

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Australia is a federal monarchy with two tiers of subnational government comprising 6 states and 2 self-governing territories, and 562 local government areas.¹



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Review (VNR).²

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Australia has not yet developed a process to integrate the SDGs into national and subnational policy yet. Nonetheless, the SDGs are consistent with the Australian government's priorities and efforts across a range of sectors such as health, education, agriculture, water, the environment, the economy, and gender equality. In addition, Australia has endorsed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The Australian government has convened an **interdepartmental group of senior officials** with portfolio responsibilities that link to one or more of the SDGs and separate cross-government groups on specific aspects such as data or communications. The senior officials group, co-chaired by the **Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)** and the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**, provides coordination on how to best give effect to the 2030 Agenda. The government has engaged with state, territory and local governments on the SDGs through existing committees and representative organizations.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The 2018 VNR was coordinated by the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**, using the whole-of-government **interdepartmental committee** on the SDGs. Agencies were designated to lead or support various SDG chapters that best fit with their portfolios and conducted stakeholder outreach across sectors and jurisdictions.

1.3 MONITORING

Australia's consideration of the SDG Indicators has been a whole-of-government exercise. Australia's national statistical agency, the **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)** undertook a data mapping exercise for the SDGs, in conjunction with lead agencies. The government has developed an **SDG data platform** to house available government datasets on the SDG Indicators, and to indicate the status of Australian data collection against all 232 SDG indicators. The platform is a whole-of-government initiative, funded by DFAT, produced by the Department of Environment and Energy.

The **Smart Cities Plan** (see below) includes a commitment to measure the success of government policies and inform Australians about the trends and changes in our cities. The **National Cities Performance Framework** supports this approach by bringing together critical economic, social and environmental data for Australia's largest cities into an easily-accessible dashboard.

Australia is supporting programs to help close the gender data gap, such as the UN Women flagship program Making Every Woman and Girl Count, which aims to create an enabling environment for gender statistics and increase the production and accessibility of gender disaggregated data. The country also supports the UN Women's Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) program, which is accelerating efforts to generate comparable gender indicators on health, education, employment, asset ownership and entrepreneurship. Finally, Australia works in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund to support the kNOWVAWdata program, which is strengthening regional and national capacity to measure violence against women in the Asia Pacific.

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20470VNR_final_approved_version.pdf (2018)

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Many local governments, such as the **Perth Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council** and **Melbourne City Council**, are leading the way through the incorporation of the SDGs into their planning processes.

As part of the effort to support LRGs, the Australian government released the **Smart Cities Plan** in 2016, which outlines a vision for productive and liveable cities by promoting collaboration between all levels of government, the private sector, research organizations and the local community. 'City Deals' is a key component of the plan, promoted as a collaborative approach aimed at bringing together the three levels of government to support urban policy and develop a shared vision to improve infrastructure, innovation and job accessibility in a specific geographic area. 'City Deals' is an example of special purpose vehicle funds conceived as partnerships to leverage funds for project financing. However, many mayors argue in favour of adopting discretionary instead of nationally-targeted funding programmes to support localization of the SDGs.³

The **Western Australia Local Government Association (ALGA)**, and the **Council of Capital City Lord Mayors** worked with the federal government to contribute to the reporting process in 2018, gathering experiences at the local level.

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



2018

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



2018

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

The 2018 VNR acknowledges that "many targets in the SDGs are in the purview of subnational levels of government" and makes many references to local and state governments, with examples of concrete local initiatives for SDG implementation.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► Cities such as **Sydney**, **Melbourne** and the **Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council in Perth** were among the first local councils to integrate the SDGs into their plans or strategies (Sustainable Sydney 2030, Plan Melbourne 2017- 2050, and Perth Regional Environment Strategy 2016-2020).

► Other local authorities are promoting climate change and sustainability actions in their communities to build resilience and adaptation capacity. Over 100 local government areas that encompass more than 300 cities and towns across Australia, representing almost 11 million people, have joined the **Climate Council's Cities Power Partnership**, which encourages, motivates and accelerates local initiatives in emissions reductions and clean energy.⁴

► In implementing Plan **Melbourne** 2017-2050, the Victorian government is delivering an integrated response to cross-cutting SDGs, with a performance monitoring framework for measuring them. Central to Plan Melbourne is the creation of '20-minute neighbourhoods' that offer accessible, safe and attractive local areas where people can meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip. This shows how the SDGs can be delivered locally, making Melbourne communities healthier, more sustainable, liveable and inclusive places to live.

