Benchmarking Sydney 2024

March 2024

Committee for Sydney

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land, and respect Elders past and present.

About this paper

The Committee for Sydney published a benchmarking report annually between 2016 and 2021. The 2024 Benchmarking Sydney report is the first since the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been produced in partnership with The Business of Cities.

We would like to thank co-authors Dr Tim Moonen (Co-Founder and Managing Director) and Jake Nunley (Head of Research) at The Business of Cities for their contribution to this report.

Cover image: Sydney World Pride in Darlinghurst.
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Executive Summary

In 2024, Sydney's star continues to shine. Our economy is frequently recognised globally for its financial services depth and capability. Our natural environment – from the coast to the mountains - are the envy of cities across the world. Sydney's cultural landscape continues to grow in stature and reputation, celebrating World Pride, the FIFA Women's World Cup and events such as the Vivid Festival, the Sydney Biennale and Ramadan Nights.

We are a city that continues to work hard to better itself and significant improvement has been made across many aspects of City life. Benchmarking is an important way for us to see where we stand tall or still have work to do. The Benchmarking Sydney 2024 report compares Sydney with a group of peer cities that not only share many of our characteristics and grapple with challenges we do, but are cities that we look to for inspiration.

This report benchmarks Sydney against nine peer cities from around the world:

- Amsterdam
- Barcelona
- Stockholm
- Miami
- San Francisco
- Toronto
- Dubai
- Hong Kong
- Singapore

Across the Committee for Sydney's six policy areas – Economy, Resilience, Mobility, Culture, Planning and Equity and Fairness – Sydney's performance varies when compared with these cities. This report explores where we perform well and where we fall short.

How Sydney ranks against peer cities in...

What it highlights is that when we compare ourselves with such a high calibre group of peer cities, we often sit in the middle of the pack. And that's ok. Benchmarking is about looking beyond our shores to learn from others who have something to teach us.

The 2024 Benchmarking Sydney report is the first published by the Committee for Sydney since the Covid-19 pandemic and intentionally looks ahead at where Sydney can and should be positioning itself globally.

A global city needs a global narrative. Sydney's must be more than a bridge, beaches and bushfires. It must reflect the complexity and innovation within our economy; the cultural diversity and vibrancy of our communities; our leadership in the race to decarbonise and our investment in city-shaping infrastructure.

It must be an identity that sets Sydney up for the decades to come.

This report highlights several key insights:

1. **Keeping pace with change:** Sydney is a city improving on many metrics including innovation and sustainability, but often not as fast as our peers around the world. Those cities that are moving faster have had a more intentional and coordinated focus on metropolitan development and investment for a longer period of time.
2. **A city bursting with potential:** Sydney is a city with so much potential that isn't yet fully realised. Sydney's global brand is strong, but it often doesn't reflect our innovation economy, our cultural diversity and the vibrant places that make our city so great.
3. **Gaps between perception and performance need closing.** Sydney is a city where a gap exists between how we actually perform and how we are perceived to perform. Sometimes, such as in culture, this is a gap in where our performance has improved but global perceptions are yet to catch up. In others, such as resilience, we are perceived favourably but our actual performance could be better.
4. **Policy patience and consistency is required:** Sydney is a city where our current performance, particularly across planning and mobility, is impacted by historic growth patterns and where the policies in place to shape our future have not yet had a chance to be fully realised.
5. **Sydney cannot afford to be unaffordable.** Sydney has been successful in attracting people from across Australia and the world and our city is better for it. But this success comes with a cost. Housing unaffordability and cost of living challenges are negatively impacting Sydney and we risk losing people, their skills and their communities if we do not address it.

Image: Unsplash

What is global benchmarking?

This report looks at how Sydney stacks up in the areas that matter most to our future.

To do this we take a close look at its performance and perception among a group of ten international cities that share some of Sydney's size, standing and ambition. In the spirit of our ambition for Sydney to become the best city in the world, we want to know who is leading on the issues that matter the most, and how we compare.

The report draws on a review of all of the comparative benchmarks and datasets that feature Sydney. At the latest count there are more than 1,000 distinct indicators out there that measure the city internationally.

Not every data source is perfect. They all have their insights and limitations. So we look across all of the data, rather than at a single ranking or composite, to identify the most pertinent scores and common trends.

Global benchmarking offers

- An overall look at how Sydney is doing on the world's stage, beyond single high-profile rankings that crop up.
- A chance for Sydney to see itself against a good-fit 'peer group' of cities, rather than being caught up in domestic comparisons.
- A perspective on change over time over longer periods than one political cycle.

Sources of benchmarking data

Publicly available studies produced by teams of academics, consultancies, researchers, government analysts, and others.

Longitudinal databases and census data (for example via OECD, World Bank, UN Habitat)

Real-time platforms, aggregated from trusted application programming interfaces (APIs) (for example via Dealroom, IQAir)

Six things to know about benchmarking

It's all relative. A city can improve on the ground, yet still fall behind others if they are improving faster. The opposite is also true.

What matters matters. Cities are not rated on the same things in perpetuity. For a city to be sustainable, say, is now much more about carbon and climate resilience, as well as air pollution and green spaces. Audiences - such as visitors or investors - also change their values and in turn their perceptions of what makes a good city.

Time lags. Real improvements to infrastructure or services can take 1-2 years to register, as can fluctuations in demand. 2024 is the first year for a while that data is not strongly shaped by pandemic conditions. Because of time lags, benchmarks are more helpful to understand medium-term patterns rather than specific decisions and policies.

Performance and perception. Some measures are objective – others are perceived by global audiences. This helps to spot where the brand is better than the product, or where there is an opportunity to change minds.

Blind spots persist. In some important areas there is not yet enough comparable international data out there. These include First Nations culture, social inequality, housing supply, cultural participation and freight. The reasons are usually to do with the difficulty of comparing 'apples with apples' across national boundaries, or where there is more data on raw performance than on subjective perceptions.

City (and State) Governments cannot control everything. Sydney's performance in many areas is strongly shaped by factors outside its immediate public control, including market demand. Benchmarks do not assign blame or responsibility. The intention is instead to take a considered look at strengths and challenges that can help to inform better policy and coordination choices.


Image: Unsplash

This report

- An outside-in analysis of Sydney relative to 'peer' cities
- A comparative look at Sydney's strengths, gaps and opportunities.
- Based on the data available – not every topic yet has good international data.

It is **not** intended as:

- An inside-out analysis of all of data held on Sydney by local and state governments/departments
- An assessment of Sydney or NSW's strategies, governance, fiscal or policy models

The Benchmarking Sydney 2024 Report takes a deep look into Sydney's strengths and opportunities for improvement by benchmarking our performance again nine peer cities across six policy areas and a number of individual indicators.

City-based comparisons are done in many ways. They can be longitudinal, comparing Sydney across different time periods through data sets such has the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, counted every five years.

Comparisons are often done between capital cities, comparing demographic, economic and other profiling or performance data.

Cities are also often compared through single metric indexes, such as the many 'most liveable city' indexes that compare cities across the world to others – often when the cities are fundamentally different in scale or context. The aggregation of an entire city into a single number and ranking often provided limited policy value.

