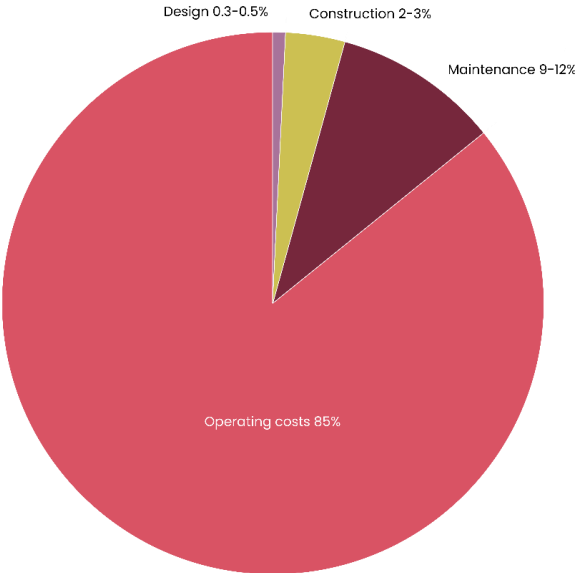
### Reduced long-term costs to government

Good design in public projects benefits the community by reducing long-term costs. The operating and maintenance costs of a building (in this case, an office building) account for most costs incurred across its lifetime (Figure 4). 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.<sup>xx</sup> Operating and maintenance costs vary as a proportion of overall costs by building and infrastructure type; however, the relationship between these cost categories is 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.”<sup>xxi</sup>

**Figure 4: TYPICAL LIFECYCLE COSTS OF AN OFFICE BUILDING**



Source: Government as Smart Client (Edition 03, 2024), OVGA

## 3. OVGA service profile

The OVGA delivers a diverse range of advocacy and advisory services across multiple sectors, clients, and locations. This section provides a summary of this service profile.

### 3.1 OVGA organisational context and funding

The OVGA is a division with specialist design expertise located within the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). OVGA's team profile comprises 16 multidisciplinary professional roles with expertise across architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and planning, as well as one business support role.

To expand the team's reach, OVGA is supported by an expert pool of over 70 leading built environment specialists. Experts cover different building types, design and construction stages, project scales, procurement models and technical areas. The diversity and quality of the experts allow OVGA to match design review expertise with project needs.

The OVGA is funded through a mix of ongoing and fixed-term funding sources. Its core ongoing funding is provided via State Budget output appropriations. In the period July 2021 to June 2025, OVGA has experienced significant changes to its governance and funding arrangements.

In late 2021, whilst OVGA was an Administrative Office attached to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), OVGA secured financial contributions from government departments through the Victorian Secretaries Board (VSB) to support OVGA's whole-of-government activities for the period July 2021 to June 2024 – a funding arrangement in place since 2016.

In May 2022, OVGA's core ongoing funding was reduced by 42%, from \$1.3 million to the current \$0.7 million per annum. The lower target reflected savings applied as part of DPC's acquisition of whole-of-government efficiencies.

On 1 January 2023, machinery of government changes took effect, which saw OVGA transferred from DPC to DTP. In this new context, OVGA received fixed-term funding tied to its involvement in delivering priority Government policies and programs, such as *Victoria's Housing Statement: The Decade Ahead 2024-2034* (September 2023). This includes funding for resources to support the expansion of the Future Homes initiative, implementation of the Great Design Fast Track planning pathway and the expansion of the Development Facilitation Program (DFP), with these allocations running from September 2023 to June 2027.

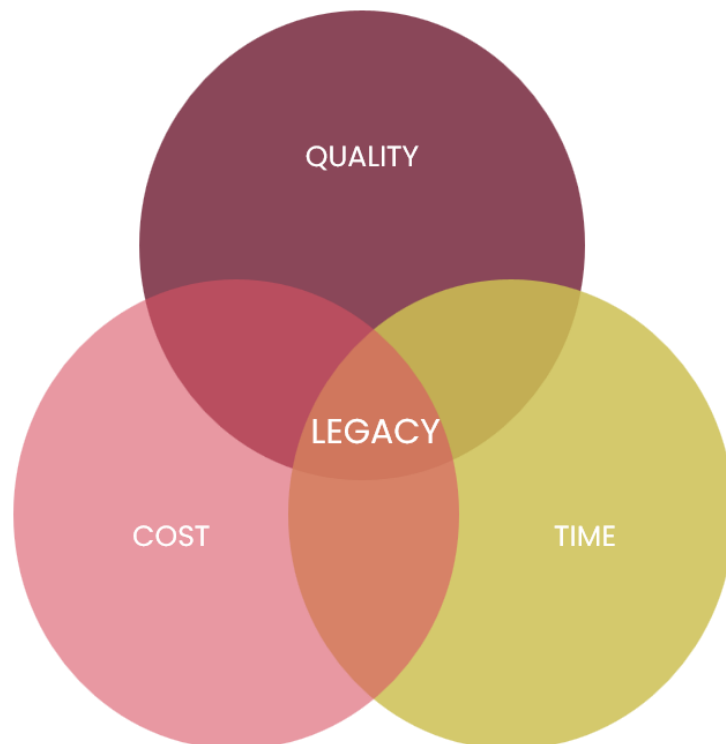
In addition, formal funding arrangements have been in place since 2016 to support OVGA's design advisory input on major infrastructure projects delivered by the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA; formerly the Major Transport Infrastructure Program), including the Level Crossing Removal Project, North East Link Project, West Gate Tunnel Project and the Metro Tunnel Project. This funding will carry over through to June 2027.

On 30 June 2024, OVGA was abolished as an Administrative Office in relation to DTP and integrated as a division of the Department.

### 3.2 OVGA services overview

The OVGA collaborates with government departments to help deliver long-term community value through Victoria’s policy initiatives and capital projects. With its focus on enduring value and legacy, the OVGA provides an independent voice within government, from broader strategic advocacy on systemic issues or reforms to project-specific design advice. OVGA’s primary concern is ensuring that quality considerations are embedded throughout the entire lifecycle of investments in the built environment (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: OVGA’s role**



Source: Government as Smart Client (Edition 03, 2024), OVGA

OVGA’s services are delivered across its core streams of advocacy and advice, including expert review.

The OVGA provides **advice** to state government, delivery agencies, and local government on how to practically improve design outcomes on specific projects, capital works programs or broader planning policy initiatives. The OVGA also offers advice on the development of business cases, feasibility studies, project scopes and briefs.

The type and format of the OVGA’s advice vary according to the specific needs of projects, programs or policy initiatives and the preferred design governance arrangements. These include:

- Formal design reviews conducted through OVGA’s Design Review process
- Dedicated design review integrated within government project teams

- Workshops aimed at informing project requirements and developing solutions
- Providing advisory input for reports authored by other government departments.

The OVGA **advocates** for the value of good design and a strong design culture within government, promoting consistent approaches to planning, design procurement and quality assurance and supporting government in its role as a well-informed client. This includes workshops, professional guidelines, and sector-specific advocacy.

Recognising the influence of public expectations and private sector activity on design outcomes, the OVGA also promotes best-practice design more broadly through lectures, publications, events, partnerships, and policy reform initiatives.

For more targeted advocacy, OVGA produces sector-specific publications, such as the Good Design series, Procurement Case Studies and Lessons Learned brochures, to extend its public reach and engagement. In the past four financial years, the OVGA has developed several new publications:

- *Good Design and Heritage (Refresh, 2025)*
- *Lessons Learned: Surf Life Saving Clubs (Refresh, 2025)*
- *Good Design and Sustainability (2024)*
- *Government as Smart Client, Edition 3 (2024)*
- *Procurement Case Study: Early Contractor Engagement (2024)*
- *Procurement Case Study: Program Alliance – Level Crossing Removal Program (2023)*
- *Procurement Case Study: Novation – State Library of Victoria (2023)*
- *Procurement Case Study: Traditional Construction Only – Research Primary School (2023)*
- *The Government Architect’s Office (2023)*
- *Good Design and Health (2022)*
- *Good Design and Local Government (2021)*



### 3.3 OVGA service delivery

The OVGA operates across a broad range of projects that vary in scale and complexity. The OVGA tailors its engagements within projects to suit specific project requirements. The OVGA may complete multiple engagements related to a single project. In addition, the OVGA may make multiple specific contributions within a single engagement. OVGA activity is tracked across a variety of activity levels to reflect the depth and frequency of its involvement in each project.

Between July 2021 and June 2025, the OVGA undertook 423 projects and 876 individual engagements, including 133 advocacy engagements and 725 advisory engagements. Across these, the OVGA made a total of 1,585 contributions, comprising 190 contributions to advocacy projects and 1,393 contributions to advisory projects (Table 1)

**Table 1: Total number of projects, engagements and contributions, July 2021 to June 2025**

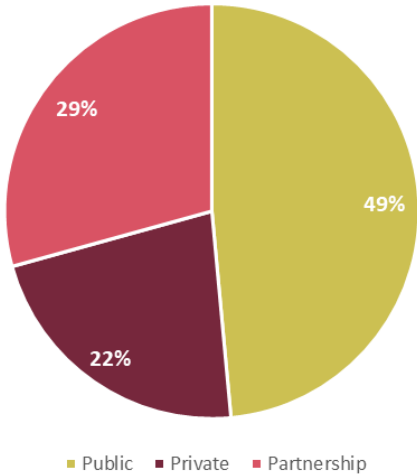
	Advice	Advocacy	Total
Number of engagements	725	133	876
Number of contributions	1,393	190	1,585

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA

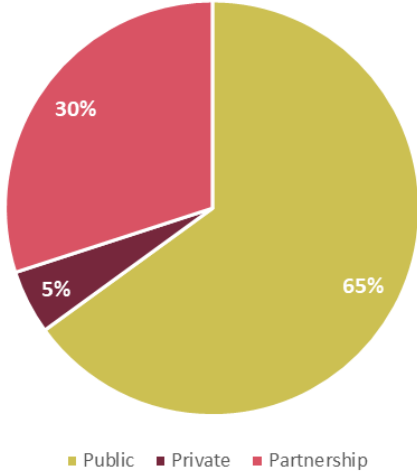
The majority of OVGA’s advice and advocacy work is undertaken on publicly funded projects (Figures 6 and 9). However, a large (and increasing) share of the OVGA’s work relates to private sector projects or those undertaken under partnership arrangements. The increasing share of private-sector projects reflects the

OVGA’s involvement with DTP’s Development Facilitation Program (DFP), through which it participated in 126 engagements over the past 2 years.

**Figure 6: Share of engagements by sector, Advice**



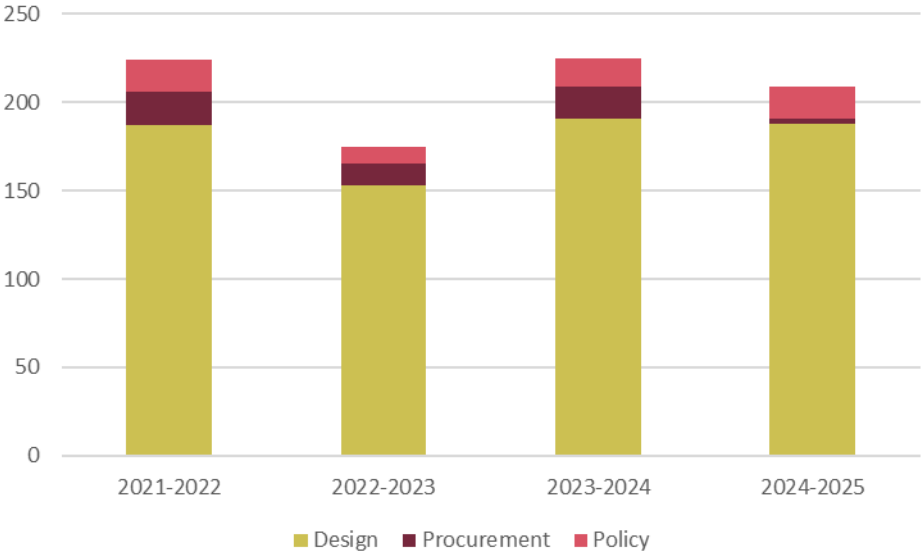
**Figure 7: Share of engagements, by sector, Advocacy**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA

The OVGA’s engagements are distributed across its 3 core areas of influence: design, policy, and procurement. Most engagements focus on design, reflecting the Office’s primary role in shaping outcomes in the built environment. A smaller, but significant, portion of engagements support policy development and reform, while procurement-related engagements focus on improving processes that enable high-quality design delivery. Figure 8 shows that design engagements represent the largest area of activity for the OVGA.

**Figure 8: Share of engagements, by area of influence, July 2021 to June 2025**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA.

OVGA’s project engagements span written advice, verbal advice, workshops, research and testing, content creation for briefs and policies, and presentations. In its advisory role, guidance is typically provided in written form, supplemented by workshops. For advocacy, inputs are largely delivered through presentations (Table 2).

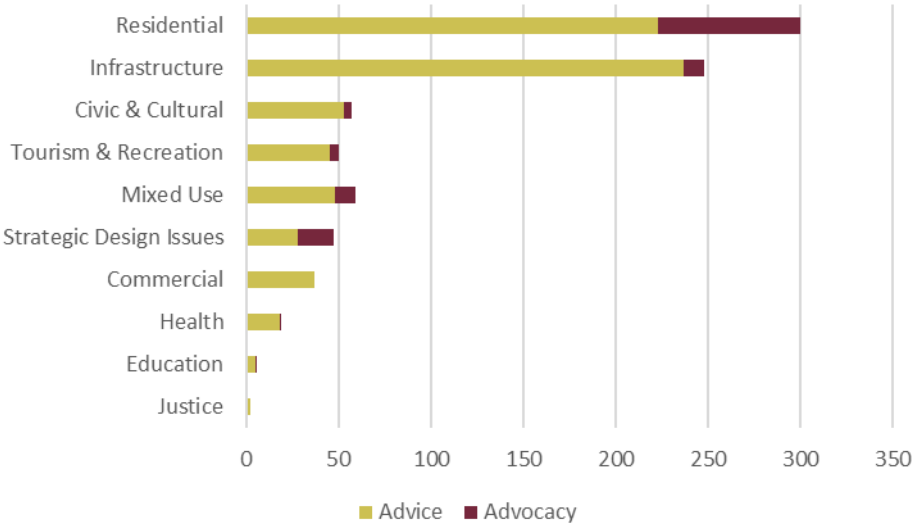
**Table 2: Count of engagements, by input type, July 2021 to June 2025**

	Advice	Advocacy	Total
Written advice	73%	18%	68%
Workshop	20%	18%	20%
Verbal advice	6%	10%	6%
Presentation	1%	55%	6%
Total	100%	100%*	100%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA.  
 Note minor discrepancies in totals due to rounding.

Figure 9 shows the number of advisory and advocacy engagements by sector over the past four years. Overall, the OVGA has been predominantly involved in residential projects, followed by infrastructure, civic and cultural projects. A similar pattern is observed in its advisory services, while its advocacy efforts have primarily focused on residential projects and those classified under 'strategic design issues.'

**Figure 9: Count of engagements by sector, July 2021 to June 2025**

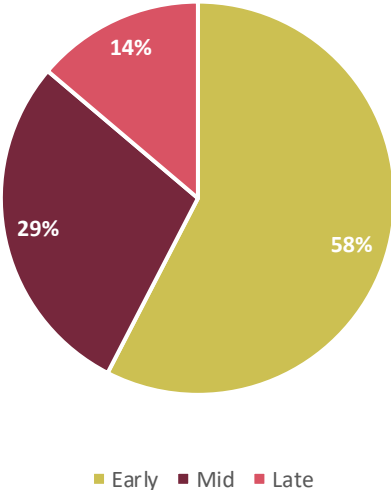


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA. Note: Projects with sector not stated are excluded from the analysis.

Previous evaluations of the OVGA’s services conducted in 2018 and 2021 consistently found that the timing of its engagement strongly influences the effectiveness of the OVGA’s involvement. Projects that involved the

OVGA early in their development reported better design processes and outcomes compared with those that engaged midway or at later stages. In response, the OVGA has begun tracking the timing of its engagements against overall project timelines to assess their impact and effectiveness. Figure 9 shows that 58% of OVGA engagements have occurred in the early project stages.

**Figure 10: Share of engagements by stage of OVGA involvement, July 2022 to June 2025**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA. Note: Projects with stages of engagement not stated are excluded from the analysis. Note discrepancies in total due to rounding.

Between July 2021 and June 2025, OVGA has been engaged in projects across Victoria, both in metropolitan and regional areas. Figure 11, 12 and 13 show the location for advocacy and advisory engagements. This shows that most advice (61%) is provided for projects located in metropolitan Melbourne. This aligns with the concentration of state-wide development activity in Melbourne and the focus on projects that are of state significance. Notably, 23% of OVGA advisory engagements were for statewide projects, indicating OVGA’s influence across Victoria.

In contrast, the OVGA’s advocacy role has a stronger statewide focus, with 63% of engagements relating to projects across Victoria. Additionally, 23% of advocacy projects are in metropolitan areas, while 6% are in regional Victoria.

The distribution of projects by Local Government Area (LGA) is shown in Figure 13. A significant number of projects span multiple areas, including 86 statewide projects, 64 across multiple metropolitan LGAs, and 17 across multiple regional LGAs.

