1 July 2014

Hon Premier Colin Barnett MLA
1 Parliament Place
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Hon Premier Colin Barnett

Local government has found that when communities are asked, they rate community infrastructure, parks, and open space as the most important factors in how they feel about their environment. Secondary to those are services such as "roads, rates and rubbish".

It is with this salient fact that Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) would like to congratulate the West Australian Government for the recent recognition of Kings Park in Perth as being in the top ten parks in the world. This is an amazing achievement and is in recognition of the foresight of the WA planners and decision makers that have gone before us and who set aside quality greenfield land to become one of the most beautiful parks in the world.

However, it is evident to PLA that urban planning, and in particular the setting aside of quality open space does not appear to carry the same level of importance that it once did. The great parks of our major cities are generally over a century old and evidence of the value of public space in years gone compared with today. As stated, the community still considers parks and green space to be the most important aspect of their quality of life and it is therefore crucial that we preserve, protect and where possible enhance the provision of space for current and future generations of Australians.

With cities expanding at their fringes it is important that government set aside quality greenfield sites, including in those peri urban areas of all major population centres. Open space, whether for active play, outdoor recreation, sport or just enjoyment, is a critical component of modern city planning and hence the reason government needs to protect and plan for its provision in the urban context.

All three levels of government are responsible for our future and open space planning is critical in this. It is said that environmentalism is a conversation with the future, that being the case the decision makers of today need to consider the allocation of green space for future generations.
In closing we would once again like to congratulate you on this most prestigious recognition and would urge your government to promote this great achievement wherever and whenever possible. With your permission, PLA would like to highlight the award in our quarterly professional Journal that is distributed to a wide readership both here in Australia and overseas in New Zealand and Asia.

Yours faithfully

Mark Band
Chief Executive Officer
Parks and Leisure Australia