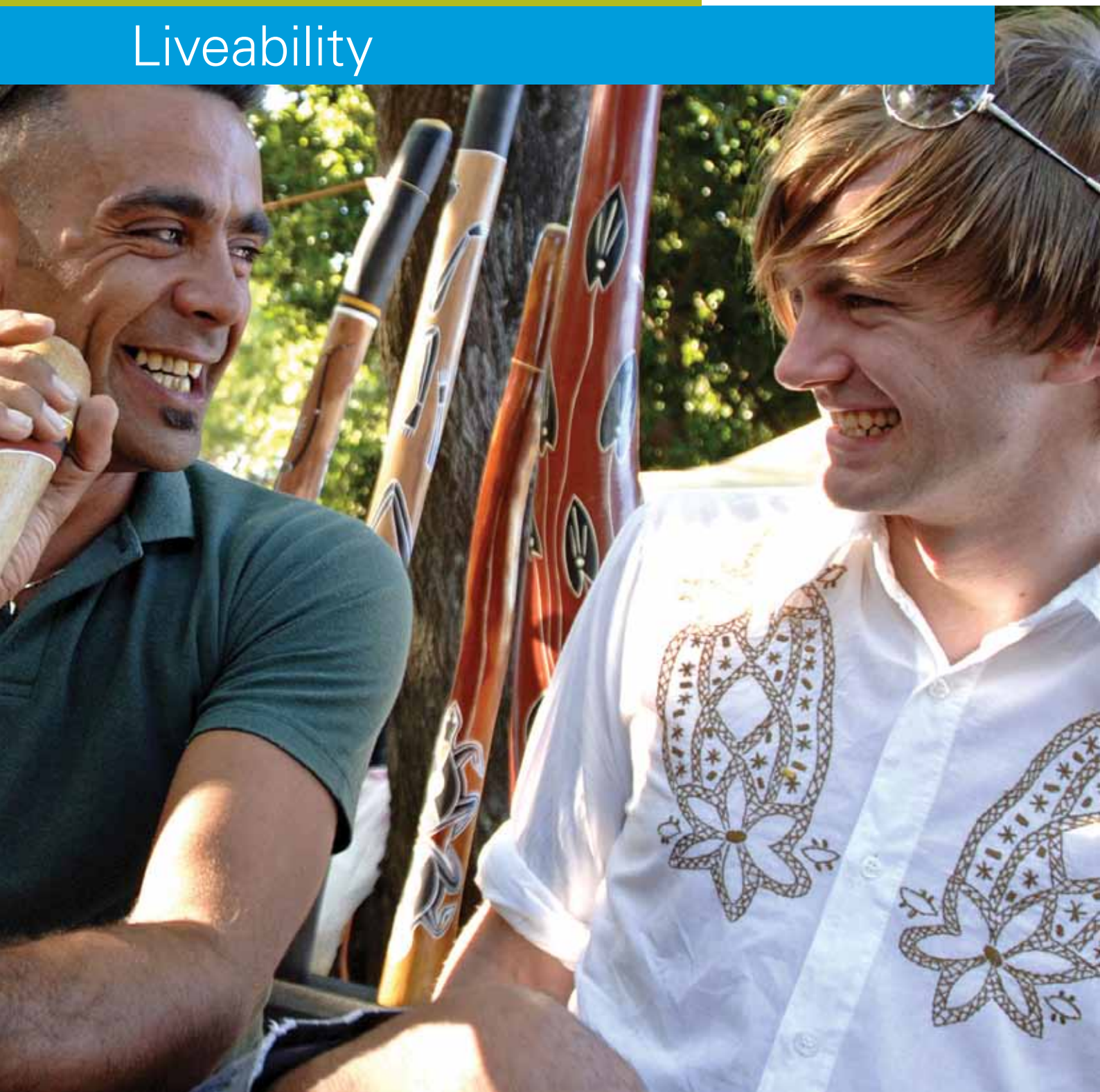


Darwin, NT



Chapter 5

Liveability





Chapter 5

Liveability

Long term residents, families and generations who remain stable in a location over a long period of time have many benefits for our cities. Benefits include a sense of pride, connection and inclusion, personal investment and 'ownership' in the region, and a willingness to contribute and participate in community activities and initiatives. In order to meet the needs of our growing population we will need diverse dwelling forms and sufficient affordable housing options across all tenures including home-ownership, private rentals, social housing and crisis accommodation, to accommodate people for short or longer periods at different points in their lives or 'housing careers'.

National Shelter, 2011

A good and attractive environment may not be an alternative to economic success but may rather contribute to it; as in the knowledge-based economy, highly qualified professionals with scarce skills can choose where to live from among different cities.

OECD, Competitive Cities in the Global Economy, 2006

In the context of our major cities, liveability refers to the way the urban environment supports the quality of life and wellbeing of communities. Quality of life and wellbeing encompasses mental and physical health, happiness and life satisfaction for individuals and supportive social relationships in communities. Quality of life is enhanced by environmental sustainability, in particular with regard to low levels of pollution and access to quality open space and natural landscapes. Wellbeing is important to economic prosperity as poor health and depleted social cohesion have high economic costs as well as social costs.

