

AHURi Research Webinar Series

The role of local government in Australian cities

Speaker

Prof Andrew Butt, RMIT University

Respondent

Liz de Chastel, Senior Policy Adviser, Australian Local Government Association



Welcome

Dr Tom Alves

AHURI (facilitator)



Housekeeping

Webinar recording available at:

https://www.ahuri.edu.au/events/ahuri-research-webinars/webinar-local-government-co-ordination

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The role of local government in Australian cities

Download the report: ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/352

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Local Government Co-ordination

Metropolitan governance in twenty-first century Australia

Andrew Butt, RMIT University

The Research Team

Assoc. Andrew Butt – RMIT University

Professor Stefanie Dühr – UniSA

Dr Annette Kroen – RMIT University

Assoc. Professor Wendy Steele – RMIT University

Local Government and Australia's Cities

What role should they have?

Our Research

- A review of Australian and international examples
- An expert panel on the national scene, continuity and change in models of governing the metropolis
- Distilling the features that rationalise and differentiate a role for local government collaboration (between and across tiers) in the critical issues facing contemporary Australian cities
- Directions for policy and research in this important space



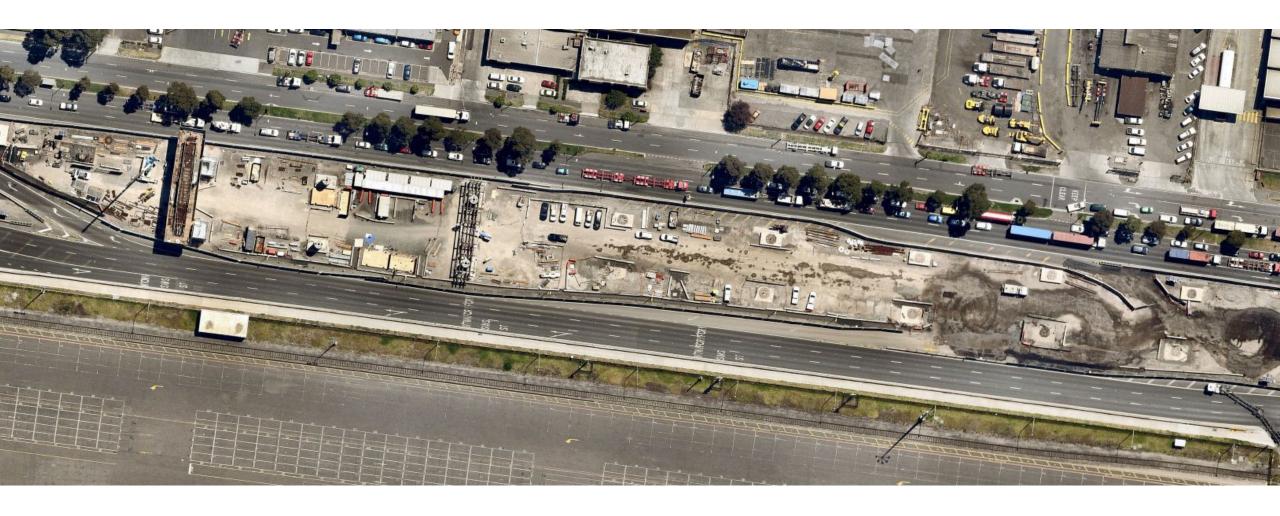
What is driving metropolitan change in Australia?

