



# STATE OF PLACE **2021 AUSTRALIAN LIVEABILITY CENSUS**



Place Score acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney.

We pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to other First Nations people.

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#### Data Analysis

Marcus Crowley

Jameel Baig

#### Place Score Team

Ainsley Milton

Amulya Ragam

Claudine O'Keefe

Srishti Sharma

#### Authors

Aditya Malshe

Greg Vann

Jameel Baig

Kylie Legge

Maxime Boutaghou Courtemanche

Valli Morphett

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Suite 1-2, Level 5, 2-12 Foveaux St,  
Surry Hills 2010, NSW Australia

**[www.placescore.org](http://www.placescore.org)**

ABN 19 610 823 286

T: +61 2 8065 7401

E: [admin@placescore.org](mailto:admin@placescore.org)

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# Liveability in Australia

Kylie Legge, CEO Place Score

Liveability is something that we all want to achieve for our communities, but because it is hard to define, it has also been hard to measure and track. Over the last 5 years Place Score has been committed to solving this challenge by providing governments and the private sector with actionable insights into local communities that drive better place outcomes.

## MEASURING LIVEABILITY

Data is becoming a language that we can all understand. We are used to using census stats or even traffic volumes to help us make decisions. This information begins to give us a picture of a community, but it has many limitations. Similarly, liveability indexes, whether delivered by the media, business or government, have their own challenges in capturing what really makes a place somewhere people want to invest their life in.

City rankings can help drive internet hits, build reputation as well as the confidence to keep doing what is working or strive harder to make a difference. But how valuable are these top 10 lists in reflecting how liveable a city is – and are they actually aiming to achieve this? The two most established lists are provided by The Economist, a weekly magazine and on-line media outlet, and Mercer, a global human resources consultancy. In both cases the purpose of the ranking is to advise companies of how easy or hard it would be for an expatriate employee to live in an overseas city in order to work out how much to pay them. They were never designed to represent the local community's value of their city, how liveable nor how loveable it was to those people who had made it their permanent home.

## THE 2021 LIVEABILITY CENSUS

The Place Score methodology was developed to measure place values and experience, from the perspective of the local residents, or visitors to a place. Our objective has always been to provide decision makers with the data, insights and evidence to support investments that improve community outcomes. The 2021 Liveability Census has significantly increased our capacity to deliver this support with liveability data now available for every state and territory and over 400 local government areas (LGAs).

A second, but no less important objective of the Liveability Census was the unique opportunity to also understand how Covid-19 has impacted our communities' values and to understand the 'state of place' across the country.

## THE VALUE OF HUMAN-CENTRIC DATA

Quantitative, numeric, or objective data that counts things, people or actions is great for understanding the current situation, such as how many people are crossing the road. Qualitative data is generally descriptive and subjective. For instance, why are people crossing the road, or perhaps even why aren't they? Both provide essential information to guide decision making and tracking the impact of your investments.

There is a tsunami of data from traffic, phone,

# Liveability: an assessment of what a place is like to live in

Australian Curriculum





socials, internet and credit card, but a drought in terms of human-centric data. That is why the voice of the community provided by this Liveability Census and by local studies conducted by Place Score are so important. We need to understand what really matters to people and how our neighbourhoods are performing in order to be able to define national and local liveability strengths and to prioritise investments for maximum benefit.

### LIVEABILITY IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

The results reveal that Australia is generally doing well, but that there is scope for improvement. The local shops and neighbourhood offer have been the biggest contributors to local liveability. Australian liveability priorities however, are focussed on the environment and public realm - we need to do better to protect and maintain our green spaces.

But liveability is personal and the data shows important disparities. Young people value personal safety at a much higher rate than other ages, and are also not feeling safe in their own neighbourhoods. Those in the lower SEIFA brackets can also expect their neighbourhoods to be less liveable, and there is a distinct divide between the values of our oldest and youngest residents.

The 2021 Liveability Census has only just begun to share its secrets and we look forward to working with our partners in the coming months to further analyse the results.

### AUSTRALIA - TOP 3 LIVEABILITY STRENGTHS

CF	STRENGTHS	PX
6	Local businesses that provide for daily needs	7.6
5	Access to neighbourhood amenities	7.6
4	Sense of personal safety	7.3

### AUSTRALIA - TOP 3 LIVEABILITY PRIORITIES

CF	PRIORITIES	PX
10	Protection of the natural environment	6.6
2	General condition of public open space	7.0
9	Quality of public space	6.8

We thank all of our partners as well as every one of the over 100,000 community members who have participated in a Place Score study to date.

We hope that these insights help support those who invest in making better places for people across the country.

# KEY FINDINGS



# The 2021 Australian Liveability Census

## Understanding liveability from the perspective of our communities

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census is one of this country's most ambitious research projects. Our objectives were to capture community values regarding neighbourhood liveability as well as performance data in order to understand where investment should be made - geographically, demographically and thematically - to support better community outcomes.

### PROJECT SCOPE

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census set out to collect 8 to 10,000 new responses across Australia with a focus on our capital city council areas and hard to reach groups. Through our generous partners and a range of innovative data collection techniques we exceeded our best estimates. We collected over 30,000 responses, with people from 122 countries of birth represented and our largest sample yet from those who do not identify as female or male.

Liveability is for everyone, and every voice in every place counts. This report aims to reveal just some of the insights gained in the first three months of analysis since data acquisition closed at the end of June 2021.

The second part of the project is virtual - building the national benchmark into our proprietary Liveability Platform. We have designed a powerful, everyday tool for government and the private sector to access liveability data and ensure those insights are actionable and deliver high impact.

### COMMUNITY VALUES

A liveable neighbourhood is different for everyone. Understanding the relative values of different attributes allows us to prioritise investment in areas that will bring the most benefit to the largest number of people.

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census asked people to select attributes that were most important to them in their ideal neighbourhood. Consequently we can now see where there is clear agreement, as well as where there are conflicting views.

Community values are important because they are often different from what we complain about. Urban planners end up investing time and energy resolving conflicts rather than proactively focussing on what is important to most of us.

### LIVEABILITY PERFORMANCE

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census also invited respondents to assess the liveability of their own neighbourhoods by rating the personal impact of 50 Place Attributes. These Place Attributes cover a broad range of themes: open space, movement, local character, economy and more.

Performance data provides a quick snapshot of the relative liveability of our suburbs, LGAs, states and territories, from the perspective of the community. The overall Place Experience (PX) Score of a location is made up of the scores of thousands of respondents to each of 50 Place Attributes. While two locations' PX Scores may be similar, how the community rates each Place Attribute may be quite different within each location.



### COMMUNITY IDEAS

Respondents were also invited to share their ideas for improving local liveability. Over 11,500 ideas were collected, with most addressing movement, open space and the local economy.

### NOTES

1. Source: 2016 ABS census
2. Confidence level 95%  $\pm$  0.8%.
3. Confidence level 95%  $\pm$  0.4%.

## ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Over 30,000 responses were collected during the 2021 Australian Liveability Census from people across Australia. They represent a diversity of geographies, climates, backgrounds, ages and interests, and join the 35,000 responses in Place Score's National Benchmark.

