

Australian Government 'Our Cities' Discussion Paper

Why does Adelaide need a National Urban Policy?

Council's vision for the City of Adelaide

Council's vision for the City of Adelaide is for it to be, *'A vibrant, populous and sustainable Capital City built upon Adelaide's heritage and lifestyle'*¹ (see box)

Six outcomes to achieve this vision are used to guide Council's strategy and policy development and help identify key projects and services. The outcomes are 1 - Populous Capital City, 2 - Unique Heritage, Park Lands and City Design, 3 - Accessible and Connected Capital City, 4 - Culturally Vibrant City, 5 - Economically Prosperous City, 6 - Environmentally Sustainable City.

A National Urban Policy will assist in achieving Council's vision by increasing policy alignment between the three spheres of government.

The National Urban Policy is therefore supported.

Vision for Adelaide City

The City's vibrancy will flow from creating diverse communities that actively participate in every aspect of City life. People who work and study in the City will live and play in the City. Residents and visitors alike will enjoy the beautiful open spaces and facilities of the Park Lands, an exciting built form which respects our heritage, shapes our future and is environmentally sustainable.

People of all ages and cultures will continue to come to the City to enjoy shopping, entertainment and socialising in cafes and other meeting places. Events and artistic activities will provide a wide range of opportunities to participate in the excitement of City life.

A strong economy will drive and support employment, education and social opportunities, new artworks and public place developments and support environmental innovation.

The City will be a magnet which attracts talent, develops skills and innovation and invests in the education of its people. Adelaide will lead the way in addressing climate change and the conservation of energy, water and natural resources. It will be a City of walkers and cyclists. A City where public transport is highly patronised and powered by the sun and other renewable sources of energy.

The Council will vigorously pursue a vibrant Capital City that is a destination for visitors, that underpins the State's prosperity and meets the aspirations of future generations of South Australians and those who choose to make Adelaide their home.

Source:

Creating our future, City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2008-2012

¹ *Creating our Future, City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012*

The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide

The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (which encompasses the City of Adelaide and thirteen other council areas) also identifies objectives that paint a vision for Greater Adelaide that complements Council's vision for the City. These objectives are: 1. maintaining and improving liveability; 2. increasing competitiveness; and 3. driving sustainability, environmental protection and climate change resilience.

Underpinning these objectives are 14 principles which provide a more detailed vision for Greater Adelaide over the next 30 years. These include a compact and carbon efficient city; a diversity of housing choice; transit orientation; world class design and vibrancy; social inclusion and fairness; healthy, safe and affordable communities; increased economic growth and competitiveness; climate change resilience; environmental enhancement; natural resources management; and community engagement.

Together these goals encompass what all Australian capital cities could be in the future (Q 1)² and should be integrated into the National Urban Policy.

What could be achieved through a National Urban Policy?

The outcomes desired for cities focus on productivity, sustainability and liveability.

The key to achieving these is to ensure that transport, housing and infrastructure are concentrated in and around activity centres and along transport corridors. For this reason, more compact development located closely around and within cities —rather than expansion of the urban fringe —is strongly supported. This will foster economic productivity and effective service provision; improve cities' sustainability; provide more environmental protection and climate change resilience; and help to locate many jobs and services near where people live (Qs 18 to 20).

This will require the recognition of capital cities as transit oriented developments which have the ability to efficiently and readily accommodate growth. Adelaide City Centre is identified as one of the 14 transit oriented developments within Greater Adelaide³, and is identified for significant revitalisation.

Productivity

The productivity challenges for cities include attracting and retaining a skilled workforce in a competitive global economy; the ageing population; infrastructure bottlenecks; and resource depletion (particularly fossil fuels).

Fostering innovation

Encouraging innovation is the single most important component of long-term economic growth. Devising new ways to get more output from the same inputs will significantly improve the international competitiveness of our cities. Governments have a crucial role to play in this and have many instruments at their disposal, such as the promotion of competitive markets; open trade and investment; the provision of funding for research and development; the establishment of strong standards; and the enforcement of intellectual property protection. Importantly, the development of innovative ideas requires the improvement of education at all levels and the uptake of innovation by the private sector (Qs 3 and 12).

² References to Survey Question numbers are inserted throughout this submission at the most relevant points in relation to that question.

³ 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2010) SA Government

Some examples of ways to foster innovation include:

- Sponsoring events that promote, support and foster innovation for new businesses and/or emerging sectors (e.g. Council-sponsored 'Innovation Week 2008')
- Supporting training to foster innovation through Commonwealth programs that increase small business skills and capacity (e.g. Enterprise Adelaide)
- Providing grant funding or incentives for emerging industries and/or innovative business solutions across industries or specific to certain industry sectors (e.g. 1998 City Centre Vital Fund)
- Supporting and funding business incubation for emerging businesses (e.g. Adelaide City Businesses Incubator)
- Supporting, through funding and infrastructure, the increase of innovation through connectivity (e.g. the 2005 Citylan project and the National Broadband Network).