Figure 11: Share of engagements by location, Advice

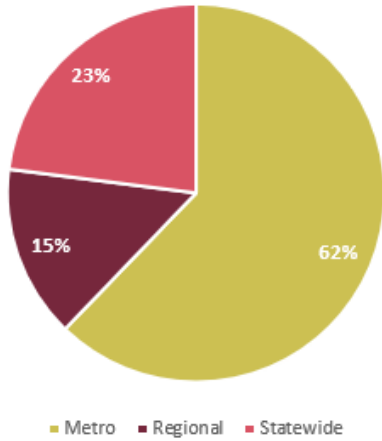
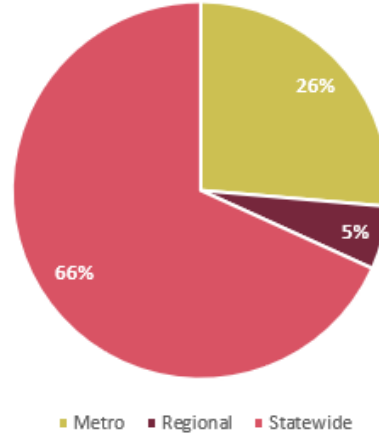
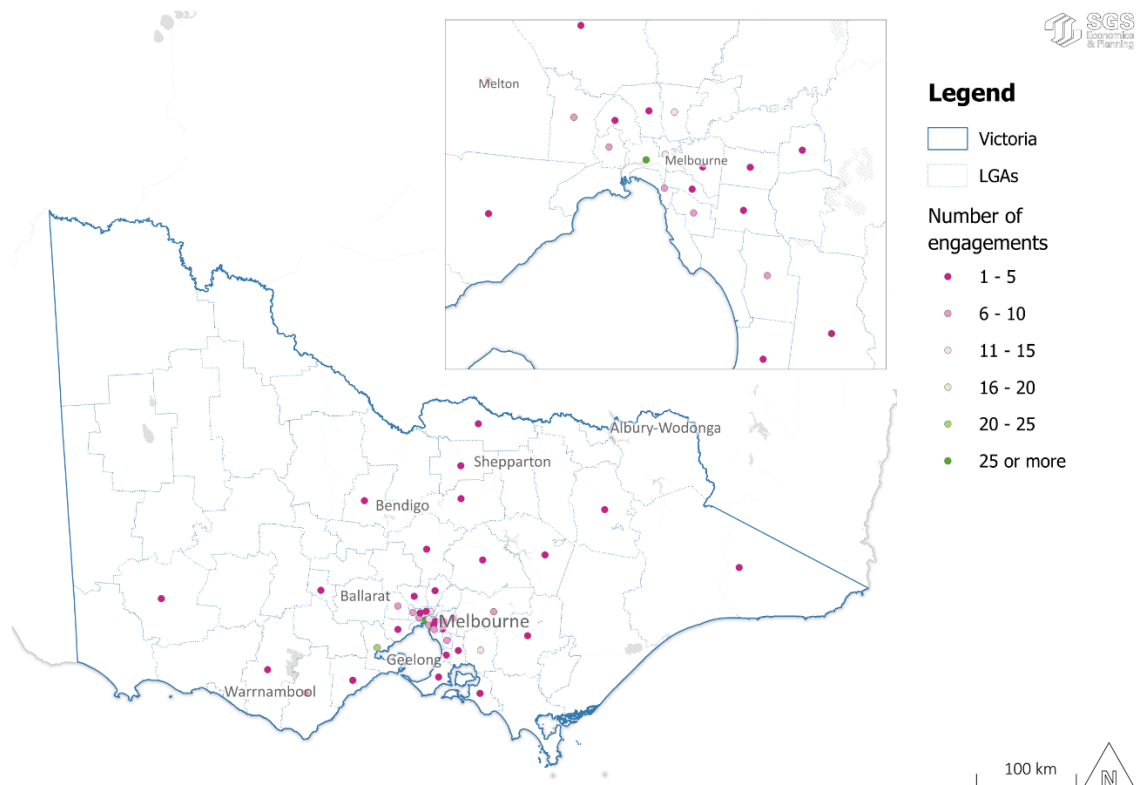


Figure 12: Share of engagements, by location, Advocacy



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA. Note: Projects with locations not stated are excluded from the analysis.

Figure 13: Engagements by location, advice and advocacy, July 2021 to June 2025



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA. Note: Projects that were for "All of Victoria," "Multiple - Metropolitan Melbourne" and "Multiple - Regional Victoria" are excluded from the above.

### 3.4 Design Review

The OVGA provides formal design review as part of its core advisory service for projects of state and local significance. Design review offers independent, expert design advice at key stages of public and private development projects, aiming to improve design quality across Victoria.

The design review process draws from an expert pool of over 70 highly skilled design professionals from a broad range of built environment disciplines within industry to form a tailored design review panel for a specific project. Each expert is individually selected for a design review to match the specific requirements of the project and to provide complimentary expertise across the panel. A typical panel would include experts from architecture, landscape architecture, heritage, and urban design, in addition to an OVGA Chair (usually undertaken by the Victorian Government Architect, the Associate Victorian Government Architect) and OVGA's principal design advisors.

Design review is a structured process that includes briefing invited expert design reviewers and providing written feedback to project teams and stakeholders. Reviews are constructive, context-aware, and tailored to project constraints such as budget and timeline. Through its design review process, the OVGA helps identify design challenges and opportunities, supports better outcomes for built environment projects, and reinforces its broader advocacy for exemplary design across Victoria.

OVGA Design Review process undertakes design review through several formats:

- **Full review:** OVGA regularly holds design review panel sessions for significant projects, with a typical session running for two hours. The process includes the submission of plans and diagrams, a briefing, and a formal in-person design review session with the proponent and design team present.
- **Desktop review:** Suited to projects which come to review at a very early stage, where limited design development has taken place, or at a very late point in the design process, where the potential influence of design review is reduced.
- **Design workshops:** These are collaborative sessions that allow for in-depth exploration of design challenges and opportunities. They support dialogue between stakeholders and can complement formal design reviews by focusing on specific issues or project stages.

For complex or long-term projects, a **Design Quality Team (DQT)** may be established to ensure continuity of panel members and deeper engagement with design teams. Chaired by the OVGA, DQTs are composed of design specialists from the OVGA and its pool of independent industry experts. They allow for a consistent and iterative design review approach, guided by Terms of Reference aligned with the needs of the project.

During the period July 2021 to June 2025, OVGA's Design Review process was principally undertaken through the Victorian Design Review Panel (VDRP), where experts were engaged as sessional board members. The VDRP was formally abolished on 30 June 2025 in line with government priorities to consolidate entities. From July 2025, an alternative model for procuring design review expertise will be formalised, where OVGA will engage experts as pre-approved contractors. OVGA will continue to manage the design review process, driving design quality while improving service delivery and efficiencies for government.

### 3.5 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 as 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 focused on critical guidance that can be brought from experts to a whole-of-government context. The model is used on major projects including Metro Tunnel Project, Level Crossing Removal Project, North East Link Project and Suburban Rail Loop, amongst others.

**Table 3: OVGA engagements with UDAP in place per year, 2021/22 to 2025/26**

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	8	11	12	14

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA

### 3.6 Performance indicators

The Victorian Government has established performance measures for the OVGA relating to formal design review, which are integrated into the annual state budget. These are shown in Table 4. It is noted that prior to 2022, the timeliness measure was expressed as the average number of days to issue formal advice, with an associated target of equal to or less than 10 business days.

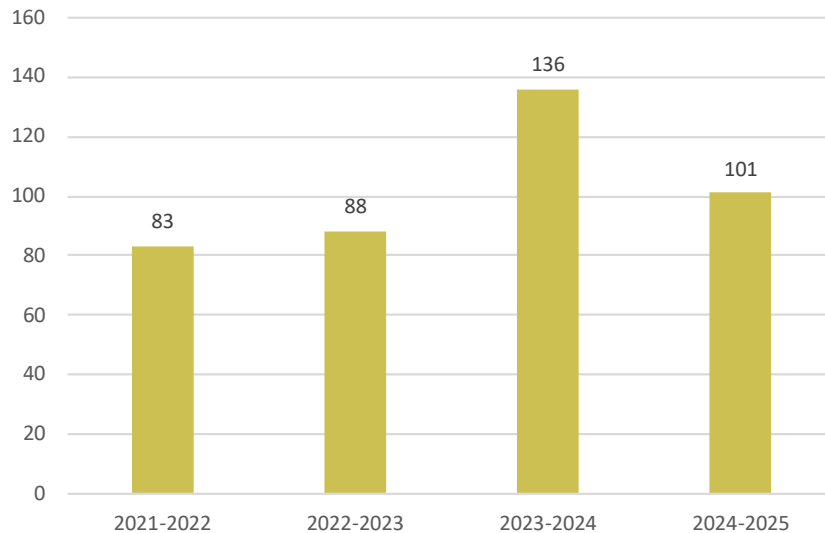
**Table 4: Current OVGA performance measures, Victorian State Budget 2024/25**

Performance measure	Unit of measure	Annual target
Formal advice issued by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect on significant projects in the built environment.	Number	70
Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of advice issued by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect on significant projects in the built environment.	Per cent	80
Formal advice is issued by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect on significant projects in the built environment within 10 business days after design review on typical projects.	Per cent	85

Source: Victorian Government (2021 to 2025), Service Delivery Budget Paper No.3

Between July 2021 and June 2025, the OVGA issued a total of 408 pieces of formal advice (i.e. advice formalised with an OVGA letter, notice, memo or report), with the highest number recorded in 2023/24 (136). The OVGA met or exceeded its performance targets for issuing formal advice in all years.

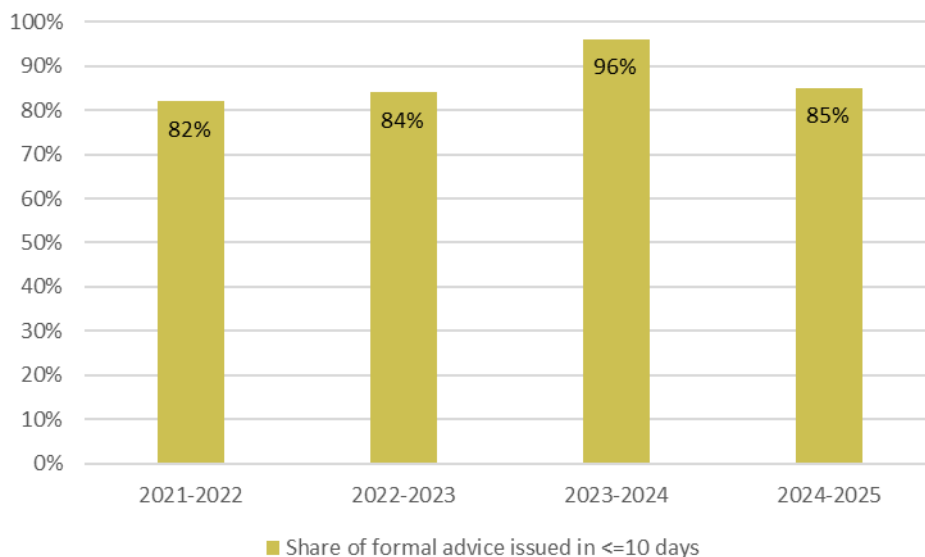
**Figure 14: Formal advice issued by the OVGA, July 2021 to June 2025**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA.

Figure 15 shows the average number of working days taken to issue formal advice. Between 2021-22 and 2024-25, the share of formal advice issued in 10 business days ranged from 82% in 2021-22 to 96% in 2023-24.

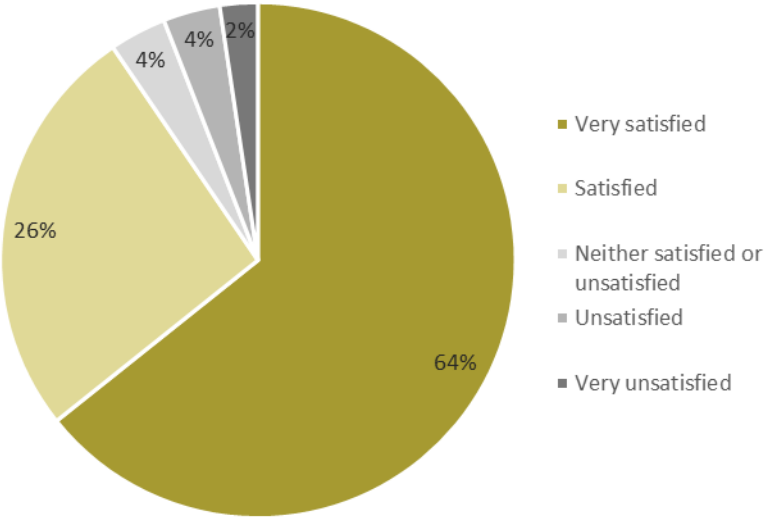
**Figure 15: Average number of business days to issue formal advice, 2021/22-2024/25**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the OVGA

Based on OVGA client survey responses (discussed further in Section 4 and Appendix B), 90% of OVGA clients reported being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the Office's services (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Stakeholder satisfaction, 2021/22 to 2024/25**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

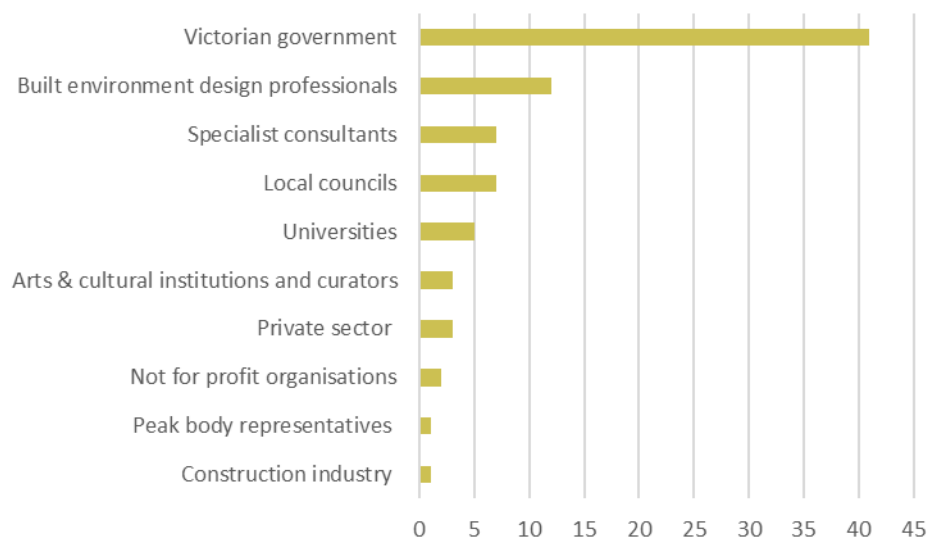
## 4. Benefits generated by the OVGA

This section presents the demonstrated benefits of the OVGA to the Victorian Government and community and reflects on the enablers of these benefits. These findings are drawn from a survey conducted with clients who have engaged with the OVGA within the past 3 years, as well as from interviews with stakeholders from key case study projects.

### 4.1 Overview

A survey was circulated to 340 recent clients of the OVGA to help the Office understand how it has fulfilled its purpose and identify how it might improve its service delivery in the future. The survey comprised 18 questions and received 84 responses, a response rate of 25%. A detailed summary of the survey results is provided in Appendix A. The distribution of respondents by organisation type is shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17: Number of survey respondents, by organisational type, 2025**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2025

Of the 84 responses, 40 were from public servants within the Victorian Government, representing 14 government departments or authorities, including:

- Victorian Health Building Authority
- North East Link Project
- Development Victoria
- Level Crossing Removal Project
- Suburban Rail Loop Authority
- Metro Tunnel Project
- Victorian Planning Authority
- Invest Victoria

- Homes Victoria

In addition to the survey, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with involvement in one of the seven case study projects summarised in Appendix B.

The findings from both consultation streams have been collated and analysed to understand how the OVGGA delivers value and to identify opportunities for enhancing its services.

This evaluation confirms that, operating within an increasingly complex environment as outlined in the introduction, the OVGGA continues to deliver significant benefits and public value for Victorians. These benefits can be grouped into the following categories:

- Maintaining social license and public trust in Government projects
- Creating public value through exemplary design for long-term impact
- Providing design expertise for practical impact and problem-solving
- Advocating for good design, procurement and delivery capability.

Each of these benefits is discussed and supported by evidence below.



**Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project / Brunswick and Coburg / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (2021)**  
**Architecture:** Wood Marsh **Landscape:** Tract **Photography:** Robyn Oliver Photography **Client:** Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP)  
**OVGGA involvement:** Chair, LXRP Urban Design Advisory Panel

## 4.2 OVGA generation of good design benefits

### Maintaining social license and public trust in Government projects

The Victorian Government is increasingly prioritising facilitation to accelerate development, achieve significant housing targets, and deliver a program of major infrastructure projects. In some instances, this approach includes removing pathways for third parties to appeal planning decisions, thereby streamlining approvals and delivery. This is the case for projects eligible under the Development Facilitation Program (DFP) (see case study).

Recent clients of the OVGA reflected that centralising decision-making and limiting the public's right to appeal requires recognition of the social license granted by the Victorian community. This social license is based on the understanding that these changes are necessary to deliver outcomes with a net public benefit. However, the community's implicit granting of this social license should not be taken for granted. It is essential that the Victorian Government consistently demonstrates sound, transparent decision-making and delivers exemplary outcomes aligned with community expectations.

Through consultation, OVGA clients consistently identified the benefits of OVGA involvement in government procurement processes, design review and oversight of major project delivery. While operating from within government, the OVGA is seen to provide independent and unbiased advice to its delivery partners.

The OVGA provides assurance to project clients, government decision-makers and Victorian communities that design processes and built-form outcomes will be robust and serve the public interest. It also raises the reputation of the state government as a sound and competent decision-maker.

*"OVGA provides invaluable independent design advice and inspires confidence in the quality of the final designs."*

Survey respondent (2025), Specialist consultant

*"Having OVGA involved in design review processes provided stakeholders comfort and assisted in gaining support for these [design review] processes."*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

*"I came from local government myself many years ago, and the OVGA is regarded as the highest authority in terms of architecture. They're independent of government, provide frank and fearless advice, and are known for focusing on great outcomes - not just for individual projects, but for the greater good."*

Client interview (2025)

This is demonstrated clearly in the findings of the client survey, in which:

- 90% of respondents agreed that the OVGA provided constructive advice
- 81% agreed that the OVGA assisted in realising broader public benefits
- 70% agreed that the OVGA improved stakeholder and client confidence.