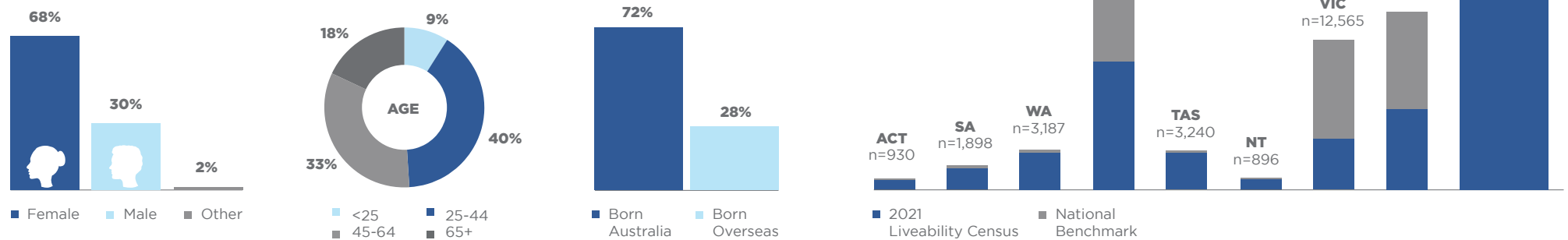
These data sources have been used to inform this report.

**Population:** 23,401,892<sup>1</sup>

**Total Responses:** 31,710

n= 16,647<sup>2</sup> (Community Values)

n= 15,063<sup>3</sup> (Place Performance)



# Measuring what matters

## Community Values

Over the last 5 years we have asked over 40,000 Australian residents what is most important to them in their ideal neighbourhood. By measuring what matters to people we define liveability metrics that are localised to each community and support place-based investment in positive social outcomes.

### WHERE ARE WE ALIGNED?

The #1 attribute of an ideal neighbourhood is where 'elements of the natural environment' are retained or incorporated into the urban fabric as way to define local character or uniqueness. In the 2021 Australian Liveability Census 73% of respondents selected this as being important to them. That is a significant consensus.

It is only in our most urban cores that nature isn't valued by as many respondents. In these locations attributes associated with public realm, care and maintenance, as well as proximity to amenity and activity are ranked higher.

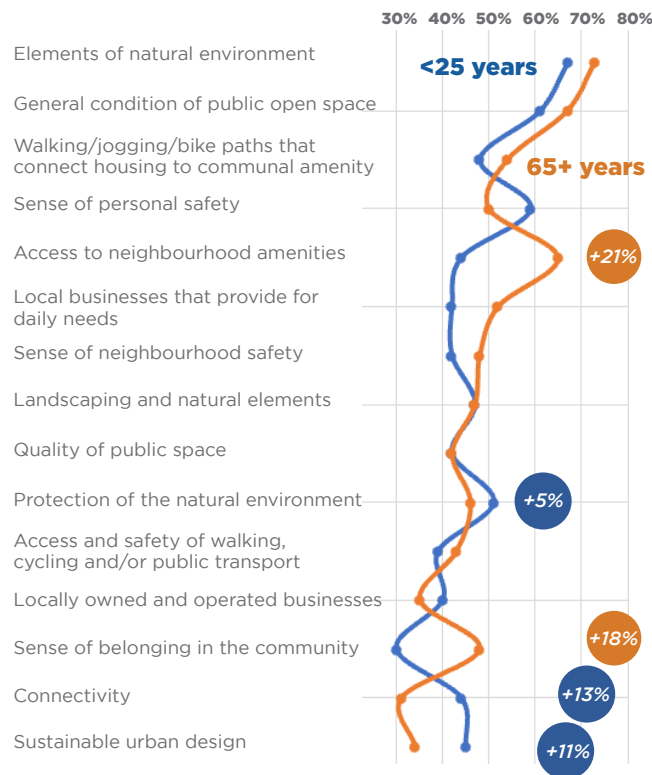
### HOW DO WE DIFFER?

Perhaps not surprisingly some of the biggest discrepancies that have been revealed are between the youngest and oldest participants of the Liveability Census. Fewer younger people selected attributes associated with neighbourhood offer and amenity as being important to them; more selected personal safety and sustainability attributes.

In the City of Melbourne the discrepancy is even more acute with 51% of under 25s selecting 'Sustainable behaviours in the community' as being important compared to 24% of over 65s. On the other hand 82% of over 65s selected 'Access to neighbourhood amenities' compared to only 49% of under 25s.

### AUSTRALIA - TOP 15 VALUES YOUNGEST/OLDEST

Australian average



### THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

We are often asked how Covid-19 has impacted liveability. Neighbourhood performance has remained fairly stable, even improving slightly as people get to know the amenity available in their local neighbourhoods. **What has changed is what we value.**

The importance of ten of our liveability attributes have changed substantially. More people are selecting nature, the outdoors and its care, as well as accessibility of local amenity as being important in their ideal neighbourhood. These changes have stabilised since 2020 when the reality of living with Covid-19 first hit.

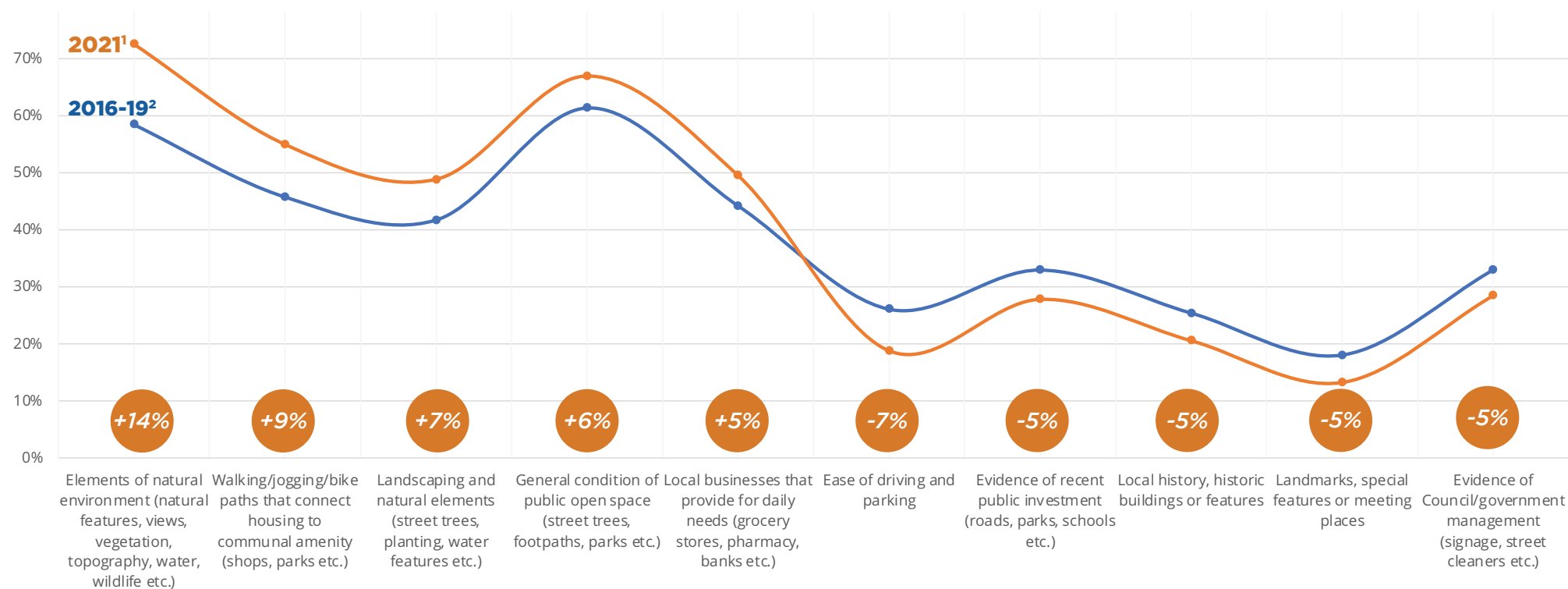
One attribute which has decreased in relative importance is 'ease of driving and parking'. This has dropped 7% nationally and currently ranks #34 out of 50 attributes.

