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Via email: urbanpolicyinput@infrastructure.gov.au

National Urban Policy - Submission

The Albanese Government is commended for bringing forward a Draft National Urban Policy.

Policy direction and debate in this area has been sadly lacking for some time but vitally important given that the majority of Australia's population resides in urban areas and this trend likely to accelerate into the future (in line with long term world trends). It is prudent to think more strategically about these areas, the form they take, how they evolve, the need for and role of infrastructure and how we make better urban places.

I have the following comments and suggestions in respect of the content of the draft policy.

Urban Roles and responsibilities (p 13-15)

Role of local government – the draft document does not have due regard to the role of local government – it vastly understates the role and capabilities of local government. The fact that there are many formal regional collaborations of council's across Australia that combined achieve outcomes of regional significance is also worthy of note.

While acknowledging the varying capabilities of local government in different jurisdictions, larger local governments, such as those in Queensland, undertake strategic planning and deliver infrastructure on a scale equal to projects delivered by State and federal Government.

In addition local governments are often called upon to deliver services and infrastructure in a constrained funding environment. This constraint leads to poorer urban outcomes and resultant social and environmental issues.

There is a need to better recognise the critical role of local governments in delivering better urban environments

Communities and people (p15)

This section identifies the importance of community participation in the planning and development of our cities. This also highlights that effective community engagement and participation leads to greater support for urban planning initiatives put forward by government and private entities.

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Given the importance of public consultation and involving the community in decisions about the future of urban areas there is a need for **better change management**.

Planning is a process of identifying a current state and a desired future state and implementing the change required to achieve the achieve that future state.

More recently there has been a great deal of speculation about planning schemes cementing inertia in urban areas and commentary about communities not wanting to see change in their area. This is often as a result of communities not being ready for change.

Typically consultation occurs at a stage in the planning process when planning concepts have been developed to a stage without bringing the community along and as a result when consultation occurs it is often in an environment of conflict.

This points to the need for consultation processes to be more encompassing and holistic manner that amounts to an effective change management process. The Hornery Institute's Step Change Cities program is an excellent example of more holistic change management processes and how this is necessary to bring people along on the change journey.
<https://www.wearethi.org/sccp-cri>

As an example there is often community unrest about new forms of housing being proposed in their area, however this housing might provide opportunities for their children, aging parents or indeed downsizing opportunities for the very people in the future. Given smaller households and an aging population there is a need and demand for new housing types and yet few in the community understand this.

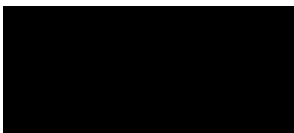
A key part of the National Urban Policy should be better change management processes so that communities are bought on a journey, better understand the need for change. A grass-roots approach concerning the need for urban change.

The draft policy does not address the need for better change management and yet community sentiment is one of the key factors affecting the ability to evolve our urban environments.

A new objective in Part 4 of the policy should be devoted to "**The community understands the need for change**". The Hornery Institute's work would provide an excellent basis for this objective.

I would be pleased to discuss aspects of this submission further.

Yours faithfully



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