



## **A DRAFT NATIONAL URBAN POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA**

### ***Submission by AITPM***

#### **ABOUT AITPM**

AITPM (the Australian Institute of Traffic Planning & Management) is the leading national membership body representing all professionals and practitioners working in transport, across fields including transport planning, transport and traffic engineering, transport modelling, active travel, travel demand management and travel behaviour change.

AITPM members and stakeholders work together to ensure multimodal transport systems are designed, built and operated in ways that support healthy people, communities and economies in all parts of Australia. The importance of this work for urban outcomes of interest to the Australian Government is clear from a brief analysis of the draft National Urban Policy's *Appendix 1 – National Initiatives Underway*.

About one in five of all listed initiatives in the appendix are solely or principally concerned with specific transport outcomes. From AITPM's perspective, the remaining 80% of infrastructure and service initiatives, in the areas of housing, education, culture and health, generate travel demand that urban transport systems must serve.

#### **INTRODUCTION TO SUBMISSION**

AITPM appreciates the opportunity to influence the development and implementation of the National Urban Policy (NUP). Our purpose in making this submission on the draft NUP is to address how the Australian Government can be most effectively involved in urban policy, and achieve broader societal benefits, by refocusing its significant influence over transport systems and outcomes.

Historically, Australia's has been one of the world's most urbanised national populations. Looking ahead, well-managed and coordinated urbanisation will in itself be essential to the nation achieving sustainable social and economic development.

Good Australian cities will continue to be preferable not only to bad cities, but to Australia having fewer, or shrinking, cities. A growing population living, working, producing and leading generally social lives in proximity consumes collectively less resources (in the form of energy, time, money or land) than the same number of people in a lower-density setting.

At the same time, the success of Australia's rural communities and remote areas relies on their connections to efficiently functioning cities. These population concentrations offer the labour pool that can add value to primary production, access to domestic and international markets, and the medical and other specialised services required from time to time by all Australians.

## **DRAFT NATIONAL URBAN POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

AITPM supports these in principle as currently framed, being aligned with our own vision of a *'sustainable, efficient, accessible and safe transport system'* (refer to attached AITPM Policy and Principles Platform). As NUP goals and objectives will provide the foundation for future policy and investment decisions by the Australian Government it is important for them to be fully informed by and aligned with people's everyday lived experience in Australian cities.

On this basis, the NUP should explicitly recognise that the goal of *'Liveability'* in urban areas is optimised by people having access to non-car transport choices, especially walking and cycling, for their physical and mental health and affordability benefits. In turn, achieving an *'Our urban areas are safe'* objective calls for proportionately greater action by the Australian Government on behalf of active transport users compared to all road users. Actual and perceived threats to personal security constrain the participation of women and other user groups in walking and cycling. Until these threats are addressed, driving – even with its attendant and well-understood safety risks – will remain a default mode of choice.

For purposes including future *State of the Cities* reporting, meaningful NUP goals and objectives should be rigorously mapped to metrics that both capture 'how things are' and demonstrate 'how things could change' – or even, for quantified cross-jurisdictional commitments such as Net Zero by 2050, 'how things must change.' Such a measurement framework will be effective in highlighting outcome shortfalls, and related investment gaps, to be addressed across Australian urban areas.

AITPM agrees that the achievement of no one NUP objective should be at the cost of others. By extension, 'no-regrets' initiatives addressing multiple goals or objectives can and should be elevated as a focus for Australian Government leadership and investment. In the transport domain, urban open space 'Green Grid' initiatives are good examples of this. Projects that rehabilitate and open up public access to degraded urban waterways can deliver multiple active travel, community recreation, natural habitat renewal and Connecting with Country benefits.

## **SCOPE OF NATIONAL URBAN POLICY**

AITPM's view is that, guided by a tightened suite of goals, objectives and metrics, the Australian Government's National Urban Policy should have a relatively narrow implementation focus. The most important areas for intervention can be identified by asking:

- 'What actions are currently undertaken by jurisdictions ineffectively, inconsistently and/or in ways that work against goals and objectives?' and
- 'Of these actions, where can the Australian Government deliver the biggest "bang for buck", given its resources, Constitutional role and broad policy agenda?'

In the urban transport domain this means distinguishing between 'things the Australian Government should do more of' and 'things jurisdictions do that the Australian Government will continue to support.' The latter include a range of transport research, safety and regulatory matters best managed under existing collaborative arrangements, including the National Transport Commission and Austroads.

