State of Australian Cities 2010 noted that governance refers to the political and legal structures and mechanisms used to manage and coordinate our urban systems, how they interrelate with each other and with key stakeholders, how resources are allocated and how outcomes are achieved. This chapter briefly describes the governance arrangements that cover major Australian cities. It provides updates on changes that have occurred since the 2010 report, and highlights progress on the COAG cities agenda and findings of the Productivity Commission into Planning, Zoning and Development Assessments.

Key findings

• Revisions to ministerial council arrangements under COAG have seen the establishment of a new Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure. This Committee will progress the agenda of the former Australian Transport Council and COAG Infrastructure Working Group. It will also have long-term involvement in the implementation of the National Urban Policy and COAG cities reform agenda.

• The Productivity Commission has pointed to the need for improved governance arrangements to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness of cities.

• The governance structure of Australia’s major cities differs between States and Territories, and between capital and regional cities within them. There is evidence to support significant integration of the different levels of major city planning, infrastructure provision and management, particularly in capital cities.

The Australian federation as it relates to major cities

There are three spheres of government in Australia: the Australian Government, six State and two Territory governments, and 565 local governments. The 18 major cities with populations above 100,000 comprise 158 local governments between them, plus the ACT Government. The ACT is in many ways a hybrid, with both State and Local Government functions but not the same level of autonomy from the national government as the States. Table 6.1 lists the number of local government areas contained within Australia’s major cities.
Historically, as cities have grown so too have the number of local government areas incorporated in them. Amalgamation of local governments over the past two decades has seen the number of councils in Australia reduced from 766 to 565. Further reform of local government boundaries is expected in Western Australia which has 138 local governments, 43 per cent of which have fewer than 1,000 electors. The Capital City Statistical Division of Perth has 30 councils including the country’s smallest local government area, Peppermint Grove Town, with a total area of 1.5 km² and a population of approximately 1,650.

Significant local government amalgamations have occurred in Queensland with those in South East Queensland being the largest in Australia. There is much interest in assessing the merits of these larger councils as it is expected the larger administrative units increase the capacity of major cities to address more complex urban management issues and to develop regional views on services and planning needs.

Over the past two decades many councils have created regional forums and groupings to address broader social and economic infrastructure planning. Many of these bodies have become organised cooperative groupings of councils such as the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, the South West Grouping of Councils in Western Australia, the National Growth Areas Alliance in the fastest growing areas of our largest cities and the grouping of 68 coastal councils making up the National Sea Change Taskforce.

Australia’s regional cities often contain local government areas that cover more than the urban footprint of the city. Over time the outer ‘shire’ and ‘city centre’ dimensions of regional cities have coalesced into single planning and servicing bodies.

### Table 6.1 Number of local government areas in Australia’s largest cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major City</th>
<th>Number of Local Government Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast-Tweed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra-Queanbeyan*</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toowoomba</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albury-Wodonga</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes*:  denotes the inclusion of the Australian Capital Territory Government

Source: Derived from ABS 2009 Regional Population Growth, Australia 2007-2008 (cat. no. 3218.0).
Collaboration and integration across spheres of government

All spheres of government share responsibility for policy, planning, funding and delivery of infrastructure, transport and human services in Australia’s major cities.

The Council of Australia Governments (COAG) was established in 1992 to enable policy reforms of national significance which require cooperative action. COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia, comprising the prime minister, federal treasurer, state premiers, territory chief ministers, state and territory treasurers, and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

COAG policy agendas of relevance to Australia’s major cities include infrastructure and transport regulation and investment, housing affordability and supply, micro-economic reforms to improve the efficiency of approval processes, and reform of health services.

**COAG Cities Agenda**

On 7 December 2009, COAG agreed to a set of reforms for capital city strategic planning, adopting a national objective to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable, socially inclusive and well placed to meet future challenges and growth.

The objective was supported by a set of nine criteria that metropolitan planning systems should embrace. This will help address the very many challenges facing major cities, including managing population and economic growth, addressing climate change, improving housing affordability and addressing urban congestion. State and Territory governments have agreed to align their capital city metropolitan planning systems with the criteria by 1st January 2012.

The COAG Reform Council which reports to COAG on the progress of COAG’s reform agenda has been asked to review the consistency of capital city planning systems against these criteria. An interim report was released to jurisdictions for feedback on 14 October 2011.