In government **procurement processes**, the OVGA is seen to hold a wealth of knowledge, developed over many years, and helpfully codified in a series of published guidelines. This was highly valued by government clients working with the OVGA. They reflected that such longstanding procurement experience is uncommon, and that consistent OVGA engagement in complex procurement processes streamlined the process, avoided major mistakes, and prevented the need for costly external advice – ultimately leading to reductions in time and budget.

*“If the OVGA hadn’t been involved [in the procurement process], we wouldn’t have known how valuable their role was. They knew all the tips and tricks, the pinch points, and where we might slip up to increase time and budget. They provided insights we never would have picked up on, saving us a lot of money and protecting our reputation. Without them, we would have fumbled and looked unprofessional.”*

Client interview (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

*“The OVGA’s involvement with this project significantly enhanced the development of our Expressions of Interest process, Design Competition, and Design Development of the project. Through sophisticated feedback, advice and review received, the design outcome and its integration into the broader Melbourne Arts Precinct redevelopment has been (and continues to be) significantly enhanced.... There is no doubt that the overall outcome for Victoria is better from this important contribution to this significant cultural project.*

Survey respondent (2025), Arts / cultural institution

In government projects relating to **policy development and testing**, the OVGA’s involvement and the market experience of the team helped to provide confidence to government stakeholders that outcomes would be reasonable and workable, were appropriately tested, and would receive buy-in from other levels of government and the community (see Future Homes case study at page 8).

*OVGA provided specialist policy input. This enhanced the project scope and definition, prior to critical decisions on project boundaries.*

Survey respondent (2025), Specialist consultant

Without the OVGA:

*“The seamless collaboration between DTP and OVGA likely wouldn’t have occurred. Typically, design becomes disconnected from policy — or vice versa — but in this case, their alignment ensured that both aspects informed each other meaningfully.”*

Survey respondent (2025), Specialist consultant

## CASE STUDY: FUTURE HOMES

**Client:** Department of Transport and Planning

**Project phase:** Various

**Location:** Victoria

### Project overview

Future Homes was originally conceived as delivering on Plan Melbourne and developed as part of the Better Apartments program. In Victoria's Housing Statement (September 2023) Future Homes was expanded across Victoria. Future Homes facilitates healthy, comfortable, and sustainable apartment buildings through the provision of:

- Exemplar designs
- Building Future Homes Adaptation Guide
- Streamlined planning process (VPP Clause 53.24)

Four exemplar designs have been developed through a competition and refinement process, with input from specialist consultants and OVGA's industry design experts.

### OVGA services

OVGA partnered with DELWP/DTP from project inception to define the project rationale, vision, objectives, approach, and scope. OVGA also provided strategic input and leadership on process and procurement.

OVGA continues to collaborate with DTP in the assessment of all Future Homes development applications, and to explore the application of the Future Homes model to other housing types and settings as announced through Victoria's Housing Statement.

### Benefits generated

- Early involvement allowed OVGA to significantly shape the Future Homes project.
- Expert design advice lifted competition designs to an exemplary, market-ready standard.
- Co-authorship enabled a tailored, policy-aligned government delivery model.
- Advocacy and events raised awareness of integrated design value.
- Architectural insight supported research into planning standards and development models.
- Identified opportunities for innovation in prefabrication and construction techniques.
- Facilitated engagement with developers to explore viability and delivery barriers.



**Future Homes Exemplar, Design A**, Design Strategy Architecture with Includesign



**Adaptation of Future Homes Exemplar Design A**, Agency for Design Strategy in collaboration with Includesign for Beyond Housing, Shepparton / Yorta Yorta Country (In delivery, due for completion in 2026)

In terms of **design review**, the OVGA provides expert input and evidence to inform the development of design outcomes, ensures accountability for design throughout project delivery processes, and has the authority to escalate emerging issues appropriately.

Fundamentally, the OVGA is viewed as both a trusted partner and collaborator, while also providing stakeholders comfort and assisting in gaining support for these processes. The elevated status of the OVGA and its inclusion in key government projects provide a clear demonstration of the Victorian Government's commitment to good design and investment in the public realm across the state.

*"As an 'independent' and respected third party, OVGA's involvement represented 'impartial' and quality design guidance to both design consultants and Project Partners - especially on matters requiring consensus."*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

Without the involvement of the OVGA via the design review process, stakeholders reflected that there would have otherwise been:

- Less confidence in design review processes, and weaker alignment with government objectives
- Increased reliance on external advisors, resulting in an undermining of public value
- Lack of challenge to key assumptions and reduced emphasis on key design issues
- Vulnerability of projects to delays, cost overruns, and missed opportunities for early intervention
- Planning controls are remaining less well resolved, and design processes are disconnected from broader policy goals
- Reduced buy-in from councils and industry, resulting in less efficient project delivery.

*"There may have been a diminished sense of confidence in the design selection without the trusted endorsement of the design process along the journey. Overall, the OVGA offers exceptional, trusted and constructive advice – across many facets."*

Survey respondent (2025), Arts / cultural institution

*"Program would have proceeded with planning controls that were less well resolved. Allowed the program to have a level of confidence in the provisions proposed."*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

*"A poorer urban and architectural outcome [would have been realised]. Their involvement also gave [government department] confidence to allow greater design flexibility within the endorsed Master Plan for key areas of concern."*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

## **CASE STUDY: DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION PROGRAM (DFP)**

<b>Client:</b>	Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
<b>Project phase:</b>	Planning Permit Applications (including pre-application)
<b>Location:</b>	Victoria

### **Project overview**

The DFP is a dedicated program within DTP that provides an expedited pre-planning process for eligible projects. Proposed developments must inject investment into the Victorian economy, provide significant employment, or create more homes, including affordable housing. DTP triages projects for eligibility and design significance. Those with civic roles, heritage value, innovation potential, or precedent-setting impact may be referred to the OVGA for independent design review.

Applications made under the DFP provisions are not exempt from the public notice and referral requirements (unless otherwise exempted in the planning scheme). However, decisions made by the Minister for Planning under the provisions cannot be appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). This amplifies the importance of a rigorous assessment process that includes independent design review by the OVGA.

### **OVGA services**

All DFP projects undergo a design review to ensure high-quality built form outcomes. If a project aligns with the planning framework and demonstrates a strong design response, OVGA input is not required. However, when further design consideration is needed, the DFP Planning team may refer the project to the OVGA. In these cases, OVGA provides a design triage service, conducted through regular joint sessions with DFP Planning. The Victorian Government Architect and senior OVGA advisors attend these. Design triage operates as a 'fast-to-pass' or 'fast-to-fail' test to quickly assess design quality.

### **Benefits generated**

- OVGA provides expert design advice to planners and the Minister for Planning, ensuring high-quality outcomes and preventing poor-quality developments from advancing unchecked.
- The OVGA team can interpret complex technical documents to assess if designs meet their ambitions, helping planners identify unsuitable projects early and save time and resources.
- Through a fast triage process, OVGA efficiently reviews projects flagged for design significance, allowing good designs to progress quickly and offering support to improve those with design issues.
- Stronger site analysis integrating multidisciplinary design, improved sustainability and public amenity, increased confidence among decision-makers, and the promotion of a robust design culture that raises expectations for Victoria's built environment.

*“As a practicing architect committed to delivering design excellence in the housing and public realm, I have valued the depth of expertise, strategic insight, and unwavering advocacy for quality design that the OVGA team provides. Their independent advice, both challenges and elevates the design process across projects.*

*The OVGA’s ability to balance design with public value, while navigating complex stakeholder environments, demonstrates the unique and essential role they play in guiding major projects. Their presence ensures that design is not only seen as an aesthetic concern but as a critical driver of long-term social, environmental, and economic benefit.*

*Working with the OVGA showed the value of independent design review in creating designs that are exemplar and serve the public good. Their ongoing work plays a key role in improving the quality of architecture and urban design across Victoria.”*

Chris Manderson, Principal, NH Architecture Melbourne (2025)



**Bang Street, Prahran / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (2024) Architecture:** Jackson Clements Burrows **Landscape:** Tract **Photography:** Tom Blachford **Client:** Homes Victoria **OVGA role:** Strategic advice, design review and tender evaluation during project procurement and delivery

## Creating public value through exemplary design for long-term impact

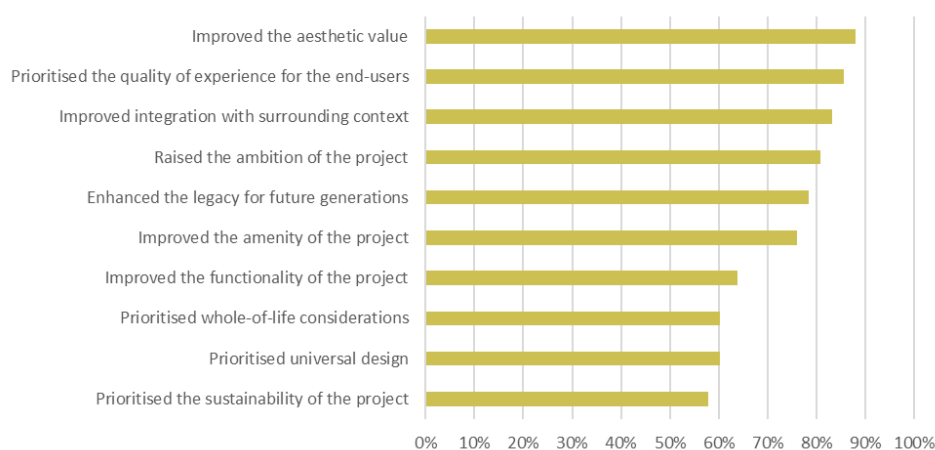
The most significant and frequently cited benefit of the OVGA is its role in promoting exemplary design outcomes that deliver value to Victorian communities across government and non-government projects.

*“Without the Government having the OVGA advocating for quality design, our built environment will be less sustainable, less durable, less functional, less accessible, and less loved by the community. All Victorians benefit from quality design in the built environment.”*

Survey respondent (2025), Built environment design professional

The client survey found that 89% of respondents agreed that the OVGA improved the design quality of projects, with 10% noting that outcomes have yet to be realised. Survey responses reported a high level of agreement that the OVGA’s contribution spanned improvements across a range of design domains (Figure 18), including improvements to the aesthetic value, integration with the surrounding context, and raising the design ambition of projects.

**Figure 18: Stakeholder level of agreement – How did the OVGA’s input benefit the project?**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Qualitatively, stakeholders consistently emphasised that the OVGA's involvement, in its various capacities, helped raise the sights of project stakeholders from achieving “best-for-project” to “best-for-community” outcomes.

*“OVGA have been instrumental in helping us advocate for good urban design and landscape solutions under intense economic pressure. Their knowledge is fundamental for ensuring that the community legacy of this project will be achieved.”*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

While some acknowledged that acceptable design outcomes may still have been achieved without the OVGA's involvement, they emphasised that such outcomes would likely fall short of being truly exemplary and meet the community's expectations.

As noted by OVGA clients, major projects, defined by their scale, visibility, longevity, public investment, or potential to set new benchmarks, demand ambitious, high-quality design. The OVGA plays a critical role in helping to realise that potential.

For example, in major projects like the Metro Tunnel (see the case study on page 14), OVGA's involvement was seen as critical to moving beyond business-as-usual and increasing the efficiency of the design. Clients viewed its contribution as fundamental to creating enduring public value and a legacy of quality design that serves current and future generations, with the outcome reflecting "simple, timeless design". It is widely credited by stakeholders with driving design ambition from project ideation through to delivery, including consideration of the broader city-shaping impacts.

*"Good design doesn't need to be expensive or time-consuming. It's common sense. It can be straightforward."*

*"Getting the project teams and delivery teams on the same page means having a dialogue about what good design is. Make it simpler. If you don't need to put wallpaper up, don't put wallpaper up."*

Client interview (2025)

The OVGA also promoted whole-of-life project considerations, encouraging decisions that account for long-term performance, adaptability, and community value beyond immediate delivery pressures, strengthening the evidence base for high-quality design and reinforcing a culture of accountability and excellence across projects. The OVGA's involvement is particularly critical during the value engineering (cost management) phases common in project delivery, where the risk of diminished design quality is high.

*"Once the inevitable cost saving process happens towards the end of the [project], their support of the design is critical to the quality not being eroded later on by the value engineering process."*

Survey respondent (2025), Built environment design professional

Through these efforts, the OVGA safeguards design ambition and contributes to building environment outcomes that are not only functional but transformative for Victorian communities. Clients provided the following reflections on likely outcomes without the involvement of the OVGA:

*"More than likely, [without the OVGA] the central tenet of design excellence would have been undermined or compromised by competing interests and the quality of the project outputs would have been of significantly lower quality than originally intended."*

Survey respondent (2025), NSW Government department or delivery agency

*"Reduced design quality, delays, and not meeting project vision."*

Survey respondent (2025), Not-for-profit organisation

*"The project would not have been completed as the project partners were unable to agree and finalise the design without OVGA input."*

Survey respondent (2025), Peak body representative

*"We probably would've ended up with poorer legacy outcomes for major infrastructure projects."*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

## CASE STUDY: METRO TUNNEL

**Client:** Metro Tunnel Project Office (MTPO)

**Project phase:** Project inception, procurement to delivery

**Location:** Central Melbourne

### Project overview

Melbourne Metro is a transformative project delivering 9km twin rail tunnels and five new underground stations - Arden, Parkville, State Library, Town Hall, and Anzac- connecting the Sunbury, Cranbourne, and Pakenham lines. The project will improve access to key destinations, including the Arden precinct, universities, hospitals, and Melbourne's CBD.

The Metro Tunnel Project is a large and complex piece of city-shaping infrastructure. Integrating the delivery of a world-class passenger experience with significant engineering and construction challenges required a design approach that could accommodate inevitable change in response to various project pressures, while maintaining the quality of the final built outcome.

### OVGA services

The OVGA has supported various departments and delivery agencies throughout the entire lifecycle of the Metro Tunnel Project, from business case, initial planning, to construction. A dedicated OVGA Principal Advisor has worked closely with RPV/MTPO to provide expert, independent design advice, ensuring the value of high-quality design is recognised and maintained. Through the Urban Design and Architecture Advisory Panel, chaired by the Victorian Government Architect, the OVGA has also delivered independent design reviews for the Minister for Planning at key approval stages.

### Benefits generated

- Supported the establishment of a strong architectural vision and concept that governed the development of the design as the project progressed.
- Ensured continuity of corporate memory and a sustained focus on quality throughout all project stages, including a robust value management process.
- Key elements of the design were refined during delivery to balance project requirements and cost while maintaining quality.



**Metro Tunnel Project, Melbourne / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (In delivery, opening late 2025) Architecture:** Collaboration with Hassell, Weston Williamson and Partners and Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners **Photography:** OVGA **Client:** Metro Tunnel Project **OVGA role:** Strategic advice, tender evaluation and design review during project planning, procurement and delivery.

## Providing design expertise for practical impact and problem-solving

The OVGA champions quality design by embedding core design principles across all project stages. It constructively engages with design teams, helping to refine proposals and deliver greater public value. Through design review, the OVGA is seen to provide continuous advice, support, and stable direction to project design teams from project formation through to delivery and completion. Not only does the Office provide clear and practical advice, but its elevated position within the industry helps to ensure that this advice is taken seriously.

*“The OVGA provided consistency in the design outcome by offering continuous advice, support, and stable direction from the early stages of project formation through to its delivery and completion.”*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

The OVGA team and expert panellists engaged for design review are seen by stakeholders as subject-matter experts with skills and experience across a broad range of fields. In addition to strong capabilities across core design disciplines, the OVGA is recognised for its solid working knowledge of Victoria’s planning system and policy frameworks, heritage, building regulations, and contemporary construction methods.

*“The OVGA’s involvement led to good design, functional dwellings, responding to evolving market conditions (i.e. construction cost escalation), looking outside the square in terms of construction methodology, reducing planning timeframes and providing more certainty around timeframes of quality of end product.”*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

The breadth and depth of knowledge within the OVGA team make it highly regarded across the built environment profession and well-positioned to support clients and project design teams on major projects, particularly those that are complex, multi-disciplinary or facing barriers to progression. The OVGA’s ability to manage multiple design concepts simultaneously and “speak the language” of a range of project stakeholders is seen as a significant value add to projects. This ability is seen to:

- Provide support and confidence to project design teams in realising the project vision and efforts to communicate design intent to stakeholders and government authorities
- Identify and clearly articulate critical design weaknesses and propose effective strategic improvements
- Manage complex interfaces between multiple design teams and disciplines, and act as a mediator where required
- Demonstrate the commercial benefits of good design
- Support developers and design teams to sustain design quality throughout all project stages, particularly through project value engineering processes.

The OVGA provides practical support to projects by “thinking at both macro and micro scales,” helping teams consider broader strategic impacts alongside detailed design decisions. It brings an innovative approach, drawing on lessons learned from experience and best-practice knowledge (nationally and

internationally), often looking beyond conventional solutions. The OVGA also responds to evolving market conditions, such as rising construction costs, by adapting advice accordingly.