The Benchmarking Sydney report fills a gap in this body of global data and provides a rich data source and story for Sydney in a local and global context.

This report:

- Benchmarks Sydney against nine global 'peer' cities with shared characteristics that provide more meaningful insight and comparison
- Examines benchmarked data across the Committee for Sydney's six policy areas – Economy, Resilience, Mobility, Planning, Culture and Equity and Fairness
- Provides indicator-level comparison data rather than a single aggregated score, to allow more meaningful interrogation of Sydney's global standing
- Draws on both performance and perception data sets to enable examination of where these differ
- Provides a rich data set to draw on for future work

This series looks at Sydney across six pillars that together comprise the features Sydney needs to become the best city in the world:

1. Future economy
2. Resilience
3. Mobility
4. Culture
5. Planning
6. Equity & fairness

Within each pillar, the report:

- Rates Sydney among its 10 peer cities – both overall and across each sub area.
- Aggregates Sydney scores using an Elo algorithm which computes how Sydney is doing in all permutations.
- Provides a sample of measures and metrics that give a flavour where Sydney is ahead or behind.
- Illustrates the gap between Sydney and the world's best rated city on some relevant metrics

A note on scale

Throughout, the term "Sydney" or "the city" refers to Greater Sydney, unless specified otherwise. Occasionally Sydney is judged at other scales - the City of Sydney; Inner Sydney; and Sydney urban area. Wherever data is at these scales, this is called out. In a few instances, data compares New South Wales with equivalent states or regions, where city level data is not available or is not suitable (e.g. energy supply).

Who are Sydney's peers

Sydney is arguably the capital of the Southern Hemisphere and routinely rated among the 20 most significant centres of global economy and culture.

Sydney is routinely rated among the 20 most significant centres of global economy and culture. Beyond the stereotypes, a mature metropolis like ours thinks carefully and selectively about who its "peer cities" are.

The Benchmarking Sydney series previously situated Sydney among a broad peer group of 33 cities. Within this wider group, Sydney shares a lot of features with a smaller cohort of 10 high-performing metropolitan cities that are:

- Gateway cities for investment, trade and talent
- Waterfront cities whose quality of life advantages underpin brand and drive visitation and cultural roles.
- Achieving scale that sees them evolve from single-centre cities to multi-centre regions.
- In pursuit of a bigger portion of the innovation economy.
- Are witnessing first-hand the climate, affordability and resilience challenges that Sydney faces

Sydney's group of 10 includes:

- Three from Europe (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Stockholm)
- Three from the Americas (Miami, San Francisco, Toronto)
- Three from the Rest of the World (Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore)

Toronto
Metropolitan population 6.8m

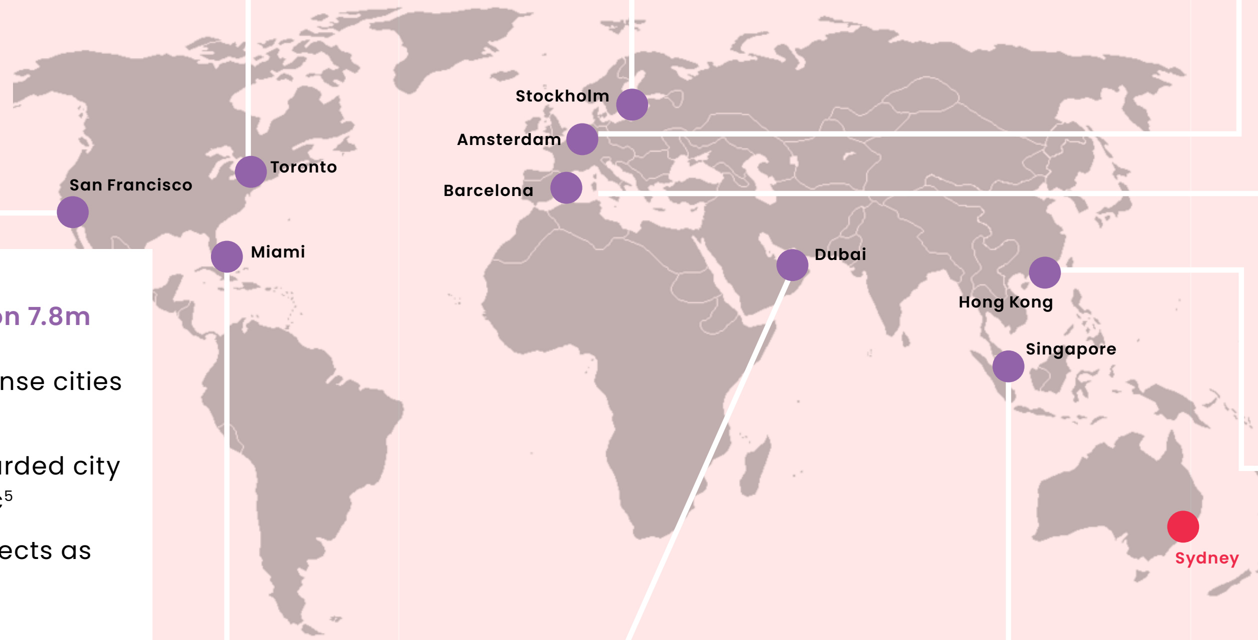
- World's 12th most globally connected economy[1]
- 47% foreign-born[2]
- Top 20 most affected by urban heat in OECD[3]

Stockholm
Metropolitan population 2.4m

- 15% population growth to 2041[10]
- 10th for how highly students rate studying in the city[11]
- Top 20 for high-value corporates (G2000)[12]

Amsterdam
Metropolitan population 2.5m

- World's 3rd most internationally connected airport[13]
- World's 14th most globally connected economy[14]
- World's 24th highest rated financial centre[15]



Barcelona
Metropolitan population 5.1m

- 14th most often rated as top city for talent[16]
- 4th most internationally visited city in Europe[17]
- More business conference attendees than any other city globally[18]

San Francisco
Metropolitan population 7.8m

- Among 100 least dense cities in the world[4]
- 8th most highly regarded city by the global public[5]
- 3rd for fintech prospects as rated by financial professionals[6]

Hong Kong
Metropolitan population 7.5m

- Global top 30 urban economy[19]
- World's 4th highest rated financial centre[20]
- 6th most visited city in the world[21]

Miami
Metropolitan population 6.1m

- 42% are foreign-born[7]
- Bottom 100 cities for built-up density[8]
- World's 38th highest rated financial centre[9]

Dubai
Metropolitan population 5.9m

- 3rd most visited city in the world[25]
- 7th most connected global economy[26]
- 20th for financial sector scale and reputation[27]

Singapore
Metropolitan population 5.9m

- 44% foreign-born[22]
- Global top 10 for cross-border real estate investment[23]
- 13th in the world for business meetings & conferences[24]

› Future Economy

A city bursting with potential

Sydney ranks fifth out of the ten peer cities, falling in a cluster of four that including Amsterdam, Stockholm and Toronto. Sydney's economy excels in areas it is already known globally for and that play a vital contribution to productivity – particularly in the financial and professional services sector. The concentration of finance and other business activity positively influences Sydney's business brand and we are now back in the world's top 20 financial centres.

