

Conclusion

Australia's cities are facing a future of growth and change. Over the next 30 years, the population is set to grow by an additional 10 million people, and our largest cities – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide – will be the setting for most of this growth.

Population growth provides many potential benefits. It is a chance to increase the diversity of our communities, strengthen the depth and capacity of our labour market, and grow the size of our economy. But it also presents governments, industry, and the community with a complex set of challenges.

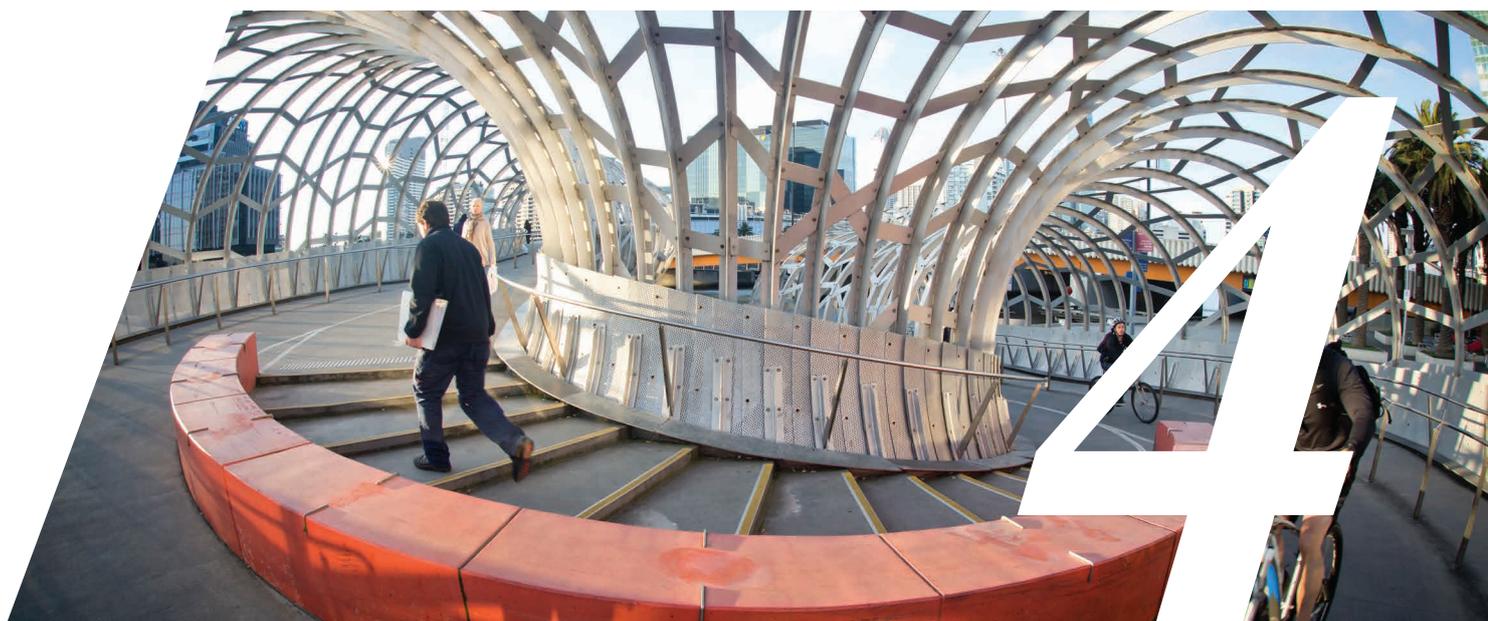
To support growth we will need to rapidly increase the delivery of higher-density housing, and upgrade the capacity of infrastructure networks. Crucially, as our cities grow, we need to protect and enhance their liveability and unique character. Our cities are inherently about the people who inhabit them and it is critical that they remain liveable places to reside and work.

Infrastructure sequencing – the timely and coordinated delivery of additional housing alongside new or upgraded infrastructure – will be critical to overcoming these challenges and ensuring Australia capitalises on the opportunities of growth.

Sequencing processes have historically delivered mixed outcomes. There are many examples where housing has been provided without the corresponding investment in infrastructure, or communities have witnessed the delivery of poor-quality development that bears little reference to local surroundings. As a result, communities are understandably apprehensive about what future growth will bring.

This paper provides government and industry with a reform checklist of the planning, governance, funding, and delivery frameworks required to deliver best-practice sequencing, including the following:

- **A new national process for managing population growth.** Australia requires a more strategic, collaborative, and transparent approach to planning for population growth. Through this process, the Australian Government would lead development of a common vision and evidence base, in partnership with state, territory, and local governments, industry, and the community, to better strategically plan for our future population.
- **Incentivising greater collaboration between levels of government.** There are limited incentives for different levels of government to work together to achieve common goals and better outcomes for communities. The Australian Government should use its existing incentive mechanisms to promote improved governance and better collaboration across the Federation.
- **A focus on place-based rather than sector-based outcomes.** Our cities need a greater focus on the holistic needs of communities and places, rather than on the services provided by individual sectors. Governments should develop place-based planning and governance frameworks to ensure that the full range of infrastructure communities require, across sectors, is considered when planning for growth.



- **Repositioning planning and engagement frameworks at the strategic rather than project level.** Strategic planning provides a long-term vision for a place and tells the story of how it will grow over time. By refocusing planning and community engagement at this strategic stage, governments will be able to include the community in setting a city's long term agenda, and drive outcomes that align with a broader vision, rather than only local considerations.
- **A root and branch review of funding for local infrastructure.** The current mechanisms used by state and local governments to fund infrastructure are a legacy of disparate and changing approaches over time. An independent review of infrastructure funding mechanisms and policies would identify the full range of mechanisms for infrastructure funding and consider potential alternative approaches, such value capture and infrastructure levies.
- **Enhance the tool and data sets used to understand the current and future capacity of infrastructure networks and make better use of existing assets.** Having a common understanding of current and future infrastructure capacity and levels of service across governments and industry is a crucial first step to determine the most efficient patterns of development in our growing cities.

It is possible to grow our cities and retain their liveability and unique character. To achieve this we need to modernise the way we plan and sequence infrastructure and housing in our cities. This paper provides governments with an overview of the key steps required to ensure that our cities remain liveable now and into the future.