This is reflected in the survey findings in responses (Figure 20) in which respondents showed a high level of agreement that the OVGA supports project progress and progression across a range of domains, where:

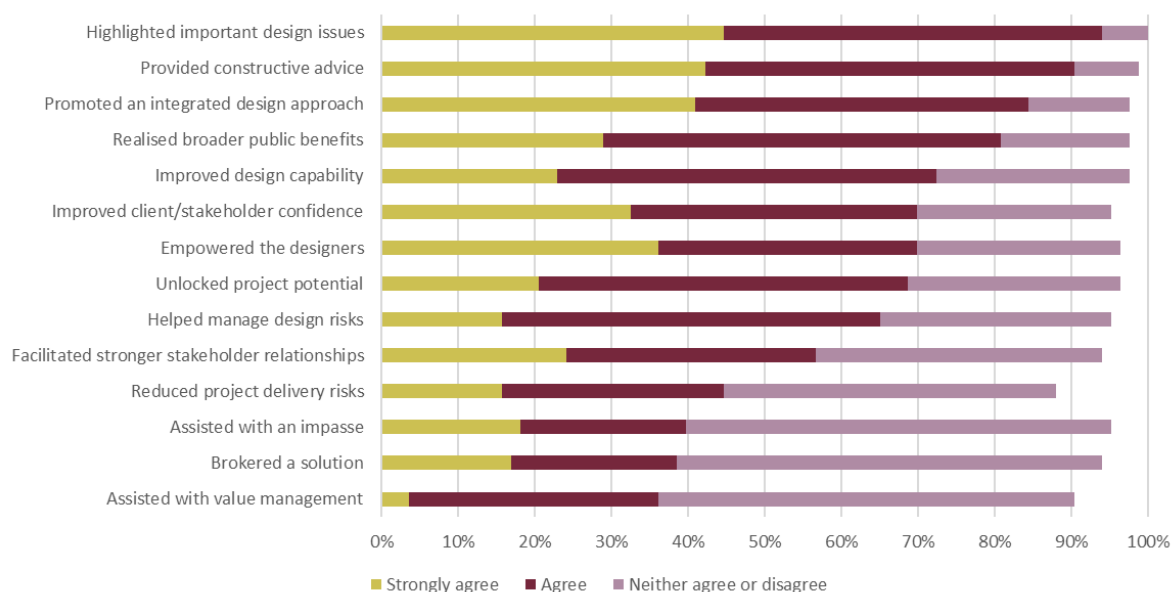
- 94% of respondents agreed that the OVGA highlighted important design issues
- 90% agreed that the OVGA provided constructive advice
- 84% agreed that the OVGA promoted an integrated design approach.

Notably, there was very little disagreement about the OVGA’s impact on the project process or progression. Most respondents viewed the OVGA as making a positive contribution, or at least not hindering progress. Cases where respondents selected “neither agree nor disagree” may also reflect limited relevance to their specific project or role rather than a neutral opinion.

“OVGA’s independent, expert review assisted by identifying key areas for improvement and constructively engaging with design with the proponent team to identify pathways forward out of what had become an impasse.”

Survey respondent (2025), Local Government

**Figure 19: Stakeholder level of agreement - How did the OVGA’s input assist the design process and project progression?**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

## CASE STUDY: COLLABORATION ON HERITAGE & PLANNING APPROVALS

**Client:** Heritage Victoria and Department of Transport and Planning

**Project phase:** Planning permit (where Heritage Victoria is the overarching regulatory authority)

**Location:** Victoria

### Project overview

Works to sites on the Victorian Heritage Register require a heritage permit and, in some cases, a planning permit. These assessment processes can lead to an impasse - particularly when heritage values conflict with contemporary development goals.

In 2024, the OVGA initiated a collaborative process involving HV and DTP, as well as its own team, to address such stalemates. Through a series of joint workshops, the agencies provided coordinated pre-application feedback to help resolve complex design and heritage issues.

One such project is the Former Cable Tram Engine House and Substation in Brunswick, a rare surviving element of Melbourne's historic cable tram system. The proposal includes adaptive reuse of the Engine House and construction of an 8-storey student housing facility. Despite multiple pre-planning meetings, the project had reached an impasse, with HV dissatisfied with the initial design. The OVGA-led workshop process was introduced to help navigate these competing interests and find a path forward. Projects that have undergone this collaborative workshop process include:

- Robur Tea House (2024)
- CHORA (Former Little Sisters of the Poor) (2024 / 2025)
- The Goods Shed (2024 / 2025)
- Ballarat Station overpass (2024 / 2025)
- Bryant and May (2024 / 2025)
- Cremorne Power Station (2024 / 2025)
- Cable Tram Engine House and Substation (2024 / 2025)

### OVGA services

Through a series of discussions and workshops, OVGA facilitates joint advice with DTP and HV. This collaborative process provides iterative, integrated guidance, enabling bespoke, site-specific designs that challenge conventional approaches and more effectively balance heritage with contemporary development.

### Benefits generated

- Reduced back-and-forth permit processes, leading to shorter assessment timeframes and greater certainty.
- Enabling a more holistic approach that balances heritage, planning, and design considerations.
- Setting a precedent for heritage-led design, raising the standard for adaptive reuse projects.
- Delivering exemplary processes and case studies in collaborative planning and design.
- Enhanced outcomes through design integration.
- Supported the HV team with design skills not available in-house.

*"The OVGA has been pivotal in reviewing and guiding design outcomes for the redevelopment of major heritage sites across Melbourne. Through direct engagement and the design review process they have brought critical insight and nuance to a number of challenging adaptive reuse projects. Working with approvals authorities and adopting a collaborative approach their input has resulted in the generation of context responsive solutions which have navigated the sensitive interface between heritage and development."*

Peter Lovell, Director and Founding Principal and Lovell Chen (2025)

### **Advocating for good design, procurement and delivery capability:**

Clients see the OVGA provide a vital role in advocating for good design across government, the built environment sector, and the wider community. Through policy submissions, presentations, events, and publications, it promotes the value of design by translating specialist knowledge into accessible, practical guidance for a broad range of stakeholders. Practitioners frequently cite its procurement case studies as valuable tools in guiding best practice in government.

Through its advocacy work, the OVGA aims to inform and empower leaders to demand better outcomes, challenge poor design, and ensure that design quality remains central to policy development and testing, decision-making and city-shaping activities, as well as inspiring the next generation of built environment professionals.

Within the industry, the OVGA is regarded as a leading voice - not only in Victoria, but nationally - valued for its deep understanding of government priorities and processes, and its ability to work across departments.

*"The OVGA is likely the largest and most impactful Government Architect's office in the country in its ability to listen, understand, and identify areas where it can make the greatest impact."*

Client interview (2025)

The OVGA maintains active connections with the Australian Institute of Architects and the Government Architects Network Australia, where it contributes to joint advocacy on nationally significant policy issues, such as Environmentally Sustainable Design. This advocacy role is viewed as particularly important in the current climate, where economic pressures are driving a shift toward market-led solutions to complex social, environmental, and economic challenges. In this context, the OVGA serves as a vital counterbalance, ensuring that public interest and long-term design quality remain at the forefront of government policy and decision-making.

*"There's a perception that a sustainable community can't also be an affordable one, but that's a fundamental mistruth. The OVGA, along with Government Architects' offices across the country, plays a critical role in debunking these misconceptions, helping to balance community needs with broader public interests to ensure we build an equitable and healthy future."*

Client interview (2025)

The influence of the OVGA in its advocacy efforts is enabled by the calibre and professionalism of its team members and respect across the industry. The OVGA are seen as an effective collaborator and relationship builder, with stakeholders reflecting that opportunities to engage with the OVGA are "rewarding and enriching".

### 4.3 OVGA success factors

Engagement with OVGA clients identified several factors that underpin the success of the OVGA in delivering strong design outcomes across Victoria. These are not optional, but essential to its ongoing impact. Notably, many of these enablers have remained consistent across evaluations over the past decade.

Figure 20: OVGA success factors



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

#### 4.4 Opportunities to enhance the contribution of the OVGA

In addition to highlighting the benefits of the OVGA, stakeholders also suggested areas to further enhance its services and overall impact.

- **Build greater awareness of the OVGA within government:** While the OVGA is well-regarded and maintains a strong external profile, several stakeholders noted the need for greater internal advocacy within government to raise awareness of its role and impact. They emphasised the importance of targeting senior and executive-level government staff to strengthen understanding and support among high-level decision makers.
- **Increase and stabilise funding and resourcing for the OVGA:** Stakeholders who have engaged with the OVGA are strong advocates for its continued role within government. However, many noted that limited staff capacity and constrained resources hinder the Office's ability to maximise its impact. Reduced core operating budgets have affected staff capacity, with clients observing that while the team maintains high standards, it appears increasingly stretched. Greater demand for engagement of industry experts underscores the need for more stable funding and resourcing to free up staff capacity and to ensure the Office retains and attracts high-calibre professionals. Some felt that stabilising and increasing OVGA capacity could help it service more projects/programs and improve timeframes for decision making to support government delivery.
- **Earlier and more consistent engagement on projects:** A recurring theme across evaluations of the OVGA is the value of earlier and more consistent engagement with projects. Stakeholders consistently noted that early involvement, particularly during the strategy stages, leads to stronger design outcomes. While early engagement is not always possible, it remains a widely supported goal. In addition to formal design review processes, stakeholders also expressed interest in more informal opportunities to collaborate with the OVGA throughout the project life cycle.
- **Pragmatic, commercially realistic, and evidence-based advice:** Many stakeholders praised the OVGA for delivering clear, pragmatic, and commercially realistic advice that responds to current market conditions. However, a minority identified this as an area for improvement, suggesting that the interpretation and impact of the advice could be strengthened by making it more succinct, directive, and focused on core design issues. They also highlighted the importance of balancing design ideals with operational requirements, budget considerations, and project timelines. Additionally, providing clearer upfront communication about the scope of the OVGA's review was seen to better align expectations and enhance the relevance and effectiveness of its input.
- **Continuing to build the evidence base for good design:** Stakeholders encouraged the OVGA to expand its body of publications and to continue to provide tangible, evidence-based insights that demonstrate the logical, ethical, and economic value of design quality. Some clients suggested the potential for the OVGA to engage in further research to quantify the economic, social, and environmental benefits of good design at all stages of a project, helping to strengthen business cases. There was also strong support for greater integration of design research and benchmarking, including collaboration with interstate and international peers, and sharing lessons learned across jurisdictions to inform local practice.

- **Refinements to formal design review process:** Stakeholders suggested improvements to the OVGA's formal design review process, including clearer communication about when and how reviews occur, and ensuring advice stays within the design remit. They recommended longer workshops structured with more opportunity for dialogue, particularly for complex projects, and clearer coordination among panel members to avoid contradictory feedback. Enhancing pre-briefings, ensuring continuity of personnel across project stages, and improving understanding of project constraints were also identified as priorities for strengthening the impact and relevance of the OVGA's advice.
- **Formal authority:** Several stakeholders recommended strengthening and formalising OVGA's authority and influence across government and private sector projects. Suggestions for how this might be achieved included stronger policy integration (for example, via planning scheme or building code reforms) or statutory recognition (for example, via statutory authority status). This could include the power to mandate design advice recommendations following design review, ensuring that design quality is not just encouraged but required. Stakeholders suggested that formalising OVGA's authority could also support its integration into key stages of public project approvals, reinforcing its position as a critical checkpoint for design excellence.

*Given the current economic conditions and pressures, a clearer focus on and communication of the financial benefit of design excellence would assist OVGA when making the case for prioritising good design in public projects.*

Survey respondent (2025), Victorian Government department or delivery agency

## 5. Summary and conclusion

SGS Economics and Planning has undertaken three evaluations of the OVGA's services over the past decade. These evaluations have consistently demonstrated the OVGA's significant contributions to Victoria's built environment, highlighting its unique value in embedding design quality across both public and private sector projects, its credibility as an independent advisory and advocacy body, and its role in strengthening design capability among built environment professionals.

The most recent evaluation reaffirms these findings, with 85% of project clients and stakeholders reporting that the OVGA's involvement 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved project design quality, and only 1% noting no improvement.

Reflecting the breadth of the OVGA's work, stakeholder feedback identified a wide range of benefits, which have been grouped into four overarching categories:

- Maintaining social license and public trust in Government projects
- Creating public value through exemplary design for long-term impact
- Providing design expertise for practical impact and problem-solving
- Advocating for good design, procurement and delivery capability.

Quantifying the exact value of the benefits generated by the OVGA to the Victorian Government and community is difficult, given the complex and collaborative nature of project delivery. However, as shown in Appendix C, the OVGA would need only to reduce project risks by 0.05% for the OVGA's benefits to outweigh its service delivery costs. This appears achievable given:

- 64% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA helped to manage design risks
- 44% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA reduced project delivery risks
- 40% of stakeholders agree that the OVGA helped to overcome a project impasse.

As Victoria faces growing complexity in infrastructure and urban development, the role of the OVGA remains essential. The evaluation identified a range of success factors critical to maintaining the quality of the OVGA's service delivery, including cross-disciplinary expertise, team tenure and experience, independence, and institutional gravitas. Sustaining these strengths requires an ongoing commitment from the Victorian Government to ensure stability in service delivery, along with adequate funding and resourcing.

# Appendix A: Case study projects

## 5.1 Collaboration on Heritage & Planning Approvals

### Program details

Client:	Heritage Victoria and Department of Transport and Planning (Planning Approvals) Sector(s):
Project phase:	Heritage and Planning Approvals
Completion status:	Planning permit (where Heritage Victoria is the overarching regulatory authority)
Location:	Ongoing (process initiated in 2024)
	Victoria

### Program description

Works to places listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) require a heritage permit under the Heritage Act 2017. A planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 may also be required. These permits are typically considered separately, and at times, a project reaches an impasse where the heritage concerns cannot be reconciled with a contemporary vision of place. OVGA contends that contemporary, creative architecture can respect heritage values while enhancing the interpretation of those values. An appropriate design response within a historic context will meld both heritage values and architectural intent, proposing a solution of combined enhanced value. A collaborative and respectful approach is needed.

In 2024, the OVGA initiated a process where Heritage Victoria (HV), OVGA and the Department of Transport and Planning's (DTP) Planning Approvals team collaborate on selected projects to navigate individual agency or group concerns through a series of workshops, with clear joint feedback provided at the pre-application stage.

The collaborative process allows each agency or group to clearly articulate their own concerns and areas of support within a collective workshop setting. The workshop process allows each agency or group to build on each other's comments and to explore tailored solutions in real time to reconcile or clarify areas of difference. The proponent is present, providing greater transparency in the process and visibility of how different parts of government are assessing the scheme according to their expertise. Due to the unique nature of VHR projects more site-specific and nuanced solutions can be considered and joint formal advice ensures that all parties are aware of one another's position.

The aim of the workshop process is to facilitate exemplary design outcomes at heritage places, based on the premise that any design proposal impacting a place listed on the state or national register needs to be led by its heritage significance.

Projects that have undergone this collaborative workshop process include:

- Robur Tea House (2024)
- CHORA (Former Little Sisters of the Poor) (2024 / 2025)
- The Goods Shed (2024 / 2025)
- Ballarat Station overpass (2024 / 2025)

- Bryant and May (2024 / 2025)
- Cremorne Power Station (2024 / 2025)
- Cable Tram Engine House and Substation (2024 / 2025) – case study below.

## Cable Tram Engine House and Substation

### Project description

The Former Cable Tram Engine House and Substation (VHR H2332) at 253-259 Brunswick Road, Brunswick is a registered place on the Victoria Heritage Register (VHR) and is of historical and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria. The Engine House is considered a rare intact component of Melbourne’s cable tram system, which was one of the largest and most complex tram systems in the world. It was later converted to electric power in the twentieth century, demonstrating two key phases of the development of Melbourne’s tram system.

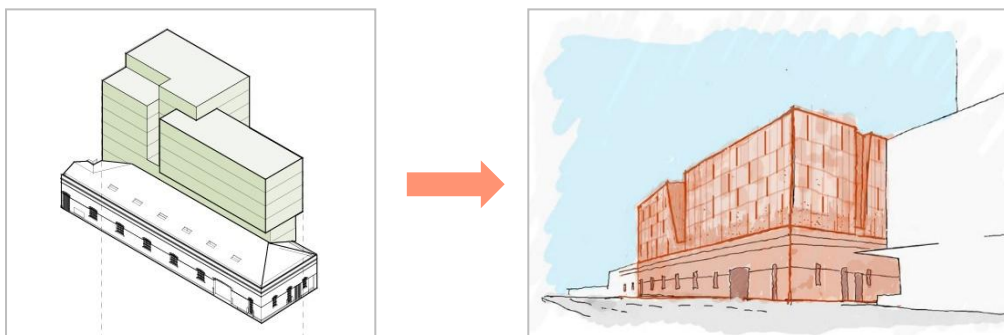
The subject site is an L-shaped parcel of land, one of three lots within the identified heritage place. The project proposes the adaptive reuse of part of the heritage place, namely the Engine House, and includes demolition of part of the roof bay, internal and external conservation works, and a new 8-storey student housing facility.

There are two responsible authorities – HV and Merri-bek Council. Before convening the collaborative workshop process, there were several pre-planning meetings with the proponent and the responsible authorities. The project had reached an impasse, with HV unsatisfied with the design response.

### Services provided by OVGA

Heritage Victoria and Merri-bek Council previously worked with the proponent/designer to assess the concept in line with planning regulations. OVGA's advice proposed that the project needed to be led by a more creative assessment of how to add to the heritage building.

Through a series of discussions and workshops, OVGA facilitated joint advice with DTP and HV. This collaborative process provided iterative, integrated guidance, enabling a bespoke, site-specific design response that challenges conventional approaches and more effectively balances heritage with contemporary development.



### Benefits generated by OVGA

- Reduced back-and-forth permit processes, leading to shorter assessment timeframes and greater certainty.
- Supported the Heritage Victoria team with design skills not available in-house.
- Proposed innovative solutions that may not have otherwise been achieved, unlocking the project from an impasse.
- Improved understanding of the relationship between planning and heritage regulations.
- Supported timely approval of much-needed housing.
- Enabling a more holistic approach that balances heritage, planning, and design considerations.
- Setting a precedent for heritage-led design, raising the standard for adaptive reuse projects.
- Delivering an exemplary case study in collaborative planning and design.
- Supported a more efficient and optimised building envelope, increasing housing yield.