The Australian Government recognises that cities are not just centres of economic activity, where the workforce, businesses and the institutions that support their activity are concentrated but our cities are also centres for living, education, recreation and entertainment. Liveable cities offer a high quality of life and are socially inclusive, affordable, accessible, healthy, safe, and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

As our cities grow and change, there are challenges to maintaining quality of life and well-being which encompasses mental and physical health, happiness and life satisfaction for individuals and supportive social relationships in communities. The supply of appropriate and affordable housing across metropolitan areas to accommodate growing and changing populations cannot be met simply by releasing land or replacing older housing with high rise. Future housing in our

cities needs to be adaptable to take into account our ageing population and accommodate a greater diversity of household types and sizes. Residential developments must improve the amenity for the communities in which they are located.

The potential of high amenity environments to attract skilled labour, generate economic activity and support environmental sustainability is well recognised. As one of its criteria for capital city strategic planning systems, COAG has determined that Australia's planning systems must 'encourage world-class urban design and architecture.'

The planning and design of local neighbourhoods and urban centres affect a community's wellbeing and is a major factor in determining quality of life of our population. Contributing factors to the amenity of a neighbourhood include access to green and open space, water and air quality, pleasant

streetscapes, and opportunities for recreation and social interaction.

Factors that detract from the amenity of places include noise, pollution, traffic and degraded built and natural environments. Low quality environments have been correlated with poor public health outcomes such as increased mental health issues and higher rates of obesity, diabetes and respiratory illnesses, resulting in high social and economic costs. Preventative health campaigns by all levels of government are consistently aimed at encouraging activity and time spent outdoors. However, many urban and suburban environments are car dominated, and so are not conducive to either incidental exercise (for example walking for local errands or to public transport) or recreational exercise.

Many short trips in Australian cities are being undertaken in cars rather than walking, cycling or by public transport. Nearly 40 per cent of Australians commute less than 10 kilometres to work or study⁷ but less than three out of 50 commuters cycle or walk to work (1.6 per cent cycle / 4.2 per cent walk). Of commuters who travel less than five kilometres, 71 per cent use a private motor vehicle, and less than seven per cent use public transport. Of those travelling five to 10 kilometres, 80 per cent drive and 16.5 per cent use public transport.

The Australian Government has worked with States and Territories toward achieving a national cycling target to double the number of cyclists by 2016. Since 2007 the Australian Government has already invested \$40 million in a national bike path program and has been supporting greater capacity for public transport through its *Nation Building Program*.

The *National Urban Policy* builds on the existing policy agenda and focuses additional efforts in improving the liveability of our cities.

It is important to ensure that everyone in cities has access to a full range of services that meet community needs. The Australian Government is also supporting the liveability of our cities through:

- a service delivery reform agenda to provide better support for people when they need it;
- coordination of the efforts of all Australian governments under the *National Disability Strategy* to meet the diverse needs of people with disability and their carers;
- implementation of the National Compact with the Third Sector, which is working to strengthen the not-for-profit sector by reducing red tape so that these organisations are able to provide support to people in need; and
- development of strategies to support and expand volunteering, philanthropy and social investment as ways of building community resilience, social inclusion and liveability.

Canberra, ACT



⁷ Data sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, *Environmental Issues: people's views and practices*, Cat. No. 4602.0 Chapter 4 'Use of Transport' (pp. 60-82), table 4.13. Totals adjusted to include all forms of transport.