# NOTES

1. Confidence level 95% ± 0.7%.
2. Confidence level 95% ± 0.9%.

## COMMUNITY VALUES - THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Australian average



# How liveable are Australian neighbourhoods?

## Liveability Performance

Liveability is personal. For one resident, a neighbourhood can provide everything needed for a happy and healthy life, but for the person who lives next door it might be missing essential attributes. Understanding the relationship between people and their places is the key to understanding local liveability, and how it can be enhanced.

The national average for neighbourhood performance is 68/100<sup>1</sup> with all the states and territories sitting close to this score. At the local government level 52% of LGAs rated above this average and 48% were below.

The highest capital city PX was achieved by the City of Adelaide (76/100) while LGAs located in Tasmania received the lowest liveability ratings.

The attributes that are contributing most to local liveability across the country are a mix of soft and hard infrastructure, social and economic factors. They are:

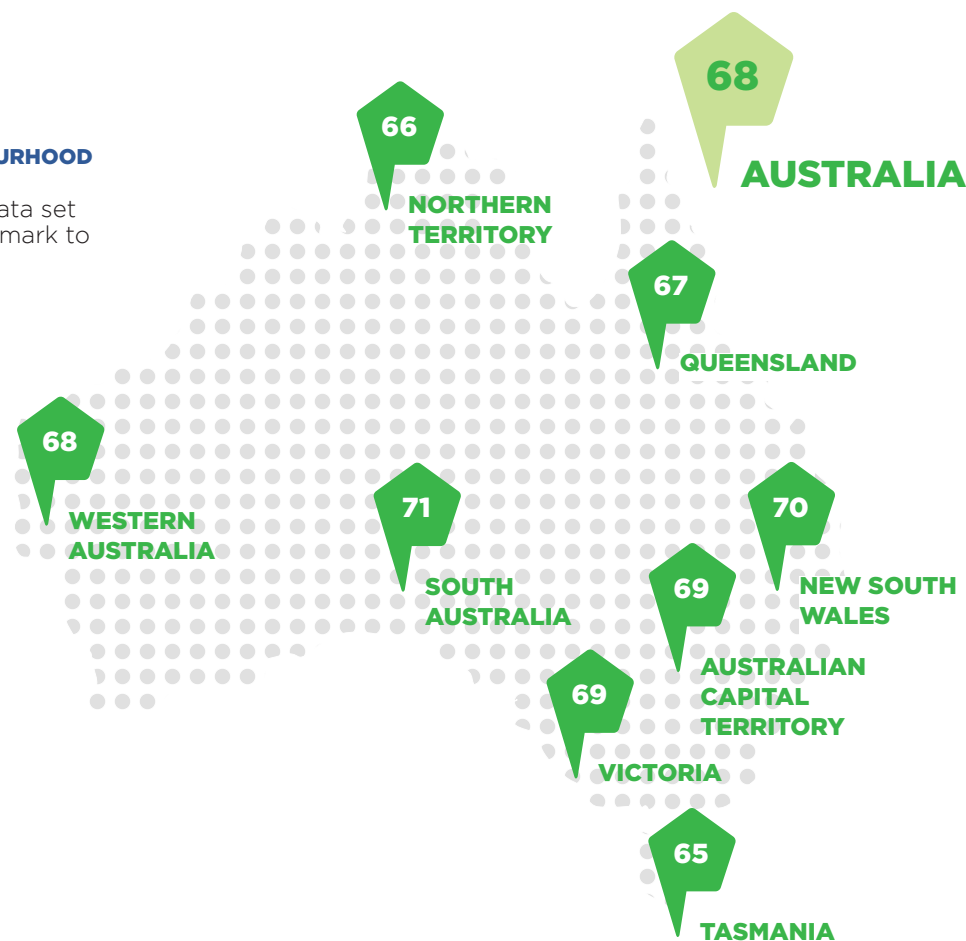
- Connectivity
- There are people like me
- Welcoming to all people
- Local businesses that provide for daily needs
- Access to neighbourhood amenities

Attributes that are rated poorly are more diverse:

- Unusual or unique buildings and/or public space design
- Things to do in the evening
- Sustainable urban design
- Cultural and/or artistic community
- Range of housing prices and tenures

### AUSTRALIA STATE & TERRITORY NEIGHBOURHOOD LIVEABILITY PERFORMANCE

This nation-wide liveability data set provides a foundation benchmark to track over time.



#### NOTES

1. Confidence level 95% ± 0.4%.

# Understanding liveability and the SEIFA Index

Jameel Baig

Findings from the 2021 Australian Liveability Census found that local government areas with a lower SEIFA score (greater social and economic disadvantage), are more likely to be experiencing lower levels of liveability. Residents living in higher ranked SEIFA areas are more likely to rate local liveability attributes higher.

Comparing our Liveability Census and the SEIFA index isn't like comparing apples to apples. Given the number of requests we've had for what the relationship might be, we decided to test the correlation between SEIFA and Place Score's liveability data.

This chart demonstrates a clear correlation between the data sets. For every increase of 100 points on the SEIFA Index we can expect an average increase of 6 points in our liveability score.

These broad-brush strokes provide useful guidance for decision makers when evaluating the equity of resource investment across LGAs. The following questions should also be considered:

- Are some suburbs being prioritised because of loud community voices (despite evidencing very high levels of liveability)?
- How can we ensure resource investment will result in an increase in liveability for those who need it most?
- What are the greatest 'liveability needs' in the areas of lower SEIFA ranking?

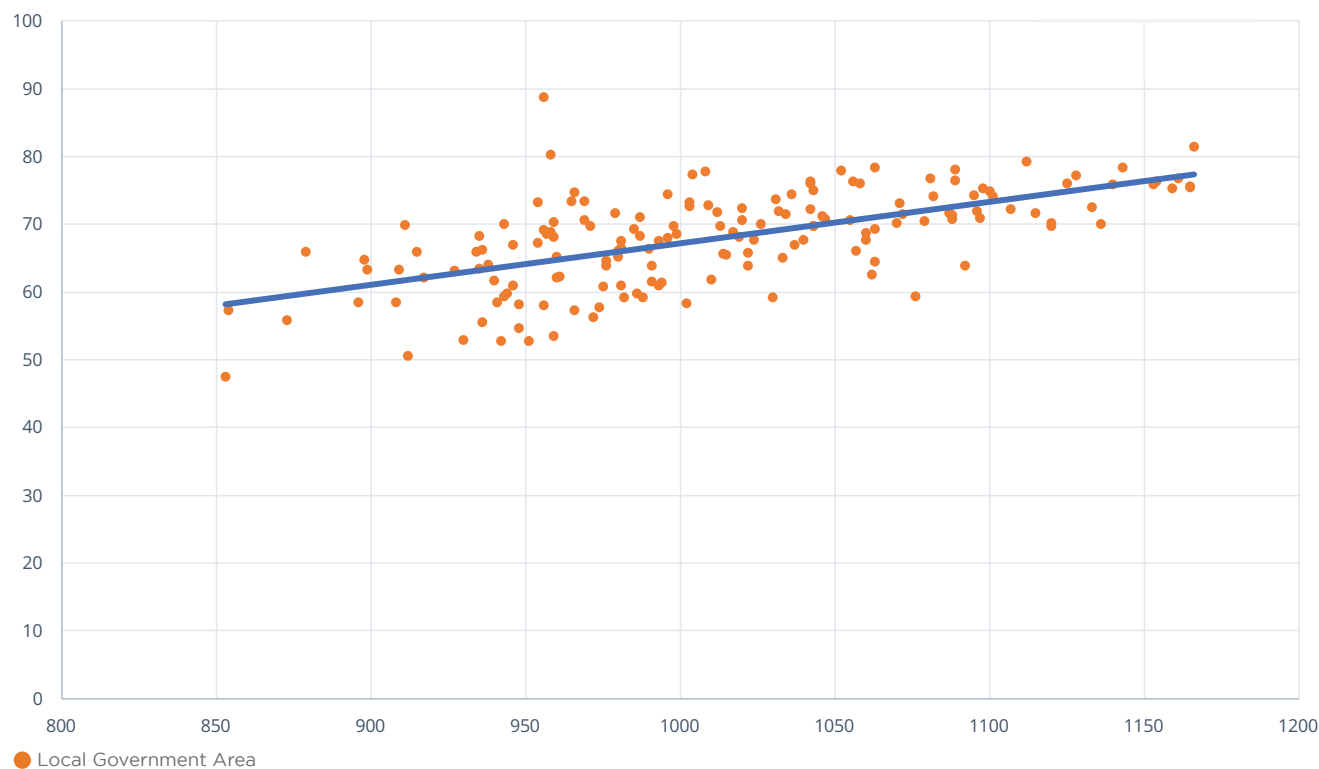
Place data provides a powerful evidence base, that is actionable and defensible. By balancing SEIFA data against place liveability data, a more equitable foundation for resource investment may be achieved, one that drives meaningful community outcomes and social benefit, rather than simply counting outputs.

