

Introduction

Governance, in the context of this report, 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 various governance arrangements across Australia that have responsibility for the planning and management of the major cities.

Key findings

- The future direction of the 17 major Australian cities is influenced, apart from the Australian Government, by eight state or territory governments, and 155 local governments.
- Metropolitan land-use and infrastructure planning is largely the responsibility of state and territory governments, however, responsibility for planning, funding and delivery of infrastructure, transport and human services in Australia's major cities is shared between all spheres of government.

Composition of the Federation of Australia

There are three spheres of government in Australia: the federal government, six state and two territory governments, and 565 local governments. The 17 major cities with populations of more than 100,000 as at the 2006 Census contain 155 local governments between them.

Local government boundaries differ between capital and regional cities. Table 8.1 lists the number of local government areas contained within Australia's major cities. Maps and tables of the names of these local government areas can be found in Appendix B.

The local governments were established by colonial governments in the 19th century to provide services such as road maintenance, drainage and sewage disposal. They were retained by states and territories after Federation in 1901.

As cities grew so did the number of local government areas that surrounded the city centres. As a result most of Australia's capital cities have acquired a patchwork of local government jurisdictions with many covering relatively small land areas. The exception is Brisbane, which in 1925 merged 20 local councils into one large City of Brisbane council.

In contrast to the capital cities, Australia's regional cities often contain local government areas that cover more than the urban footprint of the city alone. This allows the local governments of many regional cities to operate as a functional economic unit, and to plan and invest in infrastructure at a regional scale.

Table 8.1 Number of local government areas in Australia's largest cities, 2007–08

Major City	Number of Local Government Areas
Sydney	43
Melbourne	31
Brisbane	5
Perth	30
Adelaide	19
Gold Coast–Tweed	2
Newcastle	5
Wollongong	3
Sunshine Coast	1
Hobart	7
Geelong	1
Townsville	1
Cairns	1
Toowoomba	1
Darwin	3
Launceston	4

Source: ABS 2009

Collaboration across the spheres of government

Metropolitan land-use and infrastructure planning has largely been the responsibility of state and territory governments. However, responsibility for policy, planning, funding and delivery of infrastructure, transport and human services in Australia's major cities is shared between all spheres of government.

At the federal level, the Australian Government has responsibilities for setting immigration levels, taxation and distribution of funding to states for health; education, especially universities; and housing. It also has an interest in sea ports, airports and major land transportation networks in relation to their contribution to the productivity of the nation, as well as safety and border security issues associated with international freight and people movements.

State and territory governments are responsible for metropolitan strategic planning, urban roads and transport, and the provision of education and health facilities and utilities. States and territories fund infrastructure and services mainly through transfers from the Federal government but also from state taxes such as stamp duty.

Local governments (generally) have planning authority over land-use zoning and determination of development applications. Local governments are responsible for local roads, rubbish

removal, recycling and increasingly for providing services and facilities for local communities, including libraries, child-care, recreational and cultural facilities. Funds for local government to provide infrastructure and services are sourced from local land rates, and through levies and grants from the other two spheres of government.

The Council of Australia Governments (COAG) was established in 1992 to enable policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments to be developed and implemented. 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 (ALGA).

Through COAG the three spheres of government come together to make decisions about policy and financial relations that cover a range of issues. In many cases these intergovernmental agreements determine the planning and delivery of infrastructure and services in cities. For example, on 7 December 2009, COAG agreed to a set of reforms for national criteria for capital city strategic planning. The criteria aim to ensure there are long-term plans in place to manage population and economic growth, address climate change, improve housing affordability and tackle urban congestion. The states and territories have agreed to the metropolitan plans for their capital cities meeting the criteria by 2012. The Australian Government intends to link future infrastructure funding decisions to jurisdictions having met the criteria. This governance reform is intended to secure better outcomes from the investments of all governments.

Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a recent partnership initiative between the Australian, state, territory and local governments to support the growth and development of Australia's regions. RDA is delivered through a national network of 55 committees. Each committee comprises local leaders with a broad range of skills and experience, as well as demonstrated networks within their region. Committee members are individuals who understand the challenges, opportunities and priorities within their local community and include representatives from governments, regional development organisations, local businesses and community groups.

The RDA committees will:

- consult and engage with the community on economic, social and environmental issues, solutions and priorities;
- liaise with governments and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development;
- support informed regional planning; and
- contribute to business growth plans and investment strategies, environmental solutions and social inclusion strategies in their region.