### Key lessons learnt

- The process captures respectful acknowledgement of the individual concerns of OVGA, HV and DTP Planning as a starting point before a project goes too far. There is important upskilling and knowledge sharing in a collaborative arrangement that allows for and integrates the different lenses each of these groups brings to project review.
- Refining the collaborative heritage and planning process could lead to the promotion of a more intelligent and sensitive approach to revisioning, where a development proposal needs to be more clearly led by the valuable existing heritage building/place.
- For clients, it's essential to understand that embarking on a project impacted by heritage means the stakes are high. Design expectations are higher – 'exemplary' not just 'adequate'. This necessitates a more careful choice of designers and heritage expertise in the team. Some sites may be suitable for design-led procurement, such as a design competition.
- It is critical to have a skilled, capable design team on any project impacting a heritage building/place. The discussion is nuanced and needs design capability to interpret.

## 5.2 Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project



**Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project / Brunswick and Coburg / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (2021)**  
**Architecture:** Wood Marsh **Landscape:** Tract **Photography:** Peter Clarke

### Project details

Client:	Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA)
Completion status:	Completed (Opening 2021)
Project phase:	2018-20
Sector:	Transport Infrastructure
Location:	Upfield Line / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
Design Team:	Wood Marsh + Tract

### Project description

Coburg and Moreland Stations were delivered as part of the Bell Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project, which elevated the rail to remove four level crossings along the Upfield line.

Continuous separated pedestrian and cycling paths now connect 2.5 kilometres of linear park with adjacent open space and local street networks. Moreland is a local station designed in response to the heritage listed station and local neighbourhood context. Multi-generational play equipment, activation nodes, skate parks, and passive open space either side of the new infrastructure are integrated to support a vibrant inner-city community.

### Services provided by OVGA through LXP

OVGA, via a dedicated resource working in close collaboration with LXP:

- Provided advice on the program-wide LXP Urban Design Framework, which provides guidance on site-responsive, high-quality outcomes for all level crossing removals work.
- Chairs the LXP Urban Design Advisory Panel (UDAP), assessing bid proposals and providing advice throughout all design stages and construction of the project.
- Provided critical advice to Heritage Victoria on the contemporary architectural design response in relation to the state-listed heritage buildings.
- Liaised with Merri-bek City Council to develop the LXP Urban Design Guidelines, which form the brief for the Northwest Program Alliance (NWPA), who delivered the project.
- Provided advice to NWPA, ensuring the quality of station and landscape architecture was maintained through the design development and construction phases of the project.

### Benefits generated by the OVGA

- Assisted LXP in discussions with Heritage Victoria through the approval processes to ensure timely delivery of the project.
- Support for an innovative consolidated station plan layout and other infrastructure design elements, now adopted as part of the LXP solution reuse program.
- Advocacy for integration of activation nodes along the path networks for improved amenity and passive surveillance below the elevated rail.
- Ensured high quality landscape interfaces with local streetscapes along, below and across the rail infrastructure. This resulted in an increase in tree canopy cover and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) contributions to streetscapes, station forecourts, including local parkland that was significantly impacted by the infrastructure.

### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

- Earlier involvement with OVGA (through UDAP) on select infrastructure elements may have benefited the project with improved efficiencies.

### Key lessons learnt

- Earlier engagement with Merri-bek City Council on the design and maintenance of open space and infrastructure assets may have expedited ultimate handover processes.
- Engagement between OVGA (through UDAP) and Heritage Victoria early in the design phase assisted the approval process for the heritage permit.
- Regular UDAP meetings throughout the design, construction and maintenance phases proved beneficial to the design quality of landscape and architectural outcomes across most of the project.
- Significant tree loss at Gandolfo Gardens has been successfully mitigated with successful tree canopy cover integrated with WSUD following 4 years of growth.
- Proximity of piers and crossheads to heritage station buildings could have been refined.

- Steep batter slopes alongside swale drains in select areas have not enabled good vegetative coverage.
- Further interrogation of overland drainage earlier in the design phase may have reduced the extent of landscape rework.
- A wider pedestrian path along the corridor would discourage people from walking along the dedicated cycling path.

### 5.3 Frankston Hospital redevelopment



Architectural render of Frankston Hospital Redevelopment, Design team: Bates Smart + Architectus Conrad Gargett + Urbis

#### Project details

Client:	Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA)
Sector:	Health
Location:	Frankston / Boon Wurrung / Bunurong Country
Procurement:	Public Private Partnership
Consortium:	Exemplar Health (incl. Capella Capital, Lendlease, Honeywell and Compass)
Design Team:	Bates Smart + Architectus Conrad Gargett + Urbis (landscape)
Project value:	\$1.1 billion
Project phases:	Procurement to delivery
Completion status:	In delivery, due for completion late 2025

#### Project description

The redevelopment of Frankston Hospital represents the largest ever health infrastructure investment in Melbourne's south-east. The redevelopment delivers a new tower with 12 levels of clinical services and a main entrance, 130 more beds, new spaces for mental health and oncology services and 15 new operating theatres. The redevelopment will also deliver expanded women's and children's services. This includes new maternity, obstetrics and paediatric wards, a women's clinic, and a special care nursery.

An expansion of the emergency department will deliver a new mental health, alcohol and other drugs

hub and a dedicated paediatric zone, providing specialist care for patients, families and carers. Once finished, the redeveloped hospital will have capacity to treat approximately 35,000 more patient episodes each year. Construction is well underway, with main works expected to be completed in 2025.

In health care, there is clear evidence of the benefits of good design – improved therapeutic outcomes, better work conditions, and therefore lower staff attrition rates, confidence and sustainable outcomes. Recognising this, OVGA worked closely with the VHBA to embed design-quality initiatives into the project during the early planning, procurement, and delivery phases.

#### Services provided by OVGA

- Participated in the procurement process for the selection of the State’s architectural technical advisers.
- In collaboration with Peninsula Health, VHBA and the project architectural technical advisers, developed project-specific design principles that were embedded in the bid documents.
- Reviewed and provided input to market engagement documentation such as Expression of Interest (EOI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) documents.
- Led industry briefings on the project’s design principles and expectations around design quality.
- Facilitated access to multidisciplinary design expertise through a Design Quality Team (DQT) for participation in interactive tender workshops and the evaluation of tender documents.
- Led design-focused internal briefings and presentations during the evaluation phase.
- Monitored design quality in the early stages of design development post Contract Close to ensure design outcomes were consistent with the agreed design intent.
- Site visits during construction to monitor the quality of built spatial outcomes, materials and details.
- Participation in briefing, evaluation, and selection processes for integrated artworks within the project.

#### Benefits generated by the OVGA

- The co-design of project-specific design principles with VHBA and Peninsula Health ensured agreement by all parties on design quality expectations and key areas of focus. Key design principles included:
  - A welcoming and inclusive design response
  - A contextual, connected, and integrated design responsive to existing and future site conditions – a cohesive masterplan was deemed critical in this context.
  - An uplifting and optimistic design, calm and connected with nature.
  - A sustainable and resilient solution using evidence-based design to create a healthy and healing environment.
- The design principles provided a strong design quality framework for industry to engage with.

- The Victorian Government Architect's participation in the RFP briefing elevated the importance of design – providing a clear signal to industry regarding the State's expectations around design quality.
- OVGA's participation in the interactive tender workshops provided positive guidance to the bid teams, enabling the development of robust and high-quality submissions.
- OVGA's participation in the evaluation and internal briefing process assisted in the identification and prioritisation of key design issues to be resolved before or post Contract Close.
- Maintaining involvement post Contract Close during the early design development phases to ensure outstanding design development issues were resolved to the State's satisfaction was critical.
- Retaining a key member of OVGA's DQT as a specialist technical adviser ensured continuity and enhanced corporate knowledge and monitoring of detailed design quality issues in delivery.
- OVGA's involvement in the selection of artists and artworks can optimise their integration.

#### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

- The ability to influence and optimise the design outcomes can sometimes be encumbered during the negotiation phases when other issues that the OVGA may not have visibility of – such as commercial, operational, or clinical considerations – lead to decisions that impact the design. Close collaboration and open dialogue across disciplines can help broaden impact and improve outcomes.
- Being cognisant of the 'audience' is critical when briefing decision makers during the evaluation and negotiation phases. The operating environment is fast-paced, and there are numerous competing demands and commercial tensions that need to be balanced. A clear articulation of the benefits and risks of different design solutions, free of jargon, is needed to support decision-makers.

#### Key lessons learnt

- OVGA's experience with several Public Private Partnerships projects in health highlights the importance of the evaluation phase is in identifying design development issues. Including these in the contract so that there is the ability to argue for and dedicate an appropriate amount of time to the design development and refinement of design issues, with the benefit of additional input post contract award, is crucial.
- The importance of building positive partnerships with stakeholders – securing high-level support and identifying design champions within delivery agencies who are prepared to commit and argue for good design, is all critical to the success of projects.

## 5.4 Ground Lease Model 1: Bangs Street, Prahran



**Bangs Street, Prahran / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, Photography: Tom Blachford**

### Project details

Client:	Homes Victoria
Sector:	Mixed tenure housing
Location:	Prahran
Procurement:	Public Private Partnership
Consortium:	Building Communities – Icon Kajima Construction, Citta Property Group, Tetris Capital and Community Housing (Vic) Limited
Design Team:	JCB Architects, Rush Wright
Project value:	\$394.1 million for Ground Lease Model (\$5.3 billion for Big Housing Build)
Project phases:	Bid phase mid 2020/21 – Construction commenced 2021 - Completion 2024
Completion status:	Completed

### Project description

Homes Victoria collaborated with community housing and private sectors to deliver 1,110 new homes across Flemington, Brighton, and Prahran. Through the Ground Lease Model (GLM) Project – Stage One, this initiative provided a mix of new social housing, affordable homes, and market rental homes, including Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) dwellings.

Under the GLM, public land was leased to a not-for-profit project company (Project Co) for a 40-year

term. During this period, Project Co. finances, designs, constructs, maintains, and manages the sites. At the end of the lease, all dwellings and the land will revert to Homes Victoria's management. The project adhered to the Public Private Partnership framework outlined in the Partnership Victoria Requirements.

The Bangs Street, Prahran project delivered 434 new homes, including a mix of social housing and private rental homes.

#### Services provided by OVGA

- Development of Design Principles embedded in the bid documents.
- Briefing tenderers on Design Principles and Government expectations.
- Multidisciplinary design expertise provided through a Design Quality Team for evaluation of tender documents and focus on design quality and amenity outcomes.
- Design review, assessment and report on 'Request for Proposal.'
- Independent architectural, landscape and urban design advice at Interactive Tender Workshops.
- Design review, assessment and report on 'Best and Final Offer' (BAFO).

#### Benefits generated by the OVGA

*Design quality benefits include advocating for (an) improved:*

- Masterplan to enhance the public realm, interfaces with neighbours and promote efficient building layouts as well as advocating for:
  - Tenure equity (where the low-rise Bendigo St apartments mainly were allocated to private dwellings).
  - Widening the north-south link to protect amenity.
  - Community space adjacent to northern-park, protection of street trees to Bangs Street and Bendigo Street and widening of footpath.
  - Prioritising pedestrian and cyclist movements on site and through precincts for better community connectivity, shared lobbies and safe outdoor activity.
  - Enhancing opportunities for landscaped, outdoor and play spaces by reducing hard-scape areas dedicated to vehicular access.
  - Avoiding above-ground car parking for an improved public realm and for safety.
  - Refined basement layout to reduce car park entries to a single crossover and maximise deep soil planting opportunities.
- Functionality and amenity, including:
  - Reduced corridor length and openings to capture daylight and natural ventilation.
  - Greater external solar control to the west.
  - Greater apartment area for functionality, especially in one-bedroom apartments.
  - Windows to bathrooms/wet areas that are located on the outside edge of buildings.

- Improved access to daylight and sunlight for apartments with a corner condition through oriel windows.
- Improved functionality of apartment layouts, including size and layout of living/meals/kitchen and ability to accommodate sufficient furniture for the number of occupants.
- Improved functionality of kitchen areas and the amount of bench space, commensurate with the number of occupants.
- Built form, massing and materiality, including:
  - Breaking up built form and massing to reduce the visual impact of large buildings and create a human-scale to Bangs St.
  - An improved streetscape grain and rhythm to Bendigo St.
  - Quality and authenticity in finishes and materials, e.g., natural timber flooring versus vinyl 'timber look' flooring.

*Process benefits include:*

- Challenging the planning regulatory framework (i.e. Design Development Overlay) to encourage greater height to the commercial precinct on High St, at the southern end of the site, leading to a better design.
- Continuity from the OVGA enhanced the corporate knowledge of the project.
- Advocacy for independent Post Occupancy Evaluation in the brief.

Amplifying the OVGA's impact

- Early involvement in the lifecycle of the project, including reviewing the reference design.
- Visibility of feasibility/costings during tender to inform scope, quality and value management.
- The inclusion of more State-led design sessions reinforces the State's expectations regarding quality.
- An ongoing role for the OVGA in the review of the proposals as they are developed during the Design Development phases, post Contract Close, to ensure that issues identified during the evaluation are resolved.

Key lessons learnt

*Key lessons in terms of design quality include:*

- The retention of established trees and landscape can significantly enhance the character of the site - improving the public realm and delivering apartment amenity.
- Challenge the need for fencing to the perimeter of the site, to adjacent existing parkland.
- Promoting the benefits of designing corner apartment interiors and balconies to capture the amenity of light and ventilation afforded by the dual aspect.
- Advocating for the importance of amenity and design quality to shared areas, such as lobby spaces.

*Key lessons in terms of process include:*

- A high-quality reference design can positively influence innovation, amenity and functionality.
- Ensure greater specificity on design quality and technical requirements for internal amenity, including layouts, internal finishes, kitchen bench space, lighting (artificial and natural), electrical provisions, etc.
- Resolve the identified design issues at each milestone, before progressing, to manage risk and uncertainty post Contract Close.
- Fast-tracking the negotiation process to achieve Contract Close with unresolved design documentation runs the risk of suboptimal design quality outcomes and financial uncertainty.
- Site visits after practical completion were beneficial in understanding the built outcome spatially and the quality of materials and detailing.

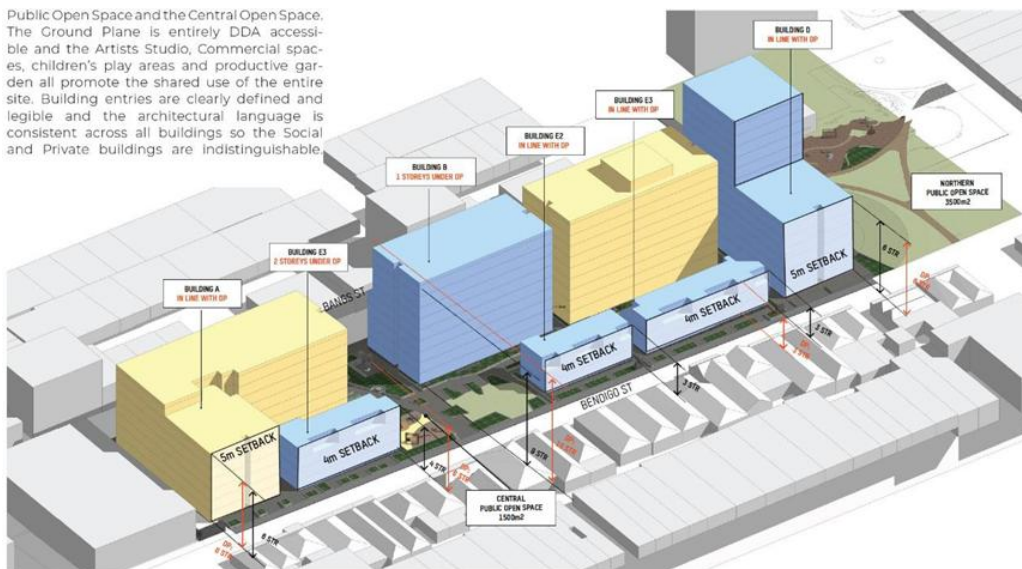


Figure 22: GLM 1 After, Prahran



TYPICAL ELEVATION (BANGS STREET)

Public Open Space and the Central Open Space. The Ground Plane is entirely DDA accessible and the Artists Studio, Commercial spaces, children's play areas and productive garden all promote the shared use of the entire site. Building entries are clearly defined and legible and the architectural language is consistent across all buildings so the Social and Private buildings are indistinguishable.



SETBACK MASSING DIAGRAMS

## 5.5 Post occupancy evaluation of schools



Schools featured in recently completed OVGA's post occupancy evaluation reports for VSBA.

**Left:** Clyde Secondary College / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (2022) **Architecture:** McBride Charles Ryan **Photography:** Tim Yi-Ting Lee

**Right:** Gisborne Primary School / Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country (2022) **Architecture:** Maddison Architects **Photo Credit:** Maddison Architects

### Project details

Client: Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA)

Completion status: Ongoing

Sector: Education

Project phase: Post occupancy

Location: Victoria

### Project description

The OVGA has completed eight Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) reports for VSBA from 2017 to 2024. In this period, OVGA visited and evaluated 76 individual school buildings. OVGA's evaluation focuses on design and procurement processes and complements a POE staff survey process led by VSBA's lead POE consultant, Aurecon (previously by Arup). OVGA's annual stand-alone reports summarise overall learnings and observations of its school visits. OVGA's evaluation provides VSBA with valuable intelligence regarding qualitative issues that complement the formal survey outcomes.

### Services provided by OVGA

For each annual round of POE reporting, OVGA attends a meeting with the principal and staff from each school, along with the delivery team, including the VSBA project officer, design architect, and project manager. OVGA's experience in the design and delivery of educational buildings supports an informed evaluation of the briefing and design process, the role of the architect and issues encountered through the project design and delivery stages.

OVGA's design knowledge and design review expertise within government enables critical commentary on design decisions made along the way and the success of the final built outcome, helping inform and improve future school building processes for the VSBA.

### Benefits generated by the OVGA

Without the involvement of the OVGA and its specialised knowledge, the design review of the POE process's qualitative aspects would be limited. Learnings from the success or failure of different design solutions of each project would not be as clearly distilled and presented to the VSBA. Without this unique design knowledge, the connection between the survey results and the design itself would not be clearly illustrated.