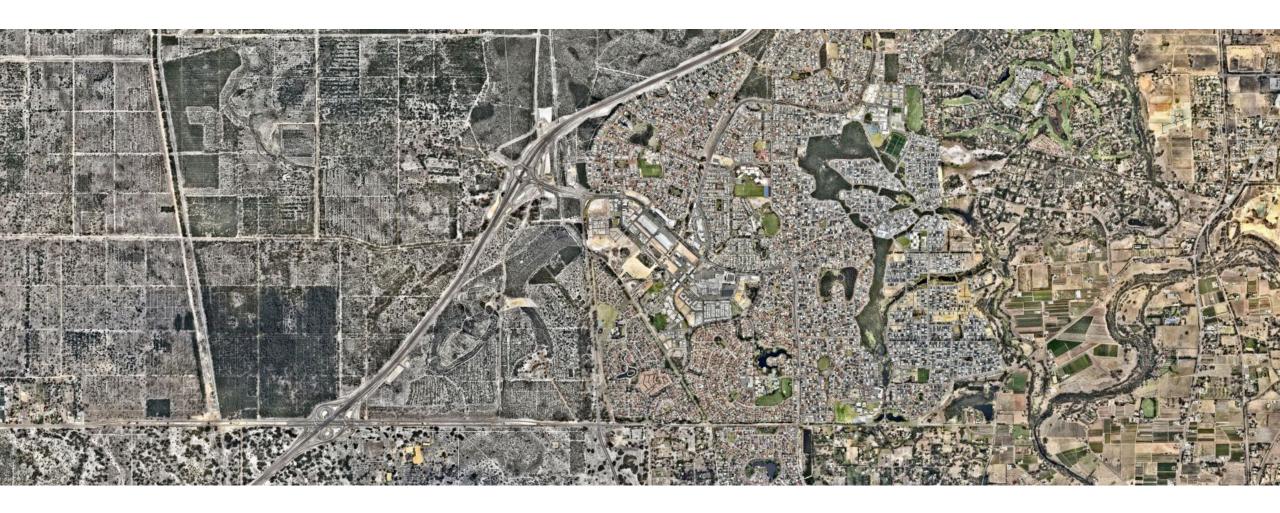
- What is metropolitan governance in Australia?
- The roles of state governments (and local government)
- Engagement from the private sector, civil society and the emerging role of the Commonwealth
- How has this changed, and what has changed for local government?
- Is this new? What are the features of contemporary metropolitan governance that make this a crucial, and increasingly urgent issue to address?











The roles of local government

- The consequences of reform and review
- The roles of state governments
- Engagement from the private sector, civil society and the emerging role of the Commonwealth
- How has this changed, and what has changed for local government?
- Is this new? What are the features of contemporary metropolitan governance that make this a crucial issue to address?

What are some lessons internationally?

- Informal (soft) co-ordination including voluntary networks (OECD assesses that 52% of metro regions are like this)
- Inter-municipal authorities (24%)
- Supra-municipal authorities (16%)
- Special status for metro-region (8%)
- These typologies conceal actual contextual differences in capacity and legitimacy of these structures within their territories
- Examples Auckland amalgamations, Greater London (supra-municipal), *MetroVancouver* & *Verband Region Stuttgart* (voluntary associations, with legitimacy!)



...and some Australian examples

- Regional voluntary organisations (ROCs) across and within metro regions
- Amalgamations (for better or worse)
- Structured regionally-focussed institutions (Greater Sydney Commission, WA Development Assessment Panels), delivered from states
- City Deals (and other sectoral direct/bypass funding models from the Commonwealth)
- International networks (100RC, UNGC Cities Programme etc)

What should be the priorities, and principles?

- Key issues relate to the mandate given/taken by the states
- Many of these issues do not relate to new structural models, but rather reflect on the boundaries of what local government does, and is seen to do (and the agency they have in that process)
 - How to target the effective actors in the process?
 - What is the mandate being sought for what reach and sectors?
 - How to develop meaningful autonomy and authority over what?
 - Fiscal powers and fiscal independence how to establish these?
 - Who is politically accountable?



...and directions from here?

- Deeper analysis of specific examples as they exist in an Australian (and perhaps state-by-state)
 context
- Considering the informal roles and the formal roles the soft influence of working within large and smaller scale projects, and speaking to the impacts on community and place
- Re-asserting the democratic role for local government
- Re-setting and restructure of cities policy in a period of slower growth what opportunities does this present?

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