A key task for the committees is to develop regional plans which will be available to the community for review and discussion. RDA committees will then work with their communities to implement these plans.

Metropolitan planning in states and territories

Metropolitan planning has been adopted in different ways and to different extents throughout Australia's Federal, state, territory and local governments. This has often developed in conjunction with a shift towards regional governance models to reflect a new paradigm of regional policy.

Although there are many models for metropolitan planning and governance, these can be summarised into statutory and cooperative approaches. A statutory approach to governance means that there is a regional government with powers to create regional laws or by-laws. Similarly, a statutory approach to metropolitan planning means that once a regional plan is agreed upon it becomes law. Statutory metropolitan planning can be undertaken by a regional government; or collaboratively by a number of governments and legislated by an overarching government.

A cooperative approach to regional governance means that smaller local authorities work together to achieve mutually beneficial goals and objectives. Any agreements made would be subject to follow through by each participating government. Similarly, the implementation of a cooperative regional plan would be subject to the statutory powers of the cooperating authorities.

New South Wales

Governance

The NSW Government is vested with the statutory, policy and administrative responsibility for strategic land-use planning, major development and infrastructure projects, and assessments and approvals. The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* is the basis for the role.

The Metropolitan Strategy, supporting Draft Subregional Strategies and Regional Strategies describe where future growth is expected to occur and where supporting infrastructure is needed over a 25-year period.

Agencies, including utility and transport, are directly involved in the rollout of a Metropolitan Development Program, which reports annually on the future of residential lands and the quantity of zoned and serviced land. Agency planning (through Total Asset Management [TAM] Plan process) and the State Infrastructure Strategy process ensure that infrastructure delivery aligns with these plans. In respect of Sydney's major growth areas, the North West and South West Growth Centres, a systematic precinct planning process, led by the Department of Planning, involves all relevant agencies.

Local governments across NSW have responsibility for the preparation of local environmental plans (LEP) covering whole or part of the local government area to manage growth. When preparing the LEP, they are required to implement the vision and land-use strategy of an applicable Regional or Subregional Strategy. This includes accommodating growth in employment and housing. Local government is also responsible for the majority of development application assessment and decision-making. However, the Minister for Planning reserves call-in powers for applications.

In parts of the state, regional organisations of councils have been formed as cooperative partnerships between groups of local government entities that agree to collaborate on matters of common interest. They are diverse in size, structure and mandate.

There are 14 RDA committees in New South Wales. The three major cities are included among these committees. There is one committee for Greater Sydney, the Hunter RDA committee encompasses Newcastle and the Illawarra RDA committee covers Wollongong.

Metropolitan planning

New South Wales has a State Plan released in 2006 and reviewed in 2009. The State Plan sets priorities and performance targets for the economy, society and urban and natural environments. The State Plan provides the overarching context for the NSW Government's Detailed Delivery Plans — which include regional and metropolitan strategic plans as well as the State Infrastructure Plan and plans addressing innovation, health, aging, families, safety and security.

Sydney's metropolitan strategy, *City of Cities – A Plan for Sydney's Future*, is the key overarching 25-year strategic land-use plan for NSW and was released in 2005. The strategy provides the policy framework to coordinate land-use planning decisions across state agencies and local government. The first comprehensive review of the strategy is due in 2010, and will take forward the 25-year timeframe to 2036.

The 2010 comprehensive review of the strategy is proposed to involve the widest group of stakeholders, including developers, investors, local communities, residents, environmental groups and local government. It will also go before Cabinet for whole-of-government endorsement.

The metropolitan strategy assists in the guidance of investment and ensures Government expenditure is focused in alignment with metropolitan transport and land-use planning. The strategy includes monitoring provisions, the results of which have been reported annually to the Metropolitan Chief Executive Officers Group (made up of 26 state agencies) and to Cabinet.

Regional strategic plans have been developed for growth areas in New South Wales. Between 2006 and 2009, eight regional strategies have been developed for the growth areas of the Lower Hunter, Illawarra, Central Coast, South Coast, Mid North Coast, Far North Coast and Canberra to Sydney Corridor. The Draft Murray Strategy was on public exhibition in late 2009. The regional strategies outline employment lands and dwellings numbers to accommodate growth over a 25-year period. All regional strategies commit to a five yearly comprehensive review, with the first due for Lower Hunter in 2011.

