

11 July 2024

A joint submission to the *Draft National Urban Policy* from the **Australian Academy of Science**, the **Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia** and **Future Earth Australia**

This submission reflects the views of the Australian Academy of Science (AAS), the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) and Future Earth Australia (FEA).

Our organisations endorse the development of the draft National Urban Policy (the draft Policy) as a step towards achieving the sustainable development of Australia's cities and regions.

If well-designed, it holds the potential to deliver the integrated national framework needed to transform Australia's cities and regions for current and future generations.

We make several recommendations to strengthen the draft Policy:

1. Develop a systematic national research, innovation and knowledge framework and program that can build capability to inform and evaluate current and future urban policy actions and interventions, informed by key actions with the *Sustainable Cities and Regions Strategy 2024*
2. Commit to translating the objectives to a small number of missions to support focused research-policy-practice collaborations, stakeholder/community collaboration and engagement, and delivery against targets over time
3. Develop indicators that support monitoring of progress towards the objectives or missions and align to existing policies and frameworks such as Measuring What Matters and the Sustainable Development Goals
4. Support the Policy's proposed systems approach by significantly improving the knowledge and communications of how interdependencies across urban systems play out as they happen. This should occur across goals, policies and sectors and at various spatial scales from national to local
5. Clarify all governance and advisory roles and expand on State and Territory roles in metropolitan and regional level strategy, planning and monitoring
6. Identify how and which of the Urban Principles will be implemented through each mission
7. Elevate the importance of urban policy, practice, and research as a key enabler and cross-cutting theme of the Australian Government's draft national science and research priorities. Urban policy and research directly support the priorities in all areas of community well-being, environmental sustainability, and economic productivity.

We also highlight two recent publications by leading urban research, practice and policy experts. These publications consider complementary aspects of the issues and new ideas to be explored in a National Urban Policy:

- [*Australian Urban Policy: Prospects and Pathways*](#) (2024). Supported by ASSA, this edited collection assembles the insights of leading researchers on specific urban policy topics such as population, infrastructure, wellbeing, sustainability, productivity, and transitions, as well as overall urban policy. The book is available for free download on Australian National University (ANU) Press.
- [*Sustainable cities and regions: 10 year strategy to enable urban systems transformation*](#) (2024). Produced by FEA and supported by AAS, the strategy was developed through extensive consultation, including 400 participants, six national workshops, a dedicated First Nations consultation and multiple drafting rounds. The resulting Strategy maps out eight recommendations and concrete actions to support critical urban capability development and the cohesive approach needed for sustainable settlements.

Together, these publications provide evidence-based insights and practical recommendations to enable our urban areas to be liveable, equitable, productive, sustainable and resilient. We understand the authors of the publications are also making a submission that provides further background and rationale.

We would welcome the opportunity to connect representatives from the Cities and Suburbs Unit with Fellows and experts from the Academies and FEA to provide detailed comments on the specific policy directions.

To further arrange a meeting or to discuss any aspect of this submission, please contact Kate Nairn at kate.nairn@science.org.au