

Submission – Australian Smart Communities Association

The government's plan for a multi-billion dollar fund to assist in the development of smart cities through the collaboration of smart local councils and private industry fits in well with the local council and industry initiatives that have recently been established by the Australian Smart Communities Association (ASCA).

ASCA would like to suggest establishing live demonstration sites where parties can collaborate, and from which scalable and replicable projects can be developed. At local city level start-ups and other local businesses will be invited to participate and will be mentored by the collaborative. Commitments along these lines from private industry are already in place.

As the country's peak industry body ASCA would be delighted to assist the government in realising the outcomes envisaged in its policy document.

ASCA's Vision

We have brought three groups together on the one hand 40 local councils, members of the Australian Smart City Association, a Smart City Industry Collaborative, consisting of around the 25 leading companies involved in telecoms, utilities, infrastructure, ICT and sustainability and some of Australia's leading R&D institutions.

Through a well defined process these two groups are working together through steering committees and project groups.

The aim of this collaboration is to provide leadership in the development of policies and strategies that will lead to the development of modern cities that are suited to the new sustainable, interconnected, sharing and digital economy.

Through collaboration councils will be able to develop a structured approach to the development of smart cities, whereby we put the social and economic benefits of the community before commercial goals. In other words, we will deliver smart city projects based on what is best for the community.

For this to happen we assist local councils with the development of their own local smart city platform in which councils work with industry, communities and other stakeholders (health, education, transport, businesses).

Our approach is rather different from other commercial offerings in that we specifically indicate that we place the community outcomes above those of the individual companies involved. In this way we can deliver the best outcome for each council. In the end a smart city is all about its people, it will be the people that in the end will make the city smart. Smart cities need to be led by what its people expect from such a city. Organisations involved in the ASCA smart city approach all have committed to this.

As the industry's peak body we are also well-positioned to lead the development of national standards for interoperability, operating systems and data hubs.

ASCA is also part of several international organisations and this will allow us to bring best international practices to Australia; benchmark ourselves with the best in the world; and work together with other international cities to establish KPIs and other smart city measurements.



Sydney will also host an international smart city conference (GSC3) on 2 November, where these issues will be discussed. We will use this conference to put Australian smart cities on the international map.

Smart councils are a pre-requisite

It is essential that before a collaborative platform can be successfully deployed local councils need to look at the 'smart city' from a strategic perspective. Through a collaborative model the community, stakeholders and industry can provide their input into the strategy. This would add value to the strategic process that the council will have to go through in order to successfully implement their smart city model.

However, before any of this can be effectively executed we need councils that have a strategic approach; otherwise we will continue to end up with 'death by pilots'.

Based on lessons learned both from within Australia and globally the key to success is a strategic, holistic approach to smart cities by local councils.

The key steps for councils to take are as follows:

1. Leadership and vision (mayor, councillors, GM)
2. Creation of a smart council (open systems, open government, open data, no silos)
3. Engagement with stakeholders (healthcare, education, business, transport, energy, waste, water, etc.)
4. Building trust through responsiveness and continuous community engagement (citizens)
5. Projects

Once such a digital master plan is in place a collaborative platform can be established.

Collaborative platforms

We assist these smart councils with the development of collaborative platforms that can help them in developing their own smart city. For this we suggest councils use open standards on which city platforms can be built. This allows for inter-city and inter-regional sharing, which will significantly reduce costs.

The business element of the collaborative will also be in the best position to help local councils to generate viable business and investment models through innovative concepts for procurement, city-as-a-service models, and through OPEX rather than CAPEX models. These models reduce the financial and political risks attached to new smart city approaches and projects.

In order to deliver the right smart city outcomes there must be a commitment from the members to actively underpin the macro-economic outcomes the program looks to effect, including local economy development. That means looking for local options (within each community) where possible, and then looking to state and national capabilities before resorting to bringing in players from abroad.

We also encourage councils to facilitate a locally-based industry platform which is open to local businesses who wish to participate in these projects. It also means making a commitment to mentor and foster local suppliers for the longer term. The aim is also to create long term new economic income through local businesses; which in turn will improve the tax position.

Steering committee

Upon a successful outcome of the initial meeting between the council and other members of the collaborative the next step will be to establish a local steering committee, which will include council directors, other potential community stakeholders, and members of the industry collaborative.

Councils and stakeholders can bring project to the table and these will then be discussed in an open forum consisting of representatives of the local council, members of the project team specifically selected for this project, and selected local businesses.



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A key benefit of a holistic steering committee approach is that it can look for synergy, develop multifunctional projects aimed at sharing ICT cost, maximising investments and assets, and delivering the most effective community outcomes, using ICT in a horizontal way in order to facilitate the creation of a true smart city platform.

Smart city project teams

While individual organisations can provide their input in the strategic development of a smart council as mentioned above, the collaborative itself concentrates on the project side (step 5 in smart councils). We believe that in the end the projects should be based on sound business models and funded through investments rather than through grants and subsidies.

Once projects are brought forward by the steering committee project groups can be established – obviously not all of the members will be involved in all of the projects.

The business members will validate technology delivery capabilities to decide objectively the degree of fit for a specific community. This adds value to councils who then don't have to spend as much time sorting through options that is really not a good fit.

The project groups discuss the viability of the projects; but, importantly, through the steering committee they can also look at sharing assets with other projects, discussing innovations and technologies, and considering different ideas that can be used to enhance the project and save costs. Cross-sector groups can also be established, through meetings and presentations, and these can submit and execute holistic innovative solutions to broader urban issues. Such a synergistic approach will also make it possible for the city to connect and accelerate progress.

It can also look at ways to strengthen previous activities, thus making existing projects smart. This increases the opportunity for the development of new markets, innovative solutions and new job creation. Where possible, these solutions are replicated elsewhere (eg, regional models/collaboration)

A key problem for councils who have restructured themselves into a smart city/smart council is that despite their strategic approach the deployment of smart city projects often face delays and delivery problems because of the difficulty in aligning the various activities from the different partners involved in these projects. A broad-based project team can assist councils in coordinating and streamlining these projects and speeding up the delivery.

Other smart city issues

Within the context of a national smart city strategy there are a range of issues that should be addressed at a federal level. National coordination is also internationally seen as critical for the efficient and effective development of smart cities. However, Australia is one of the first to come up with a National Smart City Plan and we could play an exemplary role in this.

Apart from our above mentioned recommendations, we also would like recommend the following plan of actions from the Federal Government within its National Smart City Plan and ASCA would like to offer the government its advice and services in this respect, some this however, would require government funding.



Leading Regulatory Reform

ASCA strongly recommends that a Smart Infrastructure planning standard is implemented across Australia to:

- Eliminate different planning regimes for Smart and digital Infrastructure across state and territory jurisdictions
- Level playing field for all relevant authorities, developers, industry and service providers
- Lessen the impact of future retro-fitting of infrastructure

Measuring Success:

ASCA would like to partner with the Australian Government, other levels of government and industry to create a set of Smart City / Community metrics that will provide a common baseline to identify and measure progress and performance. Cities / Regions and Industry will be able to channel investment based on these common metrics.

Technology Solutions First thinking:

ASCA advocates the adoption of lean, agile practices for Cities / Regions to adopt latest technologies to find ways of solving problems and create economic opportunities through innovation. The Australian Government has the opportunity to develop significant funding programs to kick-start this across Australia and in partnership with the various State and territory governments.

Smart City Experience Centres and Living Labs to serve as National Research facilities

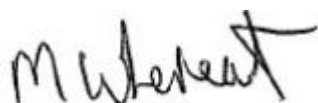
Good planning is a critical step to save millions in ineffective construction/capital works. The concept of living labs is to test a few technology 'widgets' to ensure they deliver an effective result and economy when deployed at scale. The Smart Experience Centre allows community consultation, vendor and prospective city to see the lab results in real time. The Sunshine Coast and Adelaide have these facilities operational for their own use. Expanding these and selecting a few other sites could lead to the development of national testing and experience centres thereby avoiding replication and unnecessary costs.

Open Real Time data:

ASCA advocates the creation of standards and regulation for collection and storage of data in a City / Region environment, including the regulation of data monetisation and the ability for open data to drive innovation and new economic outcomes.

Gap analysis of existing Federal and State Legislation and Regulation:

It has been identified that legislation, regulation, policies and standards around planning and infrastructure development have be addressed with immediate urgency in relation to Smart City, Innovation, Sharing Economy and other Digital Disruption based initiatives. ASCA advocates that the Australian Government in partnership with State / Territory and Local governments implement a gap analysis of existing Federal and State Legislation and Regulation that impede Smart City, Digital Disruption and Innovation opportunities across all relevant industry sectors.



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