Sydney is beginning to see a diversification of its economy towards emerging sectors, particularly those with strong links to innovation, technology and research and development. Sydney is one of only two peer cities to rate as a global top city for deep tech and we ranked first across the peer cities for growth in breakout stage venture capital between 2015-18 and 19-22.

Yet our growth prospects and investment attraction don't reflect this potential and there are clear gaps between perception, potential and performance.

While our brand is recognised globally, it is not always translating into real investment. Of the ten peer cities we place joint sixth for the number of strategic sectors where we are globally competitive and ninth for long-run growth prospects. More broadly, we rank third out of 100 cities for how often we are seen by the global public as a top place to invest but rank 36th for real levels of corporate and investor activity.

In skills too, the difference between performance and potential is clear. Sydney rates last of seven peer cities for depth of data analyst and data scientists – occupations core to the transformation of many sectors in Sydney's economy.

But the future looks promising. Sydney is first of eight for highly ranked engineering and computer science degree programs and first of ten for the retention of digitally skilled graduates. We are second of six for the share of GDP spent on R&D and third of ten for workplace and technology infrastructure to support innovation. This skills pipeline is essential for Sydney to realise its economy potential.

The story of Sydney's economy is one of as yet unfulfilled potential. Sydney has a growing global brand, future-focused educational system and clear strengths in emerging technology sectors.

To realise this potential requires continued support of both the private and public sectors to champion the industries emerging from the innovation space and ensure that students continue to enter the workforce with the skills those sectors need. It requires a concerted effort to ensure Sydney's growing unaffordability does not deter international talent from coming to Sydney and does not force people to leave. Net out-migration was higher than in 85% of other major cities in 2022-23.

Sydney's future economy cannot afford for Sydney to be unaffordable.

Sydney's headline stats

✓ **Now back in the world's top 20 financial centres, up 14 places from pandemic dip (survey data)[28]**

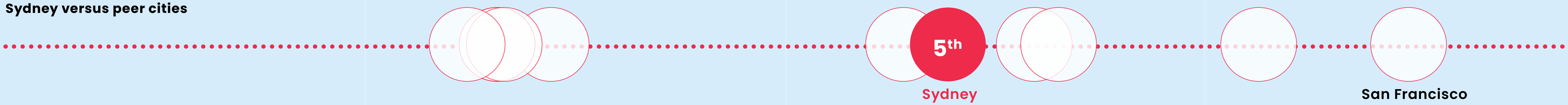
✓ **10^{th} globally for FDI into regional HQs[29]**

! **Down 7 to 18^{th} over last 4 years for all-round drivers of investment demand[30]**

! **Down 9 to 46^{th} since 2021 for patent applications and published scientific articles[31]**

- ✓ Top 15% of major cities globally for cross-border real estate investment and how fast working-age population will grow over the next decade[32]
- ✓ Up 11 places to 61^{st} for affordability of construction costs, as other cities become more expensive[33]
- ✓ Still in the top 40 cities in the world for mobile broadband speeds, although only 4^{th} out of 8 peers[34]
- ! Down 30 to 55^{th} since 2019 for meetings and conventions hosted[35]
- ! Net out-migration was higher than in 85% of other major cities during 2021-2023[36]
- ! Bottom third among 141 cities for how happy local people are with internet connectivity[37]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Future Economy

Sydney in context

Sydney is currently about half as productive as the world's top ten most productive metropolitan cities, and half as successful at growing its innovation economy. The innovation and funding gaps are starting to close, yet other cities continue to have more success diversifying their industry mix, which is key to economic resilience.

Despite the Bay Area's widely known housing and CBD challenges, it is still a yardstick for high-wage, highly capitalised growth companies. Others setting a high bar include London for talent, Austin for risk investment, and Lisbon for affordable lifestyle for the mobile tech workforce.

Common features of the top cities in this pillar include breadth and depth of talent, concentration of investors, and close relationships between institutions and inventors.

Sydney and its peer group

Across Sydney's ten peer cities, it is fifth overall for future economy. Sydney's long-term demographics appear to be more resilient, it still holds many education advantages, and is doing better for now at retaining its younger, digitally skilled workforce. But metropolises like Toronto, Miami and Amsterdam are having more success growing a critical mass of high performing companies across a broader range of high-growth sectors, which partly explains why top talent congregates in them.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

7th/10 For economic growth & prosperity

- ✓ 4th out of 9 for share of people who think businesses are creating plenty of new jobs (survey data)[38]
- ! 5th out of 6 for economic output per person (GDP per capita)[39]
- ! 9th out of 10 for long-run growth prospects[40]

6th/10 For economic diversification

- ✓ 3rd out of 7 for share of jobs in professional and technical services, information and management (does not include financial services)[45]
- ✓ 1 of only 2 peers to rate as global top 15 city for deep tech[46]
- ! =6th out of 10 for the number of strategic sectors where Sydney's ecosystem is competitive globally[47]