LIVEABILITY	Objectives and priorities
8. FACILITATE THE SUPPLY OF APPROPRIATE MIXED INCOME HOUSING BY:	<p>The current and projected supply of dwellings does not match the changing needs of the growing population in terms of quantity, diversity, accessibility and affordability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encouraging a range of housing types to suit diverse households across metropolitan areas 	<p>A variety of dwelling types is required to suit the growing proportions of smaller households and older people. Governments across Australia, including through COAG, are considering ways to encourage a greater supply of housing, a greater diversity of dwelling types and a better range of affordable, appropriate housing to meet the needs of households over their life stages.</p> <p>We need to ensure there is a more diverse range of affordable housing options, distributed across metropolitan regions that are well-connected by public transport.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting the development of aged persons accommodation, including medium and high care 	<p>Australia's population is ageing – that is, the number of older persons as a proportion of the overall population is increasing.</p> <p>This will place greater pressure on services and facilities for older people, and will require a re-think of how we provide suitable accommodation, such as medium to high care facilities, and options to downsize or age in place as people become less mobile and are socially isolated. Good planning for older people usually requires measures to accommodate people with mobility challenges. The needs of the young must also be catered for.</p>
9. SUPPORT AFFORDABLE LIVING CHOICES BY	<p>Living affordability includes the costs of purchasing and maintaining a home and transportation costs. Residents in some outer-metropolitan growth areas are particularly vulnerable to rising energy and fuel prices.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Locating housing close to facilities and services, including jobs and public transport, in more compact mixed use development 	<p>Low density urban expansion has been the standard solution to accommodating population growth in Australian cities. The upfront capital cost may be cheaper for home owners, but the long term costs for households (travel, time and social), the impacts on the natural environment, and the costs of infrastructure and maintenance for governments, are considerable. On the other hand, simply infilling existing areas without improving the amenity for existing residents, is problematic.</p> <p>A suitable balance between infill and greenfield development is required. Polycentric development, which aims to create additional centres outside of a city's central business district, is one solution. Creating more compact development around public transport corridors and activity centres is another.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting new outer metropolitan housing with access to facilities, services and diverse education and employment opportunities 	<p>We also need to consider how to generate more diverse employment opportunities and services in outer urban areas, satellite cities in larger urban conurbations, and regional cities and towns.</p>
10. IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES BY:	<p>The planning of Australian cities has been largely based around private motor vehicles as the primary means of transportation. The increase in car usage has a number of consequences for our cities, including pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion, road safety issues and increasingly sedentary lifestyles.</p> <p>In addition, many residents of our cities do not have access to, or cannot drive a car. They are greatly restricted when it comes to accessing jobs, services, shops, social and other activities.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving transport options 	<p>Enabling people to participate equitably in the life of the city, without needing to drive, must be a priority.</p> <p>Actions include funding public transport networks, and supporting local governments to provide amenable cycling and walking environments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reducing travel demand by co-location of jobs, people and facilities 	<p>Reducing travel demand is an important step in reducing traffic congestion. There are several interrelated components to reducing travel demand in our cities: one is to plan for more integrated, compact and mixed land uses in order to reduce average distances travelled; another is to reduce peak work flows, including through telecommuting and flexible work hours; and another is to reduce demand through measures such as road pricing.</p>
<p>11. SUPPORT COMMUNITY WELLBEING BY:</p>	<p>The wellbeing of the community is critical to the liveability of our cities.</p> <p>There is a role for the Australian Government in leading better quality and design of the public domain, improving public health outcomes and redressing spatially concentrated disadvantage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing access to social and economic opportunity 	<p>In the face of growing urban population and demographic change, planning should be guided by the principles of social inclusion. This will help ensure individuals and communities have access to a full range of economic opportunities and services that meet their needs, are provided with and can take advantage of opportunities to participate and help to enable an effective not-for-profit sector. The flow-on effect of improvements to individual quality of life leads to more liveable communities and larger scale economic prosperity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving the quality of the public domain 	<p>The public domain can provide environmental amenities such as shade and greenery, aesthetically pleasing buildings and infrastructure, quality public art, and a sense of safety and security. Whether publicly or privately owned, the public domain provides much of the character and amenity of a place.</p> <p>Local government, in particular, is responsible for planning and managing much of the public domain. However, the decisions of all levels of government, as well as individuals, impact on the quality of our cities. Continued investment in the public domain in our urban centres and neighbourhoods is needed to ensure they are enjoyable, encourage social interaction, and provide opportunities for a variety of activity and exercise.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving public health outcomes 	<p>Built environments that are designed to enable people to travel safely by walking, cycling or using public transport, and that provide access to quality open space can help to maintain mental health and increase levels of physical activity and social interaction. This has positive benefits for the wellbeing of people in urban communities and reduces the health burden to the economy.</p> <p>A number of preventative and public health objectives can be achieved through better designed built environments and transport networks that encourage active travel, recreational and incidental exercise, social interaction and enjoyment of the natural environment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Redressing spatially concentrated social disadvantage 	<p>Socially disadvantaged households tend to be spatially concentrated in cities, particularly in locations with poor accessibility to education, employment and services.</p> <p>Spatially concentrated disadvantage can be addressed in a number of ways, including by facilitating appropriate housing with good accessibility, and helping to upgrade, revitalise and provide better infrastructure in specific risk areas.</p>

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- Enhancing access to cultural, sporting and recreational activity

Enhancing access to cultural, sporting and recreational activity contributes to improved community health and has a number of other benefits. For example, the benefits of sport have been shown to include: enhanced academic outcomes; increased self-esteem and social confidence; development of life skills such as team work, fair play and strategic thinking; community building and social cohesion; social inclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups; and enhanced mental and physical well-being.

Facilitate the supply of appropriate, mixed income housing

The Australian Government has put in place the National Housing Supply Council to collect data and provide advice about the demand and supply of housing across the nation. The Council has confirmed that Australia has a large and growing under supply of housing, and that affordable housing, particularly affordable rental accommodation, is under considerable pressure.

The Australian Government is also continuing to work with states and territories through the COAG Housing Supply and Affordability Reform (HSAR) agenda (due to report back to COAG mid-year), examining how greater housing supply and more affordable housing can be delivered to the Australian community.

Encouraging a range of housing types to suit diverse households across metropolitan areas

The Government is taking action to improve housing outcomes by working with the States and Territories through COAG's Housing Supply and Affordability Reform (HSAR) agenda to examine how housing supply and affordability can be addressed. Issues under consideration include zoning and planning approval processes, infrastructure charges, environmental regulations, and opportunities to identify currently 'underutilised' land that may be suitable for housing.

