



Halvard Dalheim

Strategic Planning + Programs at the Department of Planning and Environment

Planning a state responsibility – what options for a national settlement strategy?

Urbanisation, regional dynamics and globalisation are changing the face of settlements in Australia. These forces transcend geo-political boundaries, though they can be influenced by localised decision making. In responding to the change created by these forces communities expect us to deliver liveable, competitive and sustainable places.

Our ability to deliver on the communities' expectations are constrained by the reality of finite resources and at times the misalignment of policies and infrastructure investments across places and jurisdictions.

Actions are being taken to address these issues such as the cooperation through tri-government 'city deals' and in NSW updated planning legislation which requires the alignment at planning at the regional, district and local level.

In that context what would a national settlement strategy be about. Firstly, it is not about another tier of planning. The constitution clearly has planning as a state responsibility. A national settlement strategy should be more about alignment and cooperation. With its focus / scope potentially being agreement on:

- common planning assumption;
- sectoral policy expectations; and
- infrastructure priorities.

It does not mean a one size fits all approach. My experience in metropolitan planning in two states clarifies that the priorities, issues and opportunities for one city are not necessarily the same for others.