



**Council of Mayors**  
South East Queensland

17 July 2017

Mr Bill Pender  
Inquiry Secretary  
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities  
PO Box 6020  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Pender

**Inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities:  
Response on behalf of the South East Queensland Council of Mayors**

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Council of Mayors (SEQ), to provide this submission to the *"Inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities."*

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) is Australia's largest regional Local Government advocacy organisation, representing the South East Queensland (SEQ) region which is home to one in seven Australians, generates 1.64 million jobs and is a powerhouse of Australia's economic future.

Five of Australia's nine largest Councils are located in SEQ and the membership of the Council of Mayors (SEQ) includes eleven Councils of SEQ: Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Redland, Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba Councils.

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) acknowledges the Committee's Terms of Reference for this inquiry. The matters outlined in Attachment 1 focus on the Committee's inquiry into Terms of Reference: *Item 1) Sustainability transitions in existing cities: identifying how the trajectories of existing cities can be directed towards a more sustainable urban form.*

With a projected population growth to 5.35 million by 2041, SEQ faces the challenge of planning for, and delivering, the infrastructure and services needed to improve productivity and reduce cost of living pressures, whilst maintaining and improving the liveability and sustainability of the region. Various ways the Australian government can contribute to these outcomes are outlined in Attachment 1.

Should you have any questions regarding our position or wish to discuss any aspect of our position on this important subject, please do not hesitate to contact me on (07) 3040 3460.

Yours sincerely

Scott Smith  
A/Executive Director

## **Attachment 1**

National policy can foster urban planning responses by:

### **The Australian Government incorporating Council of Mayor's infrastructure into its infrastructure prioritisation.**

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) regularly publishes advocacy documents outlining our policy and funding priorities requiring Australian Government support. Attached is our current Federal advocacy document outlining our current priorities for regional infrastructure funding. We encourage its use by the Australian Government in the determination of infrastructure priorities for the SEQ region.

### **The Australian Government providing catalytic infrastructure.**

Transforming our cities is not just about providing infrastructure *per se*. Infrastructure needs to serve a purpose for growing the region. It is our submission that greater funding of prioritised, growth-focused infrastructure in SEQ by the Australian Government is an absolute necessity. Infrastructure funding should not only be considered in relation to responding to forecast growth and development, but should also be considered as a catalyst for planned development (e.g. opening new development opportunities) and preferred urban development scenarios (e.g. a significant modal shift to public transport use).

### **The Australian Government committing to infrastructure networks and services.**

There are undoubtedly real infrastructure challenges to be faced in SEQ, e.g. the congested road system, bus and rail lines running at or near capacity. Many individual SEQ local governments have previously emphasised the need for timely provision of the necessary infrastructure networks and services. In SEQ, there is a strong perception that SEQ has accommodated significant additional housing in the past without such an increase in Australian Government infrastructure spending, and that services and facilities have been provided very late. This needs to be rectified.

### **The Australian Government committing to finding solutions to infrastructure funding barriers.**

As outlined above, funding models must respond to serious barriers: the insufficiency of funding available for infrastructure at the state and local level in Queensland, and the current impasse between the Queensland and Australian Governments regarding the funding of major infrastructure. An innovative funding solution to address these issues is discussed below.

### **The Australian Government engaging with local and state governments on alternative infrastructure funding models.**

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) is acutely aware of the challenges of funding infrastructure at the local, state and national levels. For this reason, in 2014, Council of Mayors (SEQ) in partnership with the Property Council of Australia (Qld) and the Queensland State Government, (via the then Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning), engaged KPMG to undertake a review of the UK City Deals model and its applicability and adaptability in a Queensland context. Through the previous work with KPMG and ongoing discussions with key stakeholders, it is apparent that progressing to an SEQ City Deals funding model will not be easy, however we firmly believe that working with both tiers of government and industry we can lead the country in the implementation of such a model. The outcome of this

project will be the first of its kind in Australia. It will enable Queensland to pilot the approach within a strong and coordinated region and should it be successful, may form a model for expansion into other growth areas nationally. The proposed model is outlined in *Gateway 1 Report: SEQ City Deal*. (Attached). The next phase of the project will aim to undertake broader stakeholder consultation and the financial and economic analysis and modelling required to test the model for its suitability and likelihood of success. The continued involvement of the Australian Government in this next stage as a partner would be most welcome, and instructive as to a future infrastructure funding and prioritisation approach of national value.

