

Foreword

The way Australia succeeds in the future will be largely determined by the health of our major cities. They are where three out of every four of us live. They are the economic powerhouses that produce 80 per cent of our national wealth. Our cities are simply too important to ignore.

Last year the Australian Government released the National Urban Policy *Our Cities, Our Future* to guide improvements in the productivity, sustainability and liveability of our major cities. Key to achieving change in our cities is the ability to understand them – how they compare with each other and how they change from year to year. This is the primary purpose of the *State of Australian Cities*.



The report provides an evolving evidence base for the implementation of our National Urban Policy. It looks at progress in key areas such as how well our cities are prepared for climate change, population growth and housing for an ageing population. It looks at how well we are addressing the challenges of urban congestion, improving the design of our buildings and public spaces and greening our cities. It draws together the work of some of the finest researchers and industry experts in the nation. I am enormously grateful for their time and generosity in allowing us to take their findings to a national audience in this way.

State of Australian Cities 2012 benefits from the fresh data contained in the 2011 Census, shining the brightest possible spotlight on the way Australians live. It is also a valuable reference point to monitor the reforms agreed to by all State and Territory leaders via the Council of Australian Governments to improve the long-term planning in our capital cities.

State of Australian Cities 2012 is the third report in the series and provides data on all Australian cities with populations above 100,000 people. The first two reports have now been fully downloaded almost two million times – proof of the enormous national and international interest in knowing more about our cities. I am confident that this report will be received with just as much enthusiasm by policy makers, academics and everyday Australians who care about the productivity, sustainability and liveability of our cities.

In this Asian Century, how we plan, invest in and manage our cities will determine how well we survive in the fastest-growing and most dynamic region on earth. Understanding how our cities work is key to that and I am delighted to add to that important collection of knowledge with *State of Australian Cities 2012*.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Albanese'.

Anthony Albanese

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
December 2012