Victoria

Governance

Victoria has a longstanding model of regional management forums that provide for dialogue and coordination between levels of government within regional groupings. The Victorian Government has a range of regional strategic planning documents already in place and has established a Regional Planning Ministerial taskforce to work with regional stakeholders on the

development of medium to long-term framework plans for all regions in Victoria. Elements of these frameworks will be given statutory weight upon their approval.

There are nine RDA committees in Victoria, generally aligned with Victorian Government administrative boundaries. Metropolitan Melbourne has four committees: Northern Melbourne, Western Melbourne, Southern Melbourne, and Eastern Melbourne. Five RDAs are located in provincial Victoria. The city of Geelong is included in the Barwon South West region.

Victoria has an urban development program that reports annually on the supply and demand for residential and industrial land in the metropolitan region and the Greater Geelong region. This program is being progressively established in the major regional centres. For growth areas in the metropolitan region, the Government established the Growth Areas Authority to integrate infrastructure planning at a precinct level.

Contemporary precinct planning guidelines have been established as a basis for streamlining planning, assessment and land release activities. Victoria publishes *Victoria in future*—comprehensive population forecasts to inform planning and service delivery activities.

The State Government has an overall leadership role in establishing long term policy priorities and in delivering investment consistent with its policy objectives. The Government works in partnership with local government and agencies 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. At a municipal level, councils are responsible for municipal-level strategic and statutory planning, within the overall metropolitan context, and for delivery of a range of infrastructure and other services.

Metropolitan planning

Victoria has a comprehensive legislative, policy and regulatory environment that enable it to address key sectoral issues as well as policy issues that affect Melbourne, regional centres and the state generally.

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 also provides for regional or place specific strategies to be given statutory weight as well as establishing requirements for assessment of planning scheme amendments against policy objectives.

The Planning and Environment Act, the State Planning Policy Framework and other related provisions are currently under review. 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 on line and electronic development assessment.

Melbourne has had a metropolitan strategy since 1927. The strategy has been updated from time to time. The most recent overall review of the metropolitan strategy was Melbourne 2030 (M2030, released in 2002) and given statutory weight at the same time. It is a whole-of-government endorsed strategic planning framework for metropolitan Melbourne and its relationship with regional Victoria.

In 2008, following a comprehensive audit of M2030, the Victorian Government released Melbourne 2030: a planning update – Melbourne @5 million (M@5m). This was developed in conjunction with The Victorian Transport Plan (VTP). These are key policy documents that integrate 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. This update also has statutory weight within the Victorian planning system.

Queensland

Governance

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

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

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

Queensland has a program for the development and sequencing of major infrastructure designed to align with urban growth. The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2009–2026 is Cabinet-endorsed and is the largest coordinated infrastructure program in Australia. It covers an extensive range of economic and social infrastructure.

At the state level the roles and functions of metropolitan planning and infrastructure planning are integrated into the Department of Infrastructure and Planning. The Department oversees whole-of-government urban and regional planning. It is headed by the state's Coordinator General who also has statutory planning powers over major projects.

The state government is responsible for developing 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 Infrastructure and Planning and must align with the strategic policies set out in regional plans and state planning policies.

Master plans are developed primarily by local governments and manage cities by providing more detail about what types of development are desirable in particular neighbourhoods. Master plans are reviewed and approved by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and must align with the strategic policies and the Local Government Planning Scheme.

Local governments manage the vast majority of development assessment processes and in the majority of cases determine development applications.

In Queensland there are 12 newly incorporated RDA Committees which are based on local government boundaries. The cities of Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast each have an RDA Committee. The smaller cities in Queensland are incorporated in larger RDA regions.

Cairns is part of the Far North Queensland and Torres Strait region; Townsville is part of the Townsville and North West region and Toowoomba is part of the Darling Downs and South West region.

Metropolitan planning

Queensland's planning, development and building system is called Qplan. A significant milestone in the delivery of Qplan was the commencement of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* on 18 December 2009. The tools used in Qplan (State Planning Instruments) are described in *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* 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 related to development, apply across the state and inform the development assessment process. Regional plans are used to articulate the Queensland Government's broad intent for development in particular regions. Regional plans shape cities by setting growth boundaries, identify areas for new urban development and broadly convey how development should occur in the particular region.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan was established in 1998, is a statutory document endorsed by Cabinet and has been reviewed periodically, most recently in 2009. The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031 encompasses the greater Brisbane area and the other major urban centres of Ipswich, the Gold Coast, the 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 Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Brisbane City Plan 2000 is currently under review by Brisbane City Council, with an anticipated completion in 2012. This plan has strategic elements that provide a vision for how Brisbane should develop.