The final report will be provided to COAG by the end of December 2011. The COAG Reform Council, supported by a panel with expertise in urban policy, planning and design, will also provide advice on best practice approaches to city planning that jurisdictions can draw upon. Workshops have been held to consider:

- managing and harnessing stakeholder input and building the mandates necessary to deliver the long-term vision for our cities
- the interaction between planning systems and the private sector in delivering cities strategic plans
- how we measure and monitor the progress of cities.
Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

COAG has undertaken a review of ministerial councils to rationalise the number of entities and deliver effectively on priority reforms. This has resulted in the formation of a new Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure which will progress key reforms from the former Australian Transport Council and the COAG Infrastructure Working Group. Its terms of reference also include strategic planning to deliver on the goals and objectives of the National Urban Policy and the COAG cities reform agenda.

Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission independently benchmarked the planning, zoning and development assessments system of the State, Territory and Local governments, and also made observations about the impact of the Commonwealth on planning (Productivity Commission May 2011). The Commission highlighted leading practices and areas for improvement. The main findings and recommendations point to the need for improved governance arrangements to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the functioning of cities. This report complements the work of the COAG Reform Council in city planning systems.

Leading-practice strategic planning:

- provides clear guidance and set targets while allowing flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances and innovation;
- ensures high alignment between State-level strategic and infrastructure plans including for government-funded infrastructure, Queensland and Victoria demonstrating the strongest budgetary links; and
- enables development assessment or rezoning decisions falling outside the plan to be on a case-by-case basis in a framework characterised by transparency, accountability, probity and good community engagement.

The Commission concluded that coordination and consistency between plans—State-level strategic, regional and local—is achieved by a variety of methods and is central to good governance. However, when strategic plans are updated, the development of new local council plans may lag several years as in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

Planning resources and outcomes of local councils differed across jurisdictions. On a per capita basis, Queensland councils had the highest levels of resourcing with the largest number of staff and expenditure of about twice as much as councils in Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.

Workload pressure was identified by councils as a major impediment to performance. But more than half of respondents to business surveys indicated that a lack of competency of council staff and inability to understand the commercial implications of requests and decisions were some of the greatest hindrances in development approval (DA) processes.

Most communities reported their State and local governments to be ‘somewhat effective’ in planning for a liveable city, those in New South Wales and the Northern Territory most likely to report their government as ‘not at all effective’.

There was reasonable consistency in planning priorities between State governments and local councils. Most reported ‘accommodating higher population growth’ as a top priority along with the accompanying need to transition to higher population densities through infill.

Community views as to what should be planning priorities differed substantially from priorities of their governments. In particular, ‘safe communities’, ‘public transport’ and ‘traffic congestion’ were identified by communities in all States and Territories as top planning priorities (Productivity Commission 2011, p 357).
Other policy priorities for major cities

Other national initiatives that will assist intergovernmental cooperation and integration for city policy and planning include:

- A Sustainable Population Strategy (released in May 2011) focused on ensuring policies for natural and built environments, infrastructure provision and use and immigration address the challenges and opportunities of population growth and change.
- The Nation Building Program, including significant intra-city rail links (Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010b)
- A National Ports Strategy to reduce truck queues at ports, to minimise the potential for urban encroachment, and to improve and sustain the competitive position of international trade gateways (Infrastructure Australia 2010).
- A National Freight Strategy aimed at securing and enhancing the network of freight movement across the nation, including interaction with urban areas (Infrastructure Australia 2010e).
- Funding catchment management bodies and authorities to provide important natural resource management and biodiversity strategic planning for our major cities.

Adoption of the National Urban Policy provides a much-awaited policy link in Australian land use and infrastructure planning, complementing the States and Territories hierarchical urban land use and environmental statutory policy-based systems. Figure 6.1 illustrates the policy ‘line of sight’ which now links the National Urban Policy and COAG objectives and criteria for cities, cascading through State and Regional Plans, to local plans and ultimately applications for development and on-the-ground built form outcomes. This framework has been embraced by the national Planning Officials Group.
Figure 6.1
National planning ‘line of sight’

Environment and resource management

National environmental and infrastructure investment priorities
Murray-Darling, Great Barrier Reef, National Environmental Protection Measures

State environmental and resource management frameworks
Water resource and catchment planning, coastal protection, state land development and allocation, forestry policy, mining and extractive resources

Regional environmental and resource management
Catchment protection, regionally significant vegetation communities, regionally endangered species, regional extractive resources, regional open space and views