The Government is also promoting reforms to improve the efficient functioning of cities, and ensuring that housing assistance is adequate, targets those most in need, and supports participation incentives. It has provided direct

funding to increase the supply of affordable housing through the *National Affordable Housing Agreement*, invested \$5.6 billion in the *Social Housing Initiative* and established the *National Rental Affordability Scheme* to deliver an increased supply of new affordable rental dwellings.

Housing plays a key role in establishing liveable and sustainable communities and is therefore a major priority for the Australian Government. Ongoing Commonwealth programs introduced in 2007, have established future directions for investment in affordable housing that can improve outcomes for low income households and communities to 2014.

The \$6.2 billion *National Affordable Housing Agreement* provides housing assistance to low and middle income Australians, including assistance for social housing and homelessness services and various mortgage assistance schemes. One of the key reform directions agreed under the *National Affordable Housing Agreement* is to make better use of the States and Territories significant public housing assets and reduce concentrations of social disadvantage through appropriate redevelopment, to create mixed communities that improve social inclusion.

There are various agreements connected to the *National Affordable Housing Agreement*, including for homelessness, Indigenous Australians living in remote areas and social housing, which will build new or redevelop social housing dwellings, as well as fund support for vulnerable households.

The White Paper on homelessness, *The Road Home*, sets out a national approach to reducing homelessness by 2020. Within this approach, the Government is implementing innovative

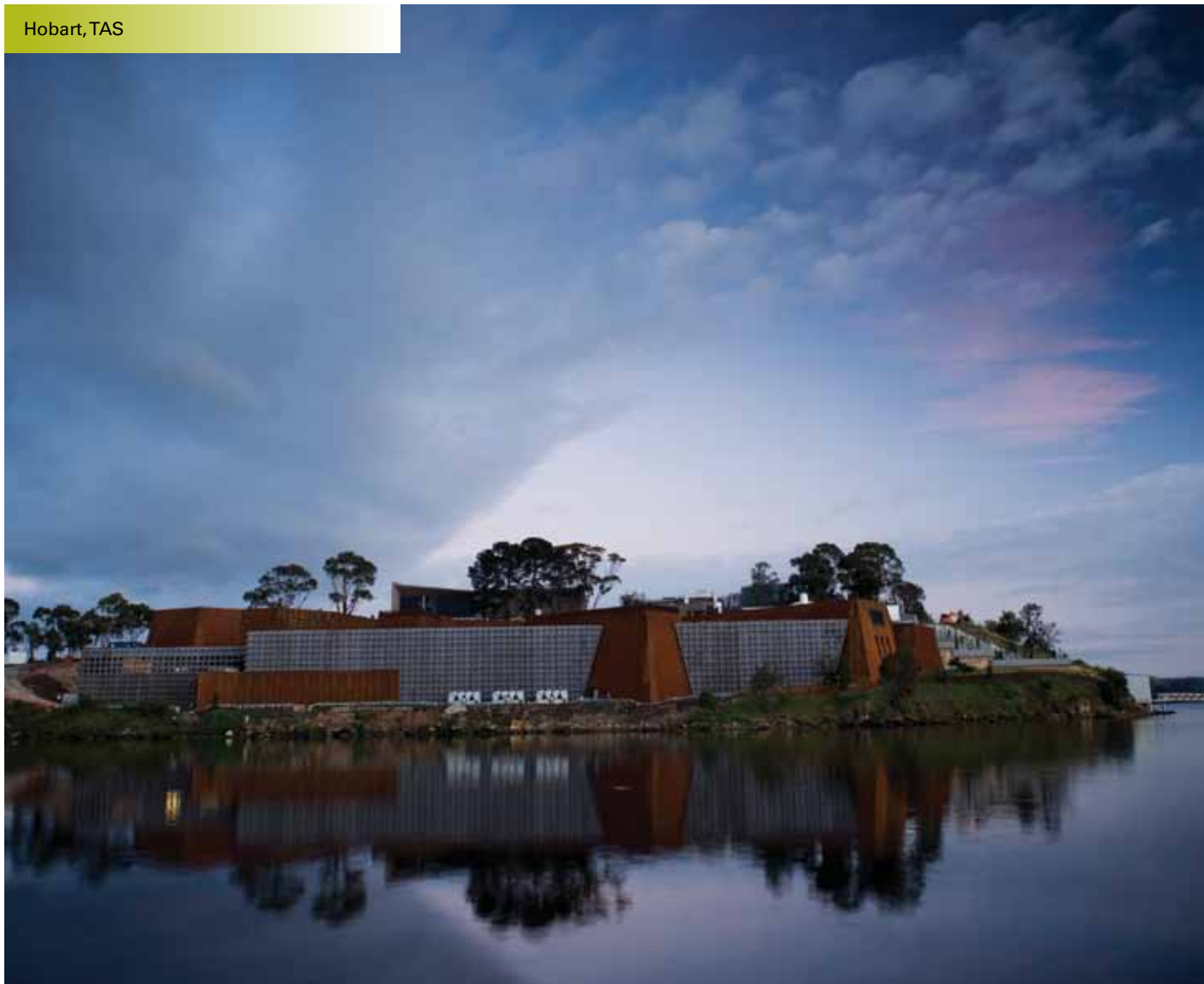
programs including assertive outreach; Common Ground housing models; case management; and mentoring, under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*.