2nd/10 For education and skills

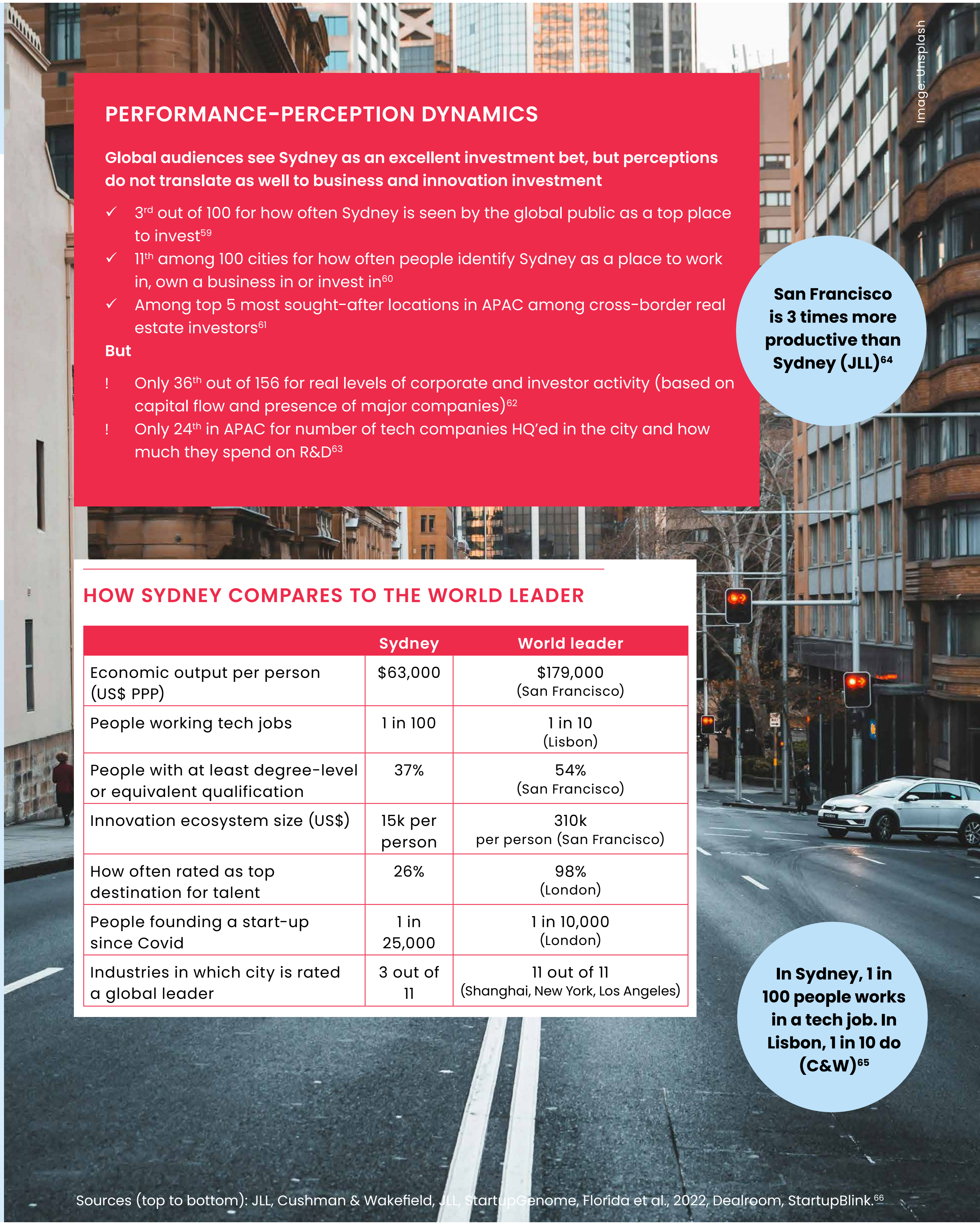
- ✓ 1st out of 10 for retention of digitally skilled graduates[54]
- ✓ 1st out of 8 for highly ranked engineering and computer science degree programmes[55]
- ✓ 3rd out of 9 for all-round availability of skilled talent[56]
- ! 5th out of 10 for contribution to the largest online crowd-sourced codebase[57]
- ! 4th out of 6 for share of people with degree or equivalent qualification[58]

3rd/10 For attractiveness to people, capital & ideas

- ✓ Lowest dependence on non-working elderly out of 7 peers[41]
- ✓ 4th out of 9 for top corporate firm HQs (G2000)[42]
- ✓ 3rd out of 9 for companies' all-round confidence in graduates (survey data)[43]
- ! 7th out of 7 for depth of data analyst & data scientist pool[44]

6th/10 For innovation

- ✓ 1st out of 10 for growth in breakout stage VC between 2015-2018 and 2019-2022[48]
- ✓ 2nd out of 6 for share of GDP spent on R&D[49]
- ✓ 3rd out of 10 for workplace and technology infrastructure to support innovation[50]
- ! 5th out of 8 for value of exits[51]
- ! 7th out of 10 for intensity of VC attraction[52]
- ! 8th out of 8 for fixed broadband speeds[53]



PERFORMANCE-PERCEPTION DYNAMICS

Global audiences see Sydney as an excellent investment bet, but perceptions do not translate as well to business and innovation investment

- ✓ 3rd out of 100 for how often Sydney is seen by the global public as a top place to invest[59]
- ✓ 11th among 100 cities for how often people identify Sydney as a place to work in, own a business in or invest in[60]
- ✓ Among top 5 most sought-after locations in APAC among cross-border real estate investors[61]

But

- ! Only 36th out of 156 for real levels of corporate and investor activity (based on capital flow and presence of major companies)[62]
- ! Only 24th in APAC for number of tech companies HQ'ed in the city and how much they spend on R&D[63]

San Francisco is 3 times more productive than Sydney (JLL)[64]

HOW SYDNEY COMPARES TO THE WORLD LEADER

	Sydney	World leader
Economic output per person (US$ PPP)	$63,000	$179,000 (San Francisco)
People working tech jobs	1 in 100	1 in 10 (Lisbon)
People with at least degree-level or equivalent qualification	37%	54% (San Francisco)
Innovation ecosystem size (US$)	15k per person	310k per person (San Francisco)
How often rated as top destination for talent	26%	98% (London)
People founding a start-up since Covid	1 in 25,000	1 in 10,000 (London)
Industries in which city is rated a global leader	3 out of 11	11 out of 11 (Shanghai, New York, Los Angeles)

In Sydney, 1 in 100 people works in a tech job. In Lisbon, 1 in 10 do (C&W)[65]

Sources (top to bottom): JLL, Cushman & Wakefield, JLL, StartupGenome, Florida et al., 2022, Dealroom, StartupBlink.[66]

› Resilience

Sustaining and supporting our natural assets

Sydney is a city with significant natural assets. Fringed by major national parks, traversed by waterways and blessed with extensive coastal shoreline. These extensive natural systems play vital roles as environmental assets, recreational places and economic infrastructure that draw tourists from across the world to visit.

These natural systems place us second in the group of peer cities from a Nature Positive perspective; first of nine for per capita green space provision consistency over a five-year period and second of nine for average health of tree and plant diversity improvement. They are the essential green and blue infrastructure that Sydney needs to help us respond to a rapidly changing climate.

As climate change continues to impact Sydney, it will increase the level of risk that different parts of the city face. Sydney is in the bottom 25% of OECD cities for the share of land covered by highly flood prone artificial surfaces. The risks of this flood exposure have been evident over the past few years. In 2021 and 2022, Sydney was impacted by significant flooding events, including but not limited to the Hawkesbury-Nepean region, leading to hundreds of millions of dollars in flood damage to houses, roads, and other infrastructure.

As the climate becomes hotter and drier, the risks and costs of urban heat and water stress increase also. The urban heat island effect in Sydney is more severe than in 95% of OECD cities and we are in the bottom 15% of OECD cities for how much the urban heat island effect has worsened since 2015.

As a result, Sydney has historically suffered from water stress - and risks continuing to do so. Of nine peer cities, Sydney is expected to suffer the second highest increase in water stress from 2020 to 2040.

This tells a story of a city often equipped to respond to natural disasters when they occur, but less advanced in mitigating the drivers of them in the first place. Sydney rates seventh of the ten peer cities in net zero transition and clean and affordable water and energy. Sydney has the second highest emissions from the transport sector of six peer cities; last of seven for reliance on coal in electricity generation and our per capita carbon footprint is nearly three times that of the leading big city in high-income OECD nations - Milan.

Transition is occurring and Sydney sits fifth overall in the Resilience rankings against the peer cities but there is a lot further Sydney can go to improve its resilience outcomes. While we sit just outside the top 10% of global cities ready to shift to net zero emissions in the office sector, we rank 23rd of 30 global cities for maturity and ambition of our policies moving towards a circular economy.

Sydney has the underlying environmental systems that are the envy of the world. But these systems alone are not enough to ensure Sydney is a resilient city. These systems must be complemented by a proactive approach to climate-related disaster mitigation and a continued investment in our transport, energy and economic systems to ensure we are resilient to a changing climate.