Most of these matters do not have a place-based dimension, being applicable across all Australian geographies. To help sharpen focus on the Australian Government's specifically urban role, AITPM suggests that the NUP describe its spatial coverage using Infrastructure Australia's place typology. In addition to Fast-growing Cities, designating Smaller Cities and Regional Centres (i.e., typically

home to more than 10,000 people) as ‘urban’ opens the way to considering how these places’ local movement systems, and their connectivity to capital cities, are critical to their ability to attract population growth and enhance regional development.

## AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT-LED URBAN TRANSPORT ACTIONS

AITPM calls out the following Australian Government action areas as focal points for the finalisation and implementation of the NUP.

The Australian Government is responsible for the overall **stewardship and advocacy of our place in a global ‘family of nations’**. In this role, only hinted at by the draft NUP under ‘International urban policy’, the government is positioned to identify international best-practice urbanisation policy settings and metrics. For transport, this should enable the setting of (for example) mode share targets for active and public transport use, in different types of urban places and for different journey purposes. Reporting (including *State of the Cities*) should track performance against benchmarks, showing how outcomes are contributing to – or lagging – the achievement of broader policy goals such as Net Zero.

The Australian Government should bring this outward and future-facing perspective to bear in its relationship with jurisdictions. This means realising the ability to go beyond collaboration, to purposefully **influence, incentivise, require and (where appropriate) even enforce certain urban outcomes through funding agreements**.

As the nation’s single largest provider of (in the words of the draft NUP) *‘direct and indirect investment’* in urban infrastructure and services, the Australian Government can and should:

- Make funding conditional on the achievement of urban goals and objectives;
- Stage and/or spread the allocation of funding temporally (e.g., invest in corridor preservation ahead of capacity expansion), spatially (e.g., invest within urban activity centres ahead of the links between them) and across multiple transport modes for a single corridor; and
- Document funding commitments in instruments ranging from Land Transport Federation Funding Agreements to future City Deals.

The below table captures stylised and generic examples of ways in which the Australian Government can leverage its transport funding role in favour of preferred urban outcomes.

Urban outcome	Examples of ‘old’ transport funding approach in practice	Examples of ‘new’ transport funding approach in practice
City development aligns with strategic plan	Funding for a single modal solution is justified as an essential ‘one-off’ reaction or response to (eg) a programmed major event, the completion of another asset, reaching a forecast congestion or crowding threshold and/or a resource opportunity (‘tunnel boring machines are already in the ground’)	Proposed investments are brought forward for funding by multi-stakeholder partnerships, addressing end-to-end journey needs that involve the use of multiple modes, operate across a broad network of existing and new assets and services, and traverse jurisdictional boundaries  Investments are funded over multiple forward years, to align with market capacity and changing travel demand

Urban outcome	Examples of 'old' transport funding approach in practice	Examples of 'new' transport funding approach in practice
Transport networks are sustainable and resilient	<p>New roads are funded on a promise of reduced GHG emissions due to 'smoother traffic'</p> <p>Upgraded roads are funded (but without associated bus services) in outer urban areas so that new residents can drive ever-longer distances to existing employment and service opportunities</p>	<p>Land use, pricing and/or other demand management measures are included as riders in funding agreements, to limit induced travel demand</p> <p>The full-lifecycle evaluation of better bus services (with supporting road infrastructure) in financial and economic analyses demonstrates the trade-off of shorter-term opex funding for longer-term economic benefits (from reduced car dependence)</p> <p>Linear corridor investments (including High-Speed Rail) are complemented and preceded by funding for sustainable transport-enabling assets for urban centres, including EV charging facilities and multimodal first / last-mile interchanges</p>
Mode choice shifts from driving to active and public transport use	Funding is provided for an 'all or nothing', mode-specific megaproject; deliverables outside this end up needing to be accommodated through 'scope creep' during project development and delivery and are deprioritised	Walking and cycling networks, and non-construction pricing, regulatory and/or bus service-improving actions, are implemented as the first stage in multi-year funding programs; later funding stages adjust these demand management interventions and (for example) reorient bus services to connect to a new trunk corridor

Finally, the Australian Government has an important **actual or potential lead role in non-transport-specific policy domains that influence urban transport choices**. In these areas, it is critical that outcomes sought by the Commonwealth in allocating funding to urban transport are supported, not undermined:

- Import regulations and duties should be applied with a view to removing constraints on the purchasing and use of e-bikes, e-scooters and/or electric vehicles as a sustainable and affordable alternative to driving a fossil fuel-powered vehicle;
- The taxation system should neither disincentivise sustainable transport choices nor incentivise motor vehicle use (e.g., by under-pricing the benefits of car ownership or use, including car parking access); and
- The healthcare system offers a setting within which professionals can support city residents – where they have access to appropriate infrastructure – in shifting the short local trips typical of urban life from car to active transport, and the Australian Government should take full advantage of this.