Coordinating and leveraging investment

Coordinating and leveraging investment in key infrastructure (such as transport, water and energy provision) is needed to secure the future operation of cities. This will require all spheres of government to adopt a coordinated approach about what infrastructure is needed when; and where and what quality it should be (including capitalising on the existing infrastructure).

An agreed infrastructure policy should be based on a best practice urban design framework, such as Adelaide's Integrated Design Strategy, and be integrated in all metropolitan planning strategies (e.g. the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide). These strategies should then guide all spheres of government in their infrastructure policy and project decisions (Qs 4, 5 and 7).

An economic strategy for major cities is also suggested. This strategy, which would be developed for each major Australian city, would be determined through a broad market analysis; be aligned with the corporate sector and across the Australian, State and Local Governments; and comprise market specialities, clusters, skills, infrastructure, knowledge, export capacity, liveability, and affordability. Importantly, such an economic strategy would provide the opportunity to establish areas of collaboration between cities, while also allowing for competition when this would deliver more appropriate outcomes.

A scorecard approach to monitoring the success of an economic strategy is suggested (see: 'How could the success of the National Urban Policy be measured?').

Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability

To improve environmental sustainability, a multi-pronged strategy is needed that accommodates population growth in a compact urban form; an efficient and effective mass transport; and smart investment in infrastructure. This will reduce per capita ESD impacts (Q 15). As part of this, compact infill housing based on whole-of-life costs must be developed around transport corridors to promote the use of public transport and walking, and minimise the use of private cars.

Importantly, ecologically sensitive, heritage value, and highly productive agricultural lands need to be integrated into broader planning strategies. This will enable their value to be identified and documented; and objectives, strategies and actions constructed for their protection and enhancement (Q 13).

The best way to ensure the efficient use of resources (such as water, energy and food) in our cities is through pricing mechanisms that foster behaviour change. As part of this, promoting the financial importance of incorporating efficient resource use by businesses and homes (especially in view of rising utility costs) is important (Q 14).

Additionally, the provision of more sustainable distributed energy and water sources is required. For instance, Adelaide City Council is the major customer of the Glenelg to Adelaide Parklands Recycled Water Project (see box).

Adaption to climate change risk is best achieved by ensuring metropolitan planning strategies are based on an assessment of climate change risk. Such strategies would incorporate a climate change risk assessment for each Local Government area and major infrastructure asset, and would be included in urban planning and Building Code standards. This would enable proactive planning that responds to matters such as the urban heat island effect and effective stormwater management. Regional collaboration in this adaptation planning is necessary so that critical decisions about key issues such as sea level rise, flood management and bushfire risk are made in concert (Q 17).

Other steps that could be taken to encourage a concerted effort by communities, businesses and all levels of government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in cities include:

- introducing initiatives and incentives that are coordinated across all levels of government.
- setting targets and defining contributions for climate change incentives and ensuring shared ownership of these targets across all levels of government. For example, Adelaide City Council has committed to making its operations carbon neutral by 2020. This follows from Council successfully reaching its target of reducing carbon emissions from its operations by 60% by 2012, two years ahead of schedule. Council is now preparing an Energy Management Action Plan, which will place greater focus on the city communities' energy use and carbon emissions and will consider a joint emissions reduction target for the City of Adelaide with the State Government.
- forming partnerships that are focussed on achieving targets, including with community groups (this should include building effective communication channels to empower residents and businesses with the knowledge required to manage their energy use and greenhouse emissions)
- using the model of Sector Agreements under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*. Under this South Australian Government Act, the State enters into agreements with organisations (including local governments) to set actions to work collaboratively to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change. Adelaide City Council has entered into a sector agreement with the State Government to achieve outcomes for the City of Adelaide.

All these initiatives will be influenced in some way by the outcome of the debate over the introduction of a price on carbon (Q 16).

The Glenelg to Adelaide Parklands Recycled Water Project

This State and Federal Government funded project, for which the Council was the anchor-client, involves the delivery of treated effluent water from the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant, to the City's Park Lands. The project has the capacity to provide 5.5 billion litres of high quality recycled water annually (or a maximum of 35 megalitres per day, depending on the amount of water coming into the Treatment Plant). The project will provide up to 1.3 billion litres each year to irrigate the Adelaide Park Lands and will reduce dependence on other water sources including the River Murray. An additional eleven Park Lands Sporting Licence holders now irrigate their licensed areas through the project.

Transport

The most significant transport challenges are (1) to balance priorities on roads between public transport, bicycles and private vehicles; and between business, commuting, parking and pedestrian needs; and (2) to increase the use of sustainable transport options while supporting population and economic growth objectives. Specific issues associated with these challenges are congestion, car dependency, and the need to provide accessibility to freight and goods required to service the City.