Local environmental and resource management initiatives
Waterway protection, local bushland protection and acquisition, vegetation protection

Neighbourhood initiatives
Healthy waterways partnerships, revegetation, amenity improvement

Site-or location-specific resource and environmental evaluations
Site location environmental audits

Development-related environmental and resource management outcomes
Codes developed around sustainability outcomes, impact assessments

Site-specific environmental and resource management initiatives
Sustainable building design, water conservation standards

State legislative and operational frameworks
State planning and infrastructure coordination legislation, state planning policies, state coastal management planning, state planning regulatory instruments, inspirational statements of strategic intent

Regional plans (including metropolitan region plans)
(Urban footprints, growth and density targets, integrated regional infrastructure plans, protection of regionally significant environmental and economic resources)

Regional plans and local government planning schemes are key instruments for the spatial expression of integrated planning policy

Local government/regional council planning schemes
(Local government strategic plans, local zoning and regulatory frameworks, identification of priority areas for infrastructure delivery codes and standards)

Local area and neighbourhood planning
(Local government structure plans/master plans, neighbourhood revitalisation)

Location-specific planning
(Centre plans, transit oriented development, development-intensive centres, master plans, urban redevelopment areas)

Development assessment (individual/specific sites)
(Site-based zoning, development intents, codes)

Development assessment (individual/specific sites)
(Site-based zoning, development intents, codes)

Development contributions frameworks and area-specific standards of service

Site-specific standards of service
Service connections, certification

Infrastructure

National infrastructure policies and priorities
Interstate rail, national highways, energy infrastructure, trade infrastructure, defence infrastructure, international airports

State infrastructure plans and priorities
State infrastructure plans, key state roads, intra-state rail, education infrastructure, health infrastructure, ports, state energy policy, standards of service policy, competitive neutrality policy

Regional infrastructure delivery programs
Regional water supply, intra-state roads/Rail/Hyways, ports, regional open space networks, energy infrastructure

Local infrastructure planning and delivery programs
Local infrastructure programs (local circulation networks, urban water cycle management programs, local open space networks)

Neighbourhood infrastructure programs
Cycleways, local open space linked to regional open space

Collaborative location-specific infrastructure planning and provision
Infrastructure partnerships, joint funding

Infrastructure contributions frameworks and area-specific standards of service

Environment and resource management Infrastructure

National urban policy and infrastructure investment priorities
(National Urban Policy Nation Building Program)

State of Australian Cities 2011
Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national network of 55 committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the development of their regions.

This Australian Government initiative brings together all levels of government to support the development of regional Australia. It is funded by the Australian Government and by State, Territory and local governments in some jurisdictions. It is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

RDA committee members are local people developing local solutions to local issues. They build partnerships to develop strategies and deliver sustainable infrastructure and services to their regions.

They also work with each other to identify issues that cross regions. As the regional development voice of their communities, RDA committees:

- consult and engage with communities
- promote and participate in regional programs and initiatives
- provide information and advice on their region to all levels of government, and
- support informed regional planning.

Each RDA committee has developed a Regional Plan which outlines priorities for the region and guides them in growing and strengthening their communities. These plans are available from each RDA’s website.
Metropolitan planning in States and Territories

Metropolitan planning has been adopted in different ways and to different extents by federal, State, Territory and Local governments. Although there are many models for metropolitan planning and governance, these can be summarised into statutory and cooperative approaches. The following section updates the State of Australian Cities 2010 contents on metropolitan governance and planning arrangements.

New South Wales

Governance

New South Wales is characterised by a relatively high number of local authorities rather than larger regional governments. In parts of the State cooperative regional governance structures have emerged, shires and cities forming regional cooperative organisations (ROCs). For example, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils represents 13 councils across Western Sydney.

A system of sub-regional strategies, which applies in the Sydney metropolitan area, allows groups of councils to undertake long-term cooperative strategic planning over broader ‘catchments’, negotiating housing and employment distribution across boundaries.

The New South Wales Government has overall responsibility for long-term policy priorities and for delivering investment consistent with its policy objectives. Decision-making at the State or city level provides for the strategic planning framework, long-term directions, high-level investment strategies and coordination of service and infrastructure delivery. At a municipal level, councils are responsible for municipal strategic and statutory planning, in alignment with overall metropolitan and sub-regional strategies, and for delivery of local infrastructure and other services.