Sydney's headline stats

Top 5% globally for low exposure to harmful PM2.5 particulates[67]

Just outside top 10% globally for readiness to shift to net zero emissions in the office sector[68]

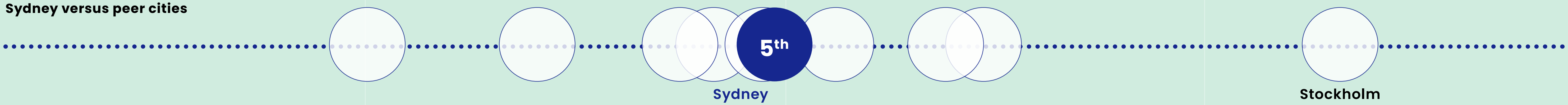
More land covered by highly flood prone artificial surfaces than in 75% of OECD cities[69]

Urban heat island effect is more severe than in 95% of OECD cities[70]

- ✓ 9th out of 23 global investment hubs for the resilience of the commercial real estate sector to changing climate[71]
- ✓ Top 30% of cities in the world for how happy local people are with recycling services (survey data)[72]
- ✓ 22nd out of 48 cities for share of waste that is recycled[73]

- ! Bottom 15% of all OECD cities for how much the urban heat island effect has worsened since 2015[74]
- ! 23rd out of 30 global cities for maturity and ambition of policies and roadmap for circular economy[75]
- ! 97th out of 167 cities for progress in making EVs a more financially viable option[76]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Resilience

Sydney in context

Sydney's systems resilience gets good ratings for the most part – especially where these focus on a city's ability to respond to crisis, rather than prevent them. Sydney's infrastructure systems, commercial real estate stock, and health services are rated reasonably robust to forecast climate and environmental risks as compared to other leading cities internationally. In the main, green space, biodiversity and water networks are better preserved than in many other big cities.

Yet Sydney's land use choices compound its vulnerability to flooding and heat island effects, while water stress is rapidly increasing. The city remains well behind in the race to decarbonise. It is currently about three times as carbon-intensive as the world's leading metropolitan cities, and much further behind at diversifying energy generation. Sydney will also be more exposed to extreme heat than other cities. Among cities of Sydney's scale, plenty are further ahead on the circular economy, cleaner mobility choices, and adopting sustainable behaviours and policies.

Sydney and its peer group

In 2024, Sydney rates ahead of many of its close peers for resilience, although this group includes highly at-risk cities. European cities are moving faster on net zero and clean energy. But Sydney's biodiversity is in better health than in any other city except for Stockholm. Sydney's exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards is also rated as lower than in other coastal hubs like Dubai and Miami.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

7th/10 For net zero:

- ! 5th out of 9 for per person carbon emissions[77]
- ! 2nd highest emissions from transport among 6 peers[78]
- ! Only city among 6 peers where share of office stock that is green has declined since 2015[79]

6th/10 For natural hazard risk:

- ✓ 2nd out of 7 for real estate resilience to climate risks[80]
- ✓ 3rd out of 7 for resilience to environmental risks[81]
- ✓ 3rd lowest economic risk associated with natural disasters[82]
- ! 4th most water stressed by 2040[83]
- ! 2nd highest increase in water stress from 2020 to 2040 among peers[84]

2nd/10 For nature positive:

- ✓ 1st out of 9 for how well green space per person has held up over the past 5 years (Sydney urban area data)[85]
- ✓ 2nd out of 9 for how much the average health of tree and plant biodiversity has improved over the past 5 years (Sydney urban area data)[86]
- ✓ 4th out of 10 for how happy people are with quality of local rivers and water bodies (survey data)[87]

7th/10 For clean & affordable water and energy:

- ! 5th out of 10 for renewable energy rate[88]
- ! 8th out of 10 peers for affordability of household water & energy[89]
- ! 7th out of 7 for reliance on coal for electricity generation[90]

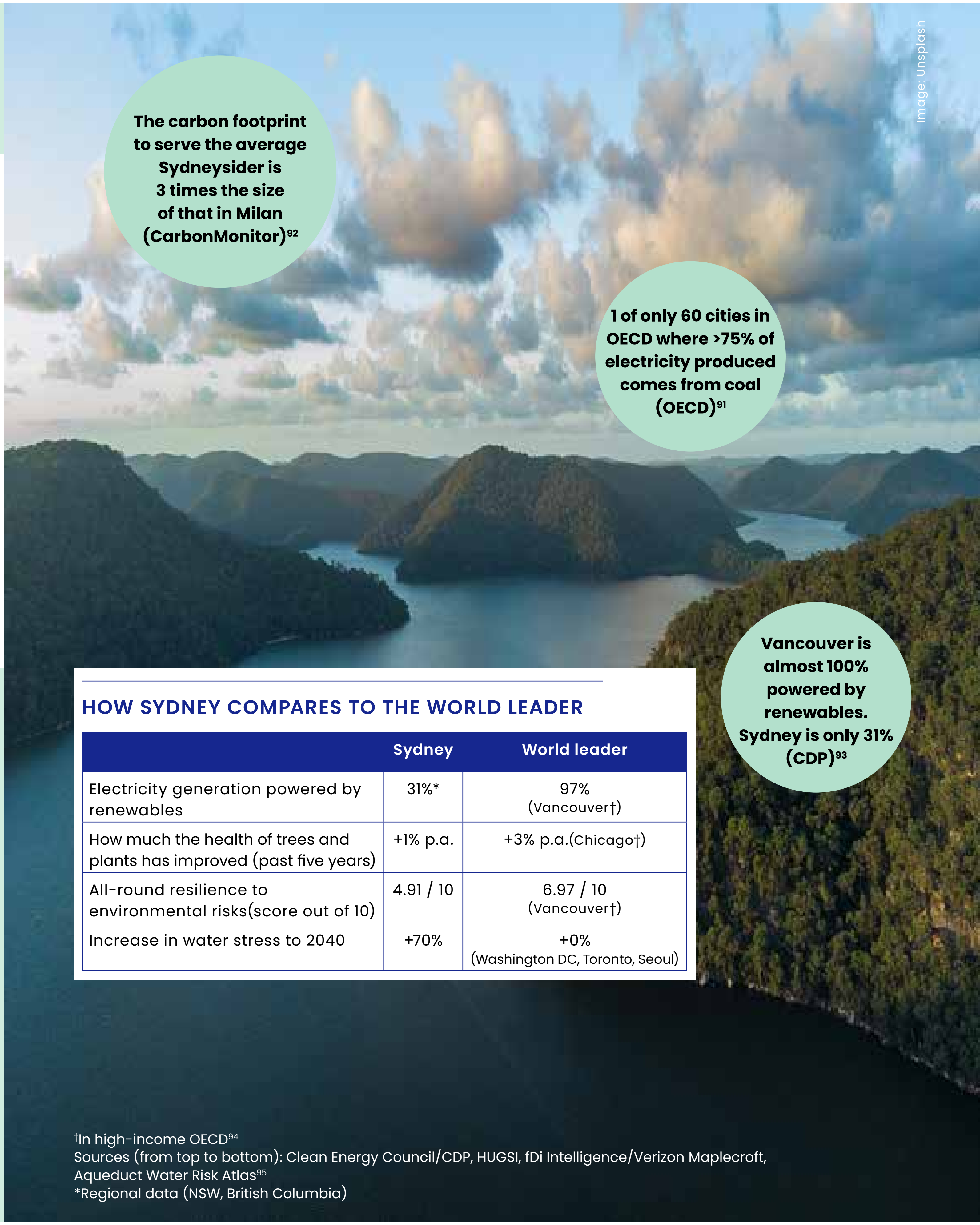


Image: Unsplash

The carbon footprint to serve the average Sydneysider is 3 times the size of that in Milan (CarbonMonitor)[92]