As people need to be able to travel easily and safely to the locations most in demand, the regularity and user friendliness of public transport should be increased, bicycle networks and end-of-trip facilities should be improved and walking encouraged by ensuring the urban environment is safe, has connecting networks, and has easily accessible information to assist people in moving around. Other approaches could include introducing a congestion tax, increasing the price of car parking, making public transport free, creating dedicated bus lanes, and developing safe cycle ways (Q6, 22 to 24).

Adelaide City Council is actively working to improve accessibility and encourage cycling, walking and public transport in the City. Council's Bicycle Action Plan was endorsed in 2008 and has had many achievements (see box). Additionally the City Development Plan has a strong focus on developing pedestrian precincts. The development of the Integrated Design Strategy and Council's Integrated Movement Strategy will look to progress these matters further.

An integrated movement strategy for major cities, which covers public transport, walking, cycling, car and freight is also suggested. This strategy would cover city-to-city connections, such as a national freight and people movement network, and international gateways. Likewise, within cities, the strategy would cover connections between the city and its regions, and mass transit and strategies to ensure the development of a range of transport options.

Adelaide City Council's Bicycle Action Plan

Adelaide City Council adopted its Bicycle Action Plan in 2008.

During the first two years of the plan:

- 33 kilometres of new on-street bike lanes were rolled out.
- A new pedestrian/ cyclist footbridge was built over the Torrens. Within a month of opening it was the third most popular cyclist commuter route into the City.
- Approximately 140 bike rails were installed around the City. Eight of these were on-street, replacing car parking spaces in Rundle Street and Pirie Street.
- free undercover bike parking was placed in all Council's U-Parks.
- The Free City Bike fleet expanded from 80 to 180 and the number of places from which the bikes could be hired increased from four to nine. During 2009-10 there were over 16,000 hires, continuing a trend of 30% increase in hires every year.

Liveability

Investment in 'social' infrastructure, including health and education, needs to be aligned with population growth to lead to cohesive communities and to enable 'liveability'. An Integrated Design Strategy will help to achieve this, particularly where multiple uses of facilities are encouraged (Q 10).

Housing diversity should be encouraged through planning controls that allow for the construction of a variety of dwellings. Council therefore supports the COAG reform agenda and the continuation of Commonwealth funding for affordable housing. Standards should be reviewed so that housing meets the needs of occupants across their life stages (sometimes called adaptable housing). Revised national standards (such as via the Building Code of Australia) should be introduced (Q 21).

An affordable and sustainable living strategy for major cities should be considered. This strategy, which should be implemented for each city, would encompass the affordability of housing, services and amenities; plan the balance of infill and greenfield growth with a focus on density; consider access to Australian Government land; and provide incentives for its implementation.

Adelaide City Council's 'Already Home' campaign (www.alreadyhome.com.au) is an example strategy for promoting inner city in-fill development in lieu of expanding greenfield development. Already Home takes an innovative approach to encouraging increased residential growth and density in the city. It does this through creating a website community of Adelaide city locals who share inside knowledge of their home, in their own words. These stories are told through film, photography and written word. Already Home also provides extensive tools and information about living, investing and developing in the City of Adelaide.

Additionally, Adelaide City Council is actively encouraging the development of a range of housing projects aimed at increasing the number, variety and affordability of homes in the City. Council's target is to deliver 150 affordable dwellings by 2012 (see box).

Adelaide City Council's housing projects

Whitmore Square Eco-Affordable Housing Development:

Supported by National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) funding, 20 apartments in this development will be available for rent to low income earners. The NRAS funding means that Council must rent the 20 apartments at 80% of the market rate to eligible persons (based on household income levels). The funding equates to approximately \$1.7 million over 10 years – approximately \$8,500 per year for 10 years for each dwelling in the scheme.

Sturt Street:

Council is currently seeking a developer partner to deliver this project, which involves the redevelopment of a car park site. A total of 184 homes are expected to be built through the project (comprising 112 homes for sale at market rate, and 72 affordable rental and sale homes), a basement car park, and new public realm, including a community building and piazza.

Waymouth St:

Council recently sold vacant land at 102 Waymouth Street to Housing SA for the development of 138 apartments. The development is expected to comprise an equal mix of homes for sale at market rate (27), affordable rental (27), affordable sale (27) and social housing (27); plus a 30-person youth accommodation service relocated from elsewhere in the City. This project will contribute 54 affordable dwellings.

Challenges and opportunities for regional cities

Challenges for regional cities include a lack of critical mass to underpin higher levels of investment; lack of political will to achieve changes; and lack of existing significant infrastructure on which to build. Opportunities for regional cities include the ability to inform and engage with smaller communities on the process of change; the ability to ensure future development is informed by the latest thinking around recent key issues e.g. climate change; more options to introduce urban renewal in under-used areas; and the ability to protect areas of heritage and environmental importance (Q 2).