## NOTES

1. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) scores are based on 25 different census data sets including annual income, education, unemployment and more, by the ABS. A low SEIFA score will indicate higher level of general disadvantage, eg higher proportion of people with lower levels of income and education.

2. LGA Liveability confidence level 95%  $\pm$  0.4%.

## PERFORMANCE - LGA LIVEABILITY & SEIFA INDEX



# Capital City Councils

## Liveability in the city

One of the key objectives of the 2021 Australian Liveability Census was engaging residents of our eight capital city council areas<sup>1</sup>. Over 10,000 responses were collected from community members in these urban centres and another 3,600 from the next 13 largest urban centres across the country.

There is always rivalry between cities – for business, investment, tourism, talent and more. And while our capital city councils represent, in most cases, only the very urban core of our metropolises they often lead the way in innovation across policy and service delivery.

### LIVEABLE CITIES

It wasn't that long ago that our urban centres were considered sinister, sickly slums to be quickly escaped from to the healthy suburbs.

*"As long as we have such streets as are to be found in Woolloomooloo, Surry Hills and, in fact, right throughout the city and near suburbs, we shall be faced with a sickly, immoral and degenerate section of citizens"*<sup>2</sup>

But much has changed in the last 100 years with our capital cities now offering some of the highest rates of liveability in the country. Fewer than 10 points separate the highest and lowest rated capital city council LGAs, while all eight sit on or above the Australian average of PX68, albeit at a cost.

For instance while the City of Sydney's overall liveability is rated 74/100 the only attribute to 'fail' is the 'Range of housing prices and tenures (low to high \$, buy or rent etc.)' at a PX4.8 out of a possible 10. Affordability is an ongoing concern for many – just for very different reasons than for our predecessors.

Overall the attributes that contribute most positively to local liveability in the capital cities are a mixture of proximity and sociability:

- Connectivity (PX8.2 vs PX7.8 national/ PX8.6 Melbourne & Sydney)
- Access to neighbourhood amenities (PX7.9 vs PX7.6 national/ PX8.7 Adelaide & Melbourne)
- Welcoming to all people (PX7.8 vs PX7.7 national/ PX7.8 Brisbane & Darwin)

On the flip side, the attributes that are contributing the least to local liveability in the capital cities focus on the built environment:

- Range of housing prices and tenures (PX5.7 vs PX5.8 national/ PX5.0 Hobart & PX4.8 Sydney)
- Sustainable urban design (PX5.7 vs PX5.5 national/ PX5.3 Brisbane & PX5.4 Darwin)
- Unusual or unique buildings and/or public space design (PX5.8 vs PX5.4 national/ PX5.0 Canberra (ACT) & Brisbane & PX4.7 Darwin)

### THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CITY

The communities of the capital city council areas have expressed 6 overall advantages to living there. These attributes are performing above<sup>3</sup> the National Benchmark:

+0.9

**Things to do in the evening** (bars, dining, cinema, live music etc.)

+0.6

**Local employment opportunities** (within easy commute)

+0.5

**Walking / jogging / bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity** (shops, parks etc.)

+0.4

**Access and safety of walking, cycling and / or public transport** (signage, paths, lighting etc.)

+0.4

**Evidence of Council / government management** (signage, street cleaners etc.)

# Capital City Councils

## Urban Archetypes

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census aimed to do more than create a ranking of our cities and places. Our objective was to reveal local liveability through the eyes of local residents: what is contributing positively (or not so much) to the daily lives of communities.

Each city offers a different experience, synthesised into eight urban archetypes<sup>4</sup> measured using Place Score's 50 Liveability Attributes.

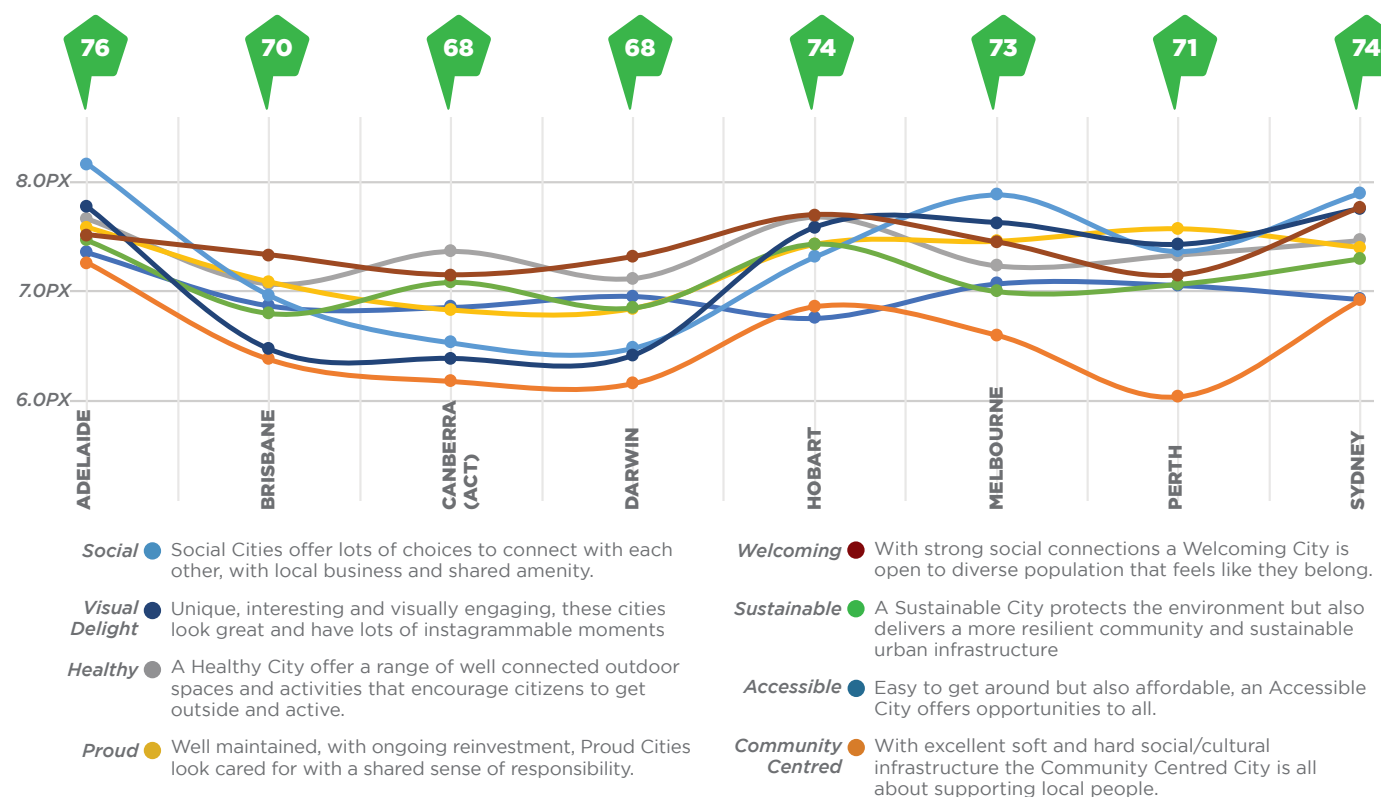
Adelaide is the most well-rounded city, performing well across all archetypes. Sydney and Melbourne, perhaps unsurprisingly, perform strongly in Social and as a Visual Delight. Interestingly, in addition to Brisbane, our smaller cities are performing strongly in terms of attributes associated with the Welcoming archetype. For their part, Canberrans rate attributes associated with the Healthy archetype more positively than any other city-dwellers.

