

Enduring research questions

Enduring research questions represent long-standing areas of research that will remain central to the department’s priorities into the future. They are developed from the multiple policy touchpoints that government can have as steward of the markets our portfolio is responsible for, as well as the different lenses through which place-based issues are considered. There are also external drivers that affect markets and places, which impact on what research questions should be prioritised. Figure 4 shows the framework the department uses to identify enduring questions.

Figure 1: Framework to identify enduring research questions

Factors market stewards consider	Place-based lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible: Ensuring Australians can access goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity & infrastructure: connecting Australians through transport links, efficient freight and digital connectivity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive: Ensuring markets are competitive with the right investment, policy and regulatory settings that foster innovation and productivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capital & skills: ensuring Australia has a skilled workforce and opportunities to access education and training institutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient: Ensuring markets use resources in an efficient way to deliver the goods and services Australians need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional employment & business: building strong regional economies through jobs, growth through specialisation and resilience from industry diversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure: Maintaining the security of our digital and physical critical infrastructure and keeping Australians together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & collaboration: developing regions to their best potential through partnerships and harnessing local leadership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable: Ensuring markets are resilient to economic shocks, structural change and natural disasters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & liveability: ensuring communities have the services and institutions they value to help keep Australians together, and grow and retain populations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe: Ensuring Australians are safe, including when using goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable natural resources: providing water and energy infrastructure, sustainable land management, and managing environmental and natural disaster risks.

External drivers that influence our enduring research questions



Market disruption and economic structural changes



Technological change and innovation



Society, culture and preferences

Connecting Australians, enriching our communities and empowering our regions



Population growth and demography



Geopolitical drivers



Environment

Enduring research questions

How can we use our role as market steward for the infrastructure, transport, communications and arts sectors to ensure these markets provide for Australians in a way that is:

- **Accessible:** how can Australians have access to competitively-priced services from the sectors of which we are stewards, including opportunities to access cultural and creative experiences?
- **Competitive:** how can investment, policy and regulatory settings create an environment that fosters competition and innovation and their benefits (such as technology and productivity)?
- **Efficient:** what opportunities can we take to meet Australians' evolving needs and societal preferences (for example, working from home, desire for digital content and convenience) in a planned and efficient manner? How can we support investment and market mechanisms that deliver efficient and productive outcomes?
- **Secure:** how can we maintain the security of our digital and physical critical infrastructure and keeping Australians together, including by ensuring the shape of markets and transport systems protect against cyberattacks and the rise of misinformation?
- **Sustainable:** how can our sectors be resilient and adaptive to external economic shocks and structural changes; as well as natural disasters, climate and other environmental risks? What risk mitigation tools are available to ensure their sustainability?
- **Safe:** how can we ensure safe access is provided to infrastructure and goods and services, such as roads, aviation and online?

How can we support liveability in our cities, regions and territories, including by enabling:

- **Connectivity & infrastructure:** to connect Australians through transport links, efficient freight and digital?
- **Human capital & skills:** to ensure a skilled workforce and opportunities to access education and training institutions?
- **Regional employment & business:** to build strong regional economies through jobs, growth through specialisation and resilience from industry diversity?
- **Leadership & collaboration:** to develop regions to their best potential through partnerships and local leadership?
- **Amenity & liveability:** to ensure communities have the services and institutions they value to help keep Australians together and have population retention and growth?
- **Sustainable natural resources:** to provide water and energy infrastructure, sustainable land management, and manage environmental and natural disaster risks?