

Infrastructure for users

Australian Infrastructure Audit

Infrastructure for users now and in the future

- Infrastructure is only as good as the services it delivers to users, but users are often not at the centre of infrastructure planning and service delivery.
- Users increasingly expect more digitally-enabled, customised and real-time services.
- This Audit puts users first by assessing the access, quality and cost of their infrastructure.
- Most users' needs are being met relatively well, however where people reside can directly impact the services they receive.
- Fast-growing cities have good services through competitive markets, but population growth creates pressure.
- There is poorer access to services in many outer urban and regional communities.
- Remote and some rural communities face challenges accessing infrastructure services.
- Lower income households pay disproportionately more of their income on essential infrastructure services.

Who uses infrastructure?

- All 25 million Australians rely on infrastructure. By 2031 our population will be 31.4 million.
- 16% of Australians are aged over 65 today – growing to 18% in 15 years.
- 60% of Australians currently live in our four largest cities alone and more than 70% of national population growth is occurring in these cities.

Average Australian household's weekly infrastructure spend

	<u>\$205</u>
	<u>\$45</u>
	<u>\$41</u>
	<u>\$23</u>

Sector specific impacts for users



Transport: Travel patterns are changing and becoming more complex. Road networks are extensive. Public transport access is focused on inner urban areas, where quality is high but urban congestion is common. Transport costs are high, particularly for car drivers.



Social infrastructure: Access differs greatly by geography. Quality is high but maintenance of ageing assets is expensive. New service delivery models can help to reduce rising costs as a result of population growth, ageing and densification.



Energy: Access, quality and reliability are high, but transitions to new energy sources may create vulnerabilities. Energy costs have increased more rapidly than most other infrastructure. New technologies can help users to manage or reduce costs.



Telecommunications: Significant investment is occurring in mobile and fixed-line networks, but rural and remote users are often under-served. Quality is improving, but fixed broadband speeds lag internationally. Users are consuming and demanding more data, but there are concerned about cost.



Water: Safe, reliable and affordable water is largely taken for granted and the value of water is not understood. Industries have used efficiently-provided productive water to support growth and productivity, particularly in regional areas. Climate change, population growth, ageing assets, and competing interests will ramp up pressure for limited resources.

Principle challenges and opportunities

Challenge: Governments and service providers do not always adequately measure and report on access, quality and costs for users. Insufficient user focused data makes it difficult for users and policy makers to make decisions that improve user outcomes.

Opportunity: Some users have limited information or understanding of the costs associated with their use of infrastructure, however new technologies will increase information and control for those that can afford them.

Opportunity: User data and customer insights can enable innovation to better meet users' needs. Better understanding users' needs can help operators to improve user experience, attract more users and provide services more efficiently.

Opportunity: Technologies can help to overcome barriers to service access as a result of distance or location. Better access to services through improved technology can bring economic and social opportunities for users outside of fast-growing city centres.

Challenge: Users with disability, or disadvantage, or a lack of digital literacy may be unable to access new technological services. This increases inequality and reduces quality of life.