Across the board, attributes associated with a Community Centred city - social services education, child care, and local community groups - are underperforming and point to an area of future focus to ensure that the soft infrastructure of our cities keeps pace with the hard.

### NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted Sydney = City of Sydney LGA, etc.
2. Yarrington, 1914.
3. PX Attribute Score compared to National Benchmark average, out of 10.
4. The 50 Place Score attributes have been aligned with 8 urban archetypes and the scores combined to identify overall performance.
5. The Capital City PX Score is derived from residents' scores for all 50 attributes.

### ARCHETYPES - CAPITAL CITY PERFORMANCE<sup>5</sup>





# LIVEABILITY **ARTICLES**

We dig deeper into the data to reveal trends and directions to help improve local liveability in Australian neighbourhoods.

# Planning for liveability matters

Greg Vann, Director, Ethos Urban

Popularised by the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index, liveability has become a key term to describe a place, community and a person's quality of life. The term has evolved, but at its core it attempts to describe and assess the key elements influencing the human experience of our towns and cities.

Built and natural environment professionals collectively endeavour to improve the daily lives of the communities they serve – all the while, trying to implement changes to best address global megatrends such as diminishing natural resources, an aging population and digital disruption. This is no easy task.

To implement successful change, and improve liveability, requires careful consideration of the attitudes, aspirations, and nuances of places. This requires access to detailed and current evidence base of community values, characteristics, priorities, concerns and opportunities such as Place Score.

Place Score provides a toolkit for a range of professionals within the built and natural environment industry. It synthesises a mix of socio-economic data sources as well as place-based surveys of over 100,000 Australians. The results allow analysis of community perspectives on neighbourhood priorities, community values and community ideas for improvement.

The data sets available allow areas to be compared and analysed on a (suburb), city or state level and can be further assessed by respondent demographic characteristics. This provides insight of elements of place the community feels are working well, and what can be improved on a city level.

An example of the power of Place Score's insight is a preliminary review of community attitudes of

their place of relevance. With a click of button, the most important liveability characteristics of Brisbane, for residents, was revealed to be its natural environment, followed closely by public space. It was also revealed residents feel that unique public building design, sustainable urban design and cultural / artistic community were the weakest elements of the city.

The benefit of working with data like Place Score is the ability to understand community nuances about liveability in a way we never could before. Previous rankings of liveability considered places on vast, macro levels, and ranking was achieved against measures like healthcare and large infrastructure. While these scores have their place, this tool is truly unique and is constantly updating through repeat surveying of Australians and their lived experience in communities.

The Place Score 2021 Australian Liveability Census provides an essential snapshot of community values and neighbourhood performance around the nation and in the future will help track progress on improving place and community.

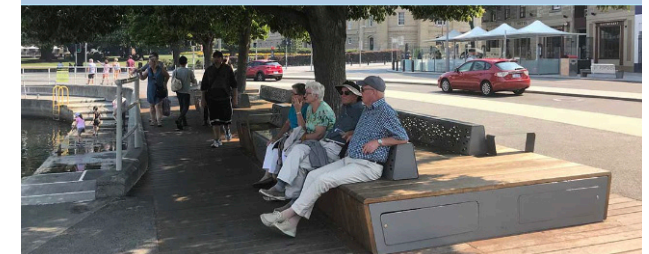
Place Score can serve as a vital tool for built environment, engagement and community development professionals. This tool can easily complement community engagement and is the type of tool whose usefulness will only grow over time as its data set expands.

Planning for liveability is critical. It is very easy to plan and develop cities and lose focus of the communities that occupy them. With this tool, the means to do better and the improve wellbeing of existing and future communities is that much more attainable.

By planning for liveability, we provide safe, healthy, active and resilient communities and places which are critical to responding to the complexities of our times. That's something worth doing with the help of Place Score.

## AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES VALUE...

A well maintained and managed public domain; footpaths, parks, roads and other public assets



# Magnets for youth and talent

Valli Morphet

Youth are often under-represented in urban research, collaboration and consultation activities, yet they are key 'customers and activators' of public space and ultimately the inhabitants of our future cities. With over 2,600 responses from under 25 year olds and an additional 6,200 from the 25-35 year old cohort there are some clear takeaways to guide city making work that better reflects the values of our younger community.

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census provides us with a powerful contemporary data set of community place values across the country. We are able to see where we are aligned, as well as where our values and priorities differ.

While many liveability attributes were consistently selected by all age groups, five were significantly

more popular with younger respondents when they were asked about their ideal neighbourhood.

Four out of the five are directly concerned with a more sustainable future, and all five of these top values are also Liveability Priorities for this group. Unfortunately, this reveals an uncomfortable disconnect between current city makers and the

community who will live longest in the cities we are making today. There are clear priorities for future investment in cities that better reflect the values of our younger community members.

## NOTES

1. Top 5 Community Values nationwide for under 25 year olds, showing Place Performance for the same age group.

### TOP 3 LIVEABILITY STRENGTHS (UNDER 25'S)

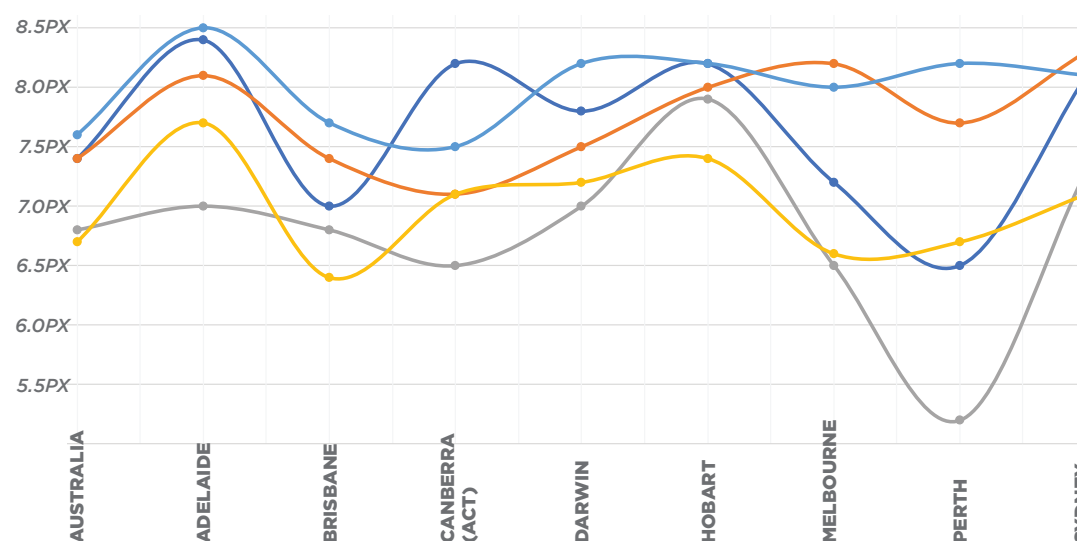
CF	STRENGTHS	PX
10	Connectivity	7.7
10	Access to neighbourhood amenities	7.7
5	Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity	7.6