Western Australia

Governance

Western Australia is the largest state by size and is characterised by some of the smallest and largest local government areas in the country. The state is currently undergoing a process of local government reform with voluntary amalgamation being encouraged.

The State Government has recently established a lead agency with responsibility for major resource and infrastructure projects in the Department of State Development.

The Western Australian Planning Commission is a statutory authority headed by an independent chair with statewide responsibilities for urban, rural and regional land-use and infrastructure planning. It provides strategic advice to the Minister for Planning and the Government, and has a range of statutory approval roles. The Department of Planning is represented on the Commission and provides technical and administrative support to the Commission.

The Western Australian Government has recently increased its emphasis on regional planning with the establishment of new regional planning committees under the Western Australian Planning Commission to provide strategic advice and determine applications under the

delegation of the Commission, as relevant. The Department of Planning works with regional organisations of councils to progress strategic planning that crosses local government areas. These groups are often a forum for information dissemination and resource sharing.

RDA Committees in Western Australia will operate independently and in parallel with WA Regional Development Commissions working towards co-location and joint projects where possible. There are eight committees with regional boundaries aligned with State administrative boundaries. Perth is covered by a single RDA region.

The state has an urban development program which aims to monitor and manage land supply and prioritise and implement infrastructure coordination. The Urban Development Program underpins the Commission's Infrastructure Co-ordination Committee which is the peak body of infrastructure providers (government and government trading enterprise) in the state.

This work 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.

The Western Australian Planning Commission plays a role in guiding planning of cities, through the State Planning Strategy and the creation of state planning policies. It also makes decisions about the growth and management of cities, as it is responsible for determining applications for subdivision made across the state, as well as determining applications for development made within region planning scheme areas. Local governments are responsible for determining most other development applications.

Metropolitan planning

The *Planning and Development Act 2005* sets out the Western Australian planning framework which consists of the following key instruments:

- State Planning Strategy (SPS) (1997)—required to be prepared by the Commission to coordinate and promote land-use planning, transport planning and land development in a sustainable manner. This strategy is presently under review.
- State planning policies (various publication dates)—prepared by the Commission to guide local governments in exercising their planning and decision-making powers.
- Region planning schemes (various publication dates)—prepared by the Western Australian Planning Commission to guide development in a regional area.
- Local planning schemes (various publication dates)—prepared by each local government, to make suitable provision for the improvement, development and use of land in the area.

The Perth Metropolitan area has had a series of metropolitan plans since 1955. The most recent plan, which covers both the Metropolitan and Peel regions, is in a draft form and is called *Directions 2031*. The draft *Directions 2031* plan was released for public comment in June 2009. Following endorsement by the Planning Commission the plan will be forwarded to the Minister for Planning and submitted to Cabinet for whole-of-government endorsement.

Directions 2031 is a strategic document and provides a framework for considering amendments to the Metropolitan Region and Peel Planning Schemes, which contain the statutory foundations for development control.

Directions 2031 builds on some of the principles contained in earlier plans such as Network City (2004) and Metroplan (1990). When formally adopted, it will replace both these documents. The final document will contain a component that looks beyond 2031 and plans for a city of 3.5 million.

It is intended the final version of Directions 2031 and the two associated growth management strategies will fulfil the requirements of the Council of Australian Governments' criteria for capital city strategic planning.

South Australia (SA)

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 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 state 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.

There are seven incorporated RDA committees in South Australia with boundaries aligned with State administrative boundaries. Local government is a funding partner to these committees. Adelaide has a Commonwealth-funded unincorporated advisory board.

Metropolitan planning

South Australia has a state planning framework known as the Planning Strategy and it 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 and is a strategic level plan while still being a statutorily required plan. The Planning Strategy is constantly under review as required by the Act, with the 'Greater Adelaide' area having been recently updated. Reviews of the rest of the state are expected to be complete by the end of 2010.

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.

The plan is a strategic level plan while still being a statutorily required plan.

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

There are three regional organisations of councils in the state of Tasmania—the Cradle Coast Authority, the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority and the Northern Tasmania Development.

