



Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water,
Population and Communities

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
DATE RECEIVED: 1-3-11
FILE No:

Reference: 06208-2010

Cr Genia McCaffery
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

21 FEB 2011

Dear Cr McCaffery

Genia

Thank you for the letter dated 11 October 2010 from your Association about a resolution passed by the National General Assembly of Local Government. I apologise for the delay in replying.

The Australian Government is committed to reinvigorating the involvement of the Commonwealth in the development of Australian cities. Our involvement is as intentionally multifaceted as the complex challenges faced by major cities.

These challenges include population growth, demographic change, climate change, and housing affordability — and these challenges demand improvements in urban planning and the provision of urban infrastructure. For this reason, the Government has developed a comprehensive and complementary suite of strategic policy responses.

The Government's Sustainable Population Strategy Issues Paper was released in December 2010. This paper identifies and explores issues around Australia's changing population. The paper is designed to draw out community views about the challenges and opportunities created by changes in our population.

The key to understanding policy for a sustainable Australia begins with a principle of regional difference. In some communities infrastructure and services have not kept pace with population growth, while in others employers are facing a chronic shortage of skilled labour.

If we are to adapt to change and build sustainable communities, we need to integrate environmental, social and economic factors to provide current and future generations with the opportunity to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Issues Paper and subsequent public consultations will inform the Government's development of Australia's first sustainable population strategy. The consultation period is open until 1 March 2011 and I would encourage you to consider making a submission.

As you would be aware, much of the population growth is projected to occur in our major cities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has projected the population of Australia's capital cities to increase by over 10 million people over the next four decades. Hence the need for better planning and infrastructure.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Objective and Criteria for Future Strategic Planning of Capital Cities seek to implement best practice principles of urban planning, such as integrated land use and transport planning, in our capital cities' strategic planning. COAG further agreed that all capital cities would be required to give expression to these principles in Capital City Plans. Indeed, from 1 January 2012, the Government will link infrastructure funding to meeting these criteria.

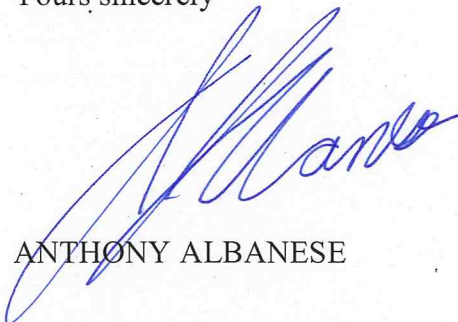
In its 2008 audit into the state of our national economic infrastructure, Infrastructure Australia identified the need to improve and transform our cities as a key strategic priority in guiding infrastructure investment decisions. Consequently, Infrastructure Australia rigorously assesses the potential contribution of investment proposals to supporting this key priority in the process of developing its annual Infrastructure Priority List.

The National Urban Policy Discussion Paper, *Our Cities*, frames the Government's overall policy approach to urban development and addressing the associated challenges discussed above as the basis for a National Urban Policy to be released in 2011.

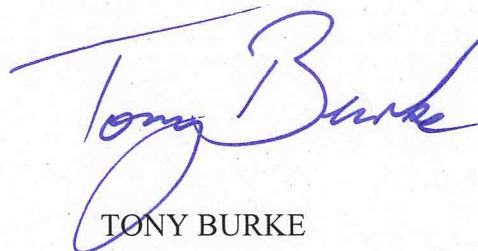
Together, these strategic policies are intended to complement each other in addressing the challenges facing our major cities and contribute to improving their productivity and sustainability.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely



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