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CITIES CAN'T BE CUT ADRIFT FROM A REAL NATIONAL CABINET

Australia is a highly urbanised nation, but this fact has been overlooked in the Prime Minister's National Cabinet structure announced yesterday.

The places where most Australians live and work, and where the majority of our GDP is generated, are not supported in this new approach.

This is a shocking omission, compounded by the exclusion of local government, which will hurt our economic recovery, and limit the capacity to deliver plans that meet the differing needs of diverse communities around the nation.

Getting our federation working more effectively is important, but meeting this challenge requires recognising that we have a clear national interest in securing more productive, liveable and resilient cities and suburbs.

This is especially so if the Prime Minister is serious about his new approach having a singular focus on jobs.

The Prime Minister and the Treasurer are fond of citing the Productivity Commission's Shifting the Dial report. But its recommendations on boosting productivity are at odds with the approach taken to the National Cabinet structure, when it comes to 'Better functioning towns and cities' - especially recommendation 4.6, which makes clear the critical role of engagement with local government in effective planning for growth.

An effective, and representative National Cabinet must focus on the needs of Australia's cities and suburbs - and the millions of Australians who live and work in them. They deserve a voice in our recovery, and their future.

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