The Cradle Coast Authority and the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority are statutorily based while the Northern Tasmania Development is a registered company formed by guarantee and shares by the councils pursuant to section 250D of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Commonwealth).

The regional organisations are signatories to the government's regional planning initiative and provide direct assistance to the regional projects by:

- facilitating and promoting the coordination and cooperation of all the councils to achieve the project outputs; and
- assisting in achieving project outputs through funding, partnership and support arrangements.

The state is currently developing appropriate arrangements to ensure that the regional planning initiative in each region is ongoing.

The three spheres of governments have agreed that there will be one RDA Committee in Tasmania that will cover all local government boundaries and incorporates the capital city, Hobart, and the smaller city of Launceston.

There is no urban development program for greater Hobart or other cities at this time in Tasmania. There is, however, a commitment in the recently released Urban Passenger Transport Framework report by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources to form a Strategic Integrated Land and Transport Committee in conjunction with the Tasmanian Planning Commission and the three regional authorities.

The need for greater coordination between land-use and infrastructure provisions will be identified through the development of the metropolitan plan for greater Hobart.

Under Tasmanian legislation, councils are responsible for planning of their local area. The state's main avenue of influence over the management of greater Hobart and other cities is through infrastructure provision (hard and soft) and through approval of planning schemes and planning scheme amendments.

Metropolitan planning

Currently there is no overarching strategic planning framework for the state although the state has recently released a 10-year infrastructure plan which coordinates the state's effort across the major economic sectors of transport, water, energy and digital. Importantly, the strategy recognises the essential role land-use planning plays in the location and provision of infrastructure.

The state also has the statutory mechanisms/processes available to it to implement the state's strategic directions at a state, regional and local level through state policies, regional land-use strategies and planning schemes.

The need for an overarching strategic planning framework has been identified in the Tasmanian Planning Commission's business plan and is seen as a high priority.

Currently there is no metropolitan plan for Hobart. A metropolitan plan is proposed to be produced as part of the state's Regional Initiative in the south. A draft for consultation is expected to be completed by the end of 2010. Once adopted, the plan will have statutory effect under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*.

Northern Territory

Governance

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

The Territory's Department of Infrastructure and Planning provides an integrated approach to the 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 a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2008*. The plans are developed from consultation between interested local councils in the region and the Department of Local Government and Housing. Regional management plans address key issues relating to local government, resource sharing and regional development.

Similar to Tasmania, there is one RDA Committee in the Northern Territory that will cover all local government boundaries. This includes the city of Darwin.

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

The Northern Territory uses project control groups, coordinated through the Department of Lands and Planning, to develop and implement plans for the provision of 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. The Planning Act establishes the Development Consent Authority that is responsible for determining development proposals in accordance with the provisions of the Northern Territory Planning Scheme. The development of the strategic planning framework, area plans and ultimately zoning maps are the role of the Northern Territory Government. Councils are joint partners with the Northern Territory Government in developing visions for the future and provide comments on changes to the Northern Territory Planning Scheme.

Metropolitan planning

The Northern Territory Planning Scheme is a statutory document which commenced in 2007 and applies to the whole of the territory. It contains planning principles which are the Northern Territory 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 future development of major urban and regional centres. The area plans are regularly reviewed following 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 which are also required to be taken into consideration when considering a proposed development.

There is currently no specific overarching metropolitan plan for Darwin. The development of area plans for specific precincts to support the planning framework for Darwin is an ongoing project and there are currently a number of areas under review.

Australian Capital Territory

Governance

The Australian Capital Territory 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 the sole jurisdiction of the ACT Government in the ACT. However, there is an informal collection of regional councils (NSW with the ACT) who seek to share information and resolve issues that are common to their interests.

A Chief Executives Strategic Coordination Committee has been established to support the development of an informal urban development program in conjunction with the land release program, infrastructure coordination and service delivery. This committee reports to a sub-committee of Cabinet.

The ACT Government is the state and local authority in respect to the 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 Commonwealth in planning and managing Canberra are currently under review by the Federal Minister for Home Affairs.

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

There is one RDA committee to cover the Australian Capital Territory, incorporating the capital city of Canberra.

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, due for completion in early 2011.

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 document. It is not currently under review.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2009, *Regional population growth, Australia 2007–2008*, cat. no. 3218.0, Canberra.