While local government has principal responsibility for initiating local land-use policy changes and determining development applications, the State government reserves the power to endorse or reject local land-use plans and to call in proposals for the planning minister’s assessment and determination.

The New South Wales Government has a Metropolitan Development Program which seeks to monitor and prioritise land release and associated infrastructure delivery in metropolitan Sydney and the Central Coast. Similar programs operate elsewhere, such as the Lower Hunter and the Illawarra. As well as coordinating greenfield planning, these programs coordinate planning for housing growth in infill areas.

The Government has an Employment Lands Development Program, which aims to monitor take-up and manage the supply of employment land and the coordination of associated infrastructure in metropolitan Sydney and the Central Coast.

It is has replaced the previous State Plan with New South Wales 2021 which provides an overarching framework for aligning policy and implementation efforts of State government agencies, which must demonstrate alignment with metropolitan planning strategies.
New South Wales has begun work through Infrastructure New South Wales on preparing a long-term State Infrastructure Strategy which will provide a clearer and more certain ‘pipeline’ of infrastructure projects, supporting metropolitan and regional strategic objectives.

**Metropolitan planning**

Sydney has long benefited from having a metropolitan strategic plan. The first major strategic plan, the County of Cumberland Plan, was prepared in 1948. Since then, major strategic plans have been prepared in 1968, 1988, 1995, 2005 and 2010.

The current metropolitan strategy, the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney, was released in 2010 after a comprehensive review of the 2005 strategy. Like the 2005 strategy, the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney contains an inbuilt requirement to be reviewed and updated every five years.

Planning strategies exist for the other major New South Wales cities:

- Central Coast Regional Strategy (part of Sydney)
- Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (Newcastle)
- Illawarra Regional Strategy (Wollongong)
- Far North Coast Regional Strategy (Tweed Heads)
- Sydney-Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy (Queanbeyan)
- Draft Murray Regional Strategy (Albury).

These regional strategies are key policy documents and are also reviewed every five years. They articulate long-term approaches for urban development, infrastructure planning and environmental protection. They are given statutory weight under section 117 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (New South Wales), to ensure that they are implemented through local land use plans.

**Victoria**

**Governance**

Victoria’s strategic approach to land use and transport planning sits within the government’s broader strategic and policy framework. All departments and agencies must take this into account in their budget, asset and service planning.

The Victorian Government has an overall leadership role in establishing long-term policy priorities and in delivering investment consistent with its policy objectives. It works in partnership with local government in planning for Melbourne and Victoria. Decision-making at the State or city level provides for the strategic planning framework, long-term directions, high-level investment strategies and coordination of service and infrastructure delivery.
Local councils are responsible for municipal-level strategic and statutory planning within the overall metropolitan or regional context, and for delivery of a range of infrastructure and other services. During the 1990s structural reforms were undertaken in Victoria to make local government and urban planning and development frameworks more efficient and responsive to changing market needs. This included reducing the number of councils from 219 to 79, to achieve better economies of scale in public administration. At the same time, councils were encouraged to take responsibility for local economic development.

More recently, the Victorian Government established the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) to integrate infrastructure planning for growth areas in the metropolitan region. The GAA has the role of developing whole-of-government policy positions in the growth areas of Casey-Cardinia, Hume, Melton-Caroline Springs, Whittlesea and Wyndham. The authority works with local councils to facilitate land development.

Strong population growth in provincial Victoria is set to continue, most being concentrated around regional cities, coastal areas and places within commuting distance of Melbourne. As a result, strategic planning for Melbourne has been complemented by a State-wide blueprint to accommodate population growth in provincial Victoria.

*Victoria in Future (VIF)* is the official government projections covering population, age structure and the number of households for all local government areas and statistical local areas across the State. It is used for strategic and service planning and has been published regularly since 1995.

The Urban Development Program (UDP) further contributes to Victoria’s approach to urban planning. The UDP is reviewed annually and is in its seventh year. Its primary objective is to provide accurate and up-to-date information to local councils, infrastructure and service providers and developers to help ensure an ongoing provision of land and supporting infrastructure for future residential and industrial requirements.

**Metropolitan planning**

Melbourne has enjoyed metropolitan strategic planning since 1927 when the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission was established. Planning strategies for Melbourne have been produced from time to time, notably through the first comprehensive planning scheme for the metropolitan area in 1954. In 1971 the principles of growth corridors, green wedges and containing outward growth were introduced and in 1983 new district centre zones were created to encourage office development in 14 centres and restrict it elsewhere. In 1995 much of metropolitan wide planning direction and controls were devolved to local government. In 2002 the Victorian Government released *Melbourne 2030 – planning for sustainable growth* as a whole of government endorsed strategic planning framework for metropolitan Melbourne and its relationship with regional Victoria.