### TOP 3 LIVEABILITY PRIORITIES (UNDER 25'S)

CF	PRIORITIES	PX
7	Things to do in the evening	5.4
9	Sustainable urban design	5.8
7	Sustainable behaviours in the community	6.2

### TOP 5 VALUES (UNDER 25'S) - CAPITAL CITY PERFORMANCE<sup>1</sup>

- Walking/jogging/bike paths
- Elements of the natural environment
- General condition of public open space
- Sense of personal safety
- Protection of the natural environment



## LEARNING FROM THE HIGH ACHIEVERS

Overall, respondents under 25 years rate liveability one point higher than the Australian average (PX69 vs PX 68). The most liveable state is NSW (PX71) and the least is the ACT (PX66). Young people from the City of Adelaide rate its liveability highest (PX77) with the City of Sydney a close second (PX75).

The top 10 performing neighbourhoods for the younger age cohort are all in Australian capital cities. The top three are Nightcliff in Darwin, West End in Brisbane and Ultimo in Sydney.

What makes these places great for younger people? Interestingly, while these model suburbs are proximate to jobs, the neighbourhood liveability attributes that are performing most strongly are those associated with shared, social spaces suitable for a range of diverse activities.

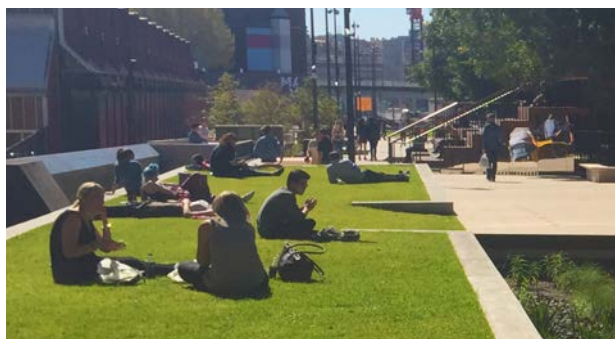
These attributes are a mix of the physical, e.g. pathways that allow for modal choice, they are experiential, e.g. spaces for specific activities, and they are social, e.g. there are people like me, addressing the full 'ecosystem' of place, both hardware and software.

They provide us with valuable guidance for what a liveable city looks like for younger residents.



**NIGHTCLIFF, DARWIN**

Social spaces with community activities such as the Nightcliff Markets contribute to liveability for younger people. Source: Bidgee, CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons



**ULTIMO, SYDNEY**

Shared spaces suitable for meeting friends and connecting at no or low cost are part of Ultimo's liveability for younger respondents. Source: Place Score

## CALL TO ACTION:

### FUTURE PROOF FOR YOUTH

- 1. Invite young people into your processes early and often**, including research, collaboration, consultation and volunteering. The passion and energy that youth bring to your projects is invaluable.
- 2. Youth values are not the same as the overall community**, but they should be equally valued. Whether you are setting strategic priorities or designing tactical interventions within public space, ensure insights from your younger residents are part of your decision making process.
- 3. Young people care deeply about environmental concerns**. The latest IPCC 'code red' Climate Change report presents a clear picture of how human activity is changing the climate in unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways. Embed regenerative practice and sustainable design into planning, design and adaptation of urban space.
- 4. Younger people want different things from cities - they are more mobile and more social** - yet may have fewer personal resources, whether they be financial or spatial assets. City makers should encourage 'hanging out' as a legitimate use of public space as important social infrastructure for young people.

# The truth about transport (2021)

Aditya Malshe, Urban Strategy Associate, Place Score

In 2017<sup>1</sup>, Kylie Legge and Steven Burgess<sup>1</sup> shared the findings from 3,700 respondents in metro Sydney: that walking, cycling and public transport options were more valued than car accessibility and parking in town centre environments. The 2021 Liveability Census with over 30,000 new responses confirms this result at a neighbourhood level.

Movement and place have a close relationship with one another, and the way we move around, or how much we like staying put, plays a big role in shaping the way we live. Concepts such as the 30-minute city and 10- and 20-minute neighbourhoods show that local mobility is a driving force in the future vision for our cities.

Two measures are particularly relevant to this discussion:

## ***Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to community amenity***

Nationally, this attribute was selected as being most important to their ideal neighbourhood by 55% of all respondents, and ranked #3 overall. It is also a national community liveability priority.

Our capital city councils perform better than the national average, although the gap between values and performance in the City of Hobart and the City of Brisbane makes this attribute a community liveability priority in these areas.

