



# COMMITTEE FOR BRISBANE

Jo Hutchinson  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Cities and Suburbs Unit  
Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and The Arts  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

*By email: [urbanpolicyinput@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:urbanpolicyinput@infrastructure.gov.au)*

11 July 2024

Dear Ms Hutchinson,

## **NATIONAL URBAN POLICY CONSULTATION DRAFT**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Federal Government's National Urban Policy Consultation Draft (NUP). As a member-driven organisation established to champion the liveability of Greater Brisbane, we commend the Federal Government for its interest in setting the framework for an aligned, positive future for our nation's cities.

Being involved in the development and now implementation of the SEQ City Deal through the Industry Reference Group, the Committee for Brisbane understands the important role the Federal Government can play in working across the three tiers of government and the private sector, to deliver more productive, liveable cities. It is pleasing to see the Federal Government's keen focus on the importance of cities, including a vision that spans beyond typical election cycles.

We would also like to thank the Cities and Suburbs Unit for their engagement with the Committee for Brisbane, both through the meeting in Canberra and the workshop with our members in Brisbane. Being able to talk through the NUP with the Unit has been crucial in understanding the intent of the policy and its anticipated implementation.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Committee for Brisbane is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that is committed to helping shape greater Brisbane as the world's most liveable place. Our membership is drawn from the diverse areas of corporate and business sectors, the creative industries, the higher education sector, and community. Our four strategic pillars of creativity, connectivity, enterprise and equity, are aligned with our vision of ensuring greater Brisbane is renowned as a liveable, productive, sustainable city.



## **FEEDBACK ON DRAFT POLICY**

### **Vision and purpose**

We would again like to reinforce our support for the Federal Government's renewed interest and involvement in cities policy. The Commonwealth can and should play an important role in setting a vision and prioritising activity that shapes the future of Australian cities.

While there is clear intent for the final document to include a vision shared by the Commonwealth and the states and territories- which reinforces the collaboration vital to successful cities- in its current form, the NUP takes a passive role in setting the national cities agenda. It fails to articulate which issues the Federal Government sees as priority areas of focus, which would naturally then lead to subsequent policy, funding and investment decisions being taken.

It would be preferable that the shared vision considers a 20-30 year horizon that is linked to city-shaping directives to address the multi-faceted, interrelated challenges our cities are facing (e.g. health, energy, connectivity, climate change).

Although the goals and objectives of the NUP are inarguably vital for sustainable cities, much of the policy focuses on the important work already being undertaken by state and local governments. We encourage the final framework to pay greater consideration to articulating what the Federal Government's unique role in cities policy is, setting nationally consistent guidance (where needed), and how the Government will enable and deliver on its identified areas of priority.

### **Interaction with other policy areas**

Complicating the NUP are the many interrelated Commonwealth policy areas that affect how cities will grow (or contract) and perform. We would urge the Unit to consider how best to demonstrate to stakeholders how broader Federal Government policy is being considered in the context of cities. A simple illustration, for example, that captures matters such as GST, settlement policy, immigration and housing, would assist in understanding the impact of wider policy fields on the performance of our urban areas.

### **Accountability measures**

As reinforced in our meeting and workshop, any policy needs to be able to withstand scrutiny, and as such, needs both alignment and accountability. Per above, clarity around how the NUP fits within the many interrelated Commonwealth policy areas is vital.

For the NUP to be truly transformative, it is critical it can show it is having an impact beyond 'business as usual' through changing behaviours and delivering on intent. This can only be achieved through the inclusion of some form of evaluative mechanism to show progress. Whether through Key Performance Indicators (linked to incentives and grant funding) or otherwise, the NUP needs a resource and capability to support the measurement of performance.

These measures not only need to include the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and The Arts, and state and local governments, they also need to demonstrate how other Government agencies are required to implement the NUP's objectives.

### **Importance of the private sector**

The NUP addresses a large cross-section of the themes relevant to Australian cities and includes sound principles to guide decision-making. It consistently reinforces the importance of collaboration and references the need for local and state government involvement in policy setting. What is absent, however, is the



# COMMITTEE FOR BRISBANE

important role the private sector plays in delivering on the Federal Government's vision for urban places- particularly with regard to major infrastructure such as ports and airports.

There is no doubting the importance of government in setting the policy agenda. To provide the private sector greater confidence and certainty in how it can play a stronger role in our cities, there must be a clear vision, articulated priorities and a mindset of enablement. An acknowledgement of the current barriers to this enablement may also be warranted.

It is hoped the final document will reflect the important role those outside the sphere of government play and will call on the private sector to step up in partnership with governments.

## **Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program (UPPP)**

The introduction of the UPPP is a great initiative and reflects that many important city-shaping projects can be stymied by relatively small investments needed in local infrastructure. The focus on 'precincts' and the importance of place is also commended.

While it is understood the program guidelines are still under development, once finalised, the Committee for Brisbane would like to see greater promotion of this funding opportunity to stakeholders beyond local governments. There are many private sector stakeholders and community representatives who would no doubt be keen to leverage the 'partnership approach' foreshadowed in the forecast funding opportunities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Again, the Committee for Brisbane commends the Federal Government for its renewed focus on urban places and the importance of cities, and congratulates the Cities and Suburbs Unit for its work to date on the NUP.

We would like to reinforce our offer of support in disseminating information to stakeholders, convening forums and providing an avenue for feedback on any further policy development on this front.

Should you have any questions on this submission or the work of Committee for Brisbane, please contact me on 0448 432 936 or [jen@committeeforbrisbane.org.au](mailto:jen@committeeforbrisbane.org.au).

Yours sincerely



**Jen Williams**  
CEO  
Committee for Brisbane