The Victorian Government has established an Urban Growth Boundary to set limits on metropolitan Melbourne’s outward growth that can only be altered by Parliament. This boundary was expanded following the release of the *Melbourne @ 5 million* plan to accommodate faster than expected population growth. This strategy was developed in conjunction with the *Victorian Transport Plan* (VTP) which integrates new commitments for public and private transport, long term land supply for employment and residential growth, as well as implementing a strategic approach to managing environmental impacts.
The Victorian Government is in the process of developing a new outcome-based metropolitan planning strategy. During the process of development, decision-making for metropolitan planning will continue to rely on the underlying State Planning Policy Framework which sits within the Victoria Planning Provisions.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) provides the legislative authority for the Victoria Planning Provisions (including a State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Frameworks tailored to each municipality). This policy framework establishes the requirements for assessing development proposals against policy objectives. The practical application of the planning system is supported by performance monitoring and through the progressive rollout of electronic data systems, including planning scheme maps online and electronic development assessment.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987, the State Planning Policy Framework and other related provisions are under review to simplify current laws, remove redundant provisions, and strengthen certainty and timeliness.

Victoria has progressively modernised its transport legislation. The Transport Integration Act 2010, the new principal transport statute, sets out a vision, objectives and principles for transport, making it clear that the transport system needs to be integrated and sustainable. The Act requires transport agencies and other decision makers to have regard to broader social, economic and environmental considerations. It unites all elements of the transport portfolio to ensure that transport agencies work towards a common goal of an integrated transport system. It integrates land use and transport planning and decision-making by extending the framework to land-use agencies whose decisions can significantly affect transport, including the government’s planning functions, municipal councils, the GAA and Parks Victoria.

**Queensland**

**Governance**

Queensland has regional planning committees to oversee development and implementation of regional plans. They are statutory groups made by the Minister for Local Government and Planning and comprise relevant State agencies and councils.

The Council of Mayors SEQ is a cooperative group of mayors from the councils in South East Queensland. This group examines strategic issues affecting the region.

The Queensland Government recently completed a substantial local government reform program, which involved amalgamating councils to form regional councils. The new councils are much larger and have a better capacity to undertake planning, development assessment, asset creation and management.

Queensland has a program for developing and sequencing major infrastructure designed to align with urban growth. The Queensland Infrastructure Plan (QIP) is Cabinet-endorsed and is the largest coordinated infrastructure program in Australia. It covers an extensive range of economic and social infrastructure. The QIP links infrastructure delivery with population growth and economic development priorities.
At the State level the roles and functions of metropolitan planning and infrastructure planning are integrated into the Department of Local Government and Planning. The department oversees whole-of-government urban and regional planning.

The Queensland Government is responsible for State planning policies and regional plans. Local government planning schemes direct building and development in each local government area. They are reviewed and approved by the Minister for Local Government and Planning and must align with the strategic policies set out in regional plans and State planning policies.

Local area plans are developed primarily by local governments and give more detail about desirable types of development in particular neighbourhoods. Local area plans are incorporated into the local government planning scheme. They must be approved by the Minister for Local Government and Planning and align with the State’s strategic policies.

Local governments manage the vast majority of development assessments and mostly determine development applications.

**Metropolitan planning**

Queensland’s planning, development and building system is called Qplan. A significant milestone of Qplan was the commencement of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* on 18 December 2009. The tools used in Qplan are described in the Act and the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009. Strategic components of Qplan include Regional Plans and State Planning Policies.

State planning policies articulate a position about a particular issue and they can apply across the State or in a specified area. Regional plans are used to articulate the Queensland Government’s broad intent for development in particular regions. They shape cities by setting growth boundaries, identifying areas for urban development and outlining how development should occur in a particular region.

The *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031* was established in 1998 and became a statutory planning tool endorsed by Cabinet in 2005. It has been reviewed periodically, most recently in 2009. The plan encompasses the greater Brisbane area and the major urban centres of Ipswich, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Logan and Toowoomba.