1 of only 60 cities in OECD where >75% of electricity produced comes from coal (OECD)[91]

Vancouver is almost 100% powered by renewables. Sydney is only 31% (CDP)[93]

HOW SYDNEY COMPARES TO THE WORLD LEADER

	Sydney	World leader
Electricity generation powered by renewables	31%*	97% (Vancouver†)
How much the health of trees and plants has improved (past five years)	+1% p.a.	+3% p.a.(Chicago†)
All-round resilience to environmental risks(score out of 10)	4.91 / 10	6.97 / 10 (Vancouver†)
Increase in water stress to 2040	+70%	+0% (Washington DC, Toronto, Seoul)

†In high-income OECD[94]
Sources (from top to bottom): Clean Energy Council/CDP, HUGSI, fDi Intelligence/Verizon Maplecroft, Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas[95]
*Regional data (NSW, British Columbia)

› Mobility

Moving ahead but starting from behind

Sydney has been characterised by low public transport accessibility and high car dependence – particularly in the Western and South-Western parts of the city. When benchmarked against its peer cities, Sydney's position of seventh reinforces this.

Some context is required, however, to better understand how Sydney's historical land use patterns have influenced our low mobility rankings. Sydney is in a cohort of four other cities in the bottom of the benchmarking – the others being San Francisco, Miami and Dubai. Like Sydney, much of the urban development in these cities took place after the advent of the car. As a result, they are typified by sprawling land use patterns, supported by large motorway networks.

Conversely, cities at in the top five of the rankings – Hong Kong, Stockholm, Singapore, Barcelona and Amsterdam – fall into two distinct city types. The European cities established urban cores well before cars and are now characterised by the compact walkable city centres that other cities aspire to. The Asian cities - Hong Kong and Singapore – are geographically constrained, by virtue of being islands.

As a consequence of these and other factors, Sydney's car dependence is higher than many other more compact cities. Sydney ranks seventh of ten for the share of trips made by public transport, walking and cycling. Only 34% of trips taken in Sydney are taken through sustainable (non-car) modes, compared with 84% in Hong Kong. In European peer cities, public transport is typically more efficient than cars. The result of this is that Sydney is 32nd out of 36 OECD cities for easy access to public transport.

Historical urban form and growth periods cannot be used as an excuse for Sydney's lower mobility performance, but it does provide context as to why Sydney often performs poorly in mobility benchmarking studies.

It is important to also reflect on where Sydney is going. Since 2014, Sydney has built 36 kilometres of metro lines, with another 77 kilometres to be completed by 2032. We have re-introduced more than 24 kilometres of light rail and have indicative plans to deliver more than 1,000 kilometres of bike lanes with the Strategic Cycleway Corridors. While we rank lowly in public perception metrics (sixth of nine peer cities for how happy locals and newcomers are with public transport), this long-term investment in metro and light rail infrastructure sets Sydney up for improvement in these rankings over the coming years, as new transport options come online.

It is essential that these major infrastructure investments are supported by continued investment in bike and active transport connections to stations and centres, bus network improvement and innovations in micro-mobility. It is also essential that areas with historical under-investment in public transport – particularly in the West and South-West – see much of this investment.

A major shift in mode share towards public transport and away from cars will only be realised through a concerted, sustained and multi-pronged policy approach.

Sydney's headline stats

✓ **Top third of 65 cities for how well the city engages business and investment to drive sustainable mobility improvements**[96]

! **32nd out of 36 cities in OECD for easy access to public transport**[97]

! **Bottom 5 among all cities in rich-world OECD for all-round maturity of mobility platform**[98]

! **Bottom 15% for hours spent in traffic in the city centre during rush hour**[99]

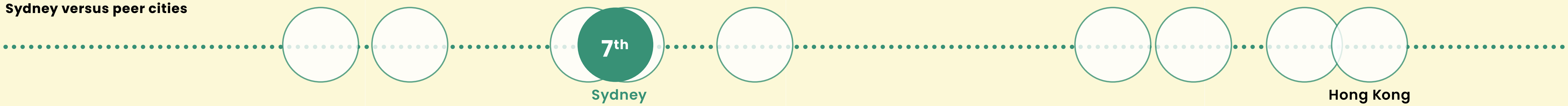
✓ 16th out of 100 cities for low wait times for public transport[100]

! 18th of 20 metropolitan cities in Europe, Latin America, Canada & Australia for how many locations can be easily accessed via low-stress cycle routes[101]

! 84th out of 131 for how many shareable bikes there are per person[102]

! 6th out of 13 global cities for share of people who think public transport is convenient[103]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Mobility

Sydney in context

Sydney is making undoubted progress through investment in its metro and bike systems. The trends had been largely positive in pre-pandemic years, and existing services are more reliable than many. Sydney is rated highly for initiatives to improve mobility, support from businesses is high and micro-mobility has taken off rapidly.

Yet people in Sydney still do not yet find it as easy or as enjoyable to get around by walking, cycling or public transport. It is less affordable, less accessible at night, less integrated and more congested. This has knock on effects on everything from dwell-time in CBDs, to quality of public spaces, and levels of exercise.

In the world's leading metropolitan transport systems, more than twice as many people get around by means other than the car. Hong Kong is still a yardstick for uptake and efficiency of public transport. Other cities setting a high bar include Barcelona for walkability, Osaka for prioritising streets and public spaces, and Bilbao for passenger satisfaction. These cities have made bold choices to reshape the city in service of people and proximity.

