

UN-Habitat's General Comments

Australian National Urban Policy Consultation Draft

The draft Australian National Urban Policy reads well. The length is good, not too text heavy, it is visually attractive and easy to read given the illustrations. Evidence that the draft is advanced include among others:

- The policy gives a very good overview of some of the key indicators / context of the state of Australian cities.
- Evidence of intensive whole of government consultation, and engagement with multiple stakeholders in the policy formulation process, including dialogues with public and private sectors, state and territory governments.
- The policy is keen on implementation with projects identified and funding committed in the 2023-2024 budgets.
- The policy formulation process aims to undertake a comparative analysis by borrowing experiences and approaches from countries including Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Singapore among others.
- The policy provides a clear link for integrating urban areas and territories / states. It seeks to support sustainable growth of cities and regions by augmenting the country's regional investment framework.
- The draft urban policy is keen on aligning and supporting implementation of SDG 11.

Equally the draft policy could be enhanced by considering the below recommendations:

1. *Australian Urban Policy 2011*: The policy mentions previous Australia's National Urban Policy that was released in 2011, but not implemented. It will be important to evaluate why implementation of the policy was a challenge. Such analysis / review will provide insights to ensure the current draft does not suffer similar challenges and achieves positive implementation outcomes
2. While the policy aims to achieve key SDGs including Goal 13: Climate Action and to achieve net zero targets, the policy may need to create links to other urban related global frameworks such as the Paris agreement including highlight on how the policy could enhance monitoring their implementation.
3. In the principles, the policy mentions the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The policy may need to clearly reference how its aligned with NUA in the introductory sections of the document / part one.

4. It may be imperative to consider highlighting how Australia will use the NUP to monitor progress on implementation of SDG target 11.a “*support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning*” and the indicator 11.a.1 “*number of countries that have national urban policies or regional development plans that: (a) respond to population dynamics, (b) ensure balanced territorial development, (c) increase local fiscal space*”. While some of these elements such as population growth and demographic changes are highlighted, such implementation and monitoring link may need to be more evident. Equally, how would federal government enable state governments in enhancing local revenues?
5. Urban legislative and regulatory frameworks are central in guiding sustainable urban development. While the urban policy framework highlights some of these under appendix B- National initiatives underway- the policy may need in the introduction to discuss some of the legislative and regulatory frameworks upon which the policy is anchored.
6. Objective 3 and objective 6: ‘Our urban areas are safe’, consider reflecting on policy recommendations on some of the key UN-Habitat tools and guides on mainstreaming [public space](#) and [climate change](#) into national urban policies. Equally, under objective 6 on promoting productivity, UN-Habitat’s [Mainstreaming migration and displacement into urban policy](#) tool could be considered in discussing the linkages of migration and displacement to urban development and productivity in Australia.
7. Monitoring and evaluation of urban policies help assess whether its design, formulation, and execution achieve the intended goals, giving value not only to the policy document but also the process, outcomes and impacts. It helps generate credible evidence to urban policy impacts. The recommendation is preparation of an *extra chapter on monitoring and evaluation* of the national urban policy with policy impacts monitoring mechanisms such as Australian National Urban Forums and that is embedded into a government policymaking and budget cycle processes.
Equally, developing a system of indicators to assess and track progress in regard to the mentioned goals, and objectives, and setting up accountability mechanisms that integrity in urban policy are necessary.
8. Developing several strategies to support urban policy implementation could be considered, including:

- a. Policy implementation strategy*
- b. Communication strategy*
- c. Financial strategy*
- d. Capacity building strategy*

9. Time frame: Consider making the policy and strategies suggested above time bound. Such timelines will also help assess the feasibility and/or ensure that the objectives and strategies are achievable and not overly ambitious.