The regional plans inform local-level planning. For Queensland’s capital city itself, the *Brisbane City Plan 2000* directs all building and development in the Brisbane City Council area. This plan was reviewed and approved by the Planning Minister. *Brisbane City Plan 2000* is under review by Brisbane City Council with anticipated completion in 2012.
Western Australia

Governance
The Western Australian planning system is characterised by the central role exercised by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), a statutory authority reporting to the Minister for Planning. WAPC is serviced by planning committees and is supported by the Department of Planning which provides professional and technical expertise, administrative services and other resources, and implements WAPC decisions.

WAPC has State-wide responsibilities for urban, rural and regional land-use planning and land development matters. WAPC responds to the strategic direction of government and is responsible for the strategic planning of the State.

Funding for the Western Australian planning system is raised through a land tax known as the Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax. This provides a fund for strategic land purchases such as acquiring land for future urban transport corridors, and to assist with the costs of implementing the Metropolitan Region Scheme.

Metropolitan planning
The Planning and Development Act 2005 (Western Australia) provides a statutory framework for the preparation and amendment of regional schemes, Local Government planning scheme reviews, subdivision of land and the public consultation required for preparing State planning policies.

The Act requires preparation of a State planning strategy, the highest strategic planning document endorsed by WAPC. A planning strategy sets out key principles for the environment, community, economy and infrastructure and regional development, to guide future planning decisions. An example is Directions 2031 which forms a key part of the State Planning Framework. Directions 2031 aims to guide planning and infrastructure provision to manage population growth within the Perth and Peel regions to 2031 and beyond.

WAPC has prepared a State Planning Framework (Statement of Planning Policy Number 1) to guide its strategic direction. The framework unites existing State and regional policies (such as Directions 2031) within one document for decision-making on land use and development.

Western Australia has a long tradition of metropolitan-wide planning starting with the adoption of the Stephenson-Hepburn plan in 1955 through to Directions 2031 published by the WAPC in 2010.

Directions 2031 has set a target of a 50 per cent improvement on current trends in both infill and greenfield densities. WAPC publishes an annual Urban Growth Monitor (UGM) which identifies land zoned for urban development and evaluates growth trends covering more than 110,000 hectares of urban land across the Perth metropolitan, Peel and Greater Bunbury regions. The UGM identifies historic trends of development and monitors density planned for and achieved in new developments. The UGM tracks progress towards achieving the Directions 2031 strategic vision, such as urban zoned land supply, subdivision approvals, stock of vacant subdivided lots, rates of infill and trends in residential density.
The UGM is an integral part of the new Urban Development Program which monitors and coordinates land supply, development and infrastructure to deliver a more effective use of land, better staging of development and prioritisation of infrastructure spending. The program has been developed to include a series of annual publications covering historical and current assessments to 20-year planning outlooks. More detailed analysis of future urban growth will be undertaken to monitor and manage the staging of future growth.

The Urban Development Program informs the deliberations of the Western Australian Land Availability Working Group, chaired by the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which reports to the Ministerial Task Force on Approvals, Development and Sustainability.

Responsibility for oversight of significant urban and regional land and housing development has been assigned to the Department of Planning through the Lead Agency Framework. The Lead Agency Framework, implemented in October 2009, nominates a State government agency to help proponents through approvals processes.

Four agencies are responsible for delivery of urban developments against milestones, namely the Department of Planning, LandCorp, the Office of Strategic Projects and the relevant redevelopment authority.

**South Australia**

**Governance**

South Australia uses regional councils and regional organisations of councils as a means of working collaboratively over significant areas of the State. The South Australian Local Government Association has established regional organisations of councils to effectively represent regional interests and the State uses these groupings to help deliver a range of services. State Government representatives from the Department of Planning and Local Government attend all regional meetings as a means of exchanging information and working collaboratively to achieve agreed outcomes.

The State Government has established the Government Planning Coordination Committee to coordinate State-significant planning and development matters across government. The chief executive officers of State Government departments sit on the committee, as do relevant local government chief executive officers, as required. The Government Planning Coordination Committee reports directly to Cabinet.

As with most of the other States, the South Australian Government is responsible for setting the planning policy framework and local government is responsible for determining applications within that policy framework. South Australia also has statutory requirements for the use of planning assessment panels under certain circumstances.
Metropolitan Planning

South Australia has a State planning framework known as the Planning Strategy which is required to be prepared by the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. The Planning Strategy covers the entire State and determines the planning policy within development plans for lands in both local government and State-managed areas.