VSBA have implemented key changes to their policies, design guidance, project delivery methods, and project briefs in response to OVGA's advocacy and reports.

Critical procurement/evaluation process changes include:

- A raise in the contingency amount for projects to 10% (previously 5%)
- The reintroduction of a fee scale for Principal Design Consultancy services, de-risking projects by consultants competing on quality, not fees
- An increase in masterplan budgets, including landscape, and protection of landscape scope through Value Management processes
- Inclusion of acoustic testing of completed school buildings for a technical analysis of acoustic performance and to confirm compliance with the new BQSH guidance
- Earlier provision of asset and services information for all projects, including the Division 6 asbestos audit, to mitigate risk
- Ensuring 100% complete Design Development documentation for D&C contract works, mitigating the risk of diminishing design quality through the documentation stage
- Inclusion of a 'rationale' in proposed tender options
- Requiring a hydraulics engineer in all roof designs – minimises ongoing maintenance issues
- Training of staff and students in the operation of new facilities to ensure the full benefit of the embedded ESD, building technology, and BMS can be met
- A minimum statistical sample for POE surveys, after observing many surveys, had only minimal responses, which skewed the results
- Pedagogy input to the POE reporting cycles, which was added in 2022
- 'As-Built' drawings rather than 'For Construction' to be issued as part of the POE inspections to provide more accurate information and supporting management of assets
- An increase in the number of individual school buildings included in each round of POE reports (2017, 8 per year to 20+).

Critical design quality changes include:

- Ensuring Performing Arts and Physical Education buildings were sized to allow for netball competitions, which supports the opportunity to rent out the space to the community as a revenue stream for individual schools
- Increased window openings that support cross ventilation and still ensure safety compliance
- Inclusion of flyscreens and blinds to all windows, now embedded in all cost plans
- Inclusion of consistent specification of proven, robust door hardware for all projects

- Inclusion of CO2 monitors in every classroom as the base case
- Increasing the standard allocation of bicycle spaces to promote active transport
- Improved amenities design to include individual cubicles
- Review of sensory spaces and breakout rooms.

#### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

There would be value in the OVGA regularly presenting key evaluation findings directly to VSBA's executive leadership and key project delivery teams as a confirmed deliverable of the POE yearly reporting. This would provide an opportunity to delve into key learnings and feedback from architects and staff, and to advocate for further changes and updates to VSBA processes and design guidance.

#### Key lessons learnt

The VSBA POE reporting process is applicable to other project types, including healthcare, housing and cultural projects. OVGA has presented the learnings and benefits of the POE program to other government departments and agencies to demonstrate the ongoing value of the process and advocate for its formal integration in publicly funded projects.

The value of the POE reporting is demonstrable in the longitudinal improvements to procurement processes, design guidance standards and finally, the overall quality of VSBA's education facilities.

## 5.6 Development Facilitation Program

### Program details

Client:	Development Facilitation, Assessment and Approvals Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
Sector(s):	Planning Approvals
Project phase:	Planning Permit Applications (including pre-application)
Completion status:	Ongoing
Location:	Victoria

### Program description

The Development Facilitation Program (DFP) is a dedicated program within DTP that provides an expedited pre-planning process for eligible projects. Proposed developments must inject investment into the Victorian economy, provide significant employment or create more homes which include affordable housing.

In 2023, government expanded the DFP process (*Housing Statement, 2024*), making the Minister for Planning the decision maker for significant residential developments that include affordable housing. The DFP expansion includes a provision allowing the OVGA's views to be sought as part of the assessment process.

The Department's dedicated pre-application enquiry service reviews all projects submitted through DFP. The accelerated pathway offered by the DFP needs to determine that the project: *'provides for the efficient and effective use of land and facilitates use and development with high-quality urban design, architecture and landscape architecture.'*

DTP has prepared **Terms of Reference for Design Review** of projects that come through the DFP process, and includes the following guidance:

*'The DFP triage projects internally to determine whether a project meets 'design significance' criteria. Factors that may deem a project to be of 'design significance', warranting an additional complementary review by OVGA are as follows:*

- *Civic or public-facing role (e.g. Convention centre, hospital)*
- *Government investment and priorities (e.g. Melbourne Metro, Victoria's Big Build Projects)*
- *Potential to innovate and improve standard practice (e.g. sustainability, architectural excellence)*
- *Including a place listed on the Victorian Heritage Register*
- *Establishing a new benchmark or precedent project (e.g. Renewal area, emerging typology of building).*
- *Some instances where development seeks to vary mandatory controls or deviate from local planning policy objectives.*

Applications made under the DPF provisions are not exempt from public notice and referral requirements of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (unless exempted elsewhere in the planning scheme). However, a key element of the pathway is that decisions made by the Minister for Planning under the provisions cannot be appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). This amplifies the importance of not only a facilitative but rigorous assessment process that includes independent design review by the OVGA.

#### Services provided by the OVGA

All projects considered by the DFP are subject to a design review process to ensure proposals deliver high-quality built form outcomes for Victoria. Where projects are generally in accordance with the planning framework and well considered in their design response, the Planning team will not require the OVGA's services.

Where the DFP Planning team believes that a project coming through the DFP pathway requires further design consideration, it can seek OVGA guidance. In these instances, OVGA supports DFP with a design triage service, conducted through regular joint sessions. These attendees included the Victorian Government Architect, Associate Victorian Government Architect and senior OVGA advisers.

Design triage is a 'fast-to-pass' or 'fast-to-fail' test. In a design triage session, OVGA, in consultation with the DFP Planning team, determines if the project:

- Is appropriate and should continue to proceed down the fast-track process with no further input from the OVGA. OVGA will provide design commentary on areas for improvement as the project develops. These items may be included as permit conditions.
- Has potential, but with a range of fundamental design concerns that need further design development before granting planning approval. OVGA directs these projects through a formal and interactive design workshop process.
- If the project is too ambitious, inappropriate for the area, of a lower design quality, or a combination of all these elements, the OVGA will recommend that the project is not supported. The key message here is that projects should either start afresh or seek a different planning pathway where third-party appeal rights are activated if they are significantly challenging existing controls.

At a design triage session, OVGA:

- Provides a high-level overview of the design merits of proposals.
- Considers proposals against the following assessment criteria:
  - contextual response
  - architectural design
  - key amenity issues including sustainability, functionality, landscape integration and access to light and fresh air.
- Provides a short memo of OVGA's design advice within ten business days of design triage. The memo can be either sent on in full to the proponent, used as a reference document for the drafting of planning permit conditions, or provided to the Minister.

- May recommend a design review workshop with supplementary industry expertise drawn from OVGA's independent design experts, where a project has significant elements that require further consideration and detailed assessment.

#### Benefits generated by the OVGA

OVGA offers a breadth of expert insight as well as support to planners and the Minister for Planning. The strength of OVGA advice lies in its independence, objectivity, and ability to analyse a scheme within the context of best practice and specialist knowledge. This is particularly significant where decisions cannot be appealed; projects are pushing typical planning controls and or challenge current context, patterns of use and development.

#### Design expertise and experience in public and private sector project delivery

OVGA has internal specialist knowledge and access to independent design experts trained in architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture, and exposure to the design, procurement, and delivery of significant projects in both the public and private sectors. The ability of the OVGA to easily understand technical documentation and translate that into three dimensions to assess whether the design is achieving the asserted ambitions is critical.

Planning is a critical gateway to capture cost, quality, and intent. The risk for fast-track planning projects without expert design review is that projects of a lower quality may unintentionally 'pass' through the process without the right scrutiny.

OVGA provides planners with clear guidance on when a project simply is not appropriate from a design quality perspective. OVGA advice embeds a robust design assessment. This saves time for all parties by providing a sound rationale for the advice and preventing further investment of time and resources into projects that are clearly inappropriate.

#### Design triage – the 'fast-to-pass' or 'fast-to-fail' test

OVGA only sees projects where there is 'design significance,' and there is an issue with design quality that requires further consideration. Embedding a 'fast-to-pass' or 'fast-to-fail' test in the design triage process offers benefits in terms of further investment of time and resources.

The design triage process generates benefits for projects that are of good design quality and align with local and state planning frameworks. These projects can proceed without having to factor an additional risk margin.

Where projects have general merit but foundational design issues, the OVGA's facilitation of a design review workshop process – supplemented by additional industry-leading expertise – sets up projects for success, allowing projects to be both improved and approved.

#### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

The OVGA could generate greater and broader benefits if it had the capacity to see more projects. The number of projects OVGA reviews is a function of factors, including resourcing. As such, it is only projects deemed of 'design significance' that gain the benefit of OVGA design advice through this pathway.

### Key lessons learnt

- Clarifying the role of design evaluation is important. Design review is complementary to the planning scheme, but not a regulatory process. OVGA has developed clear design principles/criteria that communicate the basis of its design evaluation.
- Industry briefings explaining the DFP assessment process and OVGA priorities have been invaluable. It has been important to clarify with the industry that:
  - whilst facilitative, the DFP pathway is a conservative planning pathway that rewards sensible good design. It is not a process for indiscriminately challenging height and setback controls, rather it rewards projects that align with strategic objectives by delivering clear benefits.
  - a fast-track process does not translate into a requirement for less documentation. The pathway offers benefits in terms of time and risk but does not come at expense of a considered and well-documented proposal.
- Design review processes have the most impact when used early and there is consistency of representation providing continuity of advice.
- Better contextual documentation benefits the assessment of the project. This includes site sections with adjacent street profiles and buildings opposite.
- Good design leads to improved planning outcomes.

## 5.7 Future Homes



### Future Homes exemplar designs

**Clockwise from top left:** Design A by Design Strategy Architecture with Includesign, Design B by LIAN Architects, Design C by McGregor Westlake Architecture, Design D by Spiral Architects Lab

### Project details

Client:	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP; 2018-2022); Department of Transport and Planning (DTP; 2022 – current)
Sector:	Planning / Housing
Location:	Victoria
Project phase:	2018: Concept socialisation, Election promise, funding 2019-2022: Design Competition; Exemplar Design Development 2022 – ongoing: Active planning provision/assessments
Completion status:	Ongoing

### Project description

*Future Homes* was originally conceived as delivering on *Plan Melbourne* and developed as part of the Better Apartments program. In Victoria's Housing Statement (September 2023), *Future Homes* was expanded across Victoria. *Future Homes* facilitates healthy, comfortable, and sustainable apartment buildings through the provision of:

- Exemplar designs
- Building Future Homes Adaptation Guide
- Streamlined planning process (VPP Clause 53.24)

Four exemplar designs have been developed through a competition and refinement process, with input from specialist consultants and OVGA's industry design experts. Future Homes feature:

- a streamlined planning pathway
- adaptable, high-quality, three-storey apartment building designs for General Residential Zone (GRZ) land
- highly sustainable design, equivalent to BESS Excellence Score of 70% or higher
- excellent environmental performance (average 7.5-star NatHERS)
- 100% naturally ventilated and light-filled homes
- ageing-in-place and family-friendly design considerations
- gold level LHDG accessibility compliance for 50% of apartments
- best practice water sensitive urban design
- high-quality gardens, communal and private open space
- increased bike parking requirements
- reduced minimum car parking requirements, where suitable.

#### Services provided by OVGA

OVGA partnered with DELWP/DTP from project inception to define the project rationale, vision, objectives, approach, and scope. OVGA provided strategic input and leadership on process and procurement. Contributions included:

- Co-development of design brief and research into applicable zoning and sites
- Establishing sustainability targets and benchmarks
- Chairing the competition jury evaluation and interactive workshops
- Determining the scope of engagement and fees for winning architects
- Selecting and briefing all technical consultants
- Design management, including leading refinement workshops, providing feedback on feasibility and constructability, reviewing design resolution and internal amenity, and advising on integration with other disciplines
- Design review and reporting on siting and massing strategies, landscape integration, and architectural resolution and expression
- Co-design/authorship of the planning process, planning provision and adaptation guide
- Advocacy and engagement with other State departments and agencies, local government, peak bodies, and industry across all phases of the project development and post-implementation
- Design review workshops for all planning applications to assess successful adaptation of the exemplar designs in accordance with the Building Future Homes Adaptation Guide
- Advice/support to Homes Victoria to procure the first Future Homes demonstration project.

OVGA continues to collaborate within DTP in the assessment of all *Future Homes* development applications, and to explore the application of the *Future Homes* model to other housing types and settings as announced through Victoria's Housing Statement.

#### Benefits generated by the OVGA

- OVGA's early involvement from project inception enabled it to significantly influence all aspects of the Future Homes project.
- Expert design advice and design coordination helped shape and refine the competition-winning designs to a market-ready and exemplary standard, lifting the bar for sustainability, amenity and diverse housing solutions across the sector and moving from 'business-as-usual' to exemplary design.
- Co-authorship of the project by the OVGA led to a unique and well-considered process demonstrating how government can tailor programs that deliver on commitments.
- Advocacy and events for the program helped build awareness of the value of integrated design outcomes across architecture, sustainability, construction, and development.
- The value of an architectural lens to drive ongoing research and thought leadership on alternative planning standards and development models to support the viability of sustainable, well-designed apartment housing.
- Identification of learnings and future research into contemporary construction techniques and opportunities for industry innovation, including prefabrication and componentisation to increase the capacity of housing delivery across Victoria.
- Facilitation of discussions with key developers and builders to further investigate development viability and identify the barriers to housing delivery in Victoria's current economic context.

#### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

With the current focus on planning reform to build capacity in the planning system, there is an opportunity to further develop the model across different scales and expanded settings.

There is also a possibility to capitalise on opportunities to promote the project, for further research and education through pilot projects interrogating construction viability, publications, events, and discussions with government and industry.

#### Key lessons learnt

Key lessons learned:

- Further consider the application of exemplar designs to different lot sizes and geometries
- Define the experience and capability level of competition entrants from the outset
- Engage specialist yield consultant at an earlier stage to help shape the brief
- Provide more emphasis on commercially viable outcomes and affordable construction innovation (such as offsite manufacturing)
- Ensure sufficient time and project budget to accommodate independent adaptation testing, contingencies, and design review into the program at the outset

- Car parking can provide a significant constraint – this has informed refinements to requirements within the provision since its launch
- Clarity around licensing agreements well before contracted work is critical.

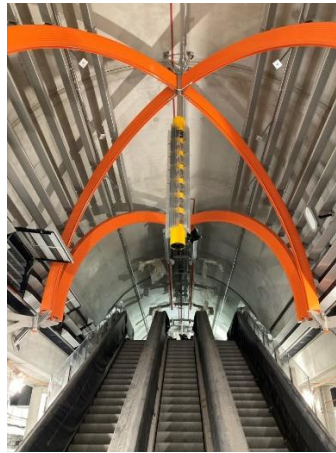
Additional lessons learned:

- OVGA has a unique role as facilitator in discussions between designers, developers, sustainability experts, policy advisors, and other professionals to identify opportunities to increase the capacity and design amenity of Victorian housing
- OVGA can strengthen outcomes through cross-departmental partnerships
- OVGA can co-lead state-wide programs with multiple participants to support the development of innovative housing models that achieve both appropriate yields and good amenities.

## 5.8 Metro Tunnel Project



Anzac Station



State Library Station



Parkville Station

### Project details

Client:	Metro Tunnel Project Office (MTPO)
Sector:	Transport
Location:	Central Melbourne
Procurement:	Public Private Partnership (PPP)
Consortium:	Cross Yarra Partnership comprising Lendlease Engineering, John Holland, Bouygues Construction and Capella Capital
Design Team:	Collaboration with Hassell, Weston Williamson and Partners and Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners (RSHP)
Project value:	\$13.48 billion
Project phases:	Project inception, procurement to delivery
Completion status:	Due for completion late 2025

### Project description

Melbourne Metro is a city-shaping project that will improve access to public transport, make journeys more enjoyable, and enhance the places it connects.

Twin 9km cross-city rail tunnels will connect the Sunbury Line to the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines. Five new underground stations, Arden, Parkville, State Library, Town Hall, and Anzac will give new direct train access to destinations including the new Arden precinct, universities, hospitals, parklands and the heart of Melbourne's CBD.

The new stations will be integrated into the fabric of the city with exemplary architecture and urban design, providing passengers with a world-class experience. This will elevate the role of public transport for Victoria, supporting the transition to more sustainable travel as the city densifies.

### Services provided by OVGA

The OVGA has supported the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA), the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA), Rail Projects Victoria (RPV), the Metro Tunnel Project Office (MTPO), and several departments throughout all project stages since the project's inception, from initial planning through construction.

In delivery, a dedicated OVGA principal adviser has provided expert independent design review and advice in close collaboration with RPV/MTPO, ensuring the value of high-quality design has been understood, supported and sustained.

As part of an Urban Design and Architecture Advisory Panel (UDAP or 'the panel'), chaired by the Victorian Government Architect, the OVGA has provided independent design review for the Minister of Planning at key planning approval stages.

By working collaboratively as an integrated part of the MTPO team over the lifecycle of the project, the OVGA has provided:

- Review and advice on the Reference Design.
- Review and input to embed design quality in market engagement and specification documentation, including Expression of Interest, Request for Proposal and Project Scope and Technical Requirements (PS&TR).
- Advice and input to the Metro Tunnel Urban Design Strategy, including participation in stakeholder workshops to confirm place-specific urban design requirements.
- Participation in extensive interactive workshops with bid teams via the UDAAP. The panel included a specialist with both architectural and structural engineering expertise.
- Collaborative input in the evaluation process.
- Advice leading to the engagement of additional architectural expertise during the negotiation phase, before the award of contract, ensuring the project would meet its ambitions of achieving design excellence.
- Consistent architecture subject matter expertise to support MTPO's architecture manager, precinct managers, engineers and delivery managers.
- Whole of project overview facilitating the sharing of lessons learned between stations, precincts and design packages, supporting a consistently high whole of project quality.
- Continuity of expert knowledge throughout the 8-year delivery process to date, protecting the project from loss of corporate knowledge during multiple changes in key personnel, including the MTPO architecture manager.
- Assistance with prioritisation of key design issues to support the project moving efficiently towards completion and sustaining design quality.
- Support for an extensive program of site inspections to assess architectural quality and identify areas requiring rectification.

