A NEW ERA FOR NATIONAL CITY PLANNING

Australia’s cities are among the fastest-growing in the developed world, and are becoming ever more critical to our collective wealth and well-being. 70% of our population lives in cities and 80% of our economy takes place in them.

Our cities are also unique in their high level of liveability. Three Australian cities featured in the top 10 of this year’s EIU liveability report, including Melbourne in first place.

However, megatrends of urbanisation and globalisation are presenting new challenges to our cities. Many aspects of our society are being affected for the worse, including equity and access; social and economic engagement; cultural identity; homelessness; housing affordability; energy and resource use; economic growth and prosperity; biodiversity and ecological health.

The impacts of these megatrends, coupled with the increasingly grim outlook on global carbon pollution, make it imperative that we plan properly, at a national level, for the future of our cities. The consequence of not doing so is declining economic, social and environmental standards that will undermine our much-envied quality of life.

This is where a new report, produced jointly by Australia’s largest planning consultancy Urbis and the Planning Institute of Australia, comes in.

Titled *A New Era for National City Planning*, it captures the outcomes of a series of Australia-wide discussions – facilitated by Urbis and involving over 80 city leaders and planning influencers – which followed on from Prime Minister Turnbull’s announcement of the Cities portfolio in September last year.

The new portfolio, and the Prime Minister’s subsequent announcement of a Smart Cities Plan, were enthusiastically endorsed as steps in the right direction. PIA CEO Kirsty Kelly said, “Smart cities are the future of our economy, and smart investment, smart policy and smart technology are the foundations upon which they are built. We look forward to working with the Government to realise this exciting vision for Australia’s cities.”

Through their report, PIA and Urbis are now calling on the Federal Government to drive the work necessary to fulfil that vision and meet a number of increasingly urgent needs around city planning. These include the need for a national settlement strategy; for national urban development policies; for urban indicator systems; for unified and streamlined national planning approval processes; for better and more consistent...
metropolitan strategic planning; and for rational, fair and transparent structures for capturing value from infrastructure investment and development.

*A New Era for National City Planning* makes a clear and compelling case for why there is much to be gained in a national approach to city planning. According to Urbis Managing Partner John Wynne, “in fostering progressive and dynamic urbanisation by charting urban patterns and crafting national urban policies, we will go a long way to ensuring that our future remains prosperous, sustainable and resilient.”

Having recently released another report entitled *Through the lens: megatrends shaping our future*, this is a policy area PIA is passionate about and for which it has been pushing for more attention and action. “Population growth, climate change and other megatrends are putting ever-increasing pressure on Australian cities,” warns CEO Kirsty Kelly. “Unless planners and policy-makers play a more active role in how our cities grow and operate on a national scale, our liveability and competitiveness will be compromised and diminished.”

To download the *A New Era for National City Planning* report and related materials, visit [www.planning.org.au/policy](http://www.planning.org.au/policy)

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