Supporting the development of aged persons accommodation, including medium and high care

The Australian Government is working with State and Local Governments to develop universal design standards for housing to ensure homes are adaptable and allow for ageing in place.

The \$5.66 billion *Social Housing Initiative*, under the *Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan*, supports both the construction of over 19,300 new social housing dwellings and the repair and upgrade of approximately 80,000 existing homes. The initiative assists vulnerable households and encourages the construction of mixed tenure and use developments that are located close to transport and support services, in addition to supporting the use of universal design principles to enable ease of access for older persons or persons with disability.

Hobart, TAS



Combining Liveability and Sustainability at the heart of new WA developments

The completion of a *Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan* project and the start of another in Western Australia have highlighted sustainability as an important part of affordable housing development in the state.

Stage Two of the Stella Orion apartments in Success, which reached staged completion in December 2010, and Signal Terrace in Cockburn, which commenced in November 2010, are part of the Cockburn Central Regional Centre in WA—one of Perth's most rapidly expanding regional hubs in the south west corridor.



Strategically located along the Southern Suburbs Railway line with easy access to public transport and only a stone's throw away from a large shopping precinct, these transit-oriented developments will provide affordable and attractive housing options for people who want to live more sustainably and closer to employment opportunities.

Stage Two of the Stella Orion development consists of 130 one and two bedroom units spread over four separate two and three level buildings. Stella Orion is part of a six-stage master-planned community of approximately 900 units in total.

The new Cockburn project consists of 67 one bedroom, 56 two bedroom and seven three bedroom units scheduled to be ready by early 2012.

A key element to the selected proposal was the futuristic design and the ability to incorporate universal and adaptable design across the majority of the units on top of a range of energy efficiency features.

All 130 units of Signal Terrace have achieved 6-star or higher energy rating under the NatHERS energy rating scheme, which is believed to be the first of its kind in Western Australia on this scale. Such high energy ratings are a result of orientation, insulation, glazing, and other features that contribute towards low energy costs in usage. The development also includes other energy efficient features like lighting, water efficient fittings and heating arrangements.

These two developments are also excellent examples of the construction of a wide range of housing options across the metropolitan area, rather than a concentration of a single style of housing or tenants in a particular area.

These developments are accessible in terms of transport and lifestyle options, demonstrating a more inclusive approach to the production of social and affordable housing, supporting the needs of the wider community. Dwellings for private sale, affordable rental housing for private tenants on low to moderate incomes, and public rental stock for people on the public housing waiting list ensures a mixed tenure development.

Further initiatives to facilitate the supply of appropriate mixed income housing

In support of the commitment to the supply of appropriate mixed income housing, the Australian Government will:

- Ensure that Australian Government housing outlays are targeted to support the objectives and priorities of the *National Urban Policy*, in particular to supply more affordable and accessible housing in attractive, inclusive developments, located close to centres and public transport interchanges
- Work with the States and Territories to address impediments to the better functioning of the housing market to improve housing supply and affordability. This will include seeking reforms to:
 - Improve planning and land release processes
 - Increase code assessment of development proposals
 - Improve spatial planning and setting an appropriate balance between infill and greenfields development
 - Reduce barriers to mixed use development and making greater use of multi-use zoning which permits a range of activities in the same locality
- Work with the States and Territories through COAG's Housing Supply and Affordability Reform (HSAR) agenda to examine issues such as zoning and planning approval processes, infrastructure charges, environmental regulations, and opportunities to identify currently 'underutilised' land
- Ensure that housing assistance is adequate, targets those in need and supports participation incentives
- Ensure that housing programs accommodate our ageing population, including progressively increasing the supply of adaptable housing that is built to universal design standards to ensure access for the elderly and people with disabilities
- Support the priority approval and construction of aged care housing, including through high care developments that are well integrated with urban areas so that aged care facilities and places become operational more quickly
- Support urban development that supports aging in place, is socially inclusive and is integrated with surrounding community facilities.

Support affordable living choices

Affordable living is not just about the capital cost of housing—it also includes the cost of transportation and maintaining a home. Increasing the affordability of living is a complex issue, and requires consideration of a range of issues—not just regulatory and taxation issues, but also land supply and land use, the distribution of jobs and housing, transportation and other networks. The Australian Government, through the *National Urban Policy*, is seeking to address these systemic factors of affordability in addition to specific programs and initiatives.

The Australian Government has a commitment to social inclusion and securing the health and wellbeing of all Australians, and to better support people when and where they need it. It is committed to the development of accessible and affordable human services and cultural facilities, and affordable living, which includes both the capital cost of home ownership as well as the ongoing costs of transportation and maintaining a home.

Locating housing close to facilities and services, including jobs and public transport, in more compact mixed use development

Coordinated development of housing, facilities and services must occur in existing and new urban areas of our cities. Consideration of living affordability, which includes transportation and the operational costs of a home as well as the initial cost of house and land, reveals significant community vulnerabilities and inequities. Many less affluent households live in outer lying areas of our cities where housing costs are more affordable. However, they carry a higher

cost burden for transport and are particularly vulnerable to increasing petrol prices.