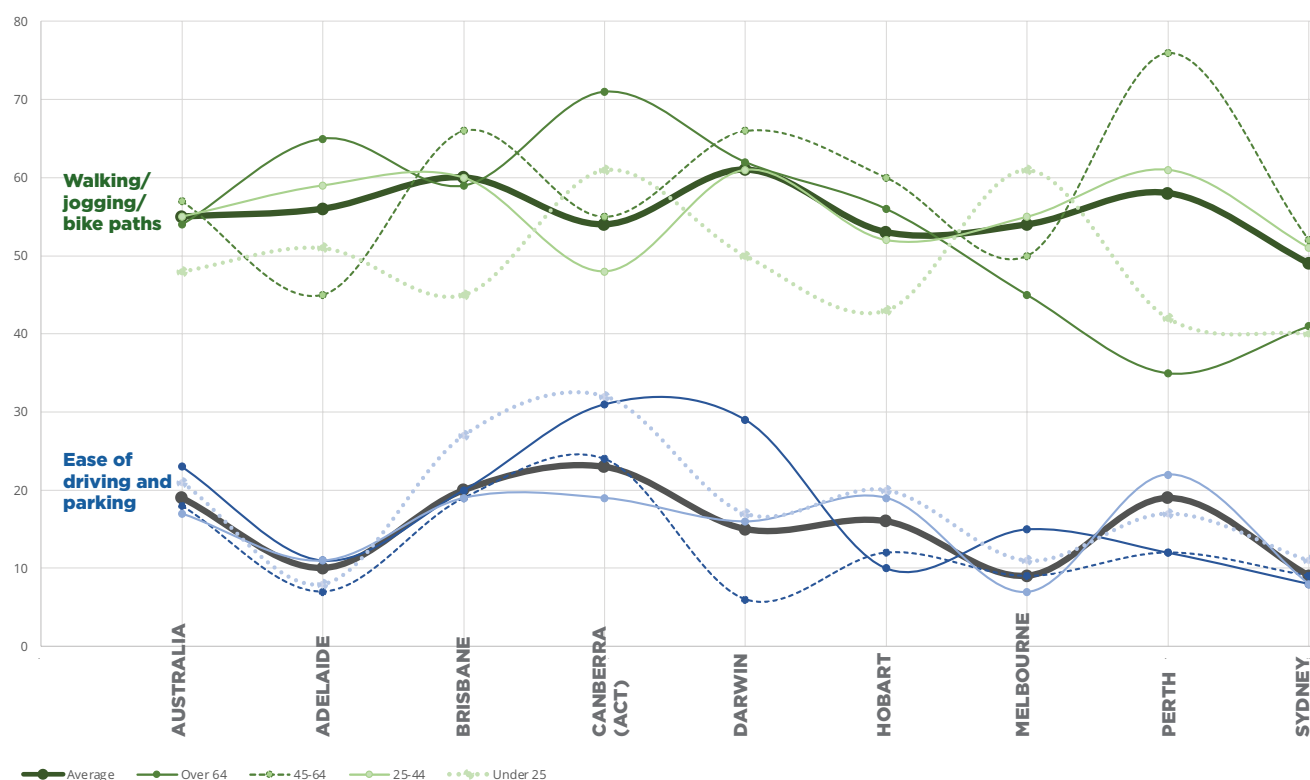
## ***Ease of driving and parking***

A common source of community complaints, this attribute is ranked #34 nationally having been selected by only 19% of respondents. This drops even further in the some capital city councils: Sydney (#47) and Adelaide (#46).

### NOTES

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/truth-transport-kylie-legge>
2. <https://www.yourhome.gov.au/introduction/australian-climate-zones>
3. Source: ABS Census 2016
4. Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan
5. <https://winstonchurchill.org/>

## COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY VALUES - NEIGHBOURHOOD MODAL CHOICE



There is no capital city council area where 'Ease of driving and parking' is a liveability priority. In fact, compared to the value of other attributes, there is no geography in our sample where investment in this attribute would benefit local liveability.

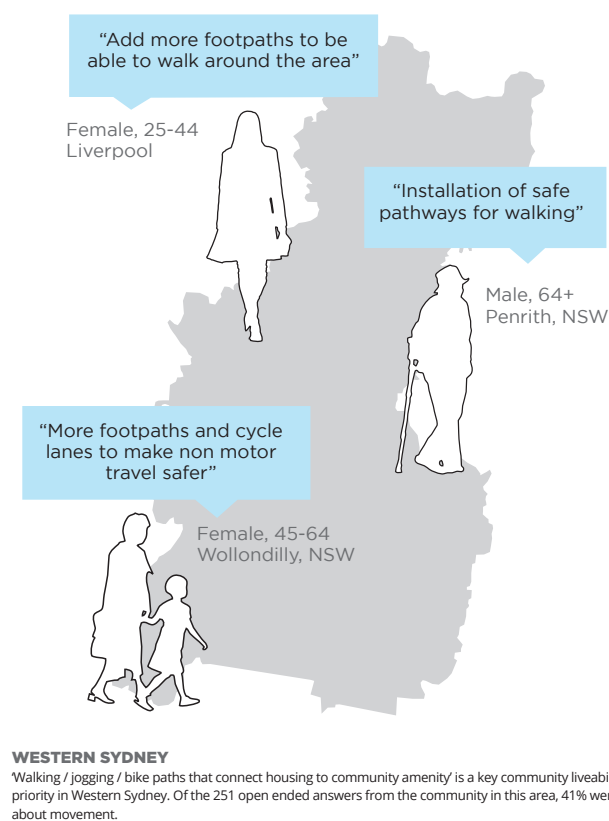
### WHAT MIGHT INFLUENCE MODAL VALUES?

Values around movement differ from place to place, but there are some interesting trends revealed by the 2021 Liveability Census data:

- Compared to the national average, more people care about active mobility in places with warmer or more humid climates such as Brisbane and Darwin; but fewer people value the same in cities with mild-cooler temperate climates such as Canberra, Hobart and Melbourne<sup>2</sup>.
- Compared to the national average, more people value private vehicular movement in cities with higher car ownership per household such as Canberra and Brisbane; but fewer people care about the same in cities with the lowest car ownership in Australia such as Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide<sup>3</sup>.

### TIME TO CHANGE

Despite the geographic differences, one thing that is clearly evident across the country is the higher value placed by Australians on local active movement over car accessibility. This indicates a strong appetite for transforming neighbourhoods



into places for people rather than cars; and shows that residents if given a choice will transition to an active lifestyle.

This then leads us to the all-important question – are we shaping our neighbourhoods the way the community would like them to be shaped?

Outer metropolitan areas of most Australian cities are characterised by rapidly expanding, sprawling low-density neighbourhoods. Western Sydney for instance has extensive areas of surface car parking, and significant investment is currently happening in road infrastructure in the area<sup>4</sup>. 29% of people living there selected ease of driving and parking as being important to them (rank #27). However walking/jogging/bike paths was selected by 44% of the same cohort (rank #9).

Winston Churchill once said: "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us."<sup>5</sup> This stands true for cities. If we create cities that are dependent on private vehicles for moving around, what we will get is a generation of people who are reliant on this mode. But if we make conscious efforts towards creating neighbourhoods that are walkable and well connected by public transport, we will get people who are healthier and more active.

It is time for local decision makers to support their community's aspirations and transform the way we are planning our cities and managing growth. It is time to do things differently. Let's start now.

# 22,000 Ideas for neighbourhood liveability

Maxime Boutaghou Courtemanche

As part of the 2021 Australian Liveability Census, we have asked respondents to share their “big and small ideas to make their neighbourhood more liveable for them”. More than 22,000 ideas were collected revealing the aspirations Australians have for their local area. So what exactly does the community think will make their neighbourhoods better places to live? They had the opportunity to ask for anything – here’s what they asked for.

## #1 – MORE AND BETTER ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Movement related ideas are front of mind for many Australians, with 37% of all the ideas relating in some way or form to movement. What may surprise many is that increasing car accessibility and parking is not the best way to increase liveability. In fact only 10% of ideas referred to private vehicle infrastructure.

In contrast, twice as many ideas (20%) asked for more walkable and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods.

Community members aged 65+ shared the most movement ideas. Their brief for more liveable neighbourhoods is clear: more, well-connected, wider, well maintained and well lit footpaths with even surfaces that are enhanced by bike lanes to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience away from traffic.

“Better and safer footpaths and crossings especially for young children parents pushing prams etc make it more pedestrian-friendly and safe.”

Female, 25-44  
Queensland



## #2 – GREENER NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH MORE OPEN SPACE

The second most common theme is open space which accounts for 31% of all ideas shared.

Respondents asked for more green spaces. More specifically, they desire more and/or better parks (16% of all ideas or 2,517 individual requests) and more vegetation around their neighbourhood (1,457 individual requests for more street trees).

The brief for designers and planners, beyond making neighbourhoods greener to improve liveability, is to improve physical comfort and amenity. 2,800 ideas asked for access of improvements to the open space offer such as play equipment or BBQ areas. To facilitate longer use of these spaces, respondents requested more shade, and simple amenities such as benches, toilets and bubblers (9% of open space ideas).

“Investment in parks - improving current unused areas in the parks to have playgrounds / sport courts / just more trees and places to sit.”