### Benefits generated by the OVGA – Quality and Value

The Metro Tunnel Project is a large and complex piece of city-shaping infrastructure. Integrating the delivery of a world-class passenger experience with significant engineering and construction challenges required a design approach that could accommodate inevitable change in response to various project pressures, whilst maintaining the quality of the final built outcome.

The OVGA supported the establishment of a strong architectural vision and concept, which underpinned the development of the design in delivery. This required expert and consistent design oversight, review, evaluation and advice.

OVGA's consistent involvement has ensured continuity of corporate memory and a sustained focus on quality throughout all project stages, including a robust value management process. Key elements of the design that were refined during delivery to balance project requirements and cost whilst maintaining quality include:

- The interior architecture of hundreds of metres of passageways was optimised, reducing material quantities, simplifying structures, and improving maintenance and access.
- The development of a 'loose fit', open ceiling system comprising standardised ribs and baffles adaptable to multiple different geometries and applications across the five stations.
- The structural and architectural integration at Arden Station was improved, resulting in a more efficient construction methodology whilst maintaining the architectural concept.
- The Anzac station canopy material and geometry were revised, reducing cost and simplifying compliance with fire engineering and maintenance requirements.
- Adopting a line-wide design for lighting and bracketry, delivering a standardised yet adaptable high-quality architectural design for technical systems across the project.

### Amplifying the OVGA's impact

The OVGA's consistent involvement has ensured that the importance of design quality has been adequately supported, but greater benefits could have been generated by:

- Better contractual support for design quality with specific measurable and quantitative requirements included in the PS&TRs. This would enable the OVGA to more effectively advocate for design quality in a PPP environment.
- Ensuring the Independent Reviewer's (IR) role in the PPP structure includes assessment of the qualitative aspects of the design. The OVGA's design advice can only be acted on if it can be enforced contractually.
- A contractual document hierarchy that better reflects the importance of design quality. The Urban Design Strategy that defined the qualitative requirements for the project's public realm was, in practice, considered as only an appendix to the technical requirements. It would have been more effective as an integrated part of the PS&TR, thereby strengthening the OVGA's role.
- Having a clear term of reference defining OVGA's role in all project stages before the project commences to support better integration of design review with other disciplines.

- Greater architectural expertise is being embedded in all levels of a state project delivery office to drive a stronger integration between engineering, architecture, landscape architecture and urban design.

#### Key lessons learnt

Achieving the necessary focus on design quality for a large infrastructure project is challenging. Large engineering works that underpin the technical success of the project remain largely unseen by the public. Although proportionally much smaller in comparison to the engineering works, the urban design and architecture are the public face of the project and define its city-shaping legacy and ultimate value. Strong contractual acknowledgement of this legacy value is key to maximising the full benefits of infrastructure projects.

Value management can reduce cost and improve quality when the process is design-led and comprehensive. This requires a holistic review of a project's design with expert, integrated and holistic design thinking. Expert design review can support design changes, which may at first appear substantial, to deliver equal or better outcomes with cost and time efficiencies.

Continuity and consistency are key to effectively delivering a quality outcome through a long delivery process. Personnel will change, and design knowledge is often lost unless the process is governed by a strong contractual framework, robust concept and thorough documentation.

Working collaboratively is essential in ensuring the value of design is understood and supported across different disciplines, roles and responsibilities. Given the complexities of the Metro Tunnel Project, being embedded within MTPO allowed the OVGA to give effective and timely advice aligned with project pressures and processes.

The critical role good design plays in maximising the legacy of infrastructure projects needs to be enshrined in the contractual framework governing the project's delivery and supported by the ways of working within the project team.

The OVGA's ability to be responsive to the complex requirements particular to project contexts and stages has ensured that design advice and guidance have been targeted and effective. The OVGA's ability to work collaboratively within a PPP environment has supported the delivery of a high-quality built outcome for the Melbourne Metro.

# Appendix B: Survey results summary

## 5.9 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 in future.

The survey comprised 18 questions and received 84 responses.

The survey questions were broadly structured as follows:

- **Personal and contact information:** name, role, organisation and contact email address
- **Project information:** project title, timing of engagement with the OVGA, depth and method of engagement.
- Assessment of OVGA’s **contribution to design quality as well as the project’s development, and stakeholder satisfaction:**
- Likelihood of **future engagement** with the OVGA and **final comments.**

## 5.10 Results summary

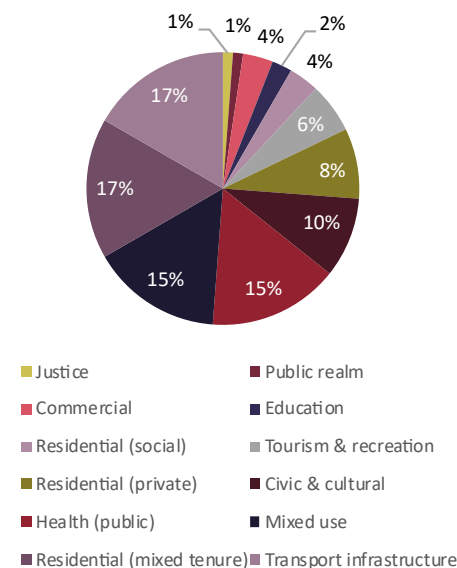
The following presents the combined results for all survey responses.

### Type of projects

As shown in the figure below, most respondents stated that they engaged OVGA in the following types of projects:

- Transport infrastructure (17%)
- Residential (mixed tenure) (17%)
- Mixed use (15%)
- Health (public) (15%).

**Figure 23: Question 3 - Please identify which of the following best describes the project you nominated**

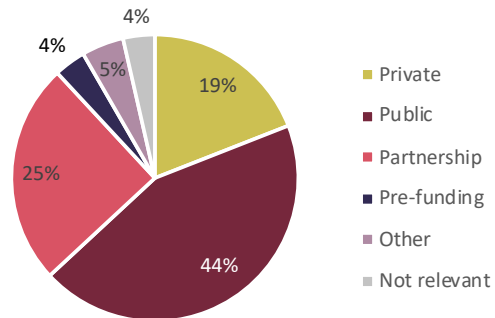


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

### Responsibility of projects

As shown in Figure 24, 44% of projects that engaged with OVGA were public. Partnership projects accounted for 25%, while private sector projects comprised 19%.

**Figure 24: Question 6 - Please identify which of the following best describes responsibility for the project's development**

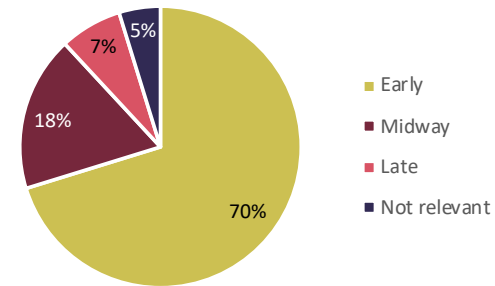


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

### Timing of OVGA's involvement in projects

As shown in Figure 25, 70% of the respondents engaged the OVGA early in their project's development process. Only 7% of survey respondents engaged with the OVGA late.

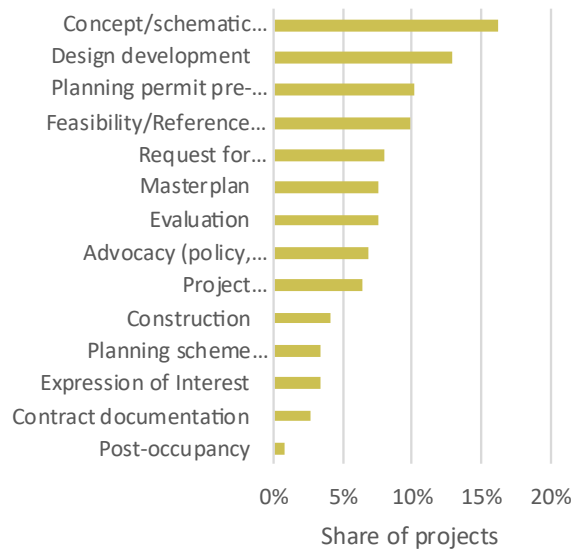
**Figure 25: Question 5 - At what stage was the project when you first engaged with the OVGA?**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

More specifically, most respondents stated that they engaged the OVGA at the concept/schematic design stage (16%), design development (13%), planning permit pre-application (10%), and feasibility/reference design (10%).

**Figure 26: Question 4 - At which stage/s did you engage with the OVGA across the project’s development and delivery?**



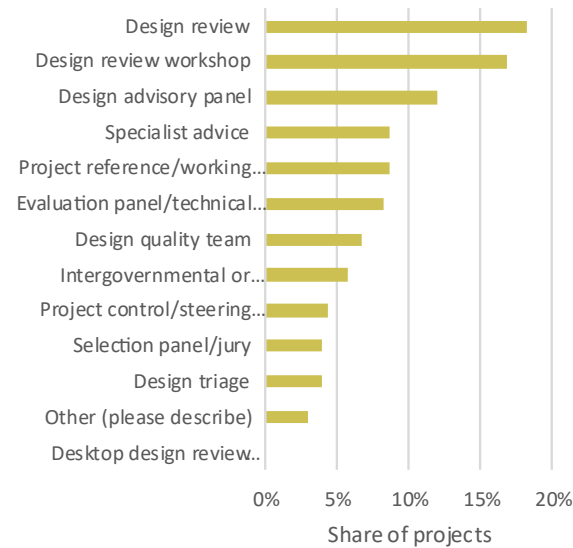
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

*Type of engagement*

As shown in Figure 27, respondents mostly engaged the OVGA through:

- Design review (18%)
- Design review workshop (17%)
- Design advisory panel (12%)
- Specialist advice (9%)

**Figure 27: Question 7 - What best describes how you engaged with the OVGA about this project?**



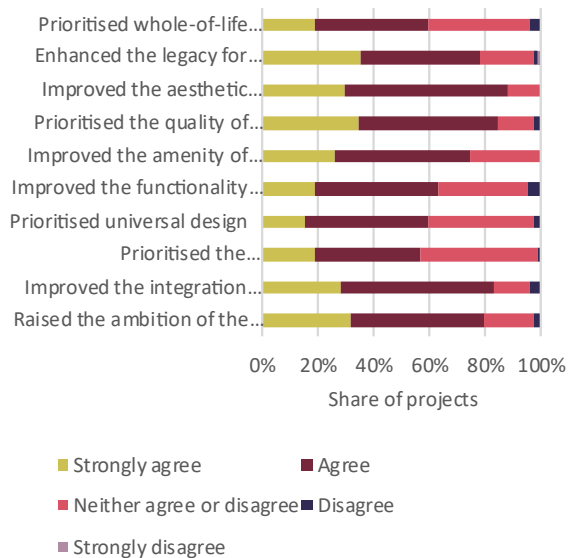
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

### How OVGA's input benefits the projects

As shown in Figure 28, most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA's input benefited projects in the following ways:

- Improved the aesthetic value generated by the project
- Prioritised the quality of experience for the end-users of the project
- Improved the integration of the project with its surrounding context
- Raised the ambition of the project.

**Figure 28: Question 9 - How did the OVGA's input benefit the project?**



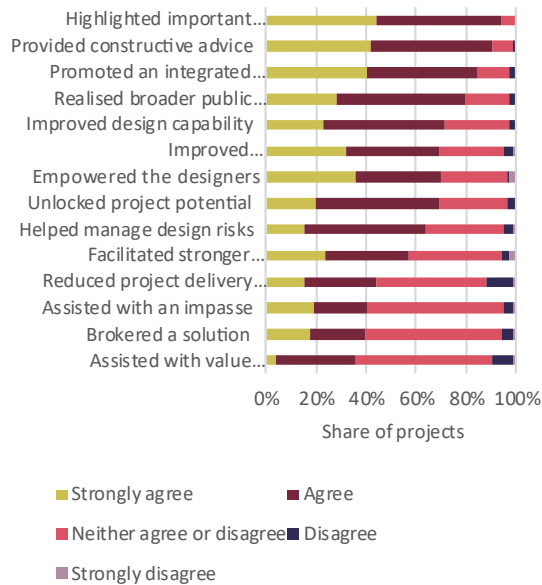
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

### How OVGA's input assists the design process &/or project progression

As shown in Figure 29, most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA's input assisted the design process and/or project progression through the following ways:

- Highlighted important design issues
- Provided constructive advice
- Promoted an integrated design approach
- Realised broader public benefits.

**Figure 29: Question 12 - How did the OVGA’s input assist the design process and/or project progression?**

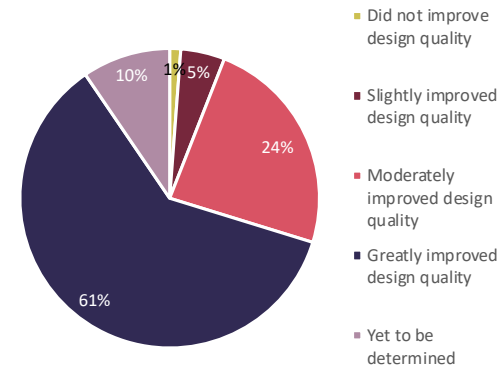


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

*How OVGA’s services support design quality*

As shown in Figure 30, 61% of respondents stated that the OVGA’s services greatly improved the design quality of projects. 24% of respondents indicated that the OVGA’s services moderately improved design quality, and only 1% of respondents stated that the services did not improve design quality.

**Figure 30: Question 8 - To what degree did the OVGA’s services help improve the design quality of the project?**



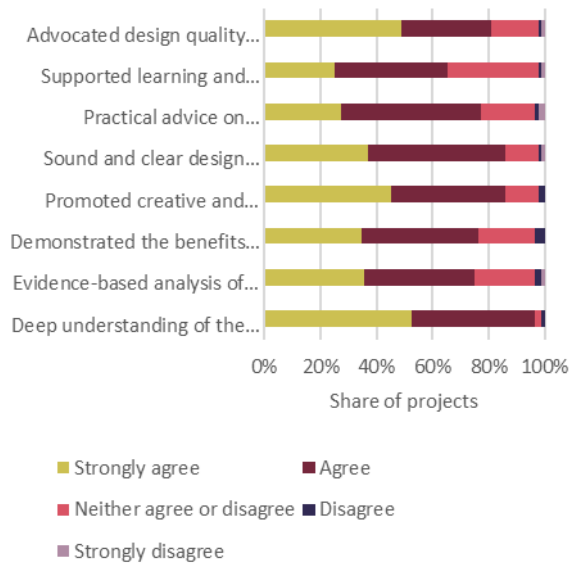
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

As shown in Figure 31, most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA services supported design quality via:

- Demonstrated a deep understanding of the design quality issue/s
- Promoted creative and best practice approaches to achieving design quality
- Formulated and demonstrated sound and clear design principles and guidance, intelligible to a broad audience

- Helped advocate and drive design quality at a strategic and systemic level.

**Figure 31: Question 13 - More generally, how did OVGA services on your project support design quality?**

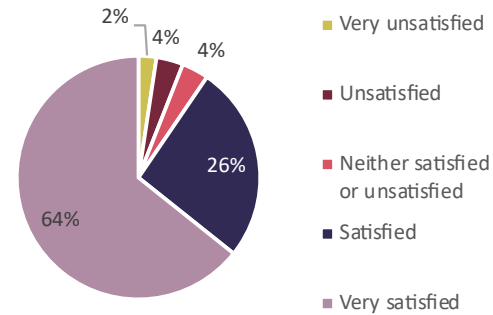


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

**Stakeholder satisfaction**

As shown in Figure 32, 64% of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the OVGA, and 26% stated they were satisfied. Only 6% of respondents indicated that they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the services of the OVGA.

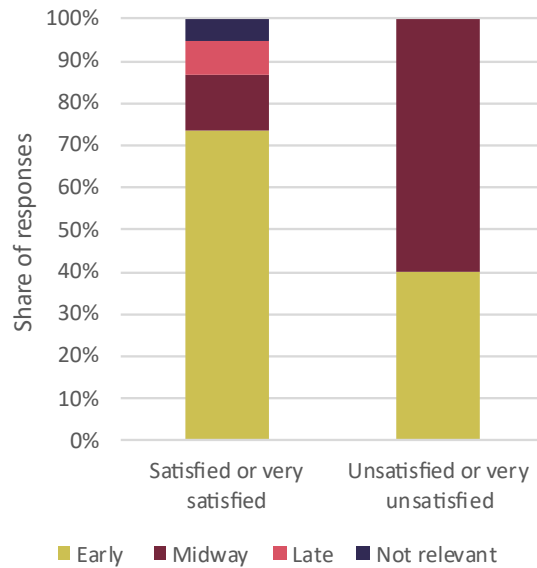
**Figure 32: Question 15 - How satisfied were you with the services provided by the OVGA?**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

For those who said they were satisfied or very satisfied, most of them stated that the OVGA engaged in their projects early (74%). For those who said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, most of them stated that the OVGA was midway (60%). This is shown in Figure 33.

