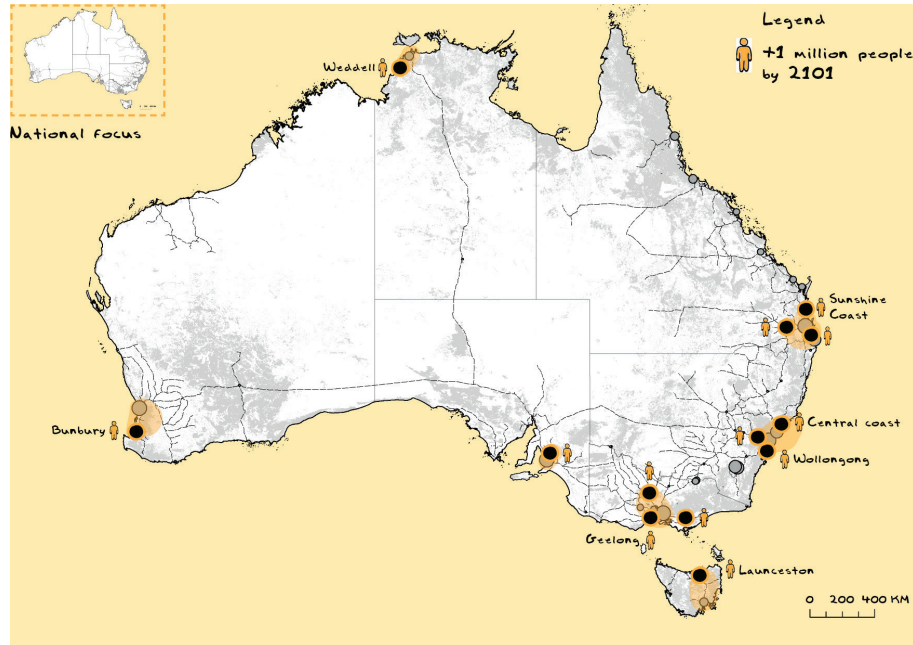


AUDRC Research Note

The Plan My Australia expert's survey



What continental-scale settlement patterns do planning experts support?

Background

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics' mid-range projection for 2101 is for the Australian population to effectively double, reaching over 53 million.
- The projected growth of Australia's population raises implications for long-term infrastructure planning and preserving the nation's prized liveability.
- The central research question guiding our enquiry was: What are potentially the most sustainable, liveable, productive, and feasible settlement patterns for accommodating a projected doubling of Australia's population by 2101?
- The project collated findings from a national scale, online Delphi-method survey of nearly 300 Australian planning experts who considered, rated, and commented on possible future settlement patterns to accommodate a projected population of over 50 million in Australia by the start of the 22nd century.

- The scenarios were Boosted Capital Cities, Boosted Secondary Capital Cities, Satellite Cities, East–West Megaregions, Sea Change Cities, Southern Megaregions, Northern Major Cities, Northern Regional Cities, Eastern Megacities and Western Cities.

Key findings

- The results indicate that the Australian planning experts favour three possible settlement patterns – satellite cities orbiting the state capital cities, boosted secondary capital cities on rail links connecting the capital cities, and cities in east-west megaregions.

- Experts agreed that Satellite Cities and Boosted Secondary Capital Cities scenarios are potentially feasible, productive, liveable, and sustainable. The experts found East-West Megaregion scenario unfeasible but potentially productive, liveable, and sustainable.

- Experts were worried about the Eastern Megacities scenario, which compounded population growth in Sydney and Melbourne and scenarios proposing development in 'frontier' regions such as northern and western Australia.

- The OECD identifies over 160 countries with national-level urban policies in different forms, development stages, and varied thematic foci. Nonetheless, Australia currently lacks an overarching national urban policy.

- Policymakers should consider the findings in the context of a re-emerging national urban policy needed to integrate a mosaic of fragmented and un-coordinated plans for sustainable population decentralisation.

Links to related publications

- Bolleter, J., Edwards, N., Freestone, R., Nichols, D., & Hooper, P. (2022). Evaluating scenarios for twenty-first-century Australian settlement planning: a Delphi study with planning experts. *International Planning Studies*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13563475.2022.2042213>

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