How we invest in housing has the potential to deliver not only on the goal of liveability but also on sustainability and productivity. Connecting investment in housing and social and economic infrastructure to achieve improved living affordability and accessibility, as well as productivity, has substantial further potential.

Supporting new outer metropolitan housing with access to facilities, services and diverse education and employment opportunities

Communities in many new growth areas in outer metropolitan regions often have a shortage of employment and education opportunities, and often have longer travel times and distances to services and facilities. Households therefore spend more of their income on transport costs and are highly vulnerable to rising fuel costs where public transport options are limited¹⁰.

Further initiatives to support affordable living choices

To further support affordable living choices in cities the Australian Government will:

- Introduce the *Sustainable Communities Program* – including *Liveable Cities* (\$20 million) which will invest in urban development or renewal projects that improve access to jobs and housing and enhance the liveability of our cities; and improve urban design outcomes to deliver higher quality public spaces and streetscapes to benefit local businesses, communities and visitors. The funding will be used to support demonstration projects that:
 - facilitate innovative residential developments that promote housing affordability, adaptable and accessible housing and improve access to services and public transport

- create or enhance mixed use precincts that optimise public transport use such as the creation of transit malls and the re-development of significant public spaces
- identify critical infrastructure corridors, sites and buffers
- facilitate strategic plans for major cities with populations greater than 100,000 in line with the COAG criteria for capital city strategic planning systems
- promote or incorporate active travel through walking and cycling

- Introduce the *Sustainable Communities – Suburban Jobs Program* (\$100 million) to support State, Territory and Local Governments to plan and provide for employment precincts, manufacturing hubs and multi-function developments close to residential areas, in order to reduce travel times to work and services. This program will be administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
- Consider best use of Commonwealth owned land to support the supply of housing, improved community amenity and new job creation through *Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy*.

Improve accessibility and reduce dependence on private motor vehicles

The Australian Government recognises the importance for people of all ages and abilities to have physical access to employment, education, services and social, recreational and cultural opportunities and facilities. The Australian Government has made an unprecedented commitment to invest \$7.3 billion in urban public transport through the *Nation Building Program*. There has been a noticeable shift to cycling as a sustainable, economical and healthy, active transport option. The Australian Government has supported construction of local cycling infrastructure through the *Jobs Fund—National Bike Path Projects*.

¹⁰ Dodson, J and Sipe, N 2008, *Unsettling suburbia: The new landscape of oil and mortgage vulnerability in Australian cities*, Urban Research Program, Brisbane.

Improving transport options

Despite a steady decline in the growth in car passenger kilometres since 2004,¹¹ car travel still accounts for the vast majority of trips in our cities, many of these trips are only short distances. For example, in our capital cities 15.3 per cent of commuters travel less than five kilometres, and in the rest of the nation 28.6 per cent. 71 per cent of people who live within five kilometres of work, drive to work. Of those commuters who travel less than five kilometres, only 3.5 per cent cycle and 18.7 per cent walk. Of those travelling between five and 10 kilometres, 2.3 per cent ride and 0.1 per cent walk. This demonstrates that:

- Nearly a fifth of people will walk to their place of work or study, provided they live no more than five kilometres away. Proximity to work is the single major factor in determining whether a person will commute by bicycle/foot
- Only a small percentage of people currently commute by bicycle (1.56 per cent of all commuters) and they are generally within 10 kilometres of work.

In Australia, rates of cycling and walking fall well behind western European countries. Nevertheless in recent years, there has been a steady increase in cycling in Australian cities and there is enormous scope to increase the modal share of cycling further, particularly for those 40 per cent of Australians commuting less than 10 kilometres to their place of work or study, or those making short local trips. However, the uptake of walking and cycling depends greatly on how easy and safe cycling and walking is.

There are significant benefits to active transport, including reductions in traffic congestion, improvements to public health and obesity prevention, and a reduction in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Cycling and walking can also significantly reduce household transportation expenses, improve the equity and liveability of communities, and encourage local economic development.

The lack of connectivity and safety of cycle and pedestrian networks are barriers for the uptake of active transport, particularly for children, families and the elderly. For example, road cycle lanes, whilst meeting the needs of some cyclists, are unsuitable for parents carrying children or children cycling to school.

Safe and well-connected cycling and pedestrian networks are also important to cater for the increasing use of mobility vehicles by the elderly.

Reducing travel demand by co-location of jobs, people and facilities

Polycentric city structures refer to the concentration of development into activity centres, rather than broadly dispersed across suburbs or concentrated solely within an inner central business district. Parramatta, Dandenong and Joondalup are all examples of polycentric type regional centres.

Regional centres can efficiently and cost-effectively provide transport and other infrastructure closer to where a large proportion of the urban population lives. Locating a range of activities, such as offices, shops, services and housing in and around centres reduces the need to travel. This consequently provides convenience and time savings, and reduces greenhouse emissions. Centres in inner cities are already home to many of our major corporations, universities and civic functions, and have the best public transport. Further development of the inner cities can maximise agglomeration potential (that is, organisations may be more productive if they are located close to one another, even if they are competitors).