The Planning Strategy is a whole of government endorsed plan. It is a strategic level plan and a statutorily required plan. The Planning Strategy is constantly under review as required by the Act, with the Greater Adelaide area having been updated recently. Reviews of the rest of the State have been completed during the first half of 2011, with one volume currently under consultation.

The Planning Strategy for the greater Adelaide area is referred to as the Planning Strategy for greater Adelaide or the 30 year plan for greater Adelaide. It is a cabinet approved whole of government document and was authorised on 17 February 2010.

While it will not be the subject of a significant review until 2015, the targets within it will be monitored on a yearly basis and will inform reviews as required to meet the long term targets.

Tasmania

Governance

Governance arrangements for regional and city planning in Tasmania embrace both cooperative and statutory approaches.

In 2007 the Tasmanian Government established the Regional Planning Initiative (RPI) and signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the State’s three regional local government organisations (Cradle Coast Authority, Northern Tasmanian Development and the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority) and their respective member councils to prepare:

- regional land use strategies;
- regional planning scheme templates; and
- new council planning schemes consistent with the regional strategy and template.

Regional planning steering committees comprising local and State government representatives were established under the MOUs. The Government provided funding for the engagement of project teams and consultants to conduct the research, analysis, plan preparation and consultation prescribed in the MOUs.

The Government also initiated amendments to the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 authorising the Planning Minister to:

- declare a region and a regional land use strategy; and
- require councils to ensure their new schemes comply with the regional strategy and the State-wide planning scheme template.
The amendments empowered the Planning Minister to review and revise regional land use strategies.

In 2010, the Minister requested the recently created Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC), through a statement of expectation, to oversee the implementation of the RPI and the cooperative regional governance arrangements operating under the MOUs.

The three regions have produced their respective regional land use strategies for declaration by the Minister, draft regional planning scheme templates and commenced the preparation of new planning schemes. The TPC has also developed a draft system for a hierarchy of plans that integrate relevant planning and implementation functions across State and local governments. It is supported by evidence and spatial/place based systems.

The three regional steering committees, in conjunction with the TPC, have driven the RPI process.

**Metropolitan Planning**

The Planning Minister also requested the TPC to manage implementation of the COAG Capital Cities Agreement and COAG Reform Council’s compliance process. A capital city steering committee of metropolitan council representatives from the southern steering committee and State agency representatives was formed to integrate State agency and local government strategies for the greater Hobart plan and to ensure that it builds on the southern regional land use strategy. The Launceston City Council has also approached the State government to undertake a similar exercise to produce a greater Launceston city plan.

The final element of the Regional Planning Initiative is to resolve a city-region governance structure and system for ongoing regional and metropolitan land use planning which is integrated with related economic, infrastructure and social planning functions. The TPC has produced a draft discussion paper on city-region governance principles, functions and options in consultation with representatives of the three regional steering committees and the capital city steering committee.

Further stakeholder consultations are planned prior to a report being presented to the Planning Minister and Government to formalise an ongoing city-region planning structure and system for Tasmania.
Northern Territory

Governance
In mid-2008 the Northern Territory established eight new regional shires under a process of local government reform. The city of Darwin contains three local government areas.

The Northern Territory’s Department of Lands and Planning provides an integrated approach to land-use planning, infrastructure planning and service delivery of transport. The department, rather than local councils, is responsible for determining development applications.

In terms of regional governance, regional council meetings have input into regional management plans which are required under the Local Government Act 2008. The plans are developed from consultation between local councils in the region and the Department of Local Government and Housing. The plans address key issues relating to local government, resource sharing and regional development.

Local government acts only as a service authority in commenting on development proposals and has no statutory role in determining development applications. Individual councils are collaborative partners with the Territory Government in developing strategic planning for their local communities.

The Northern Territory uses Project Control Groups coordinated through the Department of Lands and Planning to develop and implement plans for infrastructure and services to greenfields sites. Cabinet is regularly briefed on the activities of the Project Control Groups and provides strategic direction and priority to the implementation of government policy.

The Northern Territory government, through the Minister for Lands and Planning, is responsible for administering the Planning Act (NT). The Planning Act establishes the development consent authority that is responsible for determining development proposals in accordance with the Northern Territory Planning Scheme. Development of the strategic planning framework, area plans and zoning maps are the role of the Territory Government. Councils are joint partners with the Northern Territory government in developing visions and providing comments on changes to the Northern Territory Planning Scheme.
Metropolitan planning

The Northern Territory government has initiated a range of strategic planning documents to inform its planning decisions:

- The Territory 2030 Strategic Plan, released in November 2009, is for the whole of the Northern Territory including greater Darwin. It is a government and community-based plan built from grassroots consultations.