Sydney and its peer group

Across Sydney's ten close peer cities, it is seventh overall for mobility. Sydney is ahead of car dependent San Francisco, Miami and Dubai, but far behind leaders in Asia and Europe. Partly this reflects causality – when it is harder and less enjoyable to get around via sustainable modes, more people travel by car, and streets are less busy with walkers and cyclists.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

7th/10 For access:

- ! In European peer cities, public transport is the more efficient option than the car nearly three times more often than in Sydney.[104]
- ! 8th out of 9 for public transport operating hours, reliability and affordability (performance data)[105]
- ! 6th out of 9 for how happy locals are with public transport (survey data)[106]
- ! 10th for affordability of monthly public transport pass[107]
- ! 4th out of 5 for share of people who regularly use mobile apps to plan and book travel[108]

7th/10 For mode share:

- ✓ 3rd out of 7 for reported usage of publicly available micromobility options[109]
- ! 7th out of 10 for share of trips by public transport, walking and cycling[110]
- ! Sustainable mode share still 12% lower than average among peers[111]

7th/10 For streets as public spaces:

- ✓ Home to the 23rd coolest street in the world as voted for by global travellers – only 2 peers place higher (survey data)[112]
- ! 3rd out of 5 for recovery to city centre footfall compared to pre-pandemic[113]
- ! 5th out of 10 for rated quality of urban fabric and place[114]

Image: Unsplash

PERFORMANCE-PERCEPTION DYNAMICS

Perceptions of Sydney's public transport closely track real performance

- Sydney is among the bottom third of measured cities for how happy local people and expats are with public transport services[115]
- This is similar to its position for the all-round scale and efficiency of mobility.[116]
- One area where performance may be ahead is wait times – Sydney is in the top 20%[117]

1 in 8 more people get around by car than on average in other cities (Google Insights)[118]

HOW SYDNEY COMPARES TO THE WORLD LEADER

	Sydney	World leader
Share of all trips taken by sustainable modes	34%	84% (Hong Kong)
People happy with public transport services	59%	83%(Bilbao†)
How much of the city is streets and public space	14%	28% (Osaka†)
Street network that is easily walkable	49%	71%(Barcelona*)

† In rich-world OECD[119]
*Among 25 cities.
Sources (from top to bottom): Transport for NSW/Google Insights (based on household travel surveys and anonymised geo-located mobile phone data), IMD, UN Habitat, Eggiman et al (2022).[120]

› Culture

A tale of two cities – perception and performance

Sydney has been long known as a global tourism destination. Drawn by our climate, beaches, iconic landmarks and natural beauty, visitors from across the world continue to flock to our city. The lifting of travel restrictions after the Covid-19 pandemic allowed visitor numbers to return and Sydney is now the 22nd best destination in the world to visit and the fifth most desirable big city in the world according to global magazine readers. Of the ten peer cities, Sydney also has the highest return rate for travelers, reflecting the diversity of experience the city offers.

Behind the traditional tourist drawcards, Sydney is building a distinct cultural and night-time economy. Sydney's multicultural diversity is at the core of this and the city ranks third overall for culture compared with the peer cities.

Sydney is now in the top 25% of 100 global cities for the diversity of its cuisine and the city's multicultural communities are also driving a diversification of the type of events on offer to locals and visitors alike. The Ramadan Nights festival in the central Sydney suburb of Lakemba drew 1.4 million visitors in 2023. The diversity of cultural experiences and night-time economy activities right across Sydney has been welcomed by locals.

On the ground, the changes to Sydney's cultural scene and night life are readily observed and celebrated. Sydney is now 17th of 100 cities for range of night-time economy venues there are, and since 2019 has overtaken Stockholm, San Francisco and Toronto for how highly locals rate the evening scene.

But global perceptions still lag. For example we are down four places to 36th for the number of highly rated cultural, food and nightlife attractions since 2018.

This highlights the contradictions Sydney faces as it continues to mature as a cultural destination and must address if we are to draw more visitors, new and return alike. Our cultural diversity offers a key to this development but requires a greater awareness of the dining and entertainment experiences that local centres right across Sydney can offer both locals and visitors.

It also requires a greater emphasis on cultural investment in the central, western and south-western parts of the city where this cultural diversity flourishes. Maintaining a reputation for sports, and ensuring a safe night-time environment for women, also emerge as important imperatives.

Sydney must continue to improve, diversify and promote its cultural offer and to promote it, so that the gap between perception and performance closes.

Sydney's headline stats

✓ Up 10 places to 22nd best destination for visitors in the world[121]

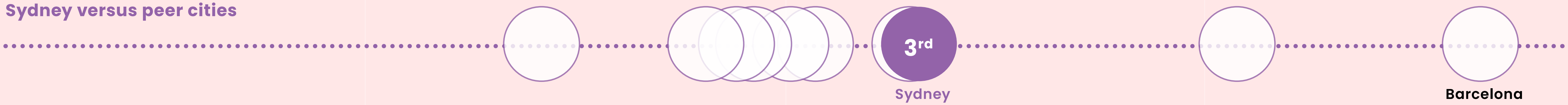
✓ Top 10% of cities in the world for all-round strength of cultural & creative industries, 3rd in APAC[122]

! Down 4 places since 2018 for how many highly rated cultural, food and nightlife attractions there are, to 36th

! Down 28 places since 2021 for reputation as a sports city (survey data)[123]

- ✓ Top 25% among 100 cities for diversity of cuisine on offer[124]
- ! =64th out of 100 cities for quality of restaurant service as perceived by food experts (survey data)[125]
- ! Bottom 20% for city-wide concentration of restaurants[126]
- ! Bottom 20% of 48 cities for museums[127]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Culture

Sydney in context

After the pandemic, Sydney has resumed its status as a magnet for visitors who are resuming international travel. Rebound in visitor numbers has been impressive by international standards and the impressions of visitors are high enough to drive more repeat visits. Sydney's mature creative and cultural industries also appear to be more resilient than elsewhere, despite cost challenges and growing competition from smaller cities.

Yet against the world's top cultural hotspots, Sydney's cultural innovation and excellence is less widely known and appreciated. Sydney's night-time economy is improving fast but international acclaim will take time to catch up.

Others – like Amsterdam – have also had more success in spreading opportunities to engage in culture throughout more parts of the metropolis.

Ultimately the top cities in the world for culture match international credit with local loveability and high levels of cultural participation.

Sydney and its peer group

In 2024, Sydney is in the top third, rising for cultural visitation and variety, and night-time reputation. Some cities with more sustained periods of metropolitan cultural investment have successfully spread cultural assets, vibrancy and participation to multiple parts of the city.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

4th/10 For participation and access:

✓ 3rd out of 9 for how many highly rated attractions there are in the inner city and how easy it is to visit them[128]
✓ 1st out of 6 for bounceback in visitors to the top rated art museum in the city[129]
✓ =1st out of 7 for share of newcomers who think there are lots of opportunities to do sport (survey data)[130]
! 6th out of 8 for how satisfied newly settled mobile talent is with culture and leisure amenities (survey data)[131]

6th/10 For attractiveness:

✓ Highest visitor return rate among measured peers[132]
✓ 5th out of 10 for how many 5* rated attractions there are[133]
! 7th out of 9 for attractiveness of dining and shopping in the city (survey data)[134]
! Joint bottom for number of top-rated restaurants in the world[135]

5th/10 For 24-hour economy:

✓ 4th out of 9 for how highly locals rate the evening scene, up from 7th in 2019 (survey data)[136]
✓ 1 of only 4 peers to be publicly rated a top 30 destination for music lovers[137]
! 5th out of 7 for like-for-like size of live music scene[138]
! 7th out of 7 for safe night-time environment for women[139]

Image: Unsplash

PERFORMANCE-PERCEPTION DYNAMICS

Sydney's 24 hour economy is improving. Locals are taking note. Global perceptions are taking time to catch up.

✓ Now 17th out of 100 cities for how many night-time economy venues there are[140]
✓ One of only 15 cities (among measured group of 30) to have night-time public transport that runs at least up to 4am[141]
✓ Overtaken Stockholm, San Francisco and Toronto for how highly locals rate the evening scene since 2019[142]

Short-term visitors are more impressed than those who stay longer.

✓ Still the 5th most desirable big city to visit in the world as voted by global magazine readers (survey data)[143]
✓ The city's top attractions rate 10th for fulfilling visitor expectations, among 85 cities globally[144]
✓ Brits' favourite destination to visit outside of Europe (survey data)[145]
! 23rd out of 49 for how happy longer-term expats are with the cultural offer (survey data)[146]

Rome has triple the number of 5* attractions (TripAdvisor)[147]

HOW SYDNEY COMPARES TO THE WORLD LEADER

	Sydney	World leader
How often the city's nightlife & night-time economy is shortlisted and acclaimed by experts (max city = 100)	58 / 100	100 / 100 (London)
Number of 5* rated attractions	610	1,700 (Rome)
Newcomers who are happy with culture and leisure amenities (survey data)	66%	93% (Barcelona)
Newcomers who think there are lots of opportunities to do sport (survey data)	91%	94% (Lisbon‡)
All-round cultural appeal & reputation (max city = 100)	36 / 100	100 / 100 (London)

London's nightlife & evening scene is twice as often acclaimed internationally (The Business of Cities research)[148]

‡Among 50 leading expat destinations[149]
Sources (from top to bottom): The Business of Cities research; TripAdvisor; InterNations; InterNations; Mori Memorial Foundation[150]

› Planning

Expansive and expensive

The planning process is a key influence on the shape of cities, however outcomes are what get measured. These outcomes take the form of, among other things, density, affordability and accessibility. Sydney has an unenviable record as one of the least dense global cities. Of the ten peer cities, it ranks seventh overall for planning and housing and eighth for the density of the average neighbourhood.

While the social, economic and environmental costs associated with low-density sprawl have become increasingly clear, Sydney has continued to invest in greenfield development on the city's fringe to meet demands for new housing. Sydney rates sixth of nine peer cities for the speed of sprawl over the past decade.

The result is a city that ranks last among its peers for how walkable the average neighbourhood is, and the third highest out of seven for public transport commutes of more than two hours.

Sydney's sprawl is disproportionately one of housing. Even amongst the cities with similar levels of sprawl like Miami, San Francisco and Toronto, Sydney has higher average commute times across all modes of transport, highlighting the imbalance between the location of jobs and housing.

Housing unaffordability in Sydney is top of mind. Of nine peer cities, Sydney has the third highest share of local people who think that affordable housing is one of the five main challenges facing the city and 20% of home-owning households spend more than 30% of their income on mortgage repayments (considered the point at which a household is in mortgage or rental stress).

This unaffordability comes at a cost. Work undertaken previously by the Committee for Sydney in 2023 estimated that the cost of unaffordability is costing Sydney's over $10 Billion per year.[151]

Just as it took decades of policy decisions to result in Sydney's low density urban form, so too will change take time. Recent planning strategies, including the current proposed planning reforms highlight a significant change in direction from previous strategies. These include rethinking development on the floodplains of Western Sydney, focusing on infill and transit-oriented development and better aligning where people live with where people work.

These all point to a different future for Sydney. But they will take time to be realised. A continued focus on housing diversity and affordability is essential, as is ensuring that the density that is delivered is done well. More housing in the right places, where more people choose high density communities to raise a family will be needed.

Sydney's headline stats

✓ 1st out of 25 cities for how many people live within walking distance of green space (>90%)[152]

! 31st out of 80 cities for availability of apartments suitable for remote work[153]

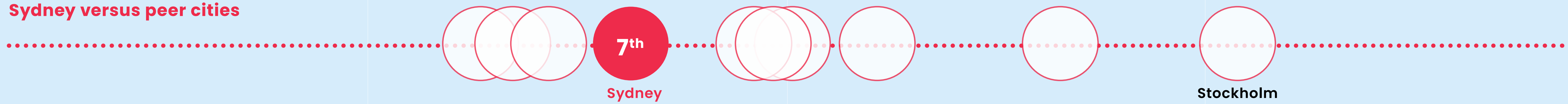
! 17th out of 30 cities for energy efficiency of buildings[154]

! The world's 6th most unaffordable city for housing, across all metrics[155]

- ✓ 7th out of 40 cities in APAC and North America for share of office stock that is green certified[156]

- ! Bottom third among 25 cities for how many people live within easy walking distance of a healthy food store[157]
- ! 29th out of 38 cities for whole-city progress towards walkability targets (as measured by ITDP guidelines)[158]
- ! 74th out of 141 cities for how many local people think that access to local amenities is a key challenge facing the city (survey data)[159]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Planning

Sydney in context

Sydney's low-density model and its propensity for sprawl presents a number of disadvantages when compared to other top global cities. People live further away from where they work, they spend longer commuting, emissions from transport are higher, and the risks to health and wellbeing are magnified.

Meanwhile unaffordability – especially of housing - has become a much more striking competitive challenge for Sydney. The perceptions and realities of the costs to own and rent have deteriorated faster even compared to other chronically unaffordable cities in recent years.

Sydney's green infrastructure endowment remains an important advantage, however. For green buildings, green areas and access to green space, Sydney is at least on a par with if not ahead of cities like Amsterdam, Singapore and Toronto.

Sydney and its peer group

Many of Sydney's policies, regulations and adaptation plans compare positively with others. But the city's spatial patterns contribute to it falling behind on affording homes, and jobs near to where people live. For easy access to amenity, Greater Sydney as a whole is in fact ahead only of Greater Miami and the Bay Area.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

8th/10 For density:

- ✓ 8th out of 10 for how densely populated the average neighbourhood is (urban area scale)[160]
- ! 6th out of 9 for how fast the city has sprawled over the past decade (urban area scale)[161]
- ! 10th for how conducive the layout of the average neighbourhood is for walking (urban area scale)[162]

5th/10 For climate adaptation:

- ✓ 3rd out of 6 for emissions from residential buildings per person[167]
- ✓ 3rd out of 6 for share of office space that is green[168]
- ! 84% undersupply of net zero carbon-ready office space by 2027, versus average undersupply of 62% in APAC peers (Hong Kong & Singapore)[169]

7th/10 For affordability and access:

- ✓ 20% of home-owning households spend more than 30% of their income on their mortgage – less than in San Francisco and Toronto[163]
- ! 3rd highest share of local people who think that affordable housing is one of the 5 main challenges facing the city out of 9 peers (survey data)[164]
- ! 3rd out of 7 for length of public transport journeys between homes and jobs[165]
- ! Rent takes up a higher share of income than in any of the North American peers[166]

7th/10 For employment and services:

- ! =6th out of 9 for how long a skilled worker needs to work to be able to afford a city centre flat[170]
- ! 3rd highest share of public transport commutes of more than 2 hours out of 7 peers[171]
- ! Average commute time to work by all modes is higher in Sydney than in Miami, San Francisco and Toronto[172]