**AITPM**  
**July 2024**

*ATTACHMENT: AITPM Policy and Principles Platform*



# AITPM POLICY AND PRINCIPLES PLATFORM

## WHY ARE TRANSPORT SYSTEMS IMPORTANT?

The impact of a successful transport system shows up as healthy people, communities and economies. Transport links and activates places, enabling people and businesses to access:

- Goods and services
- Jobs
- Education and training
- Health services
- Entertainment, sport and recreation
- Friend and family networks

AITPM is committed to educating governments and the community on the importance of successful transport systems – and, in turn, a properly resourced Transport Community – in ensuring healthy and prosperous outcomes for Australians.



# AITPM POLICY AND PRINCIPLES PLATFORM



## OUR PURPOSE

**AITPM's purpose is to raise the profile of the Transport Community. The community's practitioners and stakeholders are critical participants in delivering a sustainable, efficient, accessible and safe transport system.**

Every day people across Australia's Transport Community identify, investigate, plan, develop and implement solutions to achieve this. In doing its work, the aims of the Transport Community include:

- Supporting a switch to sustainable transport choices, to help reduce Australia's emissions and lessen transport's impact on the environment
- Growing national and community prosperity by enabling the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services
- Delivering inclusive transport services that provide access to opportunities for all users
- Building the resilience of communities and businesses by ensuring transport networks remain safe and connected under changing external conditions, including natural disasters
- Integrating the movement of people and vehicles within flourishing places in different geographic settings, from cities and towns to rural and regional areas.

# AITPM POLICY AND PRINCIPLES PLATFORM

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS ARE CREATED THROUGH

1. Integrated transport and land use planning at all levels, from future-focused strategic planning to the implementation of site-specific developments
  2. The application of sound, long-term, non-partisan and evidence-based public policy, with cross-sectoral support
  3. The systematic collection, monitoring and evaluation of transport data to support decision-making
  4. The consistent application of a range of appropriate contemporary modelling tools by suitably resourced professionals
  5. A culture of research and innovation that is collaborative across sectors and disciplines
  6. Genuine, inclusive engagement, collaboration and co-design activities encompassing all communities and stakeholders
  7. A holistic 'Safe Systems' approach covering all transport infrastructure and operations, and the interactions between people, vehicles and the transport environment
  8. Sustainable and transparent funding and pricing models that support desired strategic transport outcomes
  9. A diverse and welcoming community of transport professionals that has the capacity to handle the demands placed on it
  10. Capable transport practitioners with the qualifications, skills and experience to plan, design, engineer, deliver, operate and manage Australia's transport systems
  11. The commitment of governments and industry to educate and support the next generation of transport professionals.
- As the national association for transport professionals, AITPM leads the Transport Community in connecting, collaborating and delivering, developing industry skills, capability and knowledge as we create successful transport systems together.

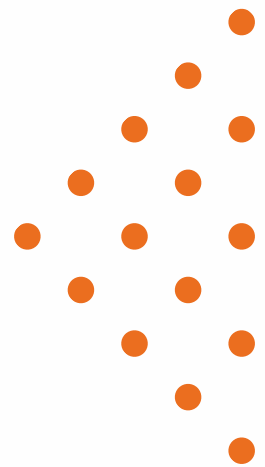
**We are the collective voice of the Transport Community, and we advocate for delivering sustainable, efficient, accessible and safe transport systems**

# AITPM POLICY AND PRINCIPLES PLATFORM

## WHO IS PART OF THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY?

The Australian Transport Community is made up of professionals from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds, including:

- Transport planners
- Traffic and transport engineers
- Land use, transport and traffic modellers
- Road safety practitioners
- Transport economists
- Road and public transport infrastructure designers
- Active transport specialists
- Travel behaviour change specialists
- Transport researchers, educators and engagement professionals
- Transport policy specialists.



To design, deliver and manage transport systems, this community of transport professionals connects to a broader network of professions and suppliers covering these areas of focus

- Urban and regional planning
- Transport and traffic data collection and analysis
- Modelling programs and resources
- Traffic management and control
- Intelligent transport systems
- Infrastructure supply, engineering and construction
- Transport service operations – from rail through to micromobility.