Further initiatives to improve accessibility and reduce dependence on private motor vehicles

In the 2011–12 Budget the Australian Government committed to investing an additional \$29.2 million in a new *Sustainable Regional Development* initiative to support better sustainability planning in regions that are experiencing high growth. A further \$11.5 million over four years will support regional cities to

¹¹ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics
2010 *Australian Transport Statistics Yearbook*

promote the benefits and opportunities of living away from the capital cities.

These initiatives will help to support affordable living choices in our regional communities. By supporting those people living in our regional areas, the Australian Government is helping to ensure that our regional communities are attractive places to live, work and raise a family.

To improve accessibility and reduce dependence on private motor vehicles, the Australian Government will:

- Continue to roll out the *National Broadband Network*, which will allow greater telecommuting and flexible work arrangements, complementing the new \$100 million *Suburban Local Jobs Program*
- Monitor progress toward achieving national cycling target and evaluate the achievement of the national cycling target, to double the number of cyclists by 2016
- Work with State and Territory Governments to improve accessibility and mobility in cities, including improving overall travel times, costs and experience in cities. This will be done by encouraging more compact and mixed use development, improved public transport and active transport options, and more efficient use of infrastructure assets
- Encourage the development of urban areas that promote healthy lifestyles through cycling and walking networks, recreation facilities and high quality public spaces
- Amend the Fringe Benefits Tax for employer-provided cars to a single 20 per cent flat rate, regardless of the distance travelled.



Wollongong, NSW

Support community wellbeing

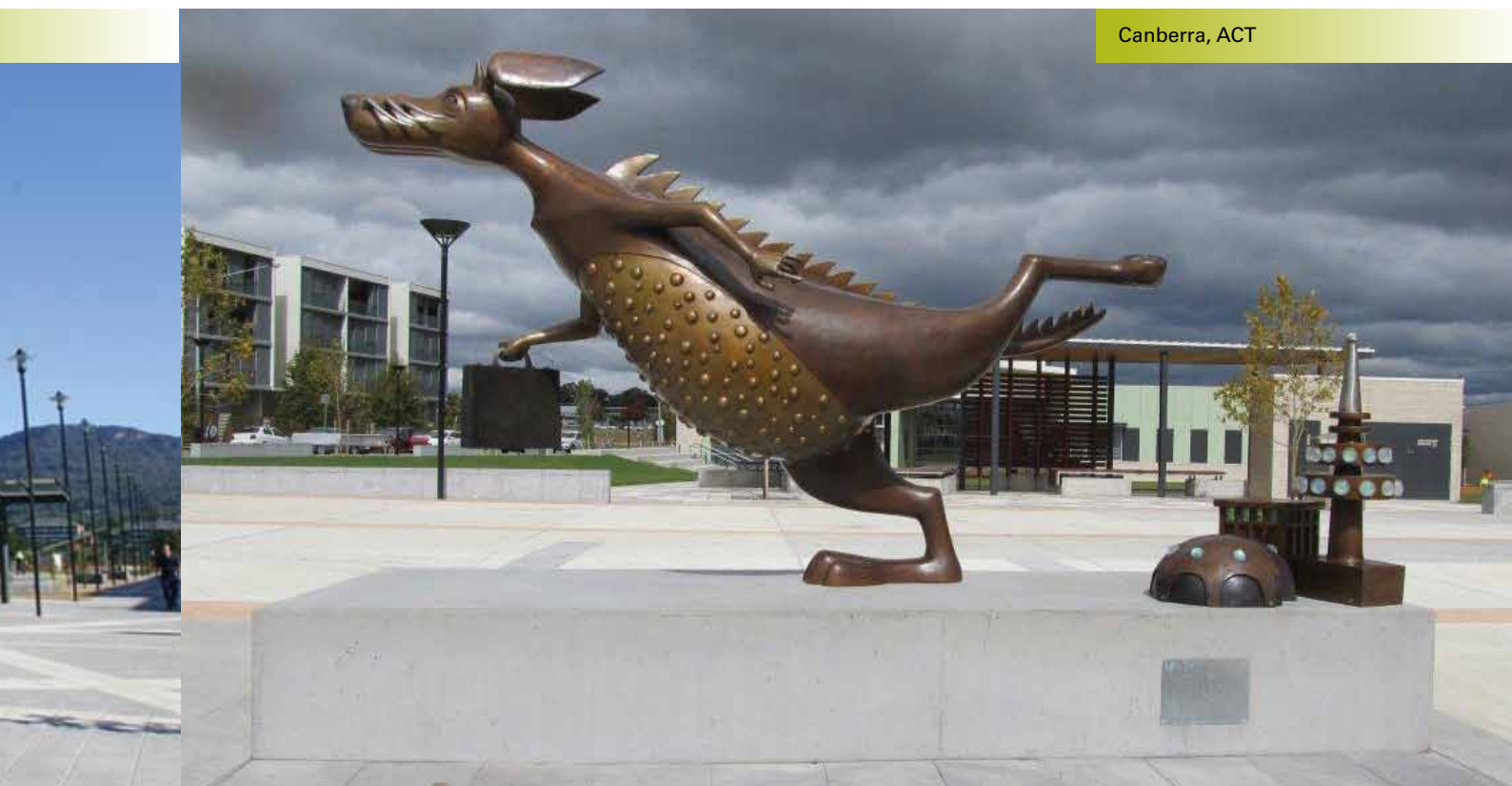
Community wellbeing is the foundation of our society. The quality of our natural and built environments, and our access to education, jobs and social and cultural opportunities have significant impacts on community wellbeing, public health outcomes, social inclusion and interaction, and community safety.

