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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES

**SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2025
BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. DESCRIBING CITIES AND REGIONS.....	6
2.1 Population.....	6
2.2 Employment	7
2.3 Transport	8
3. TRANSPORT INITIATIVES.....	9
3.1 Australian Transport Council.....	9
3.2 AusLink.....	9
3.3 National Charter for Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning	11
3.4 Transport Programmes	12
3.5 Australian Logistics Council.....	13
3.6 Rail Transport.....	14
3.7 Airports.....	15
3.8 Australian Bicycle Council	18
4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING INITIATIVES	19
4.1 Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council.....	19
4.2 The Development Assessment Forum.....	20
4.3 Local Government Financial Assistance Grants	22
4.4 National Awards for Local Government.....	22
4.5 Working from Home Initiative.....	23
5. OTHER BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES	24
5.1 Vehicle Air Pollution and Noise	24
5.2 Other Transport Related Research	25
5.3 Natural Disaster Mitigation, Relief and Recovery	26
6. REGIONAL AND OUTER METROPOLITAN INITIATIVES.....	27
6.1 Regional Programmes	27

6.2 Area Consultative Committees.....	29
6.3. Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation.....	30
6.4. Urban and Regional Development Legislation	30
APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT	32
APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT BTRE RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS	36

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) is the Australian Government department responsible for the national transport systems and regional development. DOTARS provides policy advice on transport, regional development, territories and local government and delivers transport, regional development, local government and natural disaster relief and mitigation programmes, in addition to conducting research and providing data on transport and regional development and undertaking a range of economic, safety, security, environmental and regulatory activities. DOTARS strategic objectives include:

- Transport systems which are safer and more secure, more efficient, internationally competitive, sustainable and accessible;
- Regional communities which have better access to economic opportunities and services, and which are able to take the lead in their own planning and development; and
- Local governments which serve their communities more efficiently and effectively.

DOTARS through its programmes and policy agenda is a major contributor to the provision of services and infrastructure and strategic planning in urban areas. However, apart from responsibility for the National Capital Plan in the Australian Capital Territory (through the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*);¹ the Australian Government does not have legislative responsibility for urban planning, with this responsibility resting with the States and Territories.

Nevertheless, the work undertaken by DOTARS contributes to urban development reform, and its initiatives assist communities to strengthen economic and social opportunities, sustain productive natural resources and the environment, deliver better services and adjust to change.

As the submission details, DOTARS has significant involvement in strategic planning for urban areas. Importantly, DOTARS also makes a significant financial contribution towards the sustainability of cities through a number of programmes, including the financial assistance grants to local government (some \$412 million to urban councils in 2002-03); the Roads to Recovery programme (some \$43.7 million to urban areas in 2002-03); National Highways and Roads of National Importance funding (including expenditure of \$68.9 million in 2002-03 on the Western Sydney Orbital); the Black Spot Programme (some \$22 million to urban areas in 2002-03);

¹ DOTARS also has responsibility for the external Territories (non self-governing) comprising the Indian Ocean Territories: Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands; the Coral Sea Islands Territory; the Territories of Ashmore and Cartier Islands; and the Jervis Bay Territory, although Local Government in the Indian Ocean Territories has operated since 1992 under applied Western Australian law, namely the *Local Government Act 1995*. The Australian Government also retains a role in ensuring good governance of the self-governing territories (the Australian Capital Territory, Norfolk Island and the Northern Territory) through administration of the Acts relating to self-government arrangements.

funding for Airport Noise Insulation in Sydney and Adelaide (some \$20.9 million in 2002-03) and through the Sustainable Regions Programme which includes funding of some \$24 million for two urban fringe areas.

This submission briefly outlines some key population, employment and transport characteristics of urban Australia. It then outlines how DOTARS policy and funding initiatives are making a positive contribution to sustainable cities, and how they have the prospect of increasing this contribution. The initiatives themselves are not necessarily aimed specifically at urban sustainability. In many cases the link with urban planning may be incidental. Nevertheless, a broad range of portfolio initiatives in areas such as governance, infrastructure and environmental standards contribute to the future of our cities. The submission details activities undertaken in transport; local government and planning; regional and outer metropolitan areas; and other built environment initiatives, that are of relevance to the Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025.

2. DESCRIBING CITIES AND REGIONS

This section draws on the statistics published in DOTARS Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE) booklet "About Australia's Regions"². Statistics are presented on aspects of population, employment and transport.

Regions do not always have commonly accepted boundaries. Regions can be defined by formal boundaries (as in the case of State or local governments), by a sense of economic and social interdependence, by natural environments and landscapes, or by other connections that distinguish them from neighbouring areas.

A useful spatial concept to summarise information about Australia's regions is the ABS Remoteness Structure. This classification groups Census Collection Districts into five broad classes of remoteness, which share common characteristics in terms of physical distance from services and opportunities for social interaction. These classes are:

- Major Cities of Australia;
- Inner Regional Australia;
- Outer Regional Australia;
- Remote Australia; and
- Very Remote Australia.

The concept of remoteness used to design the ABS Remoteness Structure is based upon measuring road distance from any point to the nearest ABS Urban Centre in each of five population size classes. For example, any location within a short distance of an urban centre of more than 250,000 persons belongs to the Major Cities of Australia class. The population size of the urban centre is used as a proxy for the availability of a range of services.

2.1 Population

2.1.1 Population Distribution

Over two-thirds (66 per cent) of the resident population in 2001 lived in Major Cities compared to around 20 per cent or 4 million living in Inner Regional and 10 per cent or 2 million in Outer Regional (Table 1).

² BTRE, About Australia's Regions, Canberra, 2003.

Table 1 – Selected Population Indicators by Remoteness Class

	<i>Major Cities</i>	<i>Inner Regional</i>	<i>Outer Regional</i>	<i>Remote</i>	<i>Very Remote</i>	<i>Australia TOTAL</i>
Pop ('000 persons)	12 927	4 034	2 016	326	183	19 485
% Share Total	66.3%	20.7%	10.3%	1.7%	0.9%	100.0%
Pop Growth 1996-2001	6.8%	7.3%	3.1%	1.6%	3.6%	6.4%
Area ('000 km ²)	14	220	803	1 021	5 646	7 704
Pop Density (persons/ km ²)	900.8	18.4	2.5	0.3	0.0	2.5

Sources: ABS **Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 1991 to 2001** (Cat. 3218.0); ABS ASGC 2001 geographical area data; ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing, internal migration (place of usual residence) data. Estimation for remoteness classes by BTRE. Note: Population estimates for 2001 are preliminary.

2.1.2 Population Growth and Decline

The fastest growing Local Government Area (LGA) over the period 1996-2001 was Sydney (NSW) with a population growth rate of 18.1 per cent. Growth was not limited to the Major Cities group of regions and occurred in LGAs across all remoteness classes. By contrast, the most significant declines in population growth occurred mainly in Remote, Very Remote and Outer Regional LGAs – see Table 2.

Table 2 – Local Government Areas (LGA) with Fastest Population Increase / Decrease 1996-2001

<i>Fastest increases</i>			<i>Fastest decreases</i>		
LGA	Class	Average annual growth rate (%)	LGA	Class	Average annual growth rate (%)
Sydney, NSW	Major cities	18.1	Meekeatharra, WA	V. remote	-7.2
Palmerston, NT	Outer reg.	11.1	Leonora, WA	V. remote*	-6.5
Burke, QLD	V. remote	7.9	Dundas, WA	Remote*	-5.5
Perth, WA	Major cities	7.3	Coolgardie, WA	Outer reg.*	-5.3
Camden, NSW	Major cities*	6.7	Yilgarn, WA	Remote	-4.7
Broome, WA	Remote*	6.3	Wiluna, WA	V. remote	-4.6
Dardanup, WA	Inner reg.	6.2	Jabiru, NT	Remote	-4.4
Halls Creek, WA	V. remote	6.1	Ashburton, WA	V. remote	-4.1
Roxby Downs, SA	Remote	5.7	Duaringa, QLD	Outer reg.*	-3.7
Melbourne, VIC	Major cities	5.6	Tennant Creek, NT	V. remote	-3.7

Source: ABS **Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 1991 to 2001** (Cat. 3218.0). LGAs coded to remoteness classes by BTRE. Notes: Table excludes LGAs with population of less than 1 000 at June 1996. Population estimates for 2001 are preliminary. * The majority of the LGA's population fits within the stated remoteness class.

2.2 Employment

The sectoral composition of employment is influenced by the remoteness class of regions in a fairly predictable manner with Agriculture/Mining predominant in Remote and Very Remote regions while in Major Cities and Inner Regional the dominant sector is Private Services – see Table 3.

Table 3 – Employment for Industry Sectors by Remoteness Class, 2001

<i>Sectoral Share of employed persons in remoteness class (%)</i>	<i>Major Cities</i>	<i>Inner Regional</i>	<i>Outer Regional</i>	<i>Remote</i>	<i>Very Remote</i>	<i>Australia TOTAL</i>
Agriculture/Mining	1	8	19	31	27	5
Manufacturing	13	12	9	5	3	12
Infrastructure	14	14	13	12	10	14
Govt & defence	4	4	5	5	20	5
Health/Education	17	19	16	14	14	17
Private services	50	43	38	32	26	47
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing (place of usual residence data). Estimation for remoteness classes by BTRE. Notes: Infrastructure sector includes Construction, Communications, Transport, Electricity, gas & water. Private services sector includes Wholesale, Retail, Accommodation cafes & restaurants, Property & business, Finance & insurance, Cultural & recreational, Personal & other services.

2.3 Transport

For travelling to work, over three-quarter of residents in Major Cities (77 per cent) and Inner Regional (85 per cent) utilise the car as a passenger or driver. This share is marginally lower in Remote regions (73 per cent) and Very Remote (50 per cent) – see Table 4.

The method of travel to work closely correlates with mode usage for inter-regional non-commuter passenger transport with the highest usage of car transport occurring in Inner Regional (91 per cent) and Outer Regional (92 per cent) – see Table 5.

Table 4 – Method of Travel to Work by Remoteness Class

Method	<i>Passenger's home region (%)</i>					
	<i>Major Cities</i>	<i>Inner Regional</i>	<i>Outer Regional</i>	<i>Remote</i>	<i>Very Remote</i>	<i>Australia TOTAL</i>
Car—driver	70.1%	76.7%	72.2%	63.2%	39.4%	71.0%
Car—passenger	7.0%	8.6%	9.1%	9.7%	10.3%	7.6%
Truck	1.6%	2.7%	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%	2.0%
Motorbike/scooter	0.6%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%
Bicycle	1.0%	1.3%	1.9%	2.3%	2.3%	1.2%
Walked only	3.4%	5.5%	8.0%	13.7%	34.8%	4.7%
Bus	3.9%	0.9%	1.2%	2.1%	4.1%	3.1%
Train/tram	6.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	4.4%
Other response/ multiple travel methods	6.3%	3.0%	3.3%	4.9%	5.3%	5.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing (place of usual residence data). Note: Other response includes ferries and taxis. Data relates to persons who worked away from home on the day of the census.

Table 5 – Transport Mode Usage for Domestic Inter-Regional Non-Commuter, Passenger Trips by Remoteness Class, 2000.

Main Transport mode	<i>Passenger's home region (%)</i>					
	<i>Major Cities</i>	<i>Inner Regional</i>	<i>Outer Regional</i>	<i>Remote</i>	<i>Very Remote</i>	<i>Australia TOTAL</i>
Car	84	91	92	90	84	87
Coach	3	3	3	3	2	3
Rail	5	3	1	0	0	4
Air	7	3	3	5	11	5
Other/not stated	1	1	1	2	3	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Bureau of Tourism Research National Visitor Survey 2000. Estimation for remoteness classes by BTRE. Notes: Relates to domestic travel only. Includes daytrips (roundtrip distance of at least 50km) and overnight trips (destination must be at least 40km from home). Excludes persons under 15 and routine trips (e.g. commuting, weekly shopping trip). Other transport mode includes ferries.

3. TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

The impacts of transport can be economic, environmental and/or social. It is vital that Australia has a transport system that is efficient, safe, sustainable and competitive. The provision of transport infrastructure, and transport planning are extremely critical in terms of achieving sustainability for cities.

This section describes DOTARS key initiatives and programmes in the transport sphere.

3.1 Australian Transport Council

The Australian Transport Council (ATC) was established in June 1993. It provides a forum for Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers responsible for transport, roads and marine and ports issues, to consult and provide advice to governments on the co-ordination and integration of all transport and road policy issues. It aims to maximise the contribution of effective transport to Australia's productivity, quality of life and equity. To make this vision a reality, ATC is seeking to achieve a transport system that is efficient, safe, sustainable, accessible and competitive.

Chairing responsibility resides with the Australian Government. The current chair is the Hon. John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services. DOTARS provides secretariat support for ATC and its structure. The ATC is supported by the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT) comprising a nominee of each ATC Minister, generally at Head of Department/Agency level. SCOT is supported by a formal committee structure, which provides advice on a range of policy and technical matters.

The National Road Transport Commission (NRTC), (which will be replaced by the National Transport Commission from 15 January 2004) is an independent body which provides advice to Council. Working across all jurisdictions and across all modes the Commission is able to investigate and report on issues that effect the achievement of strategic national transport outcomes.

Ongoing work of the Council of relevance to the Sustainable Cities 2025 Inquiry includes research on heavy vehicle noise and diesel emissions; a review of national strategic freight corridors; a Strategy to Reduce Greenhouse Emissions from Transport; developments in intermodal efficiency, progress in the issues of national standards and guidelines for traffic management systems under the National Greenhouse Strategy.

More information on the Council can be found at the Council's web site www.atcouncil.gov.Australia/index.htm

3.2 AusLink

Australia is facing critical challenges in transport demand. Over the coming 20 years the land freight task - both road and rail - is forecast to approximately double and the passenger task is forecast to grow by 40 per cent. The interstate component of the road freight task is forecast to almost triple in the same period. Urban congestion costs

will grow from \$13 billion annually in 1995 to \$30 billion annually in 2015 and greenhouse emissions will increase by 50 per cent.

The Australian Government's system for planning and funding national transport infrastructure is not designed to meet these challenges.

The National Highways System (NHS) has formed the basis of Australian Government funding for the last 30 years, along with the introduction of the Roads of National Importance (RONI) programme in 1996 and the Roads to Recovery programme in 2001. This system of full Australian Government funding responsibility for the NHS perpetuates ineffective planning mechanisms and expensive funding of separate road and rail networks and has resulted in ad hoc rail infrastructure investment. It does not always allow investment to be directed where it will best support Australia's economic and trade objectives.

In November 2002, the Government released a Green Paper proposing a new framework for planning and funding national-level investment in land transport infrastructure. The proposed new framework is called AusLink. AusLink is a major policy and planning framework change to develop an integrated national land transport network. It will provide a more effective means of directing Australian Government investment to where it best serves Australia's national interests.

The AusLink initiative has the potential to provide a national framework where the Australian Government can engage with States, Territories and local government to improve land transport's contribution to developing sustainable cities through long-term cooperative planning, balanced infrastructure development and deployment of innovative solutions to urban infrastructure challenges.

The AusLink framework proposes the development of a five-year National Land Transport Plan and a new National Network to replace the current NHS. The National Plan will identify the Government's funding priorities on the new National Network. It will be the first time Australia will have a long-term plan to provide national direction and a strategic basis for its funding decisions.

Rather than the current system of ad hoc funding of one-off projects, the National Plan will provide a forward-looking vision and blueprint for the National Land Transport Network.

The new National Network will identify critical road and rail links of national importance, and form the basis for Australian Government investment. The Green Paper proposes some categories of nationally significant urban links as part of the National Network.

This recognises that most of the nation's critical freight bottlenecks are in capital cities and urban fringes where congestion affects all users of the transport system. Urban congestion is forecast to grow in line with increases in the freight and passenger task. The links chosen within capital cities would be those most important to both community access for employment, services and facilities and for the freight logistics industry to have access to ports, airports, other major inter-modal facilities, markets and production and distribution centres.

Improving the performance of any urban link should involve not only infrastructure upgrading but also examination of traffic and travel demand management, land use, inter-modal performance, together with appropriate policies, planning and regulatory responses from all levels of government. In cases where urban links are included as part of the National Network, the Australian Government would seek to be involved in relevant State and local governments processes addressing these issues.

The new AusLink framework will enable innovative solutions, such as better traffic and logistics management, to be assessed fairly alongside hard infrastructure solutions. By taking a strategic approach to the national transport system as a whole AusLink will better identify where investment will have the greatest benefit. This will benefit all major cities socially, economically and environmentally.

The AusLink proposal is currently being considered by the Australian Government.

See www.dotars.gov.au/transinfra/auslink

3.3 National Charter for Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

The National Charter is a high level agreement between all Australian transport, planning and local government Ministers committing to an agreed set of good planning practices and committing to working together to achieve better outcomes.

The National Charter is designed to support existing and future planning mechanisms by providing a national commitment to a framework for responsive planning, consistent decision-making, and good design and management. All states, territories, and the Australian Government have collaborated to develop this National Charter. The responsibility for its implementation rests with each state, territory and the Australian Government. Within each state and territory, local governments also play a central role in land use and transport planning for local areas.

Land use and transport planning has a key role to play in delivering social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Roads will continue to dominate as the means of movement for the majority of people and freight in Australia in the foreseeable future. However, by shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design, and mix of land uses, planning can help to facilitate an efficient transport and land use system by:

- reducing the need to travel;
- reducing the length of journeys;
- making it safer and easier for people to access services;
- reducing the impact of transport on communities;
- improving freight access to key terminals and improved freight flows;
- providing for the efficient distribution of goods and services to business and community;

- providing a choice of travel modes; and
- ensuring flexibility to meet the demands of a changing economy and market environments.

Consistent application of sound planning principles can increase the effectiveness of land use and transport policies and help maximise the quality of life of the community. Planning of transport and land use must also be robust in the face of changes in technology, social conditions, values, resource constraints, and other key factors.

The objective of the National Charter is to achieve greater integration of land use planning and transport planning across agencies, jurisdictions, and levels of government to facilitate effective and sustainable urban and regional development across Australia. The Charter does this by identifying national aims, a range of measures available to pursue them, and by highlighting the need for coordination of land use and transport planning at and between each level of government. As such it provides a useful framework for the AusLink proposal.

See www.dotars.gov.au/lgpmc/charter.aspx for a copy of the Charter.

3.4 Transport Programmes

As detailed in 3.2, in addition to the National Highway programme, DOTARS administers a number of transport programmes that contribute to urban transport and infrastructure.

3.4.1 Roads of National Importance Programme

The Federal Government provides funding to States and Territories, on a cost sharing basis, for construction projects (not on-going maintenance) on roads that demonstrate their national character by promoting regional and national development by:

- encouraging inter-regional and international trade in goods and services;
- improving national competitiveness, by maximising transport efficiency and reliability; and
- allowing for quick adjustments to the pattern and nature of trade in response to emerging national and international opportunities.

And which form part of an integrated land use strategy to:

- improve access to major centres of economic activity (for example, manufacturing, agricultural, mining or tourism) by removing bottlenecks or other impediments to efficient road performance; or
- improve links to the National Highway or major transport facilities (for example, ports, road and rail terminals, intermodal terminals and airports); or

- allow people, goods and services to move more freely within major urban and provincial centres, in accordance with the planning objectives for those centres.

Roads of National Importance projects must promote improvements in safety, efficiency and reliability, including the use of new transport technologies.

They should contribute to achieving environmental targets, particularly relating to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, and produce net economic benefits.

Some of the key funding to urban areas overseen by DOTARS in 2002-03, included \$68.9 million on the Western Sydney Orbital and \$10.3 million to widen Portrush Road in Adelaide.

3.4.2 Black Spot Programme

The National Road Safety Black Spot Programme was introduced in 1996 as part of the Federal Government's commitment to reduce crashes on Australian roads.

Road crashes are a major cost to Australians every year. Black Spot projects target those road locations where crashes are occurring, saving the community many times the cost of the relatively minor road improvements that are implemented.

Approximately 50 per cent of funding under the Programme is spent addressing black spots in urban areas. In 2002-03, around 200 sites in urban areas were treated under the programme, with funding for these projects totalling some \$22 million. The programme has been further extended to provide \$45 million per annum to 2006.

3.4.3 Roads to Recovery Programme

In November 2000, the Australian Government announced a \$1.2 billion boost in its funding for local roads through the Roads to Recovery Programme. Some \$350 million of this will be spent in urban Australia. The Programme is a single intervention by the Australian Government to address the specific problem that much local government road infrastructure is about to reach the end of its economic life and its replacement is beyond the capacity of local government.

Payments are made directly to local councils, who determine their own priorities for funding. The distribution of the Roads to Recovery funds between States and Territories is based on historical precedents, length of local roads and population. Allocations between councils within each State are in accordance with formulae adopted by State Grants Commissions for the distribution of Financial Assistance Grants identified for roads. The allocations to councils are fixed for the life of the Programme.

3.5 Australian Logistics Council

Freight logistics is about sourcing, purchasing, packaging, transporting and delivery of goods across the entire supply chain from producer to consumer.

In July 2002, the Minister for Transport and Regional services, the Hon John Anderson MP, and the Minister for industry, Tourism and Resources, the Hon Ian

Macfarlane MP, launched the Australian Logistics Industry Strategy. Two key priority areas of the Strategy are infrastructure and sustainability.

The Australian Logistics Council was established in 2002 to guide the strategy's implementation. The Council brings together the freight transport industry and non-transport logistics service providers to form a more effective logistics industry, a vital task given the anticipated doubling of Australia's freight task over the next 20 years.

3.6 Rail Transport

The Australian Government's role in rail is focussed on the major interstate freight routes, crucial to domestic and international trade and the national economy. On these routes the Government is implementing major reforms in rail and initiating significant investment programmes. State, Territory and local governments are best placed to address local and regional passenger transport issues.

The Government has established the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), a company fully owned by the Australian Government, to manage the main interstate rail track. The Government considers that private operators are best placed to provide above rail interstate freight services.

Although the ARTC's primary focus is the interstate network its investment decisions have implications for the urban rail systems, freight movements in urban areas and, in the longer term, the city structure.

ARTC's infrastructure investment decisions are directed at meeting market requirements to enhance the competitiveness of rail as part of the transport system. Securing a better modal balance will in turn contribute to better ecological outcomes and improve urban amenity, thereby contributing to the goal of sustainable, functioning and aesthetically appealing cities.

The Australian Government and the ARTC have proposed to lease the NSW mainline track from the NSW Government. The lease proposal involves a planned five-year infrastructure investment programme of \$870 million. The investment programme is specifically targeted at growing rail's market share through better network integration, greater availability of services and improved quality of services as determined by engineering, economic and financial assessments.

The proposed investment programme will deliver benefits for the rail industry, road users and the economy. Increased market share to rail would reduce the burden on our road system, cities and environment through mitigating the projected increase in heavy truck movements, with an estimated reduction of 111,000 heavy truck movements a year on the North-South network on the East Coast of Australia.

A major area of focus for the Government is raising the performance of the interstate rail North-South corridor to the standard required for effective competition with other transport modes for the carriage of the bulk of the nation's freight task. While the reforms the Australian Government has implemented on the East-West rail corridor have resulted in a rail freight market share of 80 per cent, this has not been matched on the North-South transport corridors. On these corridors only 15 per cent of the freight is carried by rail.

As part of ARTC's overall investment programme about \$200 million will be invested to build dedicated route for rail freight, from Macarthur to Chullora in south-west Sydney. The investment, although primarily aimed at improving freight flows, will also benefit passenger services. The separation of freight and mainline passenger services from the electrified passenger system will directly benefit Sydney's public transport system by increasing urban passenger capacity and reliability.

As already detailed, through AusLink the Australian Government proposes to shift its transport infrastructure investment framework to address the health of Australia's transport network as a whole, recognising better planning in our towns and cities as a contributor to a more efficient transport and logistics chain. Improving the efficiency of our transport system and building strong and competitive logistics chains is the key to protecting the quality of our urban environment while also enabling the economic growth necessary to sustain and enhance our national prosperity. Rail transport, improved intermodal facilities, improved land use planning, better traffic management and better travel demand management all need to play a part in the development of sustainable transport solutions for our cities.

The urban environment is expected to directly benefit from AusLink investments in rail. Investing in our rail network, as well as our road system, will help address the massive forecast growth in the freight task over the next few decades. With increased rail operations, benefits also come from alleviating the increasing pressure on our road systems and minimising the costs associated with the forecast increase in road traffic on our cities and the environment. Overall, the urban population will benefit from a more efficient distribution of the consumer goods by both modes and from intermodal operations.

3.7 Airports

3.7.1 On-Airport Planning

DOTARS has responsibility for exercising control over land use planning on Federal leased airports (Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane, Canberra, Bankstown, Camden, Hoxton Park, Essendon, Moorabbin, Hobart, Launceston, Parafield, Jandakot, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Coolangatta, Archerfield, Townsville and Mount Isa) under the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act) and associated regulations.

The Act specifies that for each airport: there will be an airport master plan; major development plans are required for significant developments at airports; building activities on airport sites require approval; buildings and structures on airport sites must be certified as complying with the regulations; and there will be an environment strategy. Public consultation is a mandatory component of these processes.

The Act also specifies that the master plan must address the extent (if any) of consistency with planning schemes in force under a law of the State or Territory in which the airport is located.

Amongst other considerations, in considering the airport's draft master plan, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services must have regard to the extent the plan would meet the requirements for services and facilities of users of the airport; and the

effect the plan will have on the use of land within the airport site and in areas surrounding the airport.

The Minister also considers draft environment strategies for approval and takes account of:

- the effect of the strategy on the standard of air, water and soil quality;
- the effect of the strategy on biota and habitat, natural or heritage values or significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites;
- the effect on noise exposure levels; and
- the consultations undertaken.

The building control and environmental management of the airports are regulated by the Airport Building Controller (ABC) and Airport Environment Officer (AEO).

The AEO for an airport is appointed by the Secretary of DOTARS and has suitable qualifications and experience to work with the Airport Lessee Company (ALC), its sublessees and airport users to ensure effective environmental management of activities on airport under the Act and the Regulations. The primary responsibility for the environmental management of an airport site is vested with the ALC although the AEO is authorised under the Act to exercise powers in relation to monitoring and investigation, and is able to make decisions under the Regulations on matters such as the granting of authorisations, and the issuing of environmental remedial orders and environment protection orders.

The ABC's role is to administer and advise airport operators on building control issues as contained in the Airport (Building Control) Regulations and to implement the building approval system that facilitates ongoing building activities at airports. Under the provisions of the Airports Act 1996, the ABC must also ensure that an appropriate standard of building work is achieved at the airport.

These measures ensure the protection and preservation of the environment on Australian Government land while facilitating the development of the airport site.

For airports not regulated under the Act (regional airports and aerodrome local ownership plan (ALOP) airports), deeds of agreement are used as planning controls. This ensures certain council owned and operated regional airports cannot be sold or cease to be operated as airports without Australian Government approval.

3.7.2 Off-Airport Planning

In areas surrounding airports, the Commonwealth exercises control over land use planning through building height restrictions imposed under the airspace protection regulations and through national policies relating to aircraft noise.

Airspace protection requirements are designed to restrict incompatible developments in order to protect the utilisation of the volume of airspace needed for arriving and departing aircraft.

Protected airspace is defined by the Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) and Procedures for Air Navigation Systems Operations (PANS-OPS) surfaces. The protected airspace of the leased Federal airports is regulated under Part 12 of the Act and the Airports (Protection of Airspace) Regulations 1996 under Part 12.

For airports other than leased Federal airports, aviation obstacle clearance requirements may be imposed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or local town planning schemes.

3.7.3 Badgerys Creek Site

DOTARS manages the Badgerys Creek property portfolio, land reserved as a possible site for a possible second Sydney Airport. Land use planning on and off the Badgerys Creek site is managed to provide adequate protection from incompatible development through the Australian Noise Exposure Concept (ANEC) contours.

3.7.4 Measuring and Managing Aircraft Noise

Airports and the communities they serve often coexist in a state of tension. Airports attract surrounding urban development because they are significant employment nodes and because they generally provide good transport links to the centres of cities. In addition, airports generally need to be within easy reach of cities, as residents do not want to travel too far to reach their airport. These factors mean that almost inevitably aircraft overfly at least some urban areas as they operate into and out of airports. This invariably leads to community pressures on airports because of aircraft noise. Incompatible developments close to airports and main flight corridors can lead to pressure by noise affected constituents for constraints on the airport's operation (ie curfews, movement caps and complex noise abatement procedures).

Experience has shown that better, and more sustainable, noise outcomes can be achieved if a level of trust can be built up between airports and their communities. Historically, this trust has often not been established because much of the information used by airports to describe noise exposure patterns has not accorded with people's experience and has not painted a picture of the noise which people can relate to. In order to address this issue, DOTARS has developed a way to transparently describe aircraft noise which can both be understood, and be independently verified, by non-experts. In addition to gaining acceptance in Australia the concepts are attracting significant international interest and are now being applied or trialed by a number of overseas airports and aviation authorities.

Aircraft noise is taken into account by State/Territory planning authorities through noise exposure forecasts. This information is supplied in the form of an Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF), which is required to be provided by the airport under Section 71 of the *Airports Act 1996*. ANEF's in conjunction with the recommendations contained in Australian Standard (AS) 2021 place restrictions on land use planning using the noise contours developed.

3.7.5 Sydney and Adelaide Airport Noise Insulation Programme

The Sydney Program commenced in 1994 following the opening of the third runway at the airport. Since that time 146 residences and a church have been voluntarily

acquired and some 3,700 residences and over 90 public buildings insulated against the effects of aircraft noise. The cost of the programme will be \$9 million.

The Adelaide Programme commenced in 2000. It involves the insulation of around 600 residences and 5 public buildings around the airport. The cost of the programme will be \$21.8 million.

3.8 Australian Bicycle Council

The Australian Government supports the promotion of bicycle riding as an alternative to other forms of transport. The Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson MP, launched the Australian Cycling National Strategy in 1999. Australia Cycling has a vision of increased cycling for transport and recreation to enhance the well-being of all Australians. It has the goal of doubling bicycle use by the year 2004 with the aim of contributing to growth and improvements in transport, urban development, public health and the environment.

The Government, through DOTARS, funds and provides secretariat services for the Australian Bicycle Council, which was established to coordinate implementation of Australia Cycling. In the 2003-04 financial year, DOTARS also provided sponsorship for the Connecting Cycling conference to be held in November 2003 and made a funding contribution to enable completion of a report on cycling data and indicators.

For further information see www.abc.dotars.gov.au

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING INITIATIVES

While constitutional responsibility for local government lies with the States and Territories, the Australian Government nevertheless has a significant role and interest in local government, including providing it with significant financial assistance.

DOTARS has a role in managing the Federal Government's local government responsibilities and providing advice to the Federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads.

This section describes DOTARS key initiatives in the local government and planning sphere.

4.1 Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council

DOTARS provides the Secretariat support for the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council (LGPMC), a council established under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) framework.

The Local Government and Planning Joint Committee (the Joint Committee) supports the Council. The Joint Committee consists of the Local Government Joint Officers Group (LOGJOG) and the Planning Officials Group (POG). These groups are constituted as standing sub-committees and are accountable to the Joint Committee. The Development Assessment Forum reports to the Planning Officials Group.

The objective of the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council is to enhance the effectiveness of Local Government and planning in Australia and New Zealand.

The Terms of reference are:

- To agree policy and strategic approaches for Local Government and planning issues;
- To exchange information and brief other jurisdictions on significant current and emerging Local Government and planning issues, experiences and initiatives;
- To promote cooperation between all levels of government and to encourage harmonisation across jurisdictional boundaries in the development and implementation of public policy, strategies and programmes affecting Local Government and planning;
- To foster accountability to stakeholders through the monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and programmes developed and implemented under the aegis of the Council;
- To provide leadership to all areas of government, industry and the community in working collaboratively to advance Local Government and planning issues.
- To liaise with other Ministerial Councils and other bodies on matters relevant to the activities of the Council.

The inaugural meeting of the LGPMC was held in Darwin on 15 July 2003. The agenda consisted of a number of built environment-related topics including:

- Urban Water Reuse and Recycling;
- National Charter on integrated Land Use and Transport Planning; and
- Urban Sustainability

Priority areas for the Council include:

- Management of natural resources;
- Working towards economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable towns and cities;
- Addressing the implications of population and demographic change for infrastructure supply and demand; and
- Land-use and transport planning (see also section 3.3).

In addition, a standing agenda item for all LGPMC meetings will be “strategic planning issues for Australia’s capital cities”.

More details, including the Communique issued after the Council’s first meeting, can be viewed at www.dotars.gov.Australia/lgpmcouncil/index.aspx

4.2 The Development Assessment Forum

DOTARS supports the work of the Development Assessment Forum (DAF) through the provision of a Secretariat and funding for part of the work programme. The Forum acts as an advisory committee which ultimately advises the Local Government and Planning Ministers’ Council.

Harmonising and improving Australia’s development assessment system is a long term focus for both the development industry and government. Reduced compliance burdens and more flexible regulatory systems will improve business efficiency, stimulate growth and help business generate employment. The DAF was formed to bring together the relevant parties to reach agreement on ways to streamline the processes used for development approval and cut red tape - without sacrificing the quality of the decision making. The Forum’s membership includes the Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local Governments; the development industry; and related professional associations.

DAF’s mission is to encourage the harmonisation of Australian development assessment systems, through the promotion of leading practice regulatory reform. Its strategies include:

- (i) working towards the achievement of a harmonised development assessment system, based on demonstrated leading practice, which:

- focuses on achieving high quality sustainable outcomes
- is cost effective
- encourages an appropriate performance based approach to regulation
- encourages standard definitions and terminology
- encourages innovation and variety in development
- is streamlined, simple and accessible
- integrates all policies and assessments applying to a given site
- promotes transparency and accountability in administration
- provides clear information about system processes and requirements
- incorporates performance measurement and evaluation
- promotes sharing leading practice and continuous improvement.

(ii) undertaking effective nation-wide consultation and liaison, education and training through DAF, on reform of development assessment systems;

(iii) facilitating the coordination and integration of development assessment and planning reform activities between all stakeholders, in order to ensure a satisfactory level of consistency and efficiency in planning systems;

(iv) promoting an efficient and competitive regulatory environment; and

(v) encouraging the simplification of planning documents to achieve a user friendly and plain English style.

More detailed information about DAF, including its terms of reference, may be viewed at its web site at www.daf.gov.au

DOTARS understands that the Development Assessment Forum will be lodging its own detailed submission to this Inquiry.

4.3 Local Government Financial Assistance Grants

Under the Australian Classification of Local Governments, some 11.3 million Australians live in local government areas classified as Urban³.

The Local Government financial assistance grants (FAGs) are provided under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*, which is administered by DOTARS. In 2003-04 these grants will provide an estimated \$1.508 billion to local government. FAGs are provided to all councils including capital city councils and other urban councils. Urban metropolitan councils received over \$412 million FAGs in 2002-03 as follows:

- Urban Capital Cities: \$61.8 million (including the Australian Capital Territory)
- Urban Developed: \$214.5 million
- Urban Fringe Large and Very Large: \$136 million.

An additional \$405 million was paid to councils classified as Urban Regional and \$61.5 million to councils classified as Urban Fringe Medium and Small.

The objective of general purpose assistance from the Federal Government to local government is to strengthen local government to enable it to provide a wider range of services and to promote equity between councils and certainty of funding. These grants are untied in the hands of the receiving council. This means that councils are able to spend the grant according to the priorities of their communities.

See www.nolg.gov.au/publications/national_report for a copy of the 2001-02 Report on the Operation of the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act*.

4.4 National Awards for Local Government

The annual National Awards for Local Government are coordinated by DOTARS with sponsorship by other relevant Australian Government agencies. They were established to recognise and foster innovation and continuous improvement in local government. Leading Practice Seminars are also held to help build capacity in local government. A number of the 2003 categories are of direct relevance to the Inquiry, and will illustrate best practice. These include:

- Sustainable development - Economic Development, Environment Local Agenda 21 and Tourism Development;
- Community Capacity Building - Cultural Diversity;

³ Figure includes *Capital Cities* and *Urban Metropolitan Developed*, defined as an LGA which is part of an urban centre of more than 1 million, or has a population density of more than 600 persons per square kilometre; and *Urban Fringe Large* defined as a developing LGA on the margin of a developed or regional urban centre with a population of between 70,001 – 120,000, with *Urban Fringe Very Large* having a population of more than 120,000. Figure excludes urban regional centres and urban fringe medium and small centres.

- Engineering and Infrastructure - Engineering, Infrastructure Management and Infrastructure Development; and
- Integrated and Regional Planning - Land Use Planning, Integration of Biodiversity Conservation into Local Government Planning and Planning for an Ageing Community.

For further information on the objective of each category see Appendix 2.

4.5 Working from Home Initiative

At the initiative of the former Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, the Hon Wilson Tuckey MP, Local Government Managers Australia was asked to work with DOTARS to explore the issue of working from home in local government. The Centre for Local Government of the University of Technology Sydney was commissioned to undertake the project, which was finalised in September 2003.

DOTARS is now examining the project's recommendations and considering ways to disseminate the information provided in the report. The project's outcomes will assist local government in determining future employment options, such as flexible work arrangements, which has the potential to result in productivity gains and greater access to skilled staff. See www.lgma.org.au/pdfs/HBW-Report.pdf for a copy of the report.

5. OTHER BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES

In addition to the transport and local government initiatives outlined in sections 3 and 4, DOTARS undertakes other regulatory, research and programme activities, which are contributing to building the sustainability of urban localities. These activities are described in this section.

5.1 Vehicle Air Pollution and Noise

5.1.1 Australian Design Rules

Motor vehicles are a significant source of urban air pollution and noise. New vehicle standards have been, and will continue to be, an effective measure to reduce vehicle pollution and noise.

For many years Australia has put in place vehicle design standards known as the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) which manufacturers must comply with in order to supply vehicles to the Australian market. In the context of the Sustainable Cities Inquiry, the ADRs limiting vehicle emissions and noise are of particular relevance.

It is widely recognised that the ADRs for vehicle emissions have made the single most important contribution to reducing air polluting emissions from the vehicle fleet, and thus the level of pollution levels in our major cities. A package of five new vehicle emission ADRs covering cars, buses and trucks is being introduced over the 2002-06 period. The new, more stringent vehicle emission standards will significantly reduce harmful emission levels from all new vehicles, and will bring Australia into line with international best practice for diesel vehicles by 2006. These emission standards are also supported by new fuel quality standards, which ensure that the benefits of the new vehicle technology needed to meet the ADRs are delivered on the road, and not just in the testing laboratory.

A review of the 2002-2006 vehicle emissions and fuel quality standards is already underway. The review will consider whether Australia should adopt the latest Euro standards and the fuel standards to support them. The review is expected to provide recommendations to Ministers by early 2004.

In relation to vehicle noise, a new noise ADR is now in place and will take effect over 2005-07. The new ADR will lead to significant reductions in noise levels from cars, trucks and buses, and is largely in line with current European standards. Work is also well advanced on finding a solution to the problem of excessive engine brake noise from heavy vehicles.

5.1.2 Transport Related Emissions

The BTRE, as part of its ongoing work program, is conducting research into urban transport greenhouse gas emissions, congestion and road user charging. This research has, and will continue to, inform the wider policy framework for making urban transport more sustainable. Such research includes -: Working Paper 52 - Greenhouse gas emissions from Australian Transport: A macro modelling approach; Information

BTRE is also publishing a commissioned report on urban freight and how it responds to alternative greenhouse abatement scenarios.

5.1.3 Consumer Information

The new vehicle fleet in Australia consists of vehicles with a broad range of environmental performance. There are significant differences in both air pollution and greenhouse gas emission levels from passenger cars alone, but currently consumers are only able to source information on fuel consumption. The role of the consumer is critical to the wider adoption of those models with better than minimum standard performance. The Australian government is taking two main avenues to address better inform consumers regarding the environmental performance of individual vehicle models.

The first is the ADR for fuel consumption labelling which requires all new model vehicles to display a label on the windscreen which states the fuel consumption in L/100km and CO₂ emissions in g/km of that particular model.

The second is the development of an Internet based "Green Vehicle Guide". The Guide is intended to provide up to date information on the air pollution and greenhouse gas performance of individual models, including an overall star rating, to assist consumers in taking environmental factors into account in the purchase of a new vehicle. The guide is expected to be operational early in 2004.

5.2 Other Transport Related Research

BTRE also has under way a project on the principles and practice of road user pricing, including comparison of international and Australian urban experience. BTRE will commence in 2003-04 projects on alternative strategies to address urban traffic congestion and on new ways to collect data for transport planning and modelling purposes, including in urban areas.

Relevant completed reports include *Improving Transport in the Warringah Peninsula: Issues and Options, Working Paper 53*. This paper includes discussion of the relationships between increased road capacity, better public transport and traffic congestion in cities such as Sydney (see especially pp. 29-32). *Greenhouse Policy Options for Transport, BTRE Report 105* includes discussion of the costs and benefits of alternative urban strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see especially 'public transport', pp. 12 to 26 and 'increased urban density', pp.54 to 57).

A list of BTRE research publications of interest to the Sustainable Cities Inquiry is provided at Appendix 2.

DOTARS has also been involved in the development of the Travel Smart project and its funding through the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Programme (GGAP) in 2002. The Australian Government has provided \$6.5 million in funding through GGAP, which is run by the Australian Greenhouse Office. Travel Smart aims to encourage Australians to reduce their car usage by using public transport, walking, cycling and ride-sharing.

Over five years, more than 186,000 households in four states and territories around Australia are expected to participate in the voluntary project.

DOTARS and the Queensland Government have each contributed \$650,000 towards a joint feasibility study for a proposed light rail project in the Gold Coast. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2003.

5.3 Natural Disaster Mitigation, Relief and Recovery

DOTARS currently provides around \$100 million annually to States and Territories under the National Disaster Relief Arrangements (NDRA). This is a partial reimbursement to States and Territories for natural disaster relief and restoration measure expenditures. The bulk of NDRA assistance goes to towns and cities. This highlights the need to reduce exposure of populated areas to natural disaster risks.

The Australian Government has identified funding of \$68.5 million over five years including \$16.3 million in 2007-08 to establish a new Disaster Mitigation Australia Package (DMAP). This funding will be used to support cost-effective mitigation policies and reduce the economic and social costs of natural disasters to individuals, communities and governments.

The package will include the establishment of a Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme to support cost-effective mitigation activity based on nationally consistent data, research and disaster risk assessments. The package will also include the continuation of the Regional Flood Mitigation Programme in 2005-06 and 2006-07, for which \$19.2 million has already been included in the forward estimates.

The provision of Australian Government funding to the package will be conditional on matching funding from States and Territories and the introduction of more effective statutory land use planning, development and building controls by other governments.

This new approach aims for safer and more sustainable Australian communities and to reduce risks, damage and losses from natural disasters - currently estimated to cost Australian communities about \$1 billion a year in economic terms and infinitely more in personal suffering.

Commonwealth funding for the new Disaster Mitigation Programme is also subject to:

- State, Territory and local governments reforming statutory land use planning, development and building controls to mitigate natural disasters and their effects;
- the use by all jurisdictions of agreed consistent risk assessment methodologies; and
- commitment to a national framework for natural disaster data collection and research.

This new package requires the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments before it can be implemented. The Prime Minister has written to the Premiers and Chief Ministers seeking their agreement to the package out of session. It is anticipated that such agreement will be finalised by the end of November 2003.

6. REGIONAL AND OUTER METROPOLITAN INITIATIVES

Regional policy research and international experience canvass the issue of managing the effects of city growth on surrounding regions. This research and experience suggests that any strategy to create sustainable cities must be:

- integrated with a broader strategy for the surrounding region and regions;
- flexible enough to accommodate local strengths and aspirations;
- coherent in terms of the various layers of regional policy and the various policy frameworks that impact on regional development; and
- fair in the sense that regions do not engage in unproductive 'zero sum' regional competition.

6.1 Regional Programmes

6.1.1 Sustainable Regions Programme

The Sustainable Regions Programme, which commenced in September 2001 with an allocation up to \$100.5 million, aims to assist eight 'prototype' regions (including two outer-metropolitan areas) undergoing major economic, social or environmental change. Funds are provided for a range of projects and capacity building activities which in some instances may be consistent with the objectives outlined in the Sustainable Cities 2025: A Blueprint for the Future discussion paper.

In each of the eight prototype regions the programme seeks to:

- Formulate and test future development options;
- Identify and support specific activities to promote sustainable development including:
 - strengthening the economy
 - improving social conditions
 - sustaining the environment
 - taking account of cultural factors;
- Support community leadership in the development of local solutions;
- Foster new ideas, community energy, drive and self reliance; and
- Forge partnerships between the private sector and all three spheres of government.

Assistance under the programme is being provided to the urban regions of Campbelltown-Camden, New South Wales (up to \$12 million), and Playford/Salisbury, South Australia (up to \$12 million).

The programme encourages community building and provides a framework for more sustainable development. Each region, through an advisory committee, has developed a set of priorities to guide grant priorities and facilitate a strategic approach to developing partnerships across the private, not for profit and government sectors. The advisory committees in each region use a combination of community consultations, existing regional plans and workshops to establish regional priority areas for action. Sustaining the environment has emerged as a common priority to all eight regions along with job creation opportunities, developing a regional identity, provision of education and training at all levels, community development, value adding to existing and growing industry, and establishment of new industry.

Although many projects are under development or are at an early stage of implementation, it is anticipated that some practical models of sustainable development and other interventions may emerge from specific projects. For example:

In Campbelltown-Camden, Sustainable Regions funding of \$225,584 is being provided to assist the region plan for future development, in light of anticipated population growth of over 25 per cent in the next fifteen years. The project will develop a futures-planning framework and diagnostic software enabling the region to make informed planning decisions, cognisant of their potential economic, social and environmental impacts.

The revegetation by design project (Sustainable Regions contribution \$511,383) within the Playford/Salisbury sustainable region aims to increase the level of native vegetation across the region, reduce use of aggressive pest control methods, increase the long-term sustainability of the land itself, and improve economic returns for land holders and the region as a whole. The project includes a research component for the identification of the most efficient and effective revegetation and pest control strategies, followed by a significant community and tertiary education component. Demonstration land plots, educational manuals and public forums will be developed and promoted by the project for utilisation by land holders, Technical and Further Education and Vocational Education Training environmental management students and the wider community in understanding and adopting sustainable land management practices across the Playford/Salisbury region.

6.1.2 Regional Partnerships Programme

The Regional Partnerships Programme may fund projects which are consistent with the objectives outlined in the Sustainable Cities 2025: A Blueprint for the Future discussion paper. The Regional Partnerships programme commenced in June 2003. It brings together DOTARS key regional funding programmes. These include Regional Solutions, Regional Assistance, Rural Transaction Centres, Dairy Regional Assistance and the existing structural adjustment programmes for the Wide Bay-Burnett, Namoi Valley, Weipa and the South West Forests region of Western Australia.

The Government will invest in projects that focus on:

- strengthening growth and opportunities by investing in projects that strengthen and provide greater opportunities for economic and social participation in the community;
- improving access to services by investing in projects that, in a cost effective and sustainable way, support communities to access services. It will give priority to communities in regional Australia with a population of less than 5,000;
- supporting planning by investing in projects that assist communities to identify and explore opportunities and to develop strategies for action; and
- assisting in structural adjustment by investing in projects that assist specifically identified communities and regions adjust to major economic, social or environmental change.

Under Regional Partnerships, communities will have access to on-the-ground support to develop projects and funding applications, through the Commonwealth Government's national network of Area Consultative Committees (ACCs). To date, funding to metropolitan (ACC) areas from the former programmes totals \$14.5 million.

6.2 Area Consultative Committees

Area Consultative Committees (ACCs) are non profit, community based organisations funded by the Australian Government. The National network across Australia serves all regions and cities. Of the 56 ACCs 13 are located in urban regions. The network of ACCs provides an important link between the Australian Government and rural and metropolitan Australia. As volunteer community based organisations, ACCs are uniquely placed to respond to issues in their regions and provide a vital conduit to government on local, social and economic conditions.

The Area Consultative Committee Network potentially provides a valuable vehicle for the promotion of urban development reform and ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement at the local level and at the regional level.

The ACC organisational arrangements enable Government to better respond to each regions's needs. ACCs encourage local communities to take up opportunities under the range of Government programmes. These programmes are designed to optimise the regions own potential and development, whilst being managed at the local level, with the private sector and Government in partnership.

ACCs provide feedback to the Australian Government on impacts of policies and programmes in their regions and the local, social and environmental conditions at play in their regions. They also participate in local and regional forums to facilitate strong linkages between business, the community and government and to assist in the development of whole-of-government solutions with communities. They are also charged with developing Strategic Regional Plans in consultation with all community stakeholders to coordinate and identify the strategic opportunities for their region.

Each ACC works within the Ministerial priority areas identified in the Charter for the National Network of ACCs. Among the priorities is the requirement that ACCs contribute to sustaining our natural resources and environment whilst supporting a planned, cooperative approach to regional development, particularly to the social and economic impacts of structural change.

6.3. Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation

The Albury Wodonga Development Corporation (AWDC) is a portfolio statutory authority established by the *Albury-Wodonga Development Act 1973*.

Complementary State legislation established separate NSW and Victorian statutory corporations which, together with the AWDC, operate as an integrated organisation.

The Albury-Wodonga Ministerial Council oversees the three Corporations. The Ministerial Council comprises the Australian, NSW and Victorian Ministers responsible for regional development.

The Albury-Wodonga Area Development Agreement signed by the three Governments in 1973 sets out the principles within which the three Corporations are required to function and the detailed policy and administrative arrangements for the development of this growth complex.

The Agreement provides that the AWDC will, through the development of the growth complex, create a city with a high quality environment, appropriately planned, and developed having regard to human requirements and the involvement of the public.

However, the Ministerial Council has since determined that:

- the AWDC will be wound-up and its assets sold in an orderly manner;
- the AWDC's role would be as an asset management and disposal agency, operating on a strictly commercial basis; and
- the AWDC will cease industrial development subsidies, economic development activities, promotion and public affairs activities, community services activities and social undertakings.

The core activity of the AWDC is now land and asset management, development and sales. The AWDC manages a Land Bank of around 7,300 hectares in the border region.

According to the 2002-03 AWDC Annual Report, the AWDC set new regional benchmarks in sustainable urban development through continuation of the natural resources auditing of its development areas to assist in planning and urban design activities and through ongoing liaison with municipal councils and state agencies.

6.4. Urban and Regional Development Legislation

In addition to the *Albury-Wodonga Development Act 1973*, DOTARS is responsible for another three related acts concerning urban and regional development:

- *Growth Centres (Financial Assistance) Act 1973*, which facilitates financial assistance through grants and loans to the States for urban and regional development associated with specified Growth Centres;
- *Land Commissions (Financial Assistance) Act 1973*, which facilitates financial assistance through grants and loans to State Land Commissions for the acquisition of land for urban expansion; and
- *Urban and Regional Development (Financial Assistance) Act 1974*, which facilitates financial assistance through grants and loans to the States for urban and regional development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE COMMITTEE

ATTACHMENT TO SUBMISSION NO. 140

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