

Committees for our Cities and Regions call for a national strategy out of the COVID crisis

10 November 2020

The Committees for Cities and Regions Australia and New-Zealand network calls for the urgent development of a clear and integrated plan for ensuring our cities and regions can accelerate the return to the vibrant and safe places we have come to expect.

Australia and New Zealand have done better than most in managing the COVID-19 health crisis. We should capitalise on this achievement by developing consistent standards for a common recovery roadmap that will protect and support our communities while balancing economic opening and recovery efforts.

With structures such as Australia's National Cabinet having already demonstrated the benefit of co-ordinated decision-making, the Committees consider similar frameworks should continue to operate to support collaboration for our economic recovery. This means cooperation by all levels of government, industry and community stakeholders to build the standards and plans that will drive our social and economic future.

As a network, the Committees have identified six common actions to underpin the return of our social and economic strength.

- 1. Consistent and clear standards for health and safety for the 'new normal'** With borders opening over time, health standards on social distancing, mask wearing and business operations should be clear and preferably consistent for individuals and organisations. We must also ensure a robust process for quarantining new arrivals to allow for a return to sustainable and desirable immigration and travel capacity. Our economic health depends on the return to capacity of critical air routes such as Melbourne-Sydney, Auckland/Christchurch-Australian cities, and to our regions as well as the reopening of our domestic and international borders for critical sectors such as tourism, trade and international education.
- 2. Planning and co-operation for regulatory reform** Areas for reform within Australia which would enhance economic recovery include streamlining red-tape (such as occupational licensing), industrial relations laws and focusing on key sectors of the manufacturing industry. Ensuring trade and connectivity across state borders has a clear plan is essential so that trade is not hindered. Coordinated responses in those areas would be welcome.
- 3. Connected infrastructure planning and investment** Cities and regions should not be considered in isolation but as a part of a long-term vision and settlement strategy. A clear roadmap and vision for investment in areas such as transport infrastructure would



ensure that projects provide long-term benefits and drive a more sustainable pattern of settlement and economic activity in the wake of COVID-19, not just short-term gains.

- 4. Digital security and digital access for all** The COVID-19 pandemic confirms that all individuals and organisations must be able to operate in an increasingly interconnected world using technology. Digital capacity needs are wide-ranging and include digital inclusion, cybersecurity, equity, transparency, adequacy of internet access and regulatory balance. The accelerated pace of change in technology, including the increased application of Artificial Intelligence across technology systems, requires governments to maintain regulatory control and keep pace with rapid changes.
- 5. Government and private sector collaboration essential to drive investment and recovery** With government budgets stretched to support people and businesses through the pandemic, private sector investment globally and domestically will be needed to drive economic stimulus and recovery at the scale and speed required. The policy settings, infrastructure investment frameworks for openness and national planning processes must build the confidence and trust needed to encourage private sector participation and partnerships.
- 6. Vision – creating a coalition of confidence** Australia and New Zealand are amongst the most liveable countries in the world, with world class strengths in areas such as agribusiness, health and medical technology, innovation and advanced manufacturing. In order to continue to attract and retain the appropriate skills and business investment, a clear roadmap and vision for those industries and a coherent skilled migrant policy, are necessities. This is how our nations will continue to attract and retain much needed skills and investment into our cities and regions.

The 'Committees for' Network can help

Our 'Committees for' are not politically motivated. They are a unifying voice working in the long-term interests of their cities and regions, rather than the interests of any particular sector or individual organisation.

The Committees, which represent more than twenty Australian and New Zealand cities and regions, have been meeting during the COVID-19 crisis to draw from their broad cross-sectoral membership to determine how to rebuild economic and community strength.

Now more than ever we need cross-sectoral and impartial collaboration to help us on the road to recovery.

The Committees stand ready to collaborate with governments, community and the private sector to drive the key areas that will underpin our economic and social strength.

Representing Committees for Adelaide, Auckland (NZ), Ballarat, Brisbane, Broome, Canterbury (NZ), Cairns, Echuca Moama, Geelong, Gippsland, Greater Frankston, Greater Shepparton, the Hunter, Melbourne, Perth, Portland, Sydney, Wagga and Wyndham



More information on each Committee can be found by accessing their individual websites listed in the ***Annex***.

For more information please contact Committee for Melbourne, Director of Policy & Research, Leanne Edwards at ledwards@melbourne.org.au

For media please contact Committee for Melbourne, Communications Events & Engagement Manager, Laura Kerr Melvin at lmelvin@melbourne.org.au

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Annex: Committees for Cities and Regions Network website links:

Adelaide - committeeforadelaide.org.au

Auckland (NZ) - committeeforauckland.co.nz

Ballarat - committeeforballarat.com

Brisbane - committeeforbrisbane.org.au

Canterbury (NZ) - committeeforcanterbury.co.nz

Cairns - advancecairns.com

Echuca Moama - c4em.com.au

Geelong – committeeforgeelong.com.au

Gippsland - <https://www.committeeforgippsland.com.au/gippsland-taking-care-of-business/>

Greater Frankston - c4gf.com.au

Greater Shepparton - c4gs.com.au

the Hunter – hunter.org.au

Melbourne – melbourne.org.au

Perth - committeeforperth.com.au

Portland – committeeforportland.com.au

Sydney – sydney.org.au

Wagga - committee4wagga.com.au

Wyndham - committeeforwyndham.com.au

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