**Figure 33: How timing of engagement affects the satisfaction of stakeholders**

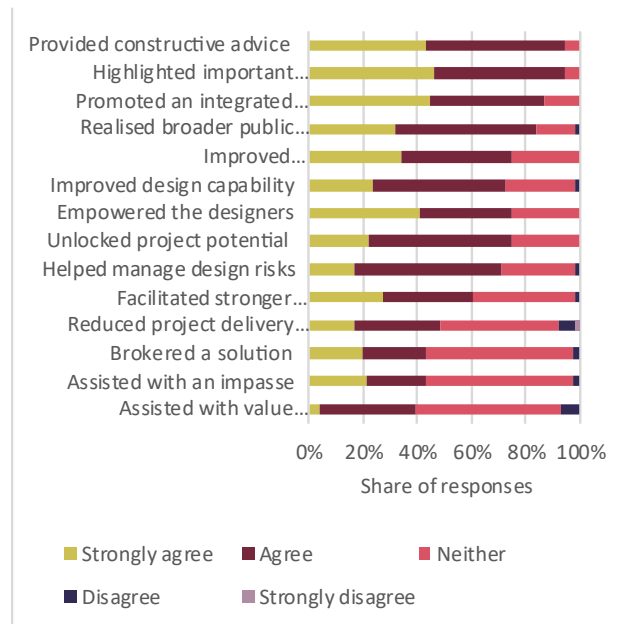


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

Among respondents who reported being either satisfied/very satisfied or unsatisfied/very unsatisfied, the majority strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA contributed to the design process or project progression by:

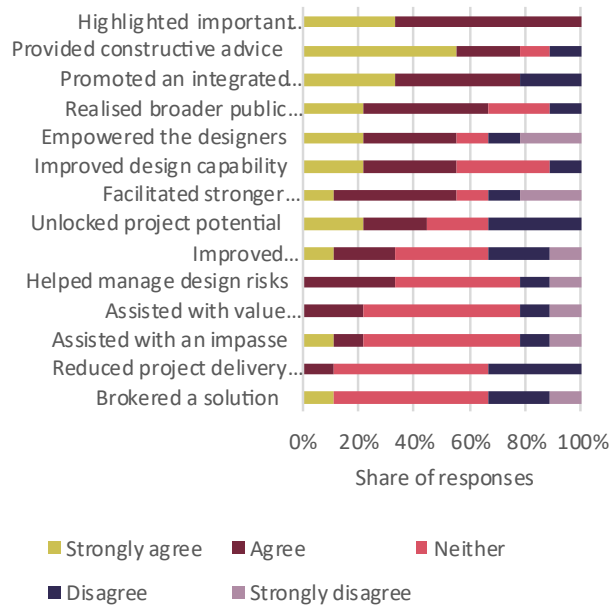
- Providing constructive advice
- Highlighting important design issues
- Promoting an integrated design approach
- Realising broader public benefits

**Figure 34: How those satisfied or very satisfied with the OVGA engagement thought about OVGA’s impacts on the design process or project progression**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

**Figure 35: How those unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the OVGA engagement thought about OVGA’s impacts on the design process or project progression**



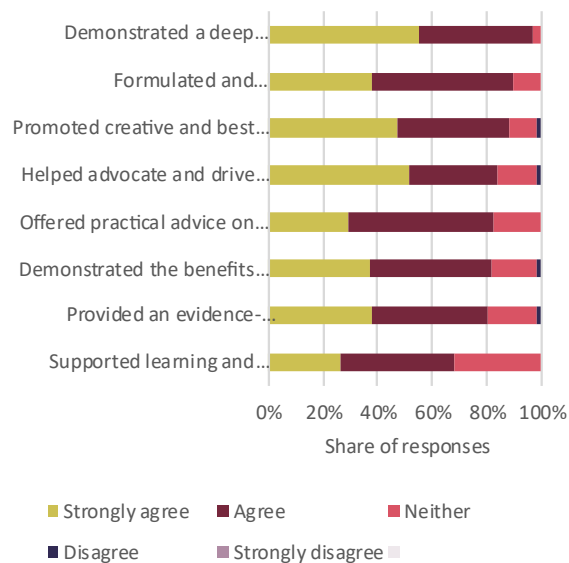
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

Among respondents who reported being either satisfied or very satisfied, the majority strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA contributed to the design quality by:

- Demonstrated a deep understanding of the design quality issue/s
- Formulated and demonstrated sound and clear design principles and guidance, intelligible to a broad audience.

This is shown in Figure 36.

**Figure 36: How those satisfied or very satisfied with the OVGA engagement thought about OVGA’s impacts of the design quality**



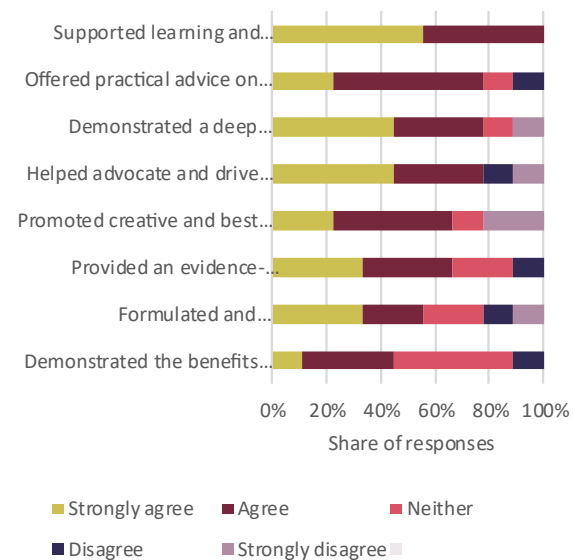
Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

Among respondents who reported being either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, the majority strongly agreed or agreed that the OVGA contributed to the design quality by:

- Supporting learning and enhancing the design knowledge of stakeholders
- Offering practical advice on implementation processes and initiatives.

This is shown in Figure 37.

**Figure 37: How those unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the OVGA engagement thought about OVGA’s impacts of the design quality**

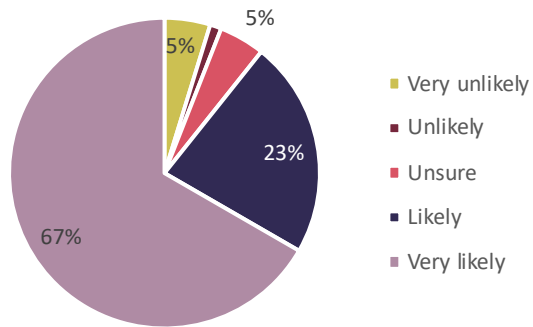


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

### *Likelihood of future engagement*

As shown in Figure 38, 90% of respondents stated that they would very likely or likely use the OVGA’s services in the future. Only 5% of respondents indicated that it would be very unlikely for them to do so.

**Figure 38: Question 16 - Would you use OVGA’s services in the future?**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from the Client Survey – OVGA Evaluation 2025

*Significant benefits for the project generated by OVGA's input*

**Table 5: Question 10 - What were the most significant benefits for the project (or community) generated by the OVGA's input?**

Theme	Summary of responses
Local context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fit with local context in terms of the materiality and size of a building</li> <li>▪ Consideration to the project's contribution to the surrounding built form and neighbourhood</li> <li>▪ Encouraging a mindset beyond best for project to extend to best for the community</li> <li>▪ Reflects the strong focus on creating a place with and for the community</li> </ul>
Collaboration with project partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having another government department in the room to advocate for artists in community and remove bias from other stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Holding the developer and their designers to account</li> <li>▪ Integrating cross-disciplinary inputs</li> <li>▪ Provided effective mediation in terms of the expectations of Heritage Victoria and the potential design outcomes appropriate to site</li> <li>▪ Constructively engaging with design with proponent team to identify pathways forward</li> </ul>
Diverse design considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contributing to finding design solutions and architectural responses acceptable to Heritage Victoria</li> <li>▪ Capacity to codify knowledge in a guideline format</li> <li>▪ Reinforced council recommendations</li> <li>▪ Improved heritage outcome and increased aesthetic value</li> <li>▪ Brought attention to the year-round use of the building</li> <li>▪ Retaining the focus on design excellence, longevity and broader contribution project outputs make to surrounding built form and neighbourhood</li> </ul>
End user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applying design thinking at both macro and micro scales to achieve a positive city shaping project and ensure a high amenity pedestrian/use experience</li> </ul>

Theme	Summary of responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of high-quality, affordable housing that will provide good amenities for future occupants</li> <li>▪ Advocacy for good design that will have a direct impact on end users</li> </ul>
Expertise input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying gaps and key areas for improvement</li> <li>▪ Keeping design quality at the forefront of the project</li> <li>▪ Allowed for complex urban design and architectural considerations to be tested in a confidential environment ahead of public release</li> <li>▪ Provided specialist policy input, enhancing project scope and definition</li> <li>▪ Assistance in escalating issues</li> <li>▪ Involvement led to efficiencies that reduced project delivery times</li> <li>▪ Expert panel evaluation that brought reassurance to internal governance groups about design quality</li> <li>▪ Evaluation and influence of design response considering massing, external colours and materials and activation of the public realm</li> <li>▪ Through the input and partnership agreement, it elevated the status and respect of the project</li> <li>▪ Provided guidance and a critical design review, which contributed to an award-winning building</li> <li>▪ Respected third party providing consistency in the design outcome by offering continuous advice, support, and stable direction from the early stages of project formation through to delivery and completion</li> <li>▪ Consideration and responding to a diverse range of inputs, such as evolving market conditions</li> <li>▪ Focus on achieving outcomes associated with budget constraints while considering and supporting project efficiencies</li> <li>▪ Clear understanding and communication in support of the project vision and design intent to stakeholders and authorities</li> <li>▪ Drawing attention to critical urban design weaknesses in the project, which assisted the design in making necessary moves</li> </ul>

*Costs of not having OVGA's input*

**Table 6: Question 11 - What do you think would have happened without the OVGA's input?**

Theme	Summary of responses
Poorer design quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Projects would have been delivered with poorer architectural and urban design outcomes, and the design outcome may not have been as strictly adhered to</li> <li>▪ CPTED issues (e.g. laneways with entrapment risks) may not have been addressed</li> <li>▪ Poorer outcome for future residents with less robust design solutions</li> <li>▪ Project would have been good still (as good architects involved), but not excellent</li> <li>▪ Poorer outcomes on street frontage and landscaping</li> <li>▪ Many aspects of the project would have been ignored or value-managed out, and the project would have prioritised client need rather than designing for a wider community</li> <li>▪ Lesser facade solution, less alignment and observation of the Council design framework</li> <li>▪ A general lessening of quality and amenity and development not elevated as crucial precedent for Melbourne's growth</li> </ul>
Loss of independent, expert advice and design credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It would have been harder to advocate for elevated design standards without OVGA's input</li> <li>▪ Design peer review submissions would have been less robust and impactful</li> <li>▪ Decision-makers may have relied solely on internal architects or commercial interests</li> </ul>
Weaker advocacy for design within government processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesser internal advocacy from government, lesser importance placed on quality urban design and landscape outcomes</li> <li>▪ Less voices in the room as advocates for progress in design quality</li> <li>▪ Having OVGA involved in design review processes provided stakeholders' comfort and assisted in gaining support for these processes</li> <li>▪ Without their presence, design could have been deprioritised in favour of budget or delivery speed</li> <li>▪ Competing internal pressures may have overshadowed design quality considerations</li> </ul>

- OVGA helped counter the perception of good design being a “nice to have” rather than essential

*How the OVGA could improve its contributions to projects*

**Table 7: Question 14 - How else could the OVGA have improved its contribution towards the project?**

Theme	Summary of responses
Strengthen influence and advocacy role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OVGA should be given formal powers or “Big Build” status to ensure design advice carries weight</li> <li>▪ OVGA should advocate more strongly within departments and to senior executives about the value of good design</li> <li>▪ OVGA could play a stronger role in influencing decision-makers across agencies</li> </ul>
Balance design excellence and project realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some design review advice was seen as too focused on aesthetics over commercial viability</li> <li>▪ A more pragmatic and solutions-focused tone in feedback would help maintain momentum</li> <li>▪ Understanding client and visitor needs more deeply would improve alignment with business outcomes</li> </ul>
Improve process consistency, communication and clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some reviews felt rushed; sessions were too short for complex projects</li> <li>▪ Contradictions between panel members caused confusion about priorities</li> <li>▪ Greater briefing and coordination of panel input was suggested</li> </ul>

*General suggestions for amplifying benefits*

**Table 8: Question 17 - Thinking more broadly, how could the OVGA's efforts generate more benefits for projects and/ or Victorians?**

Theme	Summary of responses
Service expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More early engagement with advice at early stages, wherever possible</li> <li>▪ More engagement with the executive team level to assist with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the benefits of good integrated design for all parties involved</li> <li>▪ With greater resourcing, the OVGA could also provide expert advice in council planning applications</li> <li>▪ Engage with community organisations like this more regularly on other public design projects</li> <li>▪ More involvement in the development assessment/approval of a larger/wider selection of strategic sites throughout the state</li> <li>▪ Advise the government on delivery methods that facilitate design and construction quality control</li> <li>▪ Having the resources to provide expert advice at the right time of key projects to ensure maximum benefits from investment (particularly on Government projects)</li> <li>▪ Bring design expertise into master planning of larger-scale projects to help inform the formation of building envelopes and robust design principles</li> <li>▪ Expanding design advisory services into local government and smaller-scale developments</li> <li>▪ Providing accessible tools and case studies to demonstrate the value of design quality to the broader public and industry</li> <li>▪ Supporting procurement reforms that prioritise design outcomes, not just cost or compliance</li> </ul>
Greater visibility and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased marketplace awareness - social media, presentations, etc</li> <li>▪ Demystifying their role and responsibility - perhaps by way of short video, EDMs</li> <li>▪ The breadth and variety of expertise and services offered by the OVGA could be more clearly stated, and more widely promoted, so that (for example) local councils knew they could draw upon this expertise</li> </ul>

Theme	Summary of responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The OVGA profile could be raised with continued publication of guidelines, and better understanding for clients on how Design Review Panels can benefit their projects without necessarily adding cost</li> </ul>
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy around design quality and improvements to the Building Act/code to require minimum standards (to elevate minimum design quality/standards)</li> <li>Advocate for practical and functional designs that reflect our current fiscal environment</li> <li>More advocacy work on major rail and infrastructure projects to not let these run in a vacuum till completion - i.e. Arden (and there's more). Instead, push for a precinct approach and help broker teamwork between departments. Same could be said for VSBA projects.</li> <li>Continuing to promote good design in places and buildings to promote better communities and promote positive environmental outcomes</li> </ul>

*General comments, feedback or suggestions for OVGA*

**Table 9: Question 18 - If you have any final comments, feedback or suggestions for the OVGA please leave a comment below**

Theme	Summary of responses
Widespread support for OVGA's services and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Praise for staff professionalism, commitment, and expertise</li> <li>Strong endorsement of OVGA's contribution to improving design quality in Victoria</li> <li>Desire to formalise OVGA's role further, either via statutory mechanisms or shifting its governance to a more neutral or higher-level department (e.g. DPC or becoming independent like Infrastructure Victoria)</li> </ul>
Need for strategic focus and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OVGA should prioritise high-impact issues and avoid straying into areas outside its remit (e.g. planning controls)</li> </ul>

constructive  
engagement

- OVGA should focus on better communication styles, clearer hierarchy of review language, and more collaborative, respectful peer-to-peer engagement
- OVGA should improve the panellist selection and acting arrangements

# Appendix C: Estimating the value of the OVGA's services

The results of the survey of clients (serviced over the past four years) found that 85 per cent of respondents agreed that the OVGA's contributions 'greatly' or 'moderately' improved the design quality of 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 be better understood by examining the extent to which its services help reduce project risk. Large and complex projects are exposed to many forms of risk, including development, construction, and operational risks. Increases in project costs are often linked to the realisation of these various risks.

The client survey has highlighted the many ways in which the OVGA makes a positive contribution to project outcomes. In relation to project design and project progression, the survey showed that 44% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the OVGA 'reduced project delivery risks'.

The total value of projects to which OVGA has contributed over the past four financial years is in the order of \$130 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 0.05 per cent for the OVGA's benefits to outweigh its:

- Service delivery costs (average of \$4 million per annum), 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 >0.05 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 \$79 billion worth of projects had their project designs 'greatly improved' through OVGA's engagement over the past two years. If the relationship between upfront capital costs and operating costs applies to the OVGA's recent projects, an operating cost savings of just 0.005% would need to be generated to make the OVGA's services worthwhile. Again, this seems eminently plausible.

## End notes

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- <sup>i</sup> This does not include projects funded and delivered by the local government sector.
- <sup>ii</sup> OVGA (2018), *Good Design: Issue 01*
- <sup>iii</sup> OVGA (2019), *The Case for Good Design. A guide for government*
- <sup>iv</sup> CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*, Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning
- <sup>v</sup> 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.
- <sup>vi</sup> CABE (2006), *The Cost of Bad Design*. Report by John Sorrell, Richard Simmons, Jake Desyllas and Robin Nicholson.
- <sup>vii</sup> CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning
- <sup>viii</sup> The University of Salford. (2015), *Clever Classrooms*.
- <sup>ix</sup> Barrett, P, et al. (2013), *A holistic, multi-level analysis identifying the impact of classroom design on pupil's learning*, Building and Environment, 59.
- <sup>x</sup> Lawson, B. (2002), *Healing Architecture*, Sheffield University School of Architecture research, pp. 72-75.
- <sup>xi</sup> CABE (2002), *The Value of Good Design*.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ulrich, R. (1984), *View through a window may influence recovery from surgery*, Science, New Series, 224(4647), pp. 420-421.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Beauchemin, K., and Hays, P. (1996), *Sunny hospital rooms expedite recovery from severe and refractory depressions*, Journal of Affective Disorders. 40.
- <sup>xiv</sup> 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.
- <sup>xv</sup> 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.
- <sup>xvi</sup> 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.
- <sup>xvii</sup> CABE (2001), *The Value of Urban Design*. Report undertaken by the Bartlett School of Planning.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Oseland, N. (2001), "To what extent does workplace design and management affect productivity?". Available from: [www.officeproductivity.co.uk](http://www.officeproductivity.co.uk)
- <sup>xix</sup> Commission for Built Environment and British Council for Offices (2005), *The impact of office design on business performance*.
- <sup>xx</sup> OVGA (2021), *Government as Smart Client, Edition 02*.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Leinberger, C. (2001), *Financing Progressive Development*, Capital Xchange, Brookings Institution.