



Australian Government

Our Cities, Our Future

A national urban policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future



Acknowledgements

The development of this report has been informed by the generous contributions of many stakeholders.

The Australian Government would like to acknowledge the time, commitment and support provided by States, Territories and Local Governments and their various associations; the private sector including peak industry groups; professional associations; and leading urban researchers, both past and present.

Thank you to the following individuals/organisations for the use of the following images:

Adelaide Integrated Design Strategy (Integrated Design Commission SA)
Swan Region (WA Tourism)
Sydney Opera House (NSW Tourism)
Mindil Beach Night Markets (Darwin City Council)
Launceston by night (Rob Burnett/Launceston City Council)
Bathers Pavilion - North Wollongong Beach (Wollongong City Council)
Adelaide St Brisbane (Brisbane Marketing)
Fin Sculptures - Geelong Promenade (City of Greater Geelong)
Toowoomba Botanic Gardens (Toowoomba Regional Council)
Albury Town Hall (VIC Tourism)
Gong Shuttle Bus (Wollongong City Council)
The Murray (NSW Tourism)
Cairns Esplanade (Cairns Regional Council)
The Time Thief (Molonggo Group, ACT)
Museum of Old and New Art exterior, MONA (Matt Newton)
Innovation Campus (iC) - University of Wollongong (Wollongong City Council)
Alexander the Bunyip (ACT Government)
Sunrise over Lake Burley Griffin (George Lasek)
Gold Coast Skyline (GC Photography/Gold Coast City Council)
Newcastle Beach (Newcastle City Council)
Albury City Library Museum (Albury City Council)
Gold Coast canal (Gold Coast City Council)
Breakwater Marina (Townsville City Council)
Wodonga Arbor (City of Wodonga)

Indemnity statement

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport has taken due care in preparing this report. However, noting that data used for the analyses have been provided by third parties, the Commonwealth gives no warranty to the accuracy, reliability, fitness for purpose, or otherwise of the information.

Published by

Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
Telephone (international) +61 2 6274 7000

ISBN 978-1-921769-26-9

INFRA-1118/May 2011

© Commonwealth of Australia 2011

Contents

Foreword	2
1. Introduction	5
Why we need a <i>National Urban Policy</i>	8
Coordinating actions in cities.....	8
Roles and responsibilities within cities.....	11
<i>Your Say</i> – outcomes of community consultations	14
2. Principles, Goals and Objectives	17
Goals	19
Objectives.....	19
Principles to guide urban policy development and investment	21
3. Productivity.....	23
Improve labour and capital productivity.....	27
Integrate land use and infrastructure.....	29
Improve the efficiency of urban infrastructure.....	33
4. Sustainability	39
Protect and sustain our natural and built environments	42
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.....	43
Manage our resources sustainably	46
Increase resilience to climate change, emergency events and natural hazards	48
5. Liveability.....	53
Facilitate the supply of appropriate, mixed income housing	58
Support affordable living choices.....	61
Improve accessibility and reduce dependence on private motor vehicles	62
Support community wellbeing	65
6. Governance	69
Improve the planning and management of our cities.....	72
Streamline administrative processes.....	73
Evaluate progress.....	74
7. Summary Action Plan	77
Appendix A: Council of Australian Governments national criteria for cities	86



Foreword



Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world. Our cities play a pivotal role in securing the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our nation. Cities are not only centres of economic activity and home to the vast majority of Australians they are also gateways for the important economic and cultural contribution of regional Australia. Our cities have a strategic contribution to make to Australia's global competitiveness in an increasingly urbanised world.

The Australian Government is committed to forging a fairer, more prosperous and resilient future for Australia and is determined that Australian cities lead the world in productivity, sustainability and liveability.

As is the case internationally, Australian cities are confronted by significant long-term challenges including population growth and demographic change, climate change, increasing fuel costs and resource limitations, housing affordability, technological change, and the accelerating processes of globalisation. As concentrated centres of people and activity, cities also provide immense social and economic opportunity, as well as substantial potential to redress environmental pressures.

The way in which governments plan and manage our cities therefore needs to respond effectively to these challenges whilst harnessing opportunities. This will be critical to maintaining and improving the quality of life enjoyed by our communities and to help secure the nation's productivity into the future.

On 1 December 2010, the Australian Government released *Our Cities—building a productive, sustainable and liveable future* discussion paper, accompanied by a background and research paper *Our Cities—the challenge of change*. These documents set out the Australian Government's aspirations for a national approach to planning and managing our cities, and invited contributions to a national discussion on the future of our cities. I thank all who participated in this dialogue, and in particular to the many individuals and organisations that committed time and energy to lodging submissions.

The Australian Government is now taking the next step in setting a framework for how—in partnership with State, Territory and local governments, business and the community—we can deliver on the aspirations Australians have for our urban communities.

The National Urban Policy establishes the Australian Government's objectives and directions for our cities as we prepare for the decades ahead. It recognises the critical roles of State, Territory and local governments, the private sector and individuals, in planning, managing and investing in cities. It also highlights that the Australian Government makes decisions that impact upon urban Australia. This is the first time that an Australian Government has sought to outline its overarching goals for the nation's cities and how we will play a role in making them more productive, sustainable and liveable.

The National Urban Policy is about how the Australian Government can facilitate better outcomes in our cities through both direct investment and by influencing the actions of others. It shows where we have already started to make substantial reforms, and proposes additional critical actions to set us on the path to creating better cities. The Australian Government has already demonstrated its commitment to better outcomes for Australian cities through simplified regulatory environments and its significant and unprecedented funding of public transport projects across most of Australia's capital cities. These efforts are part of a much more substantial reform agenda.

This National Urban Policy sets a vision for our cities to deliver future prosperity and wellbeing for our communities and reinforces the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) national objective to *ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable, socially inclusive and well placed to meet future challenges and growth.*

The National Urban Policy complements the Australian Government's *Sustainable Population Strategy* and our ongoing focus and commitment to Regional Australia. It recognises the strong interrelationships between cities and regions. The policy does not focus on capital cities alone, but recognises the important role that our major regional centres also play, and the substantial challenges that they face in dealing with the complexities of the modern economy.

The 2011 Budget began rolling out practical measures to tackle the big challenges our cities face – skills, planning and urban renewal, suburban jobs and investment.

I am proud to present the first National Urban Policy. This is a key step to making our cities more productive, sustainable and liveable and I look forward to continuing strong partnerships in delivering it.



ANTHONY ALBANESE
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport