Commission into the Future of Sydney CBD

Sustainable urban form, planning and liveability
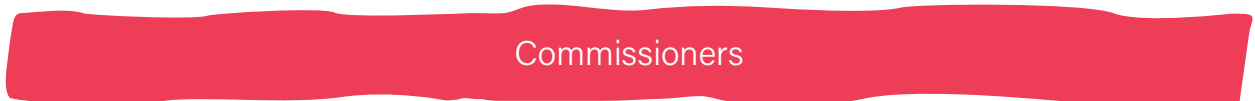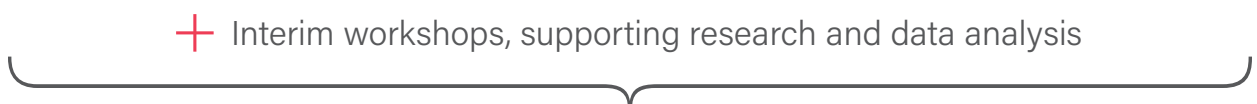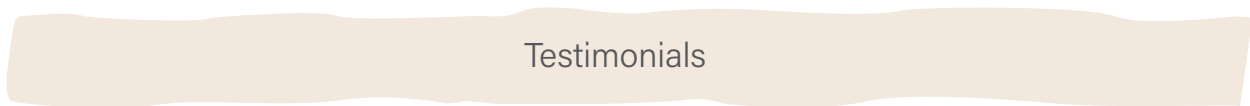
Phase four summary

Welcome

At this pivotal time for our city's future, the Committee for Sydney and Arup have brought together some of Sydney's leading thinkers to convene a Commission into the Future of Sydney CBD.

This report outlines findings and thoughts from phase four of this Commission, as identified by our Commissioners, testimonial response and research.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Commission into the Future of the Sydney CBD acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of Country on which the Sydney CBD stands.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Phase 1
Challenges and opportunities

Phase 2
Movement, workplace and productivity

Phase 3
Learning, living and culture

Phase 4
Sustainable urban form, planning and liveability

Testimonials

+ Interim workshops, supporting research and data analysis

Commissioners

Phase 5
Recommendations and actions for a global and vibrant CBD

To find out more about the Commission visit **sydney.org.au/FutureSydneyCBD**

Contents

Committee for Sydney

ARUP

About phase four

Building on earlier phases of this Commission into the Future of Sydney CBD, phase four focused on sustainable urban form, planning and liveability in the CBD.

This summary chapter outlines the findings and key emerging ideas, including insights from all testimonial sessions, research and Commissioner workshops.

We asked testifiers and workshop participants to provide insight into challenges they saw with Sydney CBD pre-COVID, trends they see impacting the long-term future of the CBD, and opportunities for improved sustainable urban form, planning and liveability in the CBD.

Testimonials

The fourth and fifth Commission hearing sessions were held on 15 June 2021 and 14 July 2021. Testimonial responses were given by:

Alex O'Mara
Group Deputy Secretary of Place, Design and Public Spaces
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)

Lisa Havilah
Chief Executive
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Abbie Galvin
NSW Government Architect
NSW Government

Rev. Bill Crews
Founder
The Rev. Bill Crews Foundation

Rory Brown
Director
Smart Places Programs, Strategy and Innovation
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)

Annette Madden
Head of Theatre, Sector Development, Advocacy and Development
Australia Council for the Arts

David Borger
Executive Director
Business Western Sydney

Michael Rodrigues
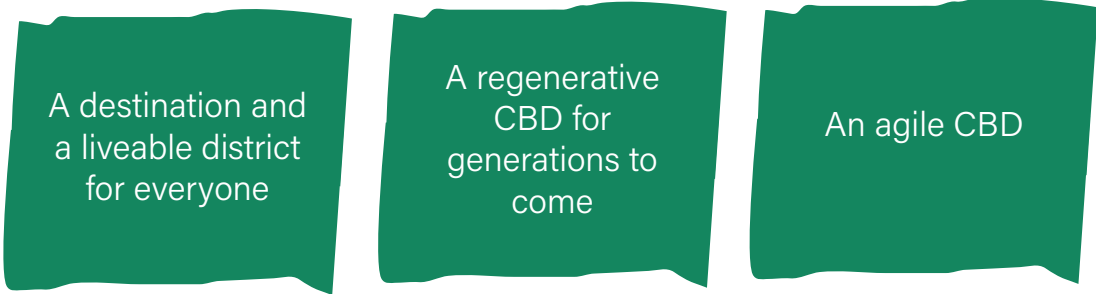24-hour Economy Commissioner
Investment NSW

What we heard and what we are thinking

Phase four highlights the importance of creating a unique destination, and a regenerative, agile CBD. These three key themes emerged from testimonials, workshops and research to date that support 'a sustainable and liveable CBD'.

Read on to explore the insights from the fourth phase of the Commission into the Future of Sydney CBD.

Key themes

A destination and a liveable district for everyone

A regenerative CBD for generations to come

An agile CBD

This is well and truly our opportunity to change, evolve and develop the CBD — not just because of the pandemic, but because we should be making it the neighbourhood it should be.

Abbie Galvin

1 A destination and a liveable district for everyone

What is happening and what has changed?

Uses and distinct offerings

As previously identified by the Commission, Sydney is facing a significant social and economic transition. As it drives towards a liveable, agile, inclusive, strong and sustainable future, Sydney must consider the needs of the economy, current and future users and the broader community. Sydney CBD is not alone in this transition and the need for re-invigoration. Cities around the world are debating how CBDs should be used in the future.

The Commission heard about commercial property market trends, the strengths of and challenges for the economy and future predictions for the CBD. It became evident through testimony, that for the CBD to remain a place that people want to visit there must be diverse experiences and offerings for everyone. Similarly, to strengthen Sydney's global positioning, the CBD must have a mix of uses and industries. This can help ensure the CBD remains a significant place for people to want to live in and visit, while also strengthening Sydney as a global economic player.

Planning is required now to provide diverse uses and offerings that attract both people and investment. This includes planning for everything from the built form, to the urban environment, social services, experiences and the economic structure.

The Commission also heard about the layers of consideration that need to be incorporated into the planning of a distinct CBD with unique 'places', uses and offerings. These layers include:

- The role of the CBD: Globally, regionally, locally and for users.

- The outcomes sought: short-term, medium-term, and long-term

- Competitors and disruptors: Globally, regionally, and locally

- Infrastructure requirements: Social, physical, and digital.

While other cities think about their own geography, markets, and resources, planning for the Sydney CBD needs to consider what the distinctive role of the CBD is in the context of Greater Sydney (and its multi-polar 'three cities' structure), New South Wales (NSW), Australia and the world. Existing and potential competition, relationships and disruption need to be measured and accounted for. For example, the distinct roles and future intended connections between Sydney CBD, Parramatta CBD, Melbourne CBD and others around Australia, are important to understand so each can excel and compliment each other in their own way.

We should do everything possible to make the CBD an enticing destination, so that people choose to be there, rather than going out of a sense of obligation.
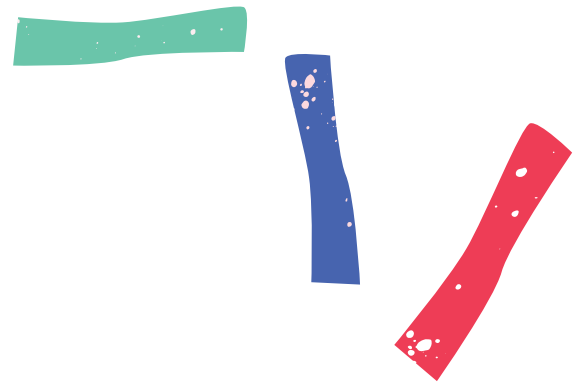
Gabriel Metcalf
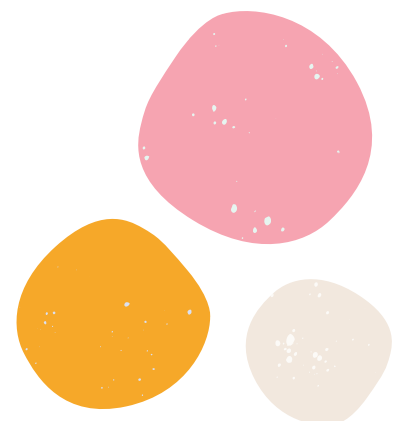
Most people do not want to work in a business park, they want to work somewhere where you can go to get a drink outside after work, somewhere cool and 'buzzy'. Cities in Asia are aggressively investing in culture and my concern is that if we don't, we will be left behind.

Alex O'Mara

Cost of living and liveability

The Commission heard repeatedly about the challenges Sydney faces with a high cost of living and increasingly unaffordable housing.

The Committee for Sydney, *Sydney Benchmarking Report 2020*, highlights some metrics used to outline affordability and liveability in cities. The report rated Sydney 8 out of 10 for 'liveability' and 4 out of 10 for 'wages and cost' in 2020 and outlined that, "rising unaffordability has been eroding Sydney's reputation as an open and affordable city for people of different backgrounds and incomes. Although the city maintains competitive salaries and a high overall purchasing power, the cost of living is viewed to be more expensive than in many other global cities. Housing is at the heart of this – when COVID-19 hit, Sydney had the third most unaffordable housing market in the English-speaking world"[9].

When looking at Sydney's ratings in 2021 against other cities for affordability and liveability, Sydney is ranked:

- 19th of 48 cities overall for liveability and 33rd of 48 cities for accessibility[1].

- The 3rd most expensive housing market out of 14 peers[2].

- 95th of 114 cities for work-life balance[3].

- 105th of 114 cities for time spent commuting[3].

- 113th of 114 cities for public transport affordability, where residents in Sydney spend a greater proportion of income on a monthly public transport pass[3].

- The city fell 17 places between 2019 and 2021 to 101st of 164 cities for student affordability[4].

- Between 2019 and 2020 there was an improvement to average annual salaries, which improved the city ranking by one place to 15th of 48 for gross annual wage level[5].

- Sydney slipped two places between 2019 and 2020 to 33rd of 48 cities for the average cost of basic goods (and 17th most expensive out of 26 peers)[6].

- For cost of renting, Sydney dropped three places between 2019 and 2020 to 35th out of 48 cities (18th most expensive out of 26 peers)[7].

- In 2020, more than four in five expats (81%) said it is easy to get used to the local culture, and 75% feel at home in Sydney.

- Overall Sydney was ranked 56th of 66 in 2020 for expat perceptions of the local cost of living with 70% of expats unhappy with how expensive it is to live in the city (compared to an average of 38% globally)[8].

While these are just some metrics to compare to, they show there are opportunities for improvement in liveability across Sydney.

1 Mori Memorial Foundation Global Power City Index Yearbook, 2020
2 Demographia 16th Annual International Housing Affordability Survey, 2020
3 Money Barn Global Commuter Index, 2021
4 QS Best Student Cities, 2019 and 2021
5 Mori Memorial Foundation Global Power City Index Yearbook, 2019 – Wage Level
6 Mori Memorial Foundation Global Power City Index Yearbook, 2019 – Price Level
7 Mori Memorial Foundation Global Power City Index Yearbook, 2019 – Housing Rent
8 InterNations Expat Insider Press Release – 'Expats in Sydney and Melbourne Find It Easy to Get Settled and Enjoy the High Quality of Life'
9 Committee for Sydney, Benchmarking Sydney's Performance 2020, 2020

Cost of living and liveability continued.

The high percentage of locals and expats in Sydney who are unsatisfied with affordability and cost of living is of concern. The report also outlined that "local perceptions of liveability have become more decisive in shaping cities' scores. There is more attention on what individuals and families make of public services, work-life balance, traffic, safety and amenities in their cities. In general, when looked at across the whole metropolis, these figures start to weigh Sydney down as issues of congestion and access tend to be seen less favorably than Sydney's liveability 'on paper'"[9].

So how does this impact the Sydney CBD? Low wages, a high cost of living, and housing unaffordability are driving people out of the city. This negatively impacts productivity in the CBD as well as hinders the attraction and retention of local and global talent and investment — all of which is vital for a genuinely global city. Nonetheless, the Commission also heard great examples of other expensive cities that still thrive and attract talent and investment when liveability, governance, availability of capital, skills and a premium global image are valued and well balanced.

There are not enough places where people can just come to occupy a table and chair and feel like they are a part of something without paying. Given the cost of living, this is going to be important if we are going to attract younger and older demographics into Sydney CBD.

Ninotschka Titchkosky

The value of public space, green space and recreation space

The testimonies spoke about the Sydney CBD being built on, and around, incredible natural assets and existing green spaces including the Royal Botanic Gardens, Hyde Park, The Rocks and Sydney Harbour. The Commissioners heard that there is a difference between the way these spaces are currently used and how they could be used in the future.

In the *Sydney Benchmarking Report 2020* by Committee for Sydney, the city overall ranked 11th among 29 peers for residents' perceptions of the quality of parks and green spaces, and 12th for perceptions of pollution levels and environmental quality[10].

Data from numerous surveys on planning and long-term goals in Sydney, highlight the importance of design of our open, public and recreation spaces that support the wellbeing of individuals and families. For example, the results from the *Planning for Sydney 2050* survey engagement showed that the first priority area for respondents was green, plants, trees, gardens and urban farming, with 77% of survey respondents wanting a green city with parks, trees and nature[11].

The behavioral patterns demonstrated both before and during COVID -19 also support this need with many Sydney residents valuing local parks, green spaces and outdoors spaces for recreation. City of Sydney reported that "people want green public spaces as a place to be active, to recharge their mental health, and to gather and socialise in their community" and "people repeatedly mentioned in the survey a desire for green, open space, parks, playgrounds and trees in their hopes for Sydney's future"[11].

In phase one of the Commission, it was highlighted that there is a lack of publicly available, connected and accessible recreations space, and green space for public enjoyment. To attract people into the CBD from local centres and suburbs it is important that there are better amenities and public space available.

The impacts of COVID-19 on mental and physical health and wellbeing are significant. Cities must consider the needs of the population to support their long-term physical and physiological health and wellbeing in future planning. The opportunity presented in the phase one chapter of this Commission, *Challenges and Opportunities*, was the creation of more shared use recreation space, green spaces, footpaths and kerbside amenity through the reclamation of the public realm and rebalancing of movement in the CBD. The changing demand for transport and desire to create more space for cyclists and pedestrians, creates a key opportunity to re-design existing spaces in the CBD to cater for more activities and uses. The re-design can also provide a greener, healthier and a more accessible environment for everyone to enjoy.

Like many cities around the world, the pandemic had a silver lining for Sydney in terms of the way people understood the value of public space.

Alex O'Mara

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10 TechTalk and Curry's Best Cities for Wellbeing Around the World – Green Spaces (underlying data source Numbeo) and MoneyBarn, Global Commuter Ranking – Pollution (underlying data source Numbeo).
11 City of Sydney, Planning for Sydney, 2050 – what we heard, Community Engagement Insights Report, 2020

HOLY

BASIL

OPENING

SOON

Multi-generational needs

People experience places differently based on their age, gender and familiarity. Poor quality green spaces, a shortage of free and accessible public activities, uneven distribution of playable public realm and unsafe areas in an urban environment can exacerbate social, gender and generational inequality across a city[12]. Well-designed public realm and transport systems that are safe, diverse, accessible and evenly distributed can help create a more liveable and inclusive CBD for everyone, regardless of age or gender.

8 80 Cities is a non for profit organisation who aim to create cities that are safe, happy and prioritise people's wellbeing. One of the ways *8 80 Cities* analyse city safety, necessary mobility and public space improvements is by asking whether an 8-year-old and 80-year-old can walk to the park together[13]. *8 80 Cities* describes public parks and public spaces as "important for building a sense of community and social belonging. They are spaces that belong to everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or income"[14].

Contemporary visions for urban spaces and amenities often prioritise the attraction of a younger, working-age demographic, and in some cases, the emphasis on this much-sought-after group means that the needs and wants of younger and older generations are overlooked[15].

As outlined in the phase three chapter from this Commission, *Learning, Living and Culture*, NSW's population is ageing. While older people are often viewed as a 'homogeneous' group, there are unique desires, needs and challenges that exist across different age ranges and population[14]. For older citizens, key considerations need to be made in design and planning around autonomy, independence, health, wellbeing, security, resilience and social connectedness. Physical characteristics of the city that reduce mobility not only limit access but can also accelerate the decline in mobility among older people, impact their health and wellbeing and reduce social connectedness.

Consultations with children and young adults, run by City of Sydney for *Planning Sydney 2050*, found the most popular desires were for a 'safe city' and 'a place with lots of trees and parks'[16].

The sound of children's voices is missing.

David Harding

There is an importance of being playful and inclusive.
How do we enable the serious and corporate city to sit happily alongside one that is full of wonder, delight, mystery and intrigue?

Abbie Galvin

12 CABE, Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health, 2010
13 880 Cities official website, 2021
14 8 80 Cities, A step by step guide: creating parks and public spaces for people of all ages, 2018
15 Arup, Cities Alive: Designing for Aging Communities, 2019
16 City of Sydney, Planning for Sydney 2050 – what we heard, Our Future Sydney: Consulting children and young people about 2050, 2020

The Commission heard that children are 'missing from the CBD' and it is not commonplace for parents to bring children into the CBD unless they are attending events or major attractions.

A child's development and view of the world is shaped by many factors including the environment in which they live. Several studies suggest that the dominance of cars in cities is a key factor preventing parents from granting children independent mobility[17].

With less independent mobility, both children and older citizens have a reduced ability to navigate and experience a city — meaning fewer opportunities for social interaction, chance encounters, intriguing journeys, and discovery[18].
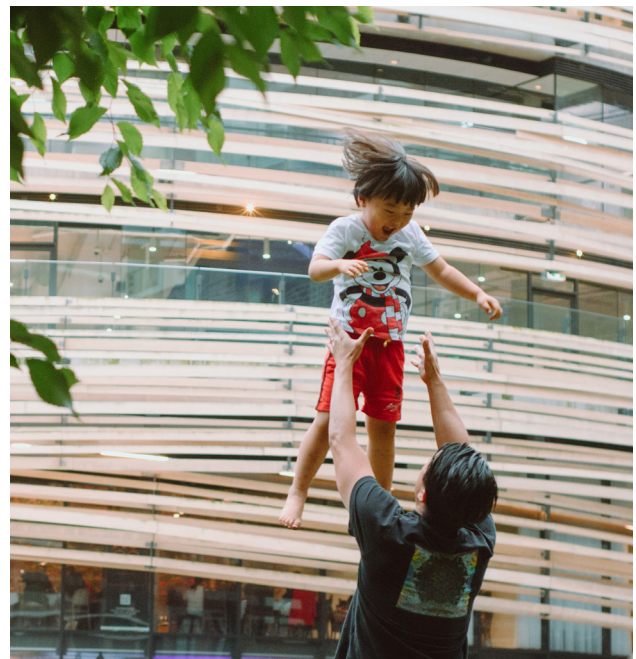
Research from the London Policy Studies Institute in 2015 on independent mobility found that children in Finland and Germany are seen to have comparatively high levels of independent mobility compared to Australia which has one of the lowest aggregate rank scores[19].

We need to have the spirituality of humanness, that is what draws people in. I often think of a mother and a child walking through the CBD — what would she say to the child? Is it just buildings and nothing else to pass on? We need a richness to the city that can be can passed on.

Rev Bill Crews

While this is a generalisation for Australia, in 2020 Sydney was ranked 7th among 8 peers for the perceived child safety of local suburbs among families and parents[20]. Overall, the city ranked 76th globally for perceived family friendliness in a survey of families and parents[21].

A study by Arup, *Designing for Urban Childhoods*, found that children's infrastructure can help to enhance the economic value and long-term viability of the urban environment. It also found that providing multi-functional, playable space — beyond the playground — can enable everyday freedoms and create a public realm for all ages to enjoy together[22]. Interventions at the neighborhood scale offer the greatest potential to create a children's infrastructure network that allows safe and enjoyable journeys[22]. An opportunity for the CBD to lean into.

17 Shaw, B.et al (2015). Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action. London: Policy Studies Institute
18 Vic Health, Life and Health Re-imagined. Streets for People, Lessons from a return to local living, 2020
19 Shaw, B.et al (2015). Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action. London: Policy Studies Institute
20 Committee for Sydney, Benchmarking Sydney's Performance 2020, 2020
21 Internations.Org, Expat Insider Quality of Urban Living Index 2019 – Health and Environment
22 Arup, Cities Alive: Designing for Urban Childhoods, 2017

Safety and equality in the public realm

While children and older citizens have diverse needs for a city, so too do different genders. Safety and security needs must be considered in creating, designing and developing equitable public spaces, green space, recreation spaces and transport hubs for everyone in the CBD.

In 2018, Plan International and Monash University's XYX Lab conducted research on experiences of safety for girls and women across five global cities —including Sydney. Research was carried out through *Free to Be* – a map based social survey tool designed to enable girls and women to tag and identify, without fear of recrimination, the areas in their city where they feel safe or unsafe[23]. They could tag a single location as a 'good' or 'bad' pin and add a comment to describe the location if they wanted to add more detail. Using crowd-mapping meant that impressions and stories could be gathered from a wide range of people. While the data was indicative of some experiences, rather than representative of the whole population, common themes were able to be discerned from the many locations and stories gathered in the data.

Safety after dark: Creating a city for women living and working in Sydney was a report done in collaboration with NAB, Plan International, Monash University XYX Lab and Committee for Sydney. It analysed the *Free to Be* data for Sydney, outlined common themes in the data and then proposed a series of actionable steps to making the city safer[24].

The report outlined common places across Sydney where girls and women described the environment as 'good' or 'bad.' 'On the street' was identified as the most common location for both 'good' and 'bad' incidents. It was also the location where a high proportion of incidents occurred at night, particularly for those going to and from work. Not unexpectedly, there were a lot of data points on 'public transport' detailing good and bad experiences traveling to and from work and going out recreationally[24].
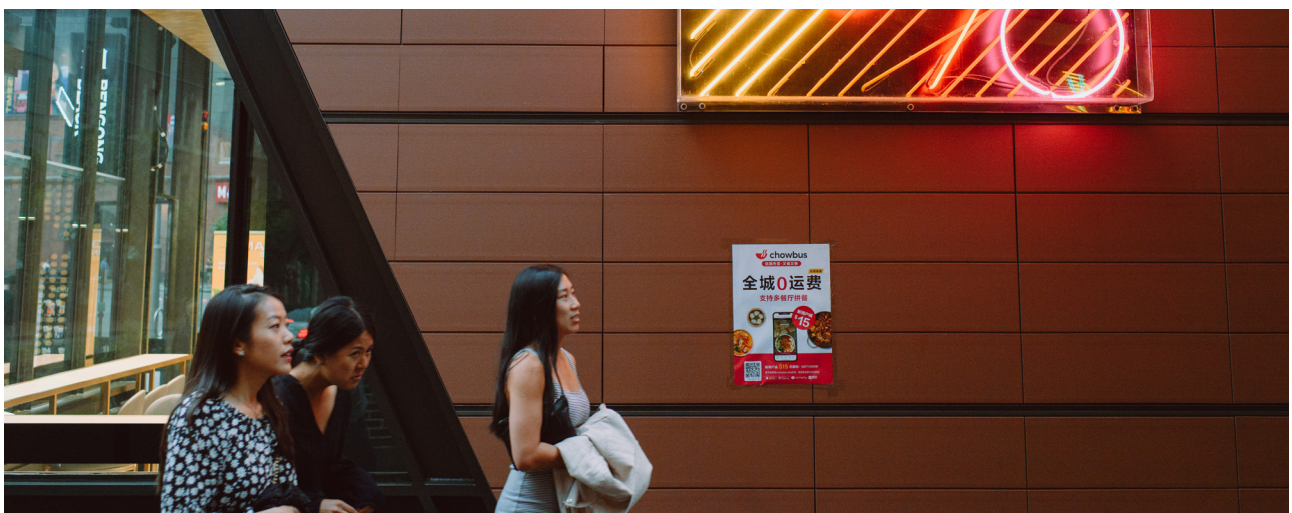
23 Plan International, Unsafe in the city: The everyday experiences of girls and young women, 2018
24 Committee for Sydney, Safety after Dark: Creating a city for women living and working in Sydney, 2019

Safety and equality in the public realm continued.

From the data set, Circular Quay and Royal Botanic Gardens were two of the top locations for good experiences across Sydney. The good experiences were predominantly mapped along the water's edge, while adjacent areas had an equal distribution of good and bad experiences. Most data points with comments noted adequate lighting, heavy foot traffic, the kind and helpful nature of the ferry staff and a family-orientated atmosphere that contributed to the feeling of safety[25].

Three of the most prominent 'bad' locations included the southern end of the CBD at Central Station (including Belmore Park), Town Hall Station and the Hyde Park Area[25]. For all locations, the majority of reports included both non-physical sexual harassment (staring, verbal harassment, stalking, public indecency, lewd comments and unsolicited photographs) and physical sexual harassment (groping, rape, pinching). At Town Hall and Hyde Park there were also comments of robberies, groups of offenders and physical assault. Nighttime was a common theme in the comments related to feeling unsafe, but bad experiences were recorded at all times of the day. Lack of lighting, security, police presence and intervention were also common concerns in the data at Town Hall and Hyde Park[25].

Following the study by Plan International and the work from Committee for Sydney, The Greater Sydney Commission Women's Safety Charter was developed in 2019 which aims to bring together businesses, government agencies, peak groups and not-for-profit organisations to take collective action that improves the safety of women and girls in Greater Sydney[26].

The charter was developed in collaboration with Greater Sydney Commission, Transport for NSW and Committee for Sydney and is designed to influence participating organisations' policies and practices, services planning and delivery, in ways that enable women and girls to feel safer and more confident participating in the city's social, economic and cultural life[26].

While the real life stories of safety and security from the Plan International study are only a cross section of experiences, they are all relevant to consider in planning for a more livable and equitable future for Sydney CBD. A drive from businesses and government to better plan a CBD for everyone is essential to improving feelings of safety for all.

When it comes to safety, especially night-time safety, we need to think about it from a multi-generational, multi-cultured and multi-gendered approach. Ultimately safety comes down to how we feel as individuals. Men, women, children, older community members, people who identify as LGBTQI — we all feel safety differently. A blanket solution approach should never be applied to solving these issues.

Billie-Grace Dunk

25 Plan International, Free to Be: Sydney, July 2019
26 Greater Sydney Commission, Women's Safety Charter, 2021

First Nations at the forefront

There is a need for protecting and preserving culture, embedding living Aboriginal culture in place and the built environment, using ancient Aboriginal design and cultural practices in our day to day lives and increasing representation and visibility. The Commission heard about the need for truth-telling, as well as telling and living an authentic story of our past in order to move forward to a sustainable future. This includes the narrative we share in and around the Sydney CBD, across the State, across the Nation and out to the world — our brand just as much as our living and breathing everyday.

Sydney CBD, as it is known today, is built upon many culturally significant sites, original meeting grounds and pathways created by Aboriginal peoples. Hyde Park for example was previously an Aboriginal ceremonial contest ground[27]. Years of development across the CBD, post colonization, have removed, covered and eradicated these sites, burying them under concrete and steel.

City of Sydney think deeply about these challenges and have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel that was appointed in 2008. The Council intends that "the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must be embedded in the city's economic, social, environmental and cultural change"[28].

Through their community engagement sessions for *Planning for 2050*, City of Sydney heard strongly that "the city should also play up its unique character, such as our local architecture and beautiful public spaces, as well our unique heritage which includes First Peoples of Australia". The engagements found that young people especially were keen to embrace greater recognition of First Peoples culture in the city demonstrating a shift in understanding of Sydney as an Aboriginal place[29]. The First Peoples Dialogue Forum challenged the city to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people benefit economically from their cultural knowledge and proposed that the City boldly embed First Peoples cultural authority and voice in governance structures and decision making[29].

Our kinship dictates our connection to Country. Country is not just our environment, it categorises waterways, the environment, the stars, the flora, the fauna, and the fungi, and as per our traditional kinship system, it brings you into a system in which the whole universe is related to you as per this system and that's something we could share, it's designed so it could be adopted.

Sydney is at the forefront in many ways with the level of engagement and understanding of Aboriginal culture. Sydneysiders are very ready for a deeper more localised sense of this.
Cameron Davison

27 NSW Government Architect, Draft Connecting With Country Framework, 2020
28 City of Sydney, Culture & Creativity, 2021
29 City of Sydney, Planning for Sydney 2050 – what we heard, Community Engagement Insights Report, 2020

First nations at the forefront continued.

In recent years the City have undertaken several projects of cultural significance including the Eora Journey Recognition in the public domain and Yananurala (translated from the Gadigal language as Walking on Country), a nine-kilometre walk that highlights Aboriginal history and culture at places along the Sydney harbour foreshore.

One way governance and decision making can be looked at is through the involvement and leadership by First Nations people in the development of built environment projects. The NSW Government Architect's *Connecting with Country Draft Framework* is an approach to understand the value of Aboriginal knowledge that can inform the planning, design, and delivery of built environment projects in NSW[30]. Connecting with Country asks everyone "to take up the challenge of thinking differently, working differently, and making decisions that prioritise Country"[30].

The ambition of the *Connecting with Country* commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Country is to help realise three long-term strategic goals:

- Reduce the impacts of natural events such as fire, drought, and flooding through sustainable land and water use practices.

- Value and respect Aboriginal cultural knowledge with Aboriginal people co-leading design and development of all NSW infrastructure projects.

- Ensure Country is cared for appropriately and sensitive sites are protected by Aboriginal people having access to their homelands to continue their cultural practices.

Project development is an iterative process. The framework states that through projects and development, both for place and the built environment, we need to repeatedly check cultural awareness. This includes refining action planning to ensure the best outcomes for any given project, the place and for the community it will serve[30]. The framework has two key strategies towards cultural awareness which could be embedded in the CBD, including:

- Pathways for connecting = relationship with country, learning from country and knowledge sharing.

- Considering project life cycles with an Aboriginal perspective. This includes:

  - Sensing – Start with Country,

  - Imagining – Listen to Country, Shaping Country, Design with Country; and

  - Caring for Country[30].

It is a danger to think of Aboriginal culture as heritage because it is not. That implies it is living in the past but it is a living culture and we want to keep it going. As a bare minimum you need to have things like dual signage and wayfinding opportunities across the city that point to sacred sites. But how do protect those places? People don't want to share those places if they are unsure if they are going to be treated respectfully.
Matilda Brown

30 NSW Government Architect, Draft Connecting With Country Framework, 2020

The branding

When it comes to the 'brand' of Sydney and the CBD, the Commission heard about all the great assets that make up the city — from the physical to the natural and cultural.

Traditionally, Sydney as a city has been marketed as Australia's home of beaches, lifestyle and climate. Internationally, Destination NSW's marketing has focused on building industry partnerships, tourism and investment and the primary focus in international markets is to promote Sydney and its neighbouring regions, including the Hunter Valley and the Blue Mountains[31].

Destination NSW also has seven key marketing areas for Sydney to domestic travelers which are:[32]

- Iconic attractions

- Food and wine

- Style, fashion and shopping

- National parks and green spaces

- Outdoor and urban beach lifestyle

- Arts and cultural experiences; and

- Major events and festivals.

While our beaches, lifestyle and climate are known world over, the Commission heard that Sydney also needs to better promote our existing strong skills, culture, talent and development to attract and retain talent and investment. Without forgetting the existing diversity and living cost challenges that need to be overcome, testimonies suggested that in order to have a stronger, more diverse future CBD, the richness of our culture and drive for innovation and excellence should be more elevated in both the local and global market. The Commission heard that the brand of the CBD could be stronger with a more authentic social, economic, and environmental narrative aligned with the truly diverse Sydney.
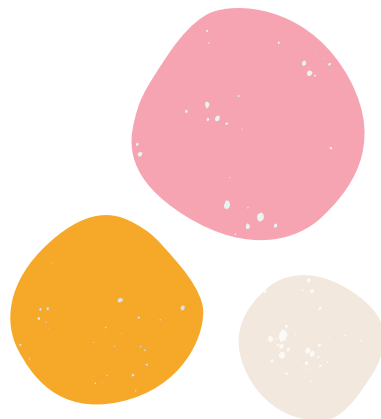
Sydney needs to develop a more nuanced, powerful and effective global brand of its own, based around its ambitions to be a truly global city that attracts, retains and grows investment and skills. A brand of brains, as well as beaches.

David Harding

31 Destination NSW, Marketing in International Markets, 2021
32 Destination NSW, Domestic Marketing Sydney, 2021

Melbourne got its global brand from the laneways and it's just as powerful as the Opera House brand. So what is our next brand? City meets nature?

Craig Allchin (Testimony session three)

It is not just about doing a tour of Sydney Harbour and the beaches. We have such a diverse offering in Sydney and there is so much more we can be talking about. My view is that we can do a much better job of selling all the great things about Sydney and the CBD.

Alex O'Mara

What we are thinking about

Neighbourhoods, precincts and districts...?

Right now there is strong interest in the future of Sydney CBD. There is money for spending, rents are changing and there is appetite for re-invigorating the CBD as an engine of strong relationships, community prosperity and growth. Timing is critical as we plan for the Future of Sydney CBD - and the Commission heard that the time is now.

When planning the CBD and its unique areas, whether they be called 'neighbourhoods', 'precincts' or 'districts', having a clear understanding of the users, needs and goals is fundamental. Planning for each place needs to consider the social, cultural, physical, environmental and digital infrastructure, how it is integrated and achieved. This includes:

- Movement (including active and passive transport systems and logistics)
- Workplaces and buildings (including uses, industries, services and technology)
- Identity (including the historical and cultural representation, expression and experience)
- The 24-hour experience (including commercial, retail, hospitality and arts offerings, and the costs)
- Outside and between the buildings (including the public realm, green space and recreation space)
- Sustainability and regeneration (including green, sustainable and regenerative design and operation).

Part of this process is about taking charge of, and improving the branding of the new Sydney CBD as a place, or series of places, for everyone. This can be through the telling of an authentic story and representing our living cultures to better connect and attract people to live, work, play and stay in the Sydney CBD.

So, we are thinking:

- *How can relationships be strengthened between businesses, government and users to form governing bodies to protect, enhance and curate 'places' in the CBD? Can the remit/mission of existing governing bodies be expanded to meet this need as well?*

- *How can the Sydney CBD better support the development and growth of 'places' that celebrates their unique characteristics?*

- *How can we better utilise Sydney CBD's natural assets as part of place revitalisation in a safe, sustainable, and respectful way?*

- *What needs to be preserved and protected in these places? What can be re-purposed and re-imagined?*

- *How do we create greater pride in Sydney CBD for all Sydney citizens by creating distinct 'places' that provide value and nurture a sense of belonging and spirituality for everyone?*

It still might be four to five years before the world is reset, so it is a good time for Sydney to reposition the city centre because it has been problematically expensive and hard for new things to happen. We need to be clever in the strategic reset.

Craig Allchin (Testimony session three)

Establishing localised, distinctive districts and community places further embeds the language of a place, and creates an organised complexity of place. I think complexity is very important because it creates a less generic and less opaque city experience.

By thinking through language, constantly changing it and owning it, we find new layers of communicating and defining places. We also find new geographical terms and definitions for places like neighbourhoods, districts, and destinations.

Lisa Havilah

Precincts did not seem to be a thing a decade ago, but now, economic precincts where there is an agglomeration of knowledge-based jobs and where there is the production of intellectual property that can be traded globally, seem to be more important places for our community. These precincts need our focus on investment attraction, they need sophisticated government models, and they also need the important ingredient of placemaking, which is often absent.

David Borger

London

The Oxford Street District in London is a global attraction and one of the world's most visited destinations. There are approximately 200 million people visiting the district annually, of which 70% use public transport[33]. The district is also a major residential and employment hub in the city, with 38,000 residents and 155,000 workers[34].

The City of Westminster initiated a framework in 2021 to transform the district over the next decade and shape a greener and more sustainable High Street. The Council recognised there has been a deterioration of the building stock and public realm, as well as pedestrian congestion and high traffic volumes, causing significant issues in the area over recent years. The Council saw that the pandemic offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rethink this important piece of the city and understood the need for a coordinated district-wide approach to transformation to be successful[34].

The framework aims to create a zero-carbon district by retrofitting heritage buildings, delivering a zero-carbon transport network, increasing resilience to the impacts of a changing climate, integrating city and nature to celebrate diverse habitats and wildlife and re-connect people with nature[34]. The framework prioritises creating an inclusive district, welcoming diverse audiences, and communities.

The framework also aims to embrace the district's capacity for innovation and experimentation by collaborating with local partners, transport providers and assisting in crowd-sourcing ideas through innovation challenges or 'hackathons'

to support the creation of new businesses, ideas and jobs[34]. The district aims to create flexible spaces which adapt to changing land use and demands throughout the day and aims to design an agile public realm establishing accessible gateways, multi-modal patterns, multi-use buildings and active frontages[34]. The Oxford Street District Framework ultimately aims to create a more sustainable, agile and inclusive precinct for all to use and enjoy.

33 Oxford Street District, Reinventing the Nation's High Street, 2021
34 City of Westminster, Oxford Street District Framework, 2021

Collaboration and imagination is needed for the curation of the city. The invitation to the city has to change but that does not come by accident. There has to be concerted public and private thinking and collaboration around this.

Tim Williams

Amsterdam

The Netherlands is globally recognized for the quality of its architectural and urban design. One of the key contributors to this is the unique role of the supervisor — an individual appointed on a specific major project to realise the ambition of a high quality built environment by instilling visions, giving inspirations, and introducing design guidelines specific to one project.

Usually, they do not hold the formal mandate to take the final decisions, but take up the role of an advisor to the client and the building permit commission. The supervisor evaluates the design proposals by the design teams on individual projects within the overall project. The task and responsibilities are not formally defined by professional codes of practice, and thus, customised to the commission in each project.

In urban design context, the role of an architect supervisor is managing spatial quality that includes the functional, aesthetic, and future values in terms of economic, social, ecological, and cultural aspects. A central part of this is to interpret statutory guidelines such as planning approvals and codes, and where appropriate, recommend adjustment to suit evolving requirements and opportunities.

The leadership approach of the supervisor towards the members of the design team could be best described as a consultative approach rather than an instructive or judgmental approach. A supervisor is usually assigned to a project containing public interest to arrange different architectural elements into a grand ensemble of an urban composition. The task of the supervisor is similar to that of a conductor of a big orchestra. Their formal assignment is actually to become an advisor to the design team, to the clients, and to the local authorities regarding the urban and architectural design quality. However, a harmonious total design could not be created only by steering on the physical objects. Making an urban composition involved dynamic understanding influenced by perceptions of different parties on the potentials of the social, economic and climatic environment.

The person appointed as a supervisor is usually a very experienced and respected architect or urban designer. An architectural supervisor possesses rich knowledge and experience in urban design and architecture, as well as the personal quality as a respected senior professional whose approach and advice are credible. Their extensive practice and personal network often give them the privilege in terms of a good insight into the design method and teamwork attitude of a different design actors.

Temporary land use in the southern district of Amsterdam - Zuidas - under the supervisor Malcolm Smith (Arup)

Outside the office and between the buildings

While dense high-rise living and working can create efficiencies in cities, it can also lead to isolation, cramped conditions and social disparity if not designed properly.

Well-designed 'places' and developments (both inside and out) can enable lively communities through access to public space, green spaces, community facilities and experiences.

People love spontaneity, discovery and intrigue and what happens outside the buildings and between the buildings is just as important as what happens within the buildings.

The Commission heard that well-designed and maintained public space, green space, footpath activation and recreation areas for people are essential for a vibrant, healthy and lively Sydney CBD.

So, we are thinking:

- *How can the revitalisation of the CBD support spontaneity and provide free, public experiences through green spaces, public spaces and recreation spaces?*

- *What cultural and natural assets need to be preserved, protected and celebrated in the public realm?*

- *What additional green, public and recreation spaces are needed in the CBD to provide health and wellness benefits to all users of the CBD? Where can, and should, they be located?*

- *Where can more public seating be implemented across the CBD to benefit users, businesses, and community?*

- *What cultural assets, public infrastructure and programs can be created and implemented in the public realm that embed and express culture in the CBD?*

- *How can more footpath activation be supported through policy, planning, investment, and strategy?*

The more attractive you make it outside the office, the more likely you are to attract talent inside the office. We have great scenery, topography and climate and have a unique and profound position in terms of First Nations community. We have the largest Aboriginal population in the country and incredible beauty and appeal in Sydney — let's work with that.

Alex O'Mara

The core task ahead is re-imagining sociability. We cannot give up on sociability as the core essence of our city experience. It has to be re-imagined and reinvented both within the building, between the building and in the public realm.

Tim Williams

What happens when you expose the heart of the CBD to a re-framed thinking and allow for more spontaneity?

Michael Rodrigues

Cities and workplaces will have to work harder to be attractive. They need to be engaging more than ever before and will be put under immense pressure to change. I've seen how challenging it is to really establish economic and financial value around things that are much harder to define. If we can get that right it makes an enormous difference in financial and in-kind support.

Abbie Galvin

> The goal is to make sure people feel like the streets, public spaces and waterfront areas are theirs to use and not only when they want to buy something or get from A to B.
>
> Alex O'Mara

Tokyo

In Japan's densely populated capital city, the effective utilisation of space and existing natural assets is key to ensuring the city remains a liveable and enjoyable place for locals and visitors alike. With a large population, there is a drive to create green spaces, recreation spaces and urban playgrounds in the public realm that meet the diverse needs of users.

In preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, many parts of the city underwent extensive infrastructure and construction changes. In the busy commercial district of Shibuya, the city transformed an existing park to become a hip hangout for workers, youth and families alike.

The Miyashita Park refurbishment opened in 2020 to serve as an open, green space mixed with commercial and recreational services including restaurants, retail shops, entertainment, a rooftop garden and a hotel[35]. The rooftop garden covers 10,000 square meters and acts as a connector between sections of the park allowing visitors to move through different activities, recreational spaces and various interactive features including a skate park, wall climbing area, multipurpose sports facility and a sand court[35].

Additionally, open space and lawn areas deliver an abundance of green space with scattered foliage and trees for families to enjoy. A canopy of plant varieties help provide a complete natural landscape providing relief from the intensity and business of the Tokyo city centre as well as providing shade in hotter temperatures[36].

Another great example of an inner-city urban environment is Maguro Sky Garden — a park facility that fuses with a motorway. Situated on Ikejiri Ohashi Station on the Metropolitan Expressway, it is a hidden gem in the city that can be reached by a walkway on the fifth floor of Prism Tower or the ninth floor of Cross Air Tower. With an area of 7,000 square meters, the unique loop-shaped layout of the garden has earned numerous awards and it promotes environmental conservation and plays a role as a base for ecological networks[35].

35 Tokyo Weekender, Where The Grass is Greener: Urban Green Spaces in Tokyo, 2021
36 ArcGis, A Survey of Green Spaces in Tokyo, 2021

A 'test and learn' approach is something that I think is quite important. You need to be comfortable to get going and trialling initiatives. See what works, see what those challenges are and who the different parties are that you need to get together to solve for things.

Rory Brown

Toronto

In recent years, Toronto has implemented several effective revitalisation and activation strategies across the city to improve health, wellbeing, and liveability. The city has focused on providing enjoyable public space experiences for people while also utilising the city's natural assets.

The *8 80 Streets Project* in Toronto aimed to "accelerate action on minimising pedestrian fatalities. The project temporarily transformed three sites across Toronto to demonstrate how the city can introduce design and planning principles to create safer, vibrant, human-centred streets"[37].

On Danforth Avenue, *8 80 Cities* redesigned the entire street and implemented proven design solutions to showcase how to save lives of vulnerable road users. They created wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, a street mural and parklets with community programming to help create street furniture, greenery and inviting lighting[37].

Morning traffic speeds dropped by 10km/h, and evening speeds by 20km/h[38]. 8 80 Cities reported that there was a 78% increase in pedestrian traffic, 77% increase in cyclist traffic and an 89% increase in mobility device user traffic due to the implementation of the temporary infrastructure. There was also a 97% increase in weekday pedestrian activity throughout the duration of the 'meanwhile' pop up spaces[38].

37 8 80 Cities, 8-80-streets, 2021
38 Aviva Canada, Innovative pop-up solutions to road safety issues, 2019

Experimentation and enabling

The Commission heard about the need for relaxing barriers such as policies, regulations and high costs that restrict experimentation, and stifle a sense of freedom and expression in the CBD.

There are examples around the world where cities, including Amsterdam, have successfully embraced and enabled more flexibility and less control through development of buildings and public spaces. Examples include providing flexibility in their infrastructure, removing controls around zoning or providing cheap spaces for creatives and start ups to experiment, grow and stimulate the economy.

So, we are thinking:

- *How can the CBD support small businesses, startups and creatives to experiment both in buildings and in the public realm in such a way that it strengthens the social, cultural and economic outcomes of the CBD, the wider city and the state?*

- *How do we enable individuals and businesses to feel empowered to experiment in the CBD and feel like it is their own space to use?*

- *What barriers need to be removed in the Sydney CBD to allow experimentation in design, practice, industries and businesses operations? And when removing barriers, what boundaries would still need to be protected, in order to maximise the collective benefit?*

- *How do we enable the CBD to be less constraining of what business can do in such a way that is strengthens the social, cultural and economic outcomes of the CBD, the wider city and the state?*

We need to allow people to use the city in ways that are less controlling. Let the city naturally emerge and stop trying to hang on so tight. That is what makes it glossy, showy and unaffordable – and we do not want that.

Ninotschka Titchkosky

Allowing things to happen by experiment would be really good. We need to create an ecosystem for risk by removing some of the regulatory barriers especially around DA approvals. This is crucial for improving Sydney's CBD and if you do not, things will remain business as usual.

Craig Allchin (Testimony session three)

Embracing all ages and cultures

Creating multi-generational and multi-cultural friendly urban environments is fundamental to creating an inclusive and safe city for everyone.

For people of all ages, developing meaningful connections with the CBD helps to instill a long-term sense of belonging to place. Better street and public space design for all generations, genders and cultures can encourage more interaction and trust. It can attract more people into the CBD who can build on the richness of the place.

The NSW Government's 'Everyone can play' guideline on creating inclusive play spaces was published in 2019 and asks designers and planners of play spaces three simple questions: Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?[39] The Commission heard about the opportunities to be strategic and integrate age-friendly, multi-cultural and multi-gendered thinking into all aspects of the CBD.

Planning needs to ensure Sydney CBD is a place for citizens of all generations, cultural backgrounds and abilities. It needs to deliver arts and cultural offerings that are relevant and accessible to all. Sydney CBD has a lot to benefit from engaging with young people to think about how they imagine the Sydney CBD for their future.

Annette Madden

So, we are thinking:

- *How do we make the CBD a lovely place for people of all ages, genders, cultural backgrounds and interests, across the day and night?*

- *What needs to be implemented in the future CBD that attracts multi-generational users, including children, teenagers, and older generations, to interact, stay and play?*

- *Where are there existing opportunities to create safer, more inclusive, more playful public spaces for children, teenagers, and older generations?*

- *Where are there existing opportunities to create safer, more inclusive public spaces for different cultural needs?*

Sydney

In 2015, architecture group Hassell Studio partnered with the Sydney Living Museums and Archikidz, a not-for-profit which engages children in city design, to create PLAY[ground].

They designed a series of interactive installations to give children a voice on the future of cities. "Little House of big ideas" was one of these installations that transformed Hyde Park Barracks. Children were invited to come and cover a 'cubby house' in their thoughts on the future of cities[40]. Some of the ideas included a city with 'a real heart', 'places to breathe' and 'seriously fun', all speaking to a healthy, happy, inclusive, and equitable city for all[40].

© Hassell Studio
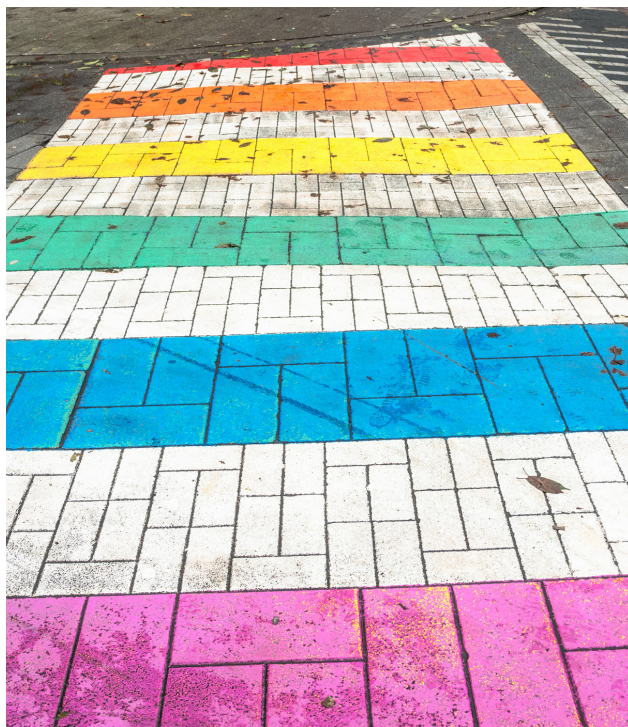
Antwerp

In Antwerp researchers utilise the city's open data network to create masterplans for individual neighbourhoods. They work with children and data to determine where they play and spend time with friends, in order to understand travel routes to preferred destinations[41].

The resulting "Play Web" provides the city with a framework for infrastructure improvements along children's common travel routes and helps direct investment towards creating more accessible journeys[41]. These improvements have included traffic calming, additional crossings, more greenery and more "play stimuli" along popular routes. Some play stimuli include landscaping logs and willow tunnels to play in, or stepping stones as part of pathways. Play stimuli aim to create new opportunities to play in unexpected places[41].

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40 Hassel Studio, Little house of big ideas, 2015
41 8 80 Cities & Eco Kids, My City Too: Advancing outdoor free play and independent mobility as cornerstones of a more child friendly Toronto, 2019

Hangzhou

In the city of Hangzhou, China, the national park, West Lake, functions as an epicentre of connection for 8 million people. The park attracts people of all generations, and invites them to interact through local music, dance, tai chi, chess, and other activities which reflect the shared cultural heritage and sense of cultural identity[42].

West Lake hosts collective performances and art showcases to appeal to a wide variety of age groups. The park also serves as an exemplar for enabling and protecting natural heritage and embracing the landscape. It is entirely encircled by trees, including weeping willows and peach trees. Huge lotus ponds that bloom in summer are placed in the corners of the causeways and other parts of the park, providing visitors seasonal attractions across the year and diversity in experience[42].

Helsinki

Inter-generational housing is a concept that was delivered in the city of Helsinki by the Finnish housing association "Setlementiassunot"[43]. The development created in 2017, allows residents to move freely and efficiently within three interconnected buildings, consisting of a total of 262 homes[43].

The development encourages collaboration and inclusivity through its offering of ample communal spaces, inclusive open gardens, kitchens, sewing rooms, music rooms, a theatre stage for creative performances and fitness and recreational utilities. The design considers the needs of different age groups and enables multi-generational communication and opportunities for different age groups to connect and build relationships[44].

42 Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Intergenerational Gatherings Among the Water and Willows, 2016
43 European Federation for Living, Groundbreaking concept Intergenerational Living. EFL member Setlementiassunot delivers Generations Block in Helsinki, 2017
44 Pop up City, The Latest Trend in Co-Living: Multiple Generations Under One Roof, 2020

2   A regenerative CBD for generations to come

What is happening and what has changed?

The context

Traditionally, the thinking and practice behind sustainability, and the use of environmental rating systems and mechanisms (including examples such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and The Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star Rating), has aimed to reduce the damage to the planet, people and the economy caused by excessive resource use[45]. Sustainability is often spoken about in the context of reducing waste, water, energy and carbon as a way to improve climate, biodiversity, nature and ecology.

Globally, cities and countries have different definitions of sustainability but many, have been working towards targets for reduction of emissions and resources. The Paris Agreement became a legally binding international treaty on climate change in 2016 after it was adopted by 196 Parties (Australia included) at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015[46].

Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. Each of the signed countries promised to look at their resources, operations and systems that can enable them to become 'more sustainable'. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by 2050[46].

In 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released their *Sixth Assessment Report* which highlighted "Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO_2) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades"[47].

Continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, global monsoon precipitation and the severity of wet and dry events[47]. Globally, many experts have shifted thinking from being 'sustainable' to regenerative' as a solution to improving our impact on the planet. Moving past just reduction and restoration to thinking about regenerative systems. These systems participate with the environment by using the health of ecological systems as a basis for design to improve societal resilience and restore planetary health rather than just causing less damage to the environment[45].
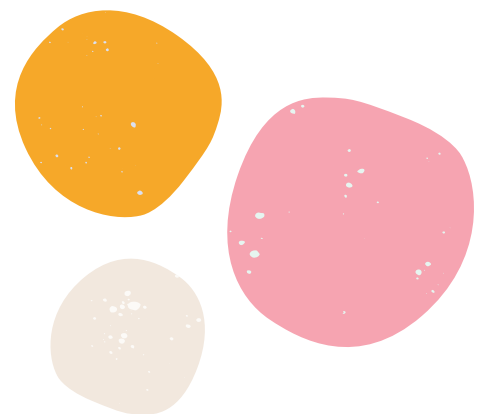
45 Reed, B (2007). Shifting from 'sustainability' to regeneration. From Taylor and Francis Online. Volume 35, 2007
   - Issue 6: Next Generation Sustainable Construction
46 United Nations Climate Change, The Paris Agreement, 2021
47 IPCC, AR6 Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis, 2021

The city's journey and achievements

The City of Sydney 2050 plan (currently being developed) builds on the *Sustainable Sydney 2030,* which was released in 2017. The *2030 plan* outlines three directions and visions for Sydney — green, global, and connected[48].

In the *Planning for Sydney 2050* community engagement sessions, the sixth top priority area from respondents was to 'address climate change and sustainability'[49]. The results from the younger audience engagement demonstrated this consistent desire for a sustainable and more environmentally conscious city. Over 90% of students want a future Sydney that uses its resources more efficiently[50].

The green goal in the *2030 Plan* aims for Sydney to be "internationally recognised as a leader with outstanding environmental performance and new green industries driving economic growth. Carbon emissions will be reduced, and a network of green infrastructure will cut down energy, water and wastewater demand. We will plan for new housing opportunities integrated with vital transport, facilities, infrastructure and open space"[48]. The plan fits in to the strategic directions areas for City of Sydney while also aligning with some State and Federal initiatives.

Ten targets were created in the plan to make the city more sustainable[48] and several great initiatives have been championed in working towards achieving these targets.

Since 2008, the city has increased canopy cover by 24%, increased parks and green spaces by 13%, expanded and restored native bushland by 180% since 2014, and provided 23 community and verge gardens across the city[51].

In 2011, The City of Sydney council became the first government body in Australia to achieve certified carbon neutral status, meeting the National Carbon Offset Standard Carbon Neutral Program (NCOS CNP). The Council's operations are powered by 100% renewable electricity. According to City of Sydney data analysis, energy use in buildings accounts for 55% of the council areas' greenhouse gas emissions[52], however, emissions have been falling because residents, businesses and industry are making their buildings more efficient[53]. The City of Sydney commenced using 100% renewable electricity to meet its needs from July 2020[51]. These changes are driving towards reduced emissions, cleaner energy sources and a low carbon city.

In 2019 City of Sydney joined 85 other councils to declare a climate emergency. Their response outlines a plan for taking swift and meaningful action on climate change, to ensure the future sustainability of the City of Sydney, its communities, economy and environment[51].

48 City of Sydney, Sustainable Sydney 2030, 2017
49 City of Sydney, Planning for Sydney 2050 – what we heard, Community Engagement Insights Report, 2020
50 City of Sydney, Planning for Sydney 2050 – what we heard, Our Future Sydney: Consulting children and young people about 2050, 2020
51 City of Sydney, Our plans for a greener, cooler, more resilient Sydney, 19 March 2021
52 Exploring Net Zero Emissions for Greater Sydney, prepared by Kinesis for the Greater Sydney Commission, 2015
53 City of Sydney, A resource efficient city, ArcGIS Data App

The city's journey and achievements continued.

A study on the *Green Economy* for the City of Sydney Council, conducted in 2019, defines 'green economy' as "the collection of activities in the economy that have a primary purpose of protecting or restoring the environment"[54]. The report identified the 'green economy' as a rapidly growing sector in Sydney and NSW, generating both economic and environmental benefits. The report also states that a "strong green and circular economy will help bring about improvements in the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we produce, ensuring a prosperous, liveable city for future generations"[54].

City of Sydney recognises that creating a 'green economy' means supporting[55]:

▪ Economic growth with demand for green building materials

▪ New areas of employment

▪ Better environmental performance and fewer emissions in our local area

▪ State and national economic outcomes, including funding renewables projects in regional areas.

In early 2020, City of Sydney began investigating options for purchasing ethically sourced offsets from carbon farmers, in northern Australia. The Council chose to partner with the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation, an Indigenous not-for-profit that supports carbon projects. Each program provides environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits, estimated to contribute around $15 million annually to local economies[56].

In 2021, a report was released in collaboration with City of Sydney, on *Planning for net zero energy buildings*, providing performance standards to achieve high-performing net zero energy buildings in Greater Sydney[57]. The report outlines that "most buildings, such as those that shape the skyline across Sydney CBD, require off-site solutions to achieve a net zero target", and "there are limited market incentives for the development industry to go above and beyond mandated standards and codes to achieve net zero emissions – the benefits of an energy efficient building go largely to the asset owner and tenants after completion in the form of lower energy costs"[57]. The report proposes performance standards and controls within the planning system as key to set a path to net zero in the planning and design process for larger buildings across Sydney[57].

The City is also a member of the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) and Energy Efficiency Council which are both leaders in advocating for better performing, efficient, cost-effective, safe, affordable, and comfortable buildings[58].

As part of the construction of the Sydney Light Rail project, recycled water pipelines were installed along George Street at the request of the Council. Along with the recycled water pipeline installed along Wynyard Walk, the Council has an invaluable opportunity to develop a recycled water scheme in Sydney's centre. The City envisages that selected Council assets and interested customers (such as building owners and developers) could connect to a recycled water pipe network and be provided with recycled water for non-potable (non-drinking water) uses.

54 Brennan, T (2019) Building a strong green and circular economy for Sydney, Final Report, Alpha and Beta Strategy x Economics
55 City of Sydney, Green Economy, 2021
56 City of Sydney, Green Environmental Sustainability Progress Report (January to June 2021), 2021
57 City of Sydney, Planning for net zero energy buildings, 2021
58 City of Sydney, Our plans for a greener, cooler, more resilient Sydney, 19 March 2021

State and national context

In 2020, the NSW Government committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 to make the State more sustainable and resilient to a changing climate[59]. The policy framework was introduced in 2020 and announced the NSW and Commonwealth Governments joint investment of over $2 billion across 10 years to help meet the State's goal of net zero emissions by 2050[60].

Nationally, under international climate agreements, Australia has two targets to reduce our national greenhouse gas emissions[61]:

▪ 5% below 2000 levels by 2020 (under the Kyoto Protocol) and

▪ 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030 (under the Paris Agreement).

Current projections show that achieving the 2030 target may be difficult. Whilst every state and territory in Australia currently has a Net Zero target by 2050 the Federal Government is yet to set a target.

Currently, at a Federal level the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources has a Climate Solutions Package, which is a A$3.5 billion investment to deliver on Australia's 2030 Paris Agreement commitments, building on existing climate change mitigation policies and programs[62]. Researchers at Australian National Univeristy (ANU) and the University of Melbourne estimate that the cost of meeting a Paris Accord Target for Australia for 2050 would be approximately $122 billion[63].

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59   NSW Government, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sustainability in Government, 2021
60   NSW Government, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Climate Change Policy Framework, 2020
61   Australian Government, International climate change commitments, 2021
62   Australian Government, Australia's climate change strategies, 2021
63 Australian National Univerity and University of Melbourne, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, Australia's Clean Economy
      Future:Costs and Benefits, 2019

Benchmarking

In June 2021, Australia was ranked 35th of 165 countries for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGS) index scores[64]. While the country had the highest ratings in the categories of SDG 1: No poverty, SDG 3: Health and Wellbeing and SDG 4: Quality Education, the county's laggard national efforts on climate change led to the lowest ranking for SDG 13: Climate Action[64]. The New Climate Institute, *Climate Change Performance Index 2020* scored Australia 54 of 61 countries based on green house gas emissions, energy use, renewable energy and climate policy[65].

For Sydney, a major all-round study of environmental friendliness, green space, and sustainability by The Business School of the University of Navarra (IESE) ranked the city 23rd of 147 in 2020 which was 5 places lower than 2019[66]. Sydney however was ranked 2nd globally for the sustainability performance of its real estate sector, as measured by the presence of green building regulations and the stringency of environmental standards applied to new developments[67].

The city ranks 62 out of 114 cities for a global commuter index, with low scores for cycle paths per capita, electric vehicle charging stations per capita and time spent commuting in minutes[68]. The city had the 3rd lowest number of electric vehicles charging points per resident among its peer group[68].

The *Sydney Benchmarking Report 2020* by Committee for Sydney outlined that in recent years, "sustainability has become a clearer disadvantage for Sydney"[69]. A lack of national action on climate change and the 2019 bushfires weighed the city's score down. The trend over the past three years was on gradual decline relative to others, but 2020 stood out as a year where Sydney's sustainability threats became exposed[69].

Over time, ratings for global cities have shifted in methodology and thinking to focus more on how well cities implement sustainable policies and how well they are adapting to cleaner mobility and energy systems and overall social, environmental, and economic wellbeing. The progress and performance of a city is commonly tracked and weighted against national- and state-level (in)action, which means that Sydney is dragged down by Australia's extremely poor action on climate change[69]. Sustainability is mostly assessed by absolute indicators with perception measures weighted towards how committed cities are to tackling climate change.

The city's and the CBD's potential to improve and reach the goals for becoming 'green, global and connected' in the coming years will depend on higher tiers of government supporting the goals as well as local and metropolitan initiatives driving change too[69].

64 Cambridge, Sustainable Development Report, 2021
65 New Climate Institute, Climate Change Performance Index 2021, 2020
66 IESE Cities in Motion Index, 2020
67 JLL Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2020
68 Money Barn Global Commuter Index, 2021
69 Committee for Sydney, Benchmarking Sydney's Performance 2020, 2020

What we are thinking about

A CBD that is cleaner, greener, healthier and protected

Sydney is not alone in its drive to be better and 'more sustainable'. What the Commission heard is that there is great work being done by City of Sydney and the NSW Government in driving a better future.

There are opportunities to build off this work to create a greener, cleaner, healthier and protected CBD for future generations to come.

Major organisations are looking at how to offset carbon but there must be a way to turn these things into regulated opportunities so businesses can, in effect, offset their carbon through these initiatives. The CBD should support this.

Ninotschka Titchkosky

Each person that lives in this country is a custodian, which means you care for Country. When we're looking at climate change, sustainability, and all these issues, we can certainly learn something from this ancient way of thinking and practice to solve some of them.

Binowee Bayles

So, we are thinking:

To ensure a restorative future for Sydney CBD that is cleaner, greener, healthier and protected:

- *What needs to be implemented from a policy, planning and strategy perspective?*

- *What infrastructure needs to be planned for and implemented and what regulations need to be put in place?*

- *What changes need to be made from current design, building and operational perspectives and practices?*

- *What incentives would further encourage government, organisations and individuals to positively impact this future?*

Regeneration and resource efficiency

The thinking about the CBD planning, design and development needs to move beyond 'sustainable' and 'restorative' to become 'regenerative'. Regenerative design is about not only creating zero-emission or circular cities, but also advancing further and creating a real and positive impact on the environment by actively improving the health of ecosystems. For example, this could be through enabling a higher degree of biodiversity and creating a symbiotic relationship between natural and human-built systems.

Regenerative design represents a shift from a human-centred approach to a whole-system approach. This includes thinking about restoring a healthy relationship with nature, using natural resources for building and operation, being efficient in resource use, using materials and products that are safe for people and the environment, creating places and environments that optimise physical and psychological health and wellbeing (including better air quality, soundscapes and green spaces), designing spaces that bring joy, are uplifting and that support a equitable community.

There are opportunities to look at how the CBD can be guided by Aboriginal culture and traditions in maintaining, growing, protecting and preserving nature and green spaces to achieve these regenerative goals.

So we are thinking:

- *How and where can regenerative thinking and design be incorporated across the CBD through design, planning and development?*

- *Where can the CBD more efficiently use resources and create more circular systems?*

- *Where can ecological regeneration projects be piloted across the CBD to create circular economy systems?*

- *Where can existing buildings be retrofitted to be regenerative in operation?*

- *What wisdom from Aboriginal culture can be embedded in the planning and preservation of the CBD's green spaces and natural assets?*

- *What wisdom from Aboriginal culture can lead the CBD to become a more circular and regenerative city?*

It is so important to think about Country being 'under the concrete'. But how do you make that visible within the CBD? It could be reintroducing native plants throughout the city, perhaps look at Hyde Park and see how we could revitalise and regenerate that with native plant species and how that can tie into employment opportunities for Indigenous people. Give space for culture to be a normal everyday thing.

Matilda Brown
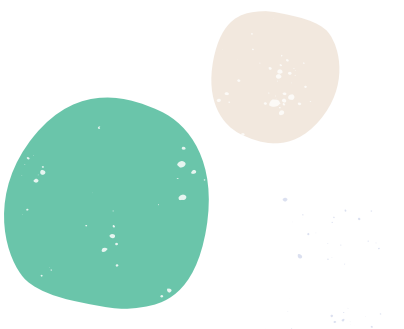
Indigenous peoples of Australia and internationally share obligations and concerns as to the restoration, conservation, strengthening and continuity of our traditional knowledge systems, our languages, religions, law and ceremonies and our role in the maintenance of the wellbeing of the environments in which our cultures exist.

This was exemplified during the Commission by the constant mention of the desire for the visibility of language in public spaces, the praise of Sydney's green spaces and bushlands but the aspirations for its increase and protection and the call for the acknowledgment and appreciation of what remains of the local cultural heritage, namely in the form of petroglyphs and paintings.

Cameron Davison

Drawing the dreamtime stories in the dirt © Getty images

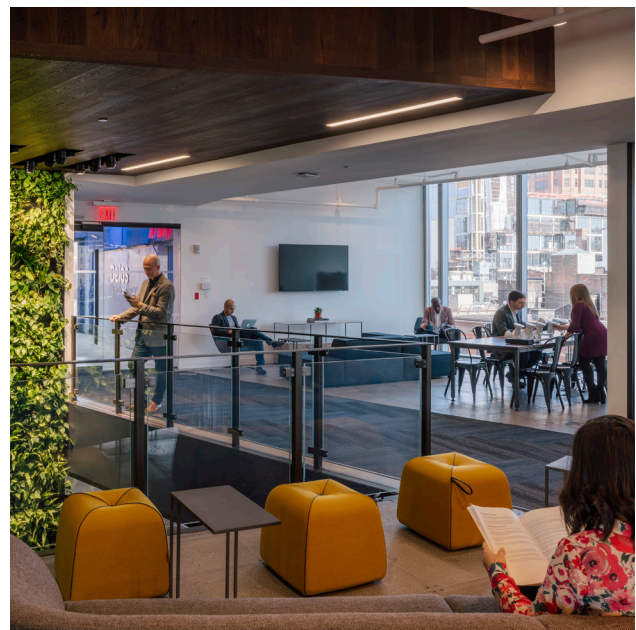Delos HQ NY © Imagen Subliminal

New York

The Delos Global Headquarters in New York is an example of a best practice sustainable building. The development achieved the highest building certification standards by winning three prestigious certifications — Living Building Challenge Petal, LEED v4, and WELL New & Existing Interiors[70].

The building was constructed using sustainable materials where the development was aligned to multiple construction standards with high grade sustainability certifications and ratings. This allowed for the development to utilise reused materials and to embody a strategy for its carbon footprint. The design incorporated many reused materials including recycled construction and landscaping waste[70]. Throughout construction, there was also an indoor air quality management plan focusing on duct protection, filter replacement, moisture absorption management, and dust containment and removal[70].

The development is an environmentally adaptive and welcoming space. It provides an abundant amount of natural daylight through the 1,500 square foot terrace, allowing employees and guests to be exposed to fresh air and biophilic design[70]. Connecting with nature was a key driver in the design for health and wellbeing benefits. The creation of zoned seating and planting of native flora allowed for a creative and productive outdoor space where employees

can socialise, have lunch and meetings. Greenery is also incorporated into the walls of the design, allowing a more innate human-nature connection[x1].

Indoor air quality is carefully managed through the HVAC system which provides a thermal gradient across the space to allow occupants to move in regions where they feel most comfortable CO_2 and environmental quality sensors also monitor the quality of air and emissions levels throughout the building[70].

Delos HQ NY © Imagen Subliminal

70 Living-Future, Delos Headquarters Tenant Renovation, 2021

Barcelona

Cngestion, pollution and restricted community spaces are common environmental and sustainability concerns in cities around the world. Barcelona first introduced the concept of 'Superblocks' in 2016, which are characterised as neighbourhoods of nine blocks, where traffic is constrained to major roads around the outside, enabling a zone of safe and efficient movement for pedestrians and cyclists[71].

The intention of the blocks is to minimise pollution from vehicles and to provide residents relief from noise pollution. They are designed to create larger and more sustainable open spaces for citizens to meet, talk and collaborate.

A study carried out by Barcelona Institute for Global Health estimated that if 503 potential 'Superblocks' are realised across the city, journeys by private vehicle would reduce by 230,000 a week due to the shift in mode share to public transport, walking or cycling[72]. This also helps to create safer streets for all generations.

The research suggests this would significantly improve air quality and noise levels on the car-free streets. Ambient levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) would also be reduced by a quarter, bringing levels in line with recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO)[72].

The plan is also expected to generate significant health benefits for residents. The study estimates that as many as 667 premature deaths from air pollution, noise and heat could be prevented each year and the design will incentivise a more active lifestyle which can reduce rates of obesity and diabetes[72]. The researchers noted that residents of Barcelona could expect to live an extra 200 days thanks to the cumulative health benefits following the roll out of 'Superblocks'[72].

71 The Conversation, Superblocks: Barcelona's car-free zones could extend lives and boost mental health, 2019
72 Barcelona Institute for Global Health, "Superblocks" Model Could Prevent Almost 700 Premature Deaths Every Year in Barcelona, 2019

R-Urban, Agrocite – A civic hub for resilience practices in Colombes, 2015 © atelier d'architecture autogérée

Paris

R-Urban is an initiative that was launched ten years ago by the French collective Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (AAA). It promotes practices and networks to develop urban resilience and produces projects that aim to benefit communities and the economy by focusing on closed ecological cycles in Paris and London[73].

R-Urban Colombes, in a North-West suburb of Paris, is a three project initiative that is connected through ecological systems. AgroCité is one of the three projects that started in 2012 as a community garden plot. It is a laboratory that encourages regeneration of the urban ecosystem and has a communal garden to grow vegetables, an education facility, a seed library and local café on what was previously a vacant plot of land. While there were some challenges along the way in retaining the land, AgroCité is still active and the garden works in experimental ways to create energy from composting and understanding the natural cycles of organic materials and processes like beekeeping[74]. The project provides an opportunity for knowledge and skill exchange between local citizens, organisers and educational groups whilst bringing an ecological advantage to the area[73].

The second part of Colombes sustainable network is the Recyclab, a recycling centre which tests the variable qualities of materials and is especially interested in ecological building techniques[73].

EcoHab is the third connected project, a cooperative of seven experimental housing units focusing on co-production and self-build processes. This residential plot contains social housing, student and residency spaces and community facilities . Ecological systems are tested with building methods to create sustainable living models. The test are recorded and archived to allow for knowledge to be exchanged and developed for future building experiments[73].

Each of the three developments plays a vital part in the ecological cycle of the R-Urban Colombes project while also exchanging a number of resources with each other. This locally closed cycle produces commodities to be shared within the cycle. For example, food is produced in Agrocité then 70% is given to EcoHab where the waste is composted and given back to the community garden to grow more[73].

73 Agile City, Research, R-Urban Colombes A Sustainable Network of Agriculture and Building Processes, 2012
74 Domusweb, Paris the Agrocité is back, 04 May 2018

3 **An agile CBD**

What is happening and what has changed?

Resilience vs agility

'Resilience' and 'agility' were terms commonly heard throughout the Commission as essential ingredients for the future of Sydney CBD.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Resilient cities are cities that have the ability to absorb, recover and prepare for future shocks (economic, environmental, social and institutional). They promote sustainable development, well-being and inclusive growth" [75].

Resilient Sydney, is a programme that started in 2015 in collaboration with all 33 metropolitan councils of Greater Sydney to build the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of chronic stresses and acute shocks[76]. In 2018, the city-wide resilience strategy was published with five key directions and flagship actions[76]:

- Direction 1: People centered. Flagship action: Shocks and stresses managed through planning for growth.

- Direction 2: Live with our climate. Flagship Action: Cool suburbs – turn down the heat.

- Direction 3: Connect for strength. Flagship action: Monitor metropolitan social cohesion and wellbeing.

- Direction 4: Get ready. Flagship action: Get prepared – 100,000 ready 'Sydneysiders'.

- Direction 5: One city. Flagship action: Engage 100 organisations in the Sydney resilience commitment.

During testimonial sessions the Commission heard about responses to the pandemic, challenges, opportunities and necessary steps for future Sydney CBD resilience — many comments of which are aligned to these Resilient Sydney directions.

City of Sydney also published *A City for All — Social Sustainability Policy & Action Plan 2018-2028*, which sets out a plan for strengthening society to improve individual and collective wellbeing and resilience in Sydney[77]. It is about improving the quality of life in Sydney for current and future generations, so that the community flourishes no matter what challenges are faced[77].

Sydney is also part of the Resilient Cities Network, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and partners, which comprises 98 member cities in 40 countries. The network is a global city-led non-profit organisation that brings together knowledge, practice, partnerships, and funding to empower cities to help them build a safe, equitable and sustainable future for all. The organisation works together with city-based chief resilience officers, mobilising communities, city governments, urban practitioners, and partners to deliver impact-driven resilience strategies and projects.

While resilience for the Sydney CBD is about ensuring that the CBD has the ability to absorb, recover and prepare for future shocks, agility for the CBD is about embracing small-scale infrastructure and remaining flexible. To ensure the CBD is agile and able to be flexible, the city needs valuable data for decision making to understand what people want, what they value, and how the CBD, its systems, processes and infrastructure (including social, digital, physical and environmental infrastructure) are performing.

75 OECD, Resilient Cities, 2021
76 City of Sydney, Resilient Sydney, 2018
77 City of Sydney, Social Sustainability Policy Action Plan, 2018

Connectivity is fundamental.

David Thodey

These connectivity layers will need to handle the massive growth and data demands that should be expected from hyper-connected cities, which Sydney should want to be.

Rory Brown

Smart cities, connectivity and technology

Cities are constantly adjusting to changing social, economic, environmental, political, and technological trends. COVID-19 accelerated some existing trends (including hybrid working, digital transformation and globalization), while other social, political, and economic trends also emerged that have impacted the way we work, live and operate.

COVID-19 highlighted the importance of local, regional, and global connectivity between markets, people and investment to ensure long-term resilience of a city, its people, economy and environment. Sydney is no exception to this, and the Commission heard that digital connectivity and excellence will remain a major attractor for investment and talent in the CBD.

Smart technologies have exponentially developed in recent years to help governments, organisations and citizens take preventive measures when required, respond to emergencies in real-time, and plan for longer-term sustainability and growth. There is a pressing need in this digital age for all cities to better understand the information, data and digital technologies they need to ensure their resilient and connected future.

'Smart cities' is a term used to describe cities that merge digital and physical and use technology and data purposefully to make better decisions and deliver a better quality of life to its citizens[78]. Ultimately the technology and infrastructure needed for 'smart cities' can transform the way that cities are governed, operated, interacted with and experienced. It is important that the data collected enhances, and doesn't detract from, the lives and rights of its citizens.

There are numerous examples globally where the line between 'smart cities' and 'surveillance cities' has become blurred. 'Smart cities' create data and transparency around an individual's life and in many cases, the individual doesn't have control over the data when it is owned and managed by others.

A resilient city is one that drives for growth and wellbeing of citizens, invests in the growth of human and social capital through provision of education, support of meaningful work, and creation of community for a livable and healthy environment. To achieve this through 'smart city' frameworks, cities must plan for infrastructure and systems management that meet the growth and data demands while ensuring ethical and humane values are upheld through systems that deal with inclusiveness, privacy and trust.

Smart buildings are part of the 'smart cities' equation and especially relevant in the Sydney CBD, as the major hub of office-based work within the city. Smart buildings should fundamentally:

- Enable connectivity between a diverse set of building service systems, business/enterprise systems, control interfaces and personal devices.

- Provide insights through learning and automatic identification of issues making the building more effective to operate and more efficient in use of resources such as energy and space.

- Support health and happiness of occupants through environments that are more productive and comfortable.

78 Mckinsey and Company, Smart cities: Digital solutions for a more livable future, June 2018

Sydney's strategies

City of Sydney released its *Digital Strategy* in August 2020 which outlines the City's vision for a smart digital future and provides action areas for the council in its digital transformation[79]. The *Smart Cities Strategic Framework* was also released in 2020 which outlines five outcomes the city wants to achieve with smart, ethical and secure use of data and technology, underpinned by smart infrastructure[80]. The outcomes are:

1. Supporting connected and empowered communities. Co-create the design and provision of city services and facilities with communities. Empower the city's communities to make more effective decisions by using open data and having the skills and tools to innovate and thrive.

2. Fuelling global competitiveness and attracting and retaining global talent. Embrace digital disruption to foster an innovation ecosystem, cultivate a culture of experimentation and sustain Sydney's position as a global magnet for talent.

3. Futureproofing our environment and bolstering resilience. Make purposeful use of data to monitor, predict and manage city conditions and the impacts of shocks and stresses on the city and community. Embrace new technologies that accelerate progress to a carbon-neutral future.

4. Cultivating vibrant, liveable places. Use data and technology to help optimise street space allocation and prioritise active transport, improve how we plan, build and maintain infrastructure, assets and systems, and enhance the experience of the physical city.

5. Providing customer-centric efficient services. Use data to understand the community's needs and preferences to provide joined-up, personalised and responsive services. Embrace smart technology and operating models to provide the efficient services communities expect.

The NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE) released the *Smart Places Strategy* for the State in 2020 which aligns closely with the City of Sydney strategy[81]. The strategy focuses on providing people and businesses access to information for skills, training and knowledge. It also aims to provide safer places, increase the sense of security, increase sustainability by reducing emissions, resource consumption and environmental impacts, improve physical and digital access for the people of NSW to participate in economic and civic life, improve the quality of life and well-being for the people of NSW and bring people, businesses and governments, their data and their services together in a seamless way[81].

If we are going to be the best in the world then I think by necessity we should really think about smart spaces and how the current user experience can be enhanced.

Michael Rodrigues

79 City of Sydney, Digital Strategy, 2020
80 City of Sydney, Smart Cities Strategic Framework, 2020
81 NSW Government, Department of Planning Industry and Environment, Smart Places Strategy, 2020

What we are thinking about

Planning for resilience and agility

The Commission heard that for Sydney CBD to remain a global competitor, it needs to be prepared and ready for anything. The Commission is thinking about agility, flexibility and small scale infrastructure that can allow Sydney CBD to adapt and change seamlessly with future shocks and stresses.

In 2020, Sydney was ranked 18 out of 109 cities (four places lower than 2019) for the smart city index[82]. The Commission heard about the need for the City of Sydney and DPIE strategies to be driven and implemented across planning, design and development to ensure Sydney CBD remains globally attractive and improves the quality of life for all users of the CBD.

There is a pressing need to embrace smart technologies and data, in our transforming world, in ways that are ethical and empowering for communities. Getting the right balance between innovative buildings and technology, smart buildings and cities, and livable buildings and places, with the right amount of flexibility, will also be key to Sydney's CBD's resilient and agile future.

So, we are thinking:

- *What does an agile and resilient Sydney CBD look like now and in the future?*

- *What economic, social, cultural, digital, physical, environmental and technological infrastructure needs to be planned for and implemented in the Sydney CBD to ensure it can be agile and adapt to changing trends, future challenges and disruptions?*

- *What smart infrastructure is needed to help drive Sydney CBD's attractiveness to more talent and investment?*

- *What do government, businesses, and users have to prepare for to be agile, resilient and ready to adapt as needed?*

- *What needs to be considered during planning to ensure the users of the CBD feel safe and secure during these transitions?*

When we are in a situation where we have multiple options, doing nothing is always a risk. We need to work collaboratively and in partnership to look at and analyse what we have seen as well as look at the outcomes that each place may desire, whether that be specific safety outcomes or activation. Whatever it is, baseline requirements for smart technology need to be embedded to enable these.

Rory Brown

82 Institute for Management Development, Smart City Index, 2020

Smart place technology can transform the way we live by creating amazing spaces that improve liveability, economic and environmental outcomes. It is important to note when talking about this technology and outcomes, that it is place-based. It can be applied everywhere in cities and across precincts — from open spaces to green spaces, public spaces, laneways and the like.

Rory Brown

Enabling a smart city is as much about the deployment as it is about the technology. Leading cities have recognised this by putting in master access agreements. We see that in places like Boston or New York where access to poles and other city infrastructure is helping companies to deploy these smart city outcomes and support innovation.

Rory Brown

Turin

The World Economic Forum's *Agile Cities: Preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution* report, highlights examples where cities have experimented with innovative solutions in their physical, digital, and environmental infrastructure to be agile and adaptable to change[83].

The Agnelli Foundation in Turin, Italy, pioneered a heating, cooling and lighting system which can be customised to workers' individual preferences in an office environment. It establishes personalised environmental spaces for each worker and supports their needs throughout multiple spaces across their work area. The system is operated by hundreds of WiFi-enabled sensors that collect data relating to occupancy, temperature, carbon dioxide concentration and the status of meeting rooms[83].

The core intention behind the Agnelli Foundation project was to integrate digital technologies within the physical working space so workers can forge better relationships between their peers and with the building they inhabit, ultimately nurturing collaboration and creativity[83].

© Zac Wolff

83 World Economic Forum, Agile Cities: Preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2018

Singapore

Flexible planning and land-use policies can help a city to be agile and respond to changing social, technological, political, economic, and environmental trends when needed.

In 2017, government agencies in Singapore collaborated to assess land-use policies and planning regulation to encourage flexibility in the city[84]. Punggol North is Singapore's first "Enterprise District" which piloted a new planning initiative where a designated master developer had the capacity to transform the use of individual sites within a district-level zoning plan, avoiding the need for each individual site to be separately zoned[84].

The master developer is accountable for enabling an integrated network of pedestrian walkways and cycling paths to improve mobility, establish green and public spaces, delivering a people-centred vision and regulate waste and storm water across district.

Collaboration and knowledge share between academia and business has also been incentivised within the business park where co-working spaces share the district with the Singapore Institute of Technology campus[84]. The district successfully blurs the line between services and manufacturing and demonstrates a growing potential for cross-sector synergies and innovation in placemaking.

84 World Economic Forum, Agile Cities: Preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2018

Next steps

Phase five will summarise the key messages from the Commission and present the final recommendations and actions that have emerged from consultation and research, to drive an ambitious, creative, inclusive and prosperous future Sydney CBD.

Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**	**Phase 4**
Challenges and opportunities	Movement, workplace and productivity	Learning, living and culture	Sustainable urban form, planning and liveability

Testimonials

+ Interim workshops, supporting research and data analysis

Commissioners

Phase 5
Actions and recommendations for a global and vibrant CBD
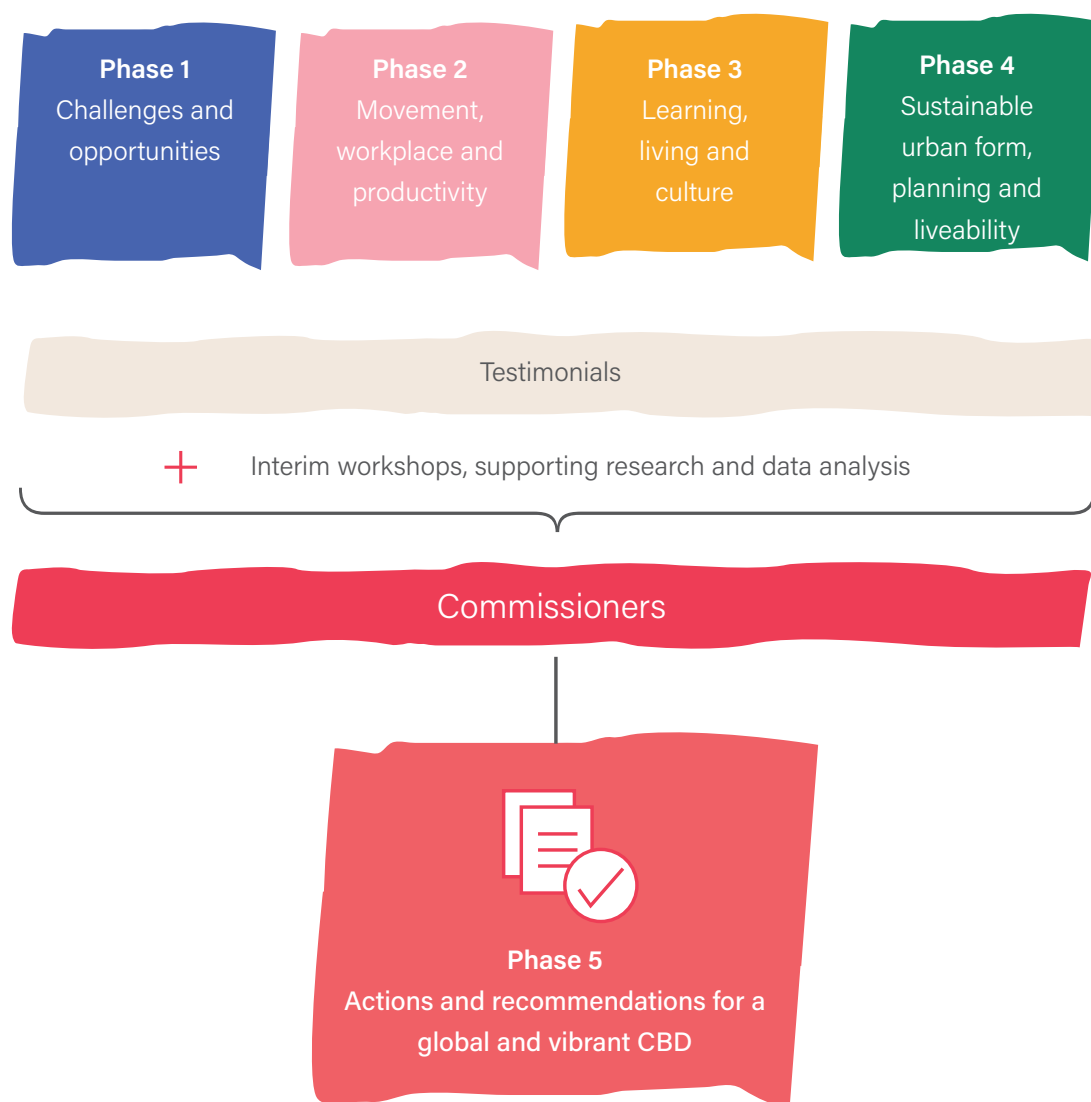
During COVID-19 there was a real sense of 'how can we solve things together' and I think for Sydney we really need more of that. It's great to see you create this forum where we can talk together about the future of our city.

Alex O'Mara

Acknowledgments

Session one testifiers

Attila Brungs, Vice Chancellor and President,
University of Technology Sydney

Elizabeth Mildwater AICD, CEO, Greater Sydney Commission

Jeheon Son, Head of Development NSW and Head of
Integrated Transport Development, LendLease

Session two testifiers

Lee Hatton, Executive Vice President, Afterpay

Michael Silman, Project Director of Macquarie's Metro
Martin Place Development, Macquarie Group

Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, CEO, Mirvac

Kirk Coningham, Former CEO, Australian Logistics Council

Rachel Smith, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Australian Logistics Council

Session three testifiers

Simon Kenway, Conductor, Opera Australia

Craig Allchin, Director, Ethos Urban

Kerri Glasscock, CEO & Festival Director, Sydney Fringe Festival

Dean Long, CEO, Accommodation Association of Australia

Session four testifiers

Alex O'Mara, Group Deputy Secretary of Place,
Design and Public Spaces, DPIE

Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Powerhouse Museum

Abbie Galvin, NSW Government Architect

Rev. Bill Crews, Founder, the Rev Bill Crews Foundation

Session five testifiers

Rory Brown, Director, Smart Places Programs,
Strategy and Innovation, DPIE

Annette Madden, Head of Theatre, Sector Development,
Advocacy and Development, Australia Council for the Arts

David Borger, Executive Director, Business Western Sydney

Michael Rodrigues, 24-hour Economy Commissioner, NSW Treasury

To find out more about the Commission visit
sydney.org.au/FutureSydneyCBD