

# Planning Systems Principles

## PLANNING INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (PIA) POSITION STATEMENT

**Government – Federal, State and Territory - has come to better understand and use urban and regional planning practice to improve development outcomes, coordinate infrastructure, manage resources, protect the environment, improve quality of life, and enhance productivity.**

However, PIA believes there is significant room for improvement, particularly in following through on implementation.

The COAG review of city strategic planning systems broadened the understanding of planning beyond development control, through to its application as a strategic tool. This needs to be maintained, along with cultivating a greater appreciation by the nine governments that Australia's planning systems and any policies that have spatial and growth management implications, greatly influence the economic, social and environmental performance of the nation's major urban and regional centres.

PIA, on its own account and in collaboration with like-minded organisations, acknowledges there are significant risks of failing to properly appreciate, foster and action good planning outcomes

for Australia's cities and regions. It is essential to do this in the context of an all-inclusive planning system, not individual compartments that in isolation have the potential to result in sub-optimal outcomes.

### PLANNING SYSTEMS

The eight planning systems are highly sophisticated chains of decision-making that have much in common and generally operate in accordance with the framework shown in Figure 1 (attached).

The planning systems which exist in each jurisdiction involve broad-level visions informed by evidence-based strategies and policies. Investing in strategy and policy generates better planning outcomes. Despite its prominence in public debate, development control is simply the tool for implementation of these broader strategies and visions. Whilst an effective Development Control system is necessary, any changes to the outcomes of standards and delivery needs to be supported by the broader vision and policies.

### THE PRINCIPLES

PIA contends that the following three groups of principles should be better employed by

the states, territories and local government, and recognised by the Australian Government through the COAG process <sup>1</sup>. They are fundamental to enhancing national productivity and enhancing development control practice as part of any micro-economic reform agenda.

#### 1. PURPOSE PRINCIPLES

- Improve urban form, legibility and coherence to balance and achieve social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Foster efficient and effective settlement patterns to promote prosperity, equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.
- Predict, avoid and ameliorate the adverse economic, social and environmental consequences of human activities, promote intergenerational equity, prudent use of non-renewable resources, the sustainable use of renewable resources, and the precautionary principle.
- Reflect our distinctive national character, nurture vibrant communities and contribute to our knowledge of ourselves and our built and natural environments.

## 3 TYPES OF PRINCIPLES

There are three types of Planning Systems Principles:

### PURPOSE PRINCIPLES

why we plan

### SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

how we should plan

**ISSUES PRINCIPLES** which issues or problems should be addressed through planning

<sup>1</sup> Derived from unpublished National Planning Systems Principles developed by the Planning Officials Group, 2009

## 2. SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

- Combine and rationalise governance structures, functions, policies and processes under a clear set of rules to produce a coherent and integrated outcome (i.e. subsidiarity principle).
- Make consistent the conditions under which development will proceed, the rate and scale at which it will take place and the way planning principles and mechanisms will be applied.
- Have the flexibility to respond to changing and unforeseen circumstances.
- Protection of personal rights and equitable access to appeal mechanisms (in-line with DAF leading Practice Model).
- Clear and appropriate accountability for decisions as described in legislative provisions and organisational structures.
- Promote community engagement, including consultation, participation and increased community understanding and support for planning processes.

## 3. ISSUES PRINCIPLES

- Design urban structures from the macro or regional scale, to the relationships

between individual built forms and the public realm; promote diversity and vitality.

- Integrate infrastructure provision with land use and development; link to funding arrangements.
- Promote social opportunity nationally and ameliorate social inequality.
- Protect and restore areas of environmental value as part of a 'triple bottom line' commitment.
- Deal with housing choice and affordability in an integrated way through the planning system.
- Foster resilient, healthy urban form through addressing land use hazards.
- Coordinate transport planning and investment along with improved mobility and accessibility, to promote alternative forms of movement.

### PIA ACTION

PIA will advocate that the Planning Systems Principles be adopted by COAG for improved national consistency and productivity in the development of future planning legislation.

PIA will advocate the Principles to state and territory planning ministers for the enhancement of current planning systems to better reflect the Principles.

PIA will advocate for the formal re-establishment of a Ministerial Council that deals with urban and regional planning as part of its agenda.

PIA will advocate for the implementation of the actions called for in 'A New Deal for Urban Australia', which includes a Minister and Department for Cities and Urban Development.

### RELATED REFERENCES

**National Planning Systems Principles**, Planning Officials Group 2009

**Planning Matters: Shaping the World Today for Tomorrow**, PIA 2013 ([www.planning.org.au/policy/planning-matters](http://www.planning.org.au/policy/planning-matters))

**Our Cities, Our Future**, A national urban policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future, Australian Government, 2011 ([www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/urbanpolicy/index.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/urbanpolicy/index.aspx))

**Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities**, A Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia, Australian Government 2011 ([www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/publications/pubs/population-strategy.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/publications/pubs/population-strategy.pdf))

**Capital City Strategic Planning Systems**, COAG Reform Council, 2009 ([www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/agenda/cities](http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/agenda/cities))

**A Call to Action**, ASBEC 2013 ([www.asbec.asn.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/130628-ASBEC-Policies-for-a-Sustainable-Built-Environment-Final.pdf](http://www.asbec.asn.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/130628-ASBEC-Policies-for-a-Sustainable-Built-Environment-Final.pdf))

**A New Deal for Urban Australia**, The Urban Coalition, 2013 ([www.planning.org.au/policy/a-new-deal-for-urban-australia](http://www.planning.org.au/policy/a-new-deal-for-urban-australia))

## PIA ADVOCACY AGENDA

**PLANNING** Systems Principles are adopted by COAG

**STATE** and territory planning ministers enhance current planning systems to better reflect the Principles.

**RE-ESTABLISHING** a Ministerial Council that deals with urban and regional planning

**IMPLEMENTING** the actions called for in 'A New Deal for Urban Australia'



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Figure 1. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