In the report *My City: the People's Verdict*, people said their highest priorities were personal safety, the security of their property, and good health care services. The strong connection between social inclusion, urban planning and the safety of communities is becoming increasingly well understood, along with the relationship to mental and physical health outcomes.

Urban planning can facilitate and support preventative health approaches, especially for those who are disadvantaged and older, or who are high users of primary health care services. This can include development of social

infrastructure that encourages healthy lifestyles (such as incorporating parks, walking/jogging/cycling/fitness tracks, swimming pools, sports facilities, clubs, community centres and ovals) and providing easy access to primary health care facilities and community health services.

The Australian Government is investing in a range of policies and programs targeted at helping all Australians remain engaged in their communities, making them safer, more productive and liveable places to work and raise families. This includes the service delivery reform agenda to provide better support for people when they need it and the development of strategies to support and expand volunteering, philanthropy and social investment to build community resilience and social inclusion.



Providing access to social and economic opportunity

The *Sustainable Communities Program* will assist in making it easier for people to access jobs closer to home. Coupled with Australian Government support for improvements to public transport networks, education opportunities, social infrastructure and the not for profit sector, this will improve access to social and economic opportunity.

Improving the quality of the public domain

The *Our Cities* consultation process with industry, community and government stakeholder groups highlighted a role for the Australian Government in leading better quality urban design in our cities and regions, particularly in response to the COAG criterion to encourage world-class urban design and architecture.

The Australian Government is supporting innovative models to improve urban liveability through projects such as the *Adelaide Integrated*

Design Strategy. This project identifies opportunities to improve the productivity, liveability and sustainability of Adelaide as well as plan for future growth.

Improving public health outcomes

The Australian Government has established a National Preventative Health Agency. The Agency will support COAG and the Australian Health Ministers' Conference (AHMC) in grappling with the increasingly complex challenges associated with preventing chronic disease.

The Agency will assist in driving the prevention agenda, including by:

- providing evidence-based advice to health Ministers
- supporting the development of evidence and data on the state of preventive health in Australia and the effectiveness of preventive health interventions
- putting in place national guidelines and standards to guide preventive health activities.



Canberra, ACT

The Agency will take responsibility for a number of programs outlined in the *National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health* (Prevention NP) including:

- two national social marketing programs relating to tobacco use and obesity
- managing a preventive health research fund focusing on translational research
- managing an audit and strategy of the preventive health workforce.

The Agency is an important part of the Government's health reform efforts and will work closely with local primary health care organisations to reinvigorate preventive health efforts at the local level.

Redressing spatially concentrated disadvantage

A National Compact with the Third Sector was launched on 17 March 2010 to strengthen the not-for-profit sector to provide support for people in need. The National Compact represents a commitment by the Australian Government and the Third Sector to genuinely collaborate to achieve this shared vision. The Compact's shared principles provide a foundation for action to improve working relationships, strengthen sector viability and develop and deliver better policy and programs. Compact partners from the sector agree to work with all Australian Government agencies to achieve these goals.

Enhancing access to cultural, sporting and recreational activity

Nearly two-thirds of the Australian population aged 15 years and over (64 per cent or 11.1 million people) participated in sport and physical recreation in 2009–10.⁸ Over two thirds of children aged five to 14 years – 1.9 million – participated in organised sport and/or dancing in 2009.⁹

Since its inception, the *Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program* has made more than \$1 billion available to Local Government authorities to build and modernise community infrastructure. The Australian Government has funded more than 6,000 individual projects and provided funds to all of Australia's 565 councils and the Australian Capital Territory. The funds have assisted the building and modernising of community facilities, including town halls, libraries, community centres, sports grounds and environmental infrastructure. The program has strengthened our communities during the economic recovery from the Global Financial Crisis, by supporting local jobs and has provided long-term benefits to communities by renewing and upgrading local infrastructure.

Further initiatives to support community wellbeing

To further support community wellbeing, the Australian Government will:

- Work with partners to prepare a national *Urban Design Protocol* that will provide Local Governments, developers, industry professionals and communities with a tool for designing, assessing and implementing better design and construction outcomes for our cities
- Implement Preventative Health Agency programs which include promotion of healthy lifestyles, and *National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health*
- Continue to provide funding to local government for community infrastructure.

⁸ 4177.0 – *Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation, Australia, 2009–10*, Australian Bureau of Statistics

⁹ 4901.0.55.001 – *Children's Participation in Sport and Leisure Time Activities*, Australian Bureau of Statistics