- A land-use plan for greater Darwin — Greater Darwin Region Land-Use Plan —towards 2030. In February 2011 the government published a discussion paper for public consultation which ended in June 2011. The paper outlined a 30-year plan with specific land-use targets for the next 15 years. The Greater Darwin Region Land-Use Plan was being drafted as a result of the consultation.

- A 10-year Infrastructure Strategy for Greater Darwin and the Territory is currently under consideration by government.

- Two long-term transport strategies are in preparation. One focuses on planning principles for Territory-wide delivery of transport services, including for greater Darwin, the other on requirements for integrated transport delivery in remote regions.

- A Managing Darwin’s Growth Steering Committee considers the range of planning issues for greater Darwin. The committee comprises heads of relevant Northern Territory agencies such as the Department of Chief Minister (chair), Treasury, departments of Lands and Planning, Housing, Education, and Health and Families.

- A Major Projects Group, comprising heads of agencies and senior officials, manages all strategic-level investment projects through project-based task forces.

- A Housing Task Group, comprising senior officers of relevant agencies, is responsible for managing implementation of housing and land release strategies for Greater Darwin. It reports to the Managing Darwin’s Growth Steering Committee.

A single statutory planning document, the Northern Territory Planning Scheme, applies to the whole of the Northern Territory. It contains planning principles which are the Government’s commitment to outcomes for land-use planning and development control. The scheme also contains framework drawings and area plans which further detail the principles and objectives to guide development of major urban and regional centres such as the Darwin and Alice Springs. The area plans are regularly reviewed after public consultation. The consent authority, when determining development applications, must take into consideration any area plan and planning principles applicable to the locality. Reference documents to the scheme include Land Use Objectives and Planning Concepts and the Capital City Charter.
Australian Capital Territory

Governance

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has both State and local government functions and is based on a leasehold system. There is no formal regional organisation of councils within the Territory given its sole jurisdiction. However, the Canberra-Queanbeyan statistical district also contains the City of Queanbeyan. There is an informal collection of regional councils (New South Wales with the ACT) which seek to share information and resolve issues that are common to their interests.

A Chief Executive’s Land Supply Committee has been established to support the delivery of the land supply program. The committee oversees the coordination of infrastructure and environmental approvals. This Committee reports to the Urban Development Committee, a sub-committee of the ACT Cabinet.

The ACT Government is the State/local authority that has full responsibility for the urban management of Canberra. However, given the unique role of the National Capital Authority in safeguarding aspects of “national significance” in Australia’s national capital, there are some overlaps. The interrelationships between the ACT Government and the Australian Government in planning and managing Canberra are currently under review by the Federal Minister for Home Affairs. A variety of formal and informal processes are in place to coordinate and manage Territory/Commonwealth interests.

Planning policy advice is given to the ACT Government through the Environment and Sustainability Development Directorate, which also has independent statutory approval powers for applications. The Minister for Planning reserves call-in powers for development applications under certain circumstances.

Metropolitan Planning

The Canberra Spatial Plan (and companion Sustainable Transport Plan) was adopted in 2004. This is a whole of government document that sits under the umbrella of the Canberra Plan, which incorporates the Economic Plan, Social Plan and Climate Change Plan. It is a strategic planning document that in 2008 was made a statutory instrument (the Planning Strategy) under the Planning and Development Act 2007. It is currently being comprehensively evaluated as part of the Sustainable Future Program. Public consultation of revised drafts of the planning strategy will be undertaken towards the end of 2011 with a view to finalising in 2012.

Given the unique role of the National Capital Authority in the ACT, there is also a Metropolitan Structure Plan contained within the National Capital Plan. This plan exerts significant influence over the planning of Canberra as a statutory (less so strategic) document under the Federal Planning and Land Management Act 1988. It is not currently under review.
Conclusion

The feature that makes the governance of Australia’s cities quite different from most other countries is the historically strong role of State governments in planning and the correspondingly lesser role of local government.

In recent years the Australian Government has given greater weight to the role of cities in the future prosperity of the nation. It recognises the impact of its policies and programs on cities and has become actively involved in national leadership in urban policy.

Chapter 6 References