Also, urban greening has been tried in Melbourne's Western Suburbs, an area that receives less rainfall than other parts of Melbourne, meaning it is drier and can experience warmer daytime temperatures. An increasing population will impact further on pollution, heat stress and the environment. A group of stakeholders with an interest in urban greening has come together to share knowledge, and promote and implement solutions through targets to increase green space and tree canopy

3. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>. For example, the most recent City Deal is the Western Sydney City Deal which is a 20-year agreement between the three levels of government to deliver a once in-a-generation transformation of Sydney's outer west – creating the 'Western Parkland City'. The agreement builds on the Australian Government's commitment to build the Western Sydney Airport to catalyze investment, development and job opportunities in the region and beyond. It also includes measures to realize the '30-minute city' and maintain and enhance Western Sydney's unique character by improving community infrastructure and liveability. See VNR, 2018, p. 76-77.

4. The examples above are extracted from UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

cover. Activities under the Greening the West partnership, supported by an Australian Government environment program, have included tree planting, creation of additional parklands, harvesting stormwater for use on green spaces, and supporting community gardens.

Still in Melbourne, partnering with CrowdSpot and Monash University's XYX Lab, girls and women were invited to pin a public interactive map "Free to Be" and describe their experience of that area. The feedback was shared with authorities such as the city of Melbourne, Metro Trains, and Victoria Police, to help create a safer city for young girls and women. This innovative Australian project has since been expanded to Sydney, as well as cities internationally including New Delhi, Kampala, Lima and Madrid.

► **Brisbane** City Council has put sustainability at the core of its planning, with a focus on biodiversity, reducing emissions, green transport, water conservation, urban forests and parks, and waste and resource recovery. Active and engaged community groups and volunteers are all playing their part to enact this vision of a clean, green and sustainable city.

► The city of **Fremantle** adopted the One Planet Fremantle Strategy, and its sustainability principles. This aligns with the intent of several SDGs.

► A number of Australian cities are **Healthy Cities**, which promote and support actions to establish social, economic and physical environments conducive to good health and wellbeing. Healthy Cities Illawarra is a leader in the Asia-Pacific region, sitting on the Steering Committee for the Asia-Pacific Healthy Cities Alliance and working with the University of Wollongong to develop a localized regional approach to the SDGs.

► The cities of **Melbourne** and **Sydney** are participating in the international **100 Resilient Cities** program, which supports cities to incorporate resilience thinking into local planning.

► At the state level, the **South Australian Government's** Health in All Policies initiative takes a 'joined-up' policy development approach to achieve better public policy outcomes and simultaneously improve population health and wellbeing.

► In 2008, the **New South Wales Government** developed a long term joint initiative with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council in recognition that the quality of water and sewerage service delivery in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the state, was significantly lower than in the broader community. The initiative provides funding through local governments and private providers for 62 communities to receive maintenance, operations and repair of water supply and sewerage systems. The quality of existing infrastructure is investigated at each location and project plans developed to improve service levels to the standard expected in the wider community.

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

The city of **Sydney** presented in 2018 a Green Environmental Sustainability Progress Report.⁵ **Melbourne** published a VLR in 2022.⁶

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

No reference.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: Australia takes a **human rights-based approach to sustainable development**, emphasizing the need for countries to respect, protect and promote human rights, in line with international human rights law, in the implementation of all SDGs. As a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (2018-2020), Australia has pledged to promote gender equality, good governance, and freedom of expression, the rights of indigenous peoples and strong national human rights institutions and capacity building. Its term on the Council will also be guided by other core objectives: the abolition of the death penalty; promoting equal human rights for LGBTIQ+ persons; and protection of the freedom of religion or belief; and ensuring civil society is enabled to protect and promote human rights through participation in the UN human rights system.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

There have been positive trends at the subnational level in terms of women participation in local politics, with the Australian Capital Territory returning a female majority following its 2016 elections, and the Tasmanian parliament returning a female majority in March 2018.

5. It is available here: <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Green-Environmental-Sustainability-Progress-Report.pdf>

6. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/melbourne_2022.pdf

3.2 COVID 19

Not applicable.

4. SDG INDICATORS⁷

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		34.0 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	99 (2020)
	Rural	-
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		-
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		99.3 (2015, Canberra)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		7.1 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		22.2 (2020)

7. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/aus>