



THE STATE OF NATIONAL URBAN POLICY IN AUSTRALIA

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of national urban policy | <i>Smart Cities Plan</i> |
| Date of national urban policy | 2016 |
| Explicit or partial | Explicit |
| Legal status (e.g. act of the legislature, executive order, administrative guidance, etc.) | Draft plan produced by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| Previous/secondary policies | <i>Our Cities, Our Future – A National Urban Policy for a Productive, Sustainable and Liveable Future, 2011</i> |
| Stage of development | Formulation – on hold during federal elections in May-June 2016 |
| How developed (e.g. through a participatory/stakeholder process, or act of parliament, etc.) | Participatory process: stakeholder comment is solicited, and a Smart Cities Summit took place in May 2016 to discuss the plan |
| Implementing body | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| Government system | Federal |
| Type of national urban agency | Not applicable |
| Implementation mechanism (e.g. committee, involvement of multiple agencies, national-local co-ordination) | City deals, investment |

Current national urban policy

In April 2016, Australia’s Prime Minister presented a new national urban policy, entitled the *Smart Cities Plan*. Formulated by the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, the plan is housed in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The *Smart Cities Plan* is intended to inform planning and investment of the country’s largest cities, as well as its smaller regional cities. It is made up of three pillars:

1. **Smart Investment**, which emphasises financing mechanisms such as value capture and an infrastructure financing unit and pledges 50 million Australian dollars (AUD) for infrastructure planning;
2. **Smart Policy**, which proposes a “City Deals” mechanism similar to that employed in the United Kingdom, regulatory reform (including decreasing government fragmentation at the metropolitan level) and collecting better city-level data; and
3. **Smart Technology**, which focuses on disruptive technologies, open and real-time data, and energy-efficiency innovations (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016).

One notable aspect of the *Smart Cities Plan* is that it calls for active involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders in its implementation, particularly in terms of financing for investment. To this end, the plan is subject to an eight-week comment-period (ending in June 2016), and the plan’s website actively encourages feedback from the public (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016).

The release of the *Smart Cities Plan* follows the transfer of the cities portfolio in February 2016 to the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. From September 2015 to February 2016 the cities portfolio had been the responsibility of the Minister for Cities and the Built Environment, within the Department of the Environment (Taylor, 2016).

Previous national urban policy and developments

Australia's previous national urban policy was formulated in 2011 by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport and entitled, *Our Cities, Our future – A National Urban Policy for a Productive, Sustainable and Liveable Future*. It stayed at the formulation stage, and was not implemented (Dodson et al., 2016). The *Urban Transportation Strategy* (2013) focused on the urban transport infrastructure needs of Australian cities (OECD, 2014).

Areas covered by current urban policy

| Sector | Sectoral representation in the <i>Smart Cities Plan 2016</i> |
|------------------------------|--|
| Economic development | Extensive |
| Spatial structure | Low |
| Human development | Low |
| Environmental sustainability | Extensive |
| Climate resilience | Low |

Specific issues covered by current national urban policy

The 2016 *Smart Cities Plan* includes the following characteristics:

| Criteria for national urban policies | Appears in the policy |
|--|-----------------------|
| Responds to population dynamics | X |
| Promotes a territorial approach (in particular urban-rural linkages) | |
| Addresses the urban systems (from large to medium and small cities) and the connectivity among cities | X |
| Prepares for infrastructure and services in cities (including public space) | X |
| Promotes urban land-use efficiency | X |
| Enhances environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change | X |
| Develops effective urban governance systems (horizontal co-ordination and vertical alignment) | X |
| Promotes effective municipal finance systems | X |
| Supports partnership and co-operation between urban actors | X |
| Safeguards inclusiveness and participation in the process and outcomes (inequity, segregation, safety, etc.) | |
| Ensures robust and comparable urban scale data | X |

Bibliography

- Commonwealth of Australia (2016), Smart Cities Plan, Commonwealth of Australia Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, <https://cities.dpmc.gov.au/smart-cities-plan> (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Dodson, J. et al. (2016), *The Global State of National Urban Policy 2016*, prepared for UN-Habitat, April 2016, draft.
- OECD (2015), “Regional Outlook Survey Results: Australia”, unpublished.
- OECD (2014), *OECD Regional Outlook: Regions and Cities: Where Policies and People Meet*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201415-en>.
- Taylor, L. (2016), “\$50m 'investment-banking style' unit to fund transport projects”, in *The Guardian*, 28 April 2016, Guardian News and Media Limited, London, United Kingdom, www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/apr/29/50bn-investment-banking-style-unit-to-fund-transport-projects (accessed 26 May 2016).