‘MidiCities’
Potential leaders in Australia’s urban future

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‘MidiCities’

Shorthand for

• regional capitals
• provincial centres
• ‘mid-sized’ cities
• second tier
• non-metropolitan

which lack a clear, simple term (or distinct identity)

Dozens of cities around the nation
Defined by function as well as size
The secret cities of Australia

• Home and workplace to about 4 million urban dwellers.
• “... form a critical element of the Australian settlement network” (LaTrobe Uni policy workshop 2010 – draft communiqué)
• Often over-looked: awareness / perception gap between major cities and ‘rural & regional’ issues.
• ‘Under-represented in policy formulation, quality research and public consciousness.’

• A bit like losing Melbourne
... or Adelaide and Perth combined
**Imperative of change**

- All cities large and small facing major challenges
  - Low carbon, oil vulnerability, demographic changes, economic shifts & shocks (*future forms of ‘work’?, ‘business’?*)
- ‘Business As Usual’ is not a credible future.
- Impacts on MidiCities unclear & poorly researched.
- Change generates new opportunities for innovators.
- Planned change is essential - but Big, Slow & Tough.

Economic resilience, environmental sustainability and liveability / social cohesion are inter-dependent.
But …

• Current systems and processes struggling to achieve
  – agreement on preferred future to be pursued
  – implementation once objectives agreed
• Segmentation of responsibilities → Fragmentation of
decision-making + multiple ‘gatekeepers’ with veto.
• Risk aversion / avoidance → indecision, inaction.
  (Wading through ‘treacle of government’.)
• Rise of ‘Followership’ rather than leadership.
THIS WAS NOT A MISTAKE!

THE CLEARLY DEFINED RESPONSIBILITY

Is the enemy of

THE INTEGRATED OUTCOME.
MidiCities’ advantages

- **Legible scale & structure** = transparent dynamics so easier to identify strategic options & likely impacts.
- **Strong multi-functional heart.** (Best single contribution ... )
- ‘**Joined up’ mindset** can redress fragmentation & veto sequence.
- “**All in this together**” – unified by shared interest as citizen.
- **Big enough, small enough:** capacity + nimbleness.
- **Usually single municipal authority for a complete functional unit.**
- **Localisation:** many aspects of ‘10 minute living’ already in place.
**MidiCities for the future**

- Facing vulnerabilities, uncertainties & opportunities.
- Positioned to be more innovative, proactive & responsive than metropolitan cities.
- Nimble, focussed, ‘joined-up’ understanding of whole place.
- Require skills & structures for setting & delivering change.

... subject to redressing:
- Conservatism – habitual resistance to change and innovation.
- Entrenched power cliques (confusing dominance with leadership).