

10 March 2021

Federal Labor's Future Cities Announcement

On 10 March 2021, Labor Leader Anthony Albanese addressed the Australian Financial Review's Business Summit in Sydney to discuss the future of Australian cities and Labor's plan for post-pandemic economic recovery.

In this, Albanese announced Labor's new Cities Policy to ensure that urban cities can effectively drive the economy. The Leader noted that because 80 per cent of Australia's GDP is produced in city centres, effective and functional urban design is required to avoid overcrowding, congestion, pollution and poverty.

Federal Labor's six measure Cities Policy

1. Transform City Deals into City Partnerships
2. Revitalise CBDs
3. Renew the independent role of Infrastructure Australia
4. Deliver a new National Urban Policy Framework
5. Publish an annual State of the Cities Report
6. Give local government a voice in National Cabinet

City Partnerships

If elected, Labor will enliven the City Deal program. Labor will honour any previously signed City Deals and will offer local and state governments an opportunity to improve existing agreements in addition to signing new City Partnerships that will work across all three levels of government and reflect local impacts of COVID-19.

CBD Revitalisation

Labor will focus on further developing major cities to reflect post-pandemic work pattern changes through improved transport, more affordable and accessible housing, and infrastructure. This policy acknowledges that whilst changed work patterns such as remote working may continue, more flexible interaction and engagement is required to combat depletion of social capital and innovation.

Infrastructure Australia

Labor will re-establish the City and Suburbs Unit within Infrastructure Australia to act as an independent body for the oversight of the City Deals and to increase public-private partnerships for urban transformation. The current Infrastructure and Project Financing Agency will be abolished to achieve better allocation of funding.

National Urban Policy Framework

Under the Cities and Suburbs Unit a new National Urban Policy Framework will be designed following consultation from experts, industry stakeholders and the community. This policy will aim to create more liveable and sustainable urban precincts in major cities.

State of the Cities Report

Under Labor the new Cities and Suburbs Unit will produce an annual report on the progress and performance of cities across Australia. The will highlight the initiatives of local and state planning authorities and inform future policy.

Local Government

Labor will facilitate local government participation in National Cabinet to bring urban policy to the national forefront.

Federal Labor's broader economic agenda

The announcement builds on Labor's commitments to:

- Boost female workforce participation through affordable childcare
- Rebuild Australian manufacturing
- Reform Industrial Relations policy
- Rewire the national energy grid
- Create jobs in the climate change sector

Further information:

For more information, please contact your Hawker Britton consultant [Simon Banks](#) on +61 419 638 587. Further Hawker Britton Occasional Papers on the activities of the Federal Opposition are available [here](#).