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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development, Communications, and the Arts
Australian Government
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: urbanpolicyinput@infrastructure.gov.au

RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL URBAN POLICY CONSULTATION DRAFT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft National Urban Policy. This submission has been prepared by Singleton Council staff involved in strategic planning, development planning and environmental services to provide comment and feedback to how local government may be engaged to support improving Australian cities and suburbs.

Singleton Council is a regional council in New South Wales that is located on the fringe of the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City boundary under the NSW Six Cities Vision¹. Singleton was home to 24,719 people in 2021² and offers connections to the city of Newcastle and Newcastle Port through road and rail and provides a unique blend of rural living with big city benefits.

The Draft National Urban Policy is promising. The Policy has identified suitable approaches to land use planning and design principles to ensure urban areas are safe and sustainable, and able to promote productivity, health, and wellbeing. However, there is room for additional considerations for this National level policy that will support a holistic community approach across Australia.

1. There has been little consideration for how cities / urban areas will connect to the surrounding regions. Goals and objectives need to be considered from an 'outside-in' approach, that is consider how the surrounding regional areas and peri—urban spaces connect with the urban environment. Committing to delivering safe, sustainable urban areas to support productivity, health and wellbeing can only be successful if there is awareness of how these urban spaces connect to adjoining regions that support the urban landscape.

The principals developed for the National Urban Policy under Appendix A of the draft policy should eventually be reflected in land use planning frameworks and strategies for regions adjoining urban areas / cities to provide cohesion between adjoining regions and cities. This will also create a peri-urban buffer that can still function for a growing population.

¹ [Six cities vision | NSW Government](#)

² [LGA information | Singleton Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)



2. Disaster and climate risk in land use planning should be given greater emphasis in collaboration with state, territory, and local governments to ensure urban areas are safe. Consideration of these growing risks in land use planning is not efficient for long-term management of climate change. Disaster and climate risks should be a mandatory inclusion of any land use planning. The need to plan for these risks can be integrated with the implementation of measures to mitigate impacts from climate change, including flooding, bushfire and heat hazards within planning and infrastructure frameworks.
3. To deliver sustainable urban areas, significant changes need to be made at the national level to improve construction standards to include the need to use sustainable materials. Additionally, changes at the state, territory and local levels need to be made to demand sustainable urban design is included for new development and infrastructure through planning policy amendments. This includes requiring planning and construction outcomes of development to deliver sustainable principles such as green roofs and green walls to improve energy performance and green space for urban spaces.

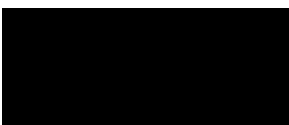
At the city infrastructure landscape, greater emphasis is needed to design and develop designated passive / healthy transport pathways to reduce the land use conflict between pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, and vehicles. Cycling infrastructure within urban cities needs to be designated as painted bike lanes, separated cycle tracks and 'green routes' to offer safe connections to get people within the urban landscape where they need to go.

4. Goals under the policy should also harness opportunities to collaborate with state, territory, and local governments to investigate the use of sustainable public transport, such as electrified 'metro' bus services to assist in the reduction of emissions.

Overall, the policy will support the delivery of sustainable urban environments. Comments above should be considered within the high-level principles developed and form part of conversations with state, territory and local governments based on expectations for their urban settings. From a local government perspective, the policy provides a strong direction for future town planning expectations, both urban and regional. The principles, goals and objectives of this policy are largely transferrable to regional planning. However, greater consideration of how safe and sustainable connections between urban and regional areas needs to be included to ensure cohesion in future planning to inform well-connected cities and regions.

Council confirms that the submission provided can be published and made public for the purposes of transparency. If you would like to discuss any part of our submission further, please contact our Principal Planner on (02) 6578 7306 or email council@singleton.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely,



Ashleigh McTackett
Principal Planner