**The Australian Government integrating its experience with the experience of local and state governments.**

It is important that the Australian Government draw on the experience and knowledge of local government in the planning and delivery of infrastructure, especially in the SEQ context of large and well-resourced councils with significant “skin in the game” of infrastructure provision. It is highly desirable for the planning of Australian Government infrastructure to be integrated with local and state Government infrastructure delivery and local land use planning to achieve greater efficiencies in:

- Network planning from a high level to local works,
- Procurement and construction,
- Design integration,
- Local community outcomes, and
- Co-funding and/or coordination of projects.

**The Australian Government demonstrating strong leadership and collaborating with Council of Mayors.**

Strong leadership from decision makers and opinion makers is required to create conditions for effective infrastructure investment and management. The Council of Mayors has strong leadership. The Council of Mayors (SEQ) speaks with one united voice, aiming to:

- Advocate for a better resourced SEQ Region with world standard infrastructure to support economic development,
- Influence the other levels of government to ensure that their policy and legislative positions support SEQ Regional growth, and
- Collaborate in effective and innovative cooperative programs across the SEQ Region.

With this in mind, the Council of Mayors welcomes further partnerships with, and leadership from the Australian Government.

**The Australian Government working with local and state governments to focus density in the right locations as determined by local planning.**

A focus on density will reflect the emphasis on using land efficiently, and the benefits in terms of provision of services and public transport. Detailed local planning can be funded by the Australian Government, with local government taking the lead to determine housing form and distribution, while also providing guidance on housing diversity.

**The Australian Government working with local and state governments to focus on the achievement of affordable living.**

Over the last 10 years, various stakeholders have stressed that the cost of living is a major barrier to economic growth and has potentially serious social consequences. Although there are a variety of points on housing affordability, affordable housing, and affordable living, affordability appears to still be at the forefront of community conversations. A more targeted approach from the Australian Government to the provision of affordable living is needed.

**The Australian Government taking a lead role in employment generation, and mitigating misalignment between labour demand and labour supply.**

Giving new residents the opportunity to work locally would be a fundamental objective for the creation of sustainable cities. The Australian Government has a crucial role in supporting priorities and projects which generate local jobs, for example, its role in funding of key enabling infrastructure or locating Australian Government offices and workers in mixed use key activity centres.

**The Australian Government fostering new technology for economic development.**

Global connectedness and new technology are two of the mega trends influencing change in the SEQ region. Developing and implementing smart urban infrastructure solutions could play an important role in optimising infrastructure within infill areas and fostering sustainable development of our cities. The Australian Government should continue to its leadership in the smart Cities and Suburbs program.

**The Australian Government providing a lead in the delivery of “complete communities”.**

The Australian Government must work closely with State government agencies to ensure a coherent, integrated approach to provision of diverse communities, and not just of traditional land use issues but also in infrastructure, especially health, education and social services. Where structure planning of new land release areas is required, sufficient infrastructure should be provided by the Australian and Queensland Governments for these structure-planned areas.

**The Australian Government providing for health and wellbeing, and fair and safe communities.**

The Australian Government should implement strategies, at a spatial level, that potentially help create diverse communities, which are safe, fair and sustainable. For example, the concentration of development at regional activity centres, and improving access to the regional activity centres could bring benefits, in that one of the problems in the region is access to jobs and community facilities. Furthermore, by maximising the number of people within the regional activity centres or maximising the number of people able to reach the centres easily by public transport, these strategies could be argued to help the socially disadvantaged. Equally, the objectives outlined above to increase affordable living and to improve on the diversity of the housing stock could have positive impacts.