THRIVING CITIES NEED FEDERAL LEADERSHIP

Friday 10 May 2019

A new Thriving Cities policy platform released today by the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) calls for federal leadership to create great Australian cities for everyone.

“Australia is the one of the most urbanised countries in the world, and this is set to continue as our cities keep pace with population and economic growth,” said ASBEC’s President, Professor Ken Maher AO. “ASBEC’s recommendations aim to ensure that the cities we build for future generations deliver healthy, liveable, productive and sustainable communities that we are all happy to call home. Time to act is running out.”

“This Federal Election comes in the wake of a clear multi-party consensus on the importance of a national approach to cities policy that delivers for all Australians. From our CBDs and outer urban growth areas, to our regional centres: a coordinated, national approach to urban policy will help us tackle those most intractable challenges associated with population settlement, productivity, climate and demographic change, and a low-carbon future.” said Jonathan Cartledge, Chair of ASBEC’s Cities and Infrastructure Task Group and Interim CEO of the Green Building Council of Australia.

“We encourage all parties to leverage this consensus across the Parliament, and support the re-appointment of a Minister for Cities and the re-establishment of a Major Cities Unit within the Australian Government.”

“In recent years we have seen incredible collaboration across governments and with industry and communities around Australia to deliver better cities. ASBEC’s recommendations provide a roadmap for that collaboration to continue and the benefits to grow.” Jonathan said.

ASBEC calls for commitment to a shared long-term vision for thriving cities, supported by targeted policy reforms to foster the best possible Australian cities. Key actions are:

1. Investing in improved policy and governance, including a National Settlement Strategy and better procurement.
2. Delivering more balanced business cases to realise better value from our infrastructure.
3. Improving housing outcomes for more affordable, equitable and sustainable living.

“A shared vision for our cities across all levels of government, coupled with improved business cases for infrastructure investment, will help realise better value from our infrastructure investments.” said Suzanne Toumbourou, ASBEC’s Executive Director. “We also need more affordable, equitable and sustainable housing options for all, with an understanding of housing as an essential component of infrastructure.”

“Last year the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities Inquiry into the Australian Government’s role in the development of cities provided a wealth of insights into how better outcomes can be achieved for Australia’s cities.” said Jonathan. “As it observed: we need a national vision for our cities over the next 50 years; nationally consistent guidelines on green spaces; and a clear trajectory to reduce carbon emissions from our built environment.”

“With almost 90% of Australians living in urban areas, there is great pressure on our cities to support the livelihoods, health and wellbeing of our population.” said Ken. “There is no better time than now to act and help ensure our cities thrive for the future.”

Read the full document: Thriving Cities
Quotes from Built Environment Leaders

“Australia’s cities are growing and transforming in important ways. This makes it more important than ever that we have the right policy tools to help create great Australian cities for everyone. ASBEC’s Thriving Cities platform is an important roadmap for whoever wins the coming election and we endorse its recommendations.”

Ken Morrison, Chief Executive, Property Council of Australia

“As a key partner, PIA strongly supports 'Thriving Cities' as a blueprint for infrastructure decisions that respond to the planned growth needs of our major cities. The recommendations are fully consistent with PIA and ASBEC’s call for a National Settlement Strategy.”

David Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Planning Institute of Australia

“Infrastructure investments have the potential to enable terrific long-term outcomes for cites and urban communities and support the productivity of the industry. There is a great opportunity for national leadership to bring this about, with multi-partisan vision and more robust transparent decision making processes.”

Ainsley Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia

“Long term thinking and a collaborative focus on cities is needed from the Federal Government. Whilst it is important to get more value from infrastructure investment with balanced business cases, we must also consider the varying types of infrastructure that makes cities better. There must be much stronger federal leadership on living infrastructure, to ensure quality open spaces, health of citizens, flourishing ecosystems and quality of life.”

Tim Arnold, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

“Consult Australia strongly supports ASBEC’s election platform on thriving cities. More productive, liveable and sustainable cities are key to Australia’s future prosperity, and this must be underpinned by a rigorous and evidence-based infrastructure investment process. Improving how business cases for new projects are developed, and taking an integrated project team approach, is a powerful example in ASBEC’s election platform on how industry can partner with governments to ensure infrastructure investments are helping our cities to thrive.”

Nicola Grayson, Chief Executive Officer, Consult Australia

Available for comment

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About ASBEC

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) is a collective of leading industry organisations committed to a sustainable built environment in Australia. ASBEC’s membership consists of a range of key industry government and academic organisations who are involved in the planning, design, delivery and operation of our built environment and who are concerned with the economic, social and environmental performance of the sector.

ASBEC’s activities, including research and policy development on built environment issues, are an example of a collaborative, co-ordinated approach undertaken across all segments of the built environment. ASBEC works actively to develop and promote leading practice in the design, planning and operation of our cities, at a building, precinct and citywide scale.