How could this be achieved through a National Urban Policy?

To be successful, a National Urban Policy requires policy cohesion across all three spheres of government about the goals for all Australian cities.

The Policy should demonstrate what good governance could achieve e.g.:

- integrating the strategies, policies and actions of the Australian, State and Local Governments
- achieving synergies from effective infrastructure investments
- increasing the efficiency of existing infrastructure and ensuring new infrastructure aligns with it
- engaging with the community and stakeholders so they can contribute and ‘buy in’ to the Policy.

A National Urban Policy should articulate the case for change and the values to be created. This should be done at the Australian, State and Local Government levels, and also at the community level. Accompanying the Policy should be a change management strategy to ensure that the leadership is resilient throughout the different stages of change (Qs 25 and 27).

The National Urban Policy should be informed by —and inform —State and Local Government policies to achieve real cohesion and change.

What tools could the National Urban Policy use to bring about change?

The tools to enact change could include a range of long term programs and ‘quick win’ projects; sophisticated and genuine community engagement methods; revised statutory planning criteria; market stimulation via incentives and subsidies; and improved knowledge and research. Ongoing dialogue and review of these areas is supported.

To this end, the Major Cities Program proposed by the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors is supported. This program should be led by the Australian Government in collaboration with State and Local Governments and contain a suite of activities underpinned by policies and projects to address inadequate infrastructure, complex land ownership, and loss of community. The Program could be established under an Intergovernmental Agreement covering objectives, criteria, time-frames and reporting.

The COAG 2009 criteria for evaluating metropolitan strategies and the expansion of COAG’s review of capital city planning systems to incorporate more major Australian cities are also supported (Q 26). In addition, incorporating mechanisms to coordinate State strategic plans across different Local Government areas within a National Urban Policy is supported (Q 28), as is the need to streamline and make more user friendly the increasingly complex administrative planning processes.

Pricing reform, which affects consumption and behaviour, is another tool that should be used to enact change. For example, resources under sustainable pressure, such as water, should be more expensive; programs

supporting green forms of energy should be expanded; and fuel tax should be used to pay for better roads and infrastructure that supports all forms of transport (Q 8).

Innovative technologies and behaviour change programs which address critical areas (such as peak demand for electricity, transport choices) need to be informed by a sound information base, and fostered by research and development. Such programs must also encourage people to change their transport modes to more sustainable forms, without resulting in negative impacts. For example, to reduce the number of cars used to travel into and around the city, it is vital that accessible, friendly, affordable public transport modes be made available.

Who should be involved in the National Urban Policy?

The National Urban Policy should involve the three spheres of government, the business community and the public.

The Business Community

Transparent dialogue between governments and the business community will enable the identification of the nature and level of incentives and subsidies needed to realise desired infrastructure outcomes, and to inform the targeting of the most-needed incentives. This should lead to more public-private partnerships, thereby harnessing more private investment in infrastructure.

Infrastructure plans must also ensure that developers are required to provide, or to make financial contributions to fund the provision of, necessary infrastructure. There also needs to be a system (such as bonds) to ensure developers repair any damage done to existing infrastructure during the building stage. (Q 9).

Public infrastructure bonds can also be used as a means to fund major infrastructure projects, and should be further considered.

The Public

Involving the public in effective engagement within a best practice urban design framework will contribute to a cohesive, workable Policy. Engagement tools should comprise mechanisms for the three levels of government and the business community to speak to residential communities to grow understanding about each other's perspectives and constraints.

This will enable the long term plans for growth in and around centres and along transport corridors to be implemented, leading to better places in which people want to work, live and recreate. This is what Adelaide's Integrated Design Strategy aims to achieve (Q 19 and 20).

How could the success of the National Urban Policy be measured?

The National Urban Policy should benchmark cities' performance across Australia. Measures should assess the outcomes of productivity, liveability, sustainability and engagement, as well as policies and investment decisions. An annual scorecard could be used to foster communication about results (Q 27).

For example, to measure public transport systems, targets should encompass regularity of service, safety, user numbers, customer satisfaction, and energy use. A relevant concept in the United States of America and Europe is that of the 'journey not taken' on any form of fuel-development transport (public or private) compared with those journeys undertaken on foot or bicycle. This is a good metric of liveability also as it indicates the ready proximity of services and employment to domestic residences.

In Freiberg, Germany, the metric is that 50% of all journeys are undertaken on foot or bicycle, with the balance being either public or private motorised transport. In Portland, United States of America, the metric is one third pedestrian or cycling; one third public transit and one third private cars.

Such targets should be considered through COAG and in relation to the future of cities. Their effect would be to increase the appeal, use and sustainability of public transport (Q 11).