Male, 25-44  
New South Wales

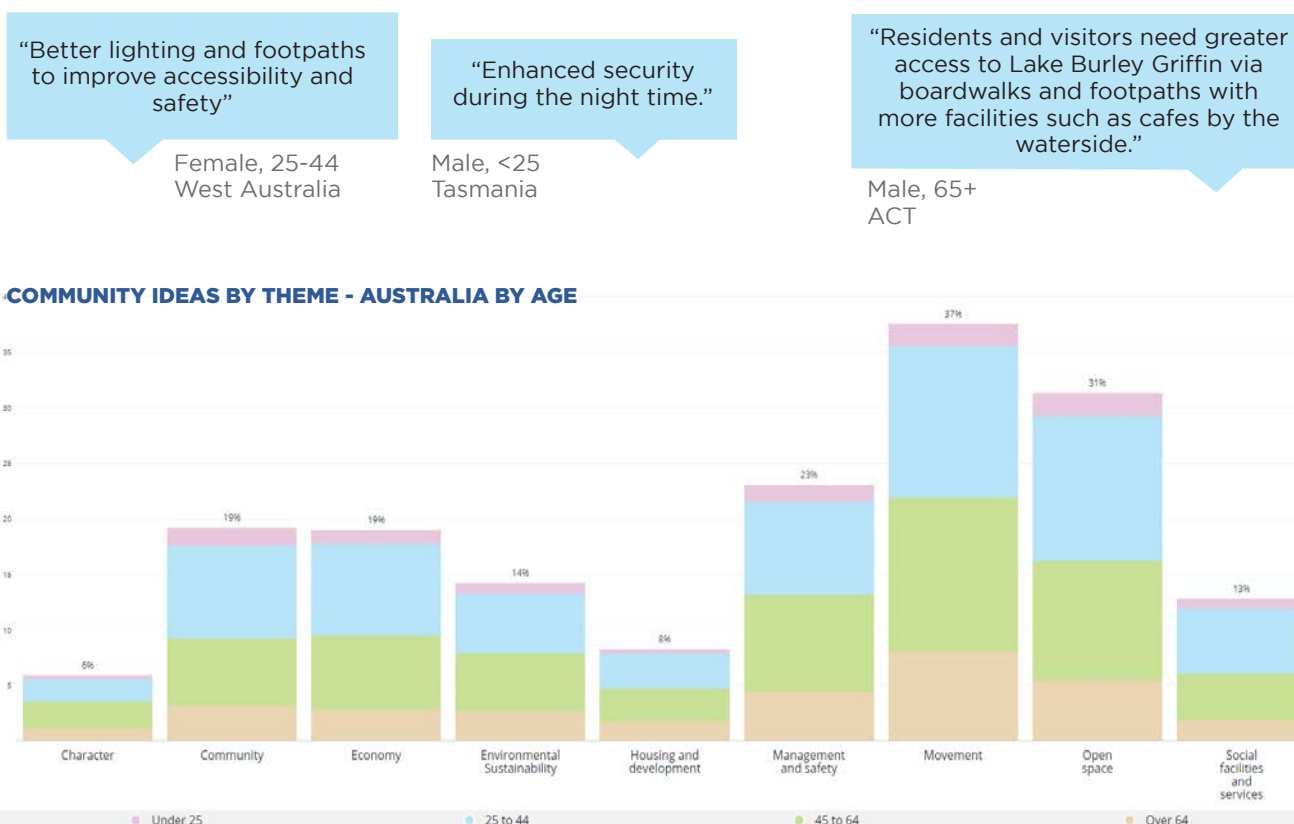
### #3 - KEEP IT WELL MAINTAINED AND SAFE

The quantitative data has already revealed that safe and well-maintained environments are highly valued by Australia. So it came as no surprise that respondents asked decision-makers to provide them with safe neighbourhood environments (11% of all ideas) and higher levels of maintenance (8% of ideas).

Apart from a general focus on 'making it cleaner' and 'maintaining it better', respondents were particularly vocal around management (33% of ideas related to maintenance).

Safety is a more complex issue. 15% of ideas linked to safety specifically related to physical safety, requesting safer movement and a reduction in dangerous traffic. However, a higher percentage of respondents asked to improve the feeling of safety (9% of all ideas). Of these ideas, 21% asked for a reduction in crime rates, 22% for more surveillance or policing and 19% for better lighting.

The safety ideas also varied according to the respondent's gender. Men tended to request more surveillance while the solutions proposed by women had a stronger focus on making the space feel safer, especially with adequate lighting along footpaths that link housing and local centres.



# Place data for better decision making

Action-oriented insights for liveable neighbourhoods,  
successful main streets and loveable parks

Place Score was developed to help government and the private sector with instant access to the values of your community and the performance of your places.

We offer human-centric data that is rigorous, representative and place-based. We measure what matters so you can make the decisions that most benefit your community.

Place Score breaks the cycle of never-ending surveys and focus groups for each individual project. Our proprietary place measurement system provides you easy to access, nationally consistent community insights that can be used to guide strategy, policy and multiple projects over multiple years. We reduce engagement fatigue, free up resources and improve the effectiveness of your decision-making processes across three place scales and types.

## LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

No-one really knows how liveable a neighbourhood is – unless you actually live there.

Place Score is the only nationally consistent liveability measurement system that collects and analyses data directly from the communities living and working in local neighbourhoods.

The result is data that not only allows for comparison between demographics groups,

suburbs and regions but reveals the community's priorities for improving local liveability and community wellbeing.

Creating a new place? Accessing our nearly 70,000 strong Neighbourhood National Benchmark provides unparalleled insights into the communities you want to attract.

## SUCCESSFUL MAIN STREETS

The best retail streets attract a diversity of people who want to spend both time and money.

Place Score's first tool was the PX Assessment – measuring the 'place experience' (PX) of main streets. Over time we have developed a powerful range of place measurement, improvement and tracking products that have helped over 300 local main street communities and economies.

Local retail places depend on their customers to not only survive but to thrive. Place Score gets to know your customers – what they value and how they are experiencing your place in order to deliver priorities for improvement and track changes before and after investment.

Place Score transforms  
opinion into data-driven evidence to  
unlock the power of your places



## LOVEABLE PARKS

The last two years have highlighted the value of our parks and open spaces. A great park or open space serves a diversity of the local community, providing important shared amenities and access to nature and the outdoors.

Our newly released Park Score tool assesses the amenity and experience offered by your open space, and can track change over time before and after improvements are made.

Please get in touch if you would like to know more about how Place Score can help make your place better for the communities they serve.

[placescore.org](https://placescore.org)



## THANK YOU

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census would not have been possible without the generous support of

- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
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- City of Adelaide
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- Bellingen Shire Council
- Benalla Rural City Council
- Berrigan Shire Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Burwood Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Campbelltown City Council (SA)
- City of Canada Bay
- City of Greater Geelong

- City of Greater Geraldton
- City of Holdfast Bay
- City of Newcastle
- City of Parramatta Council
- City of Unley
- City of Vincent
- City of Wanneroo
- City of West Torrens
- Corangamite Shire Council
- City of Darwin
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Glenorchy City Council
- Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- Griffith City Council
- City of Hobart
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Huon Valley Council
- Lane Cove Council
- City of Launceston
- Maroondah City Council
- Murray River Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council

If you would like to join us for the next liveability census, the EOI is now open at [placescore.org](https://placescore.org)

- North Sydney Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Parkes Shire Council
- City of Perth
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- Shire of Dundas
- Strathfield Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Sutherland Shire Council
- West Tamar Council
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Wyndham City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Yass Valley Council

An overhead photograph of four people sitting around a large wooden table, working together. The image has a strong green color cast. The people are seen from above, focused on their tasks. The table is cluttered with various items: a laptop in the center, several open notebooks, a smartphone, pens, pencils, a ruler, and some sticky notes. One person on the left is writing in a notebook, another is looking at a laptop screen, a third is writing in a spiral notebook, and a fourth is also working on a laptop. The background shows a gravel surface.

## PLACE SCORE

Suite 1-2, Level 5, 2-12 Foveaux  
Street, Surry Hills, NSW, 2010,  
Australia

[placescore.org](http://placescore.org)

ABN 19 610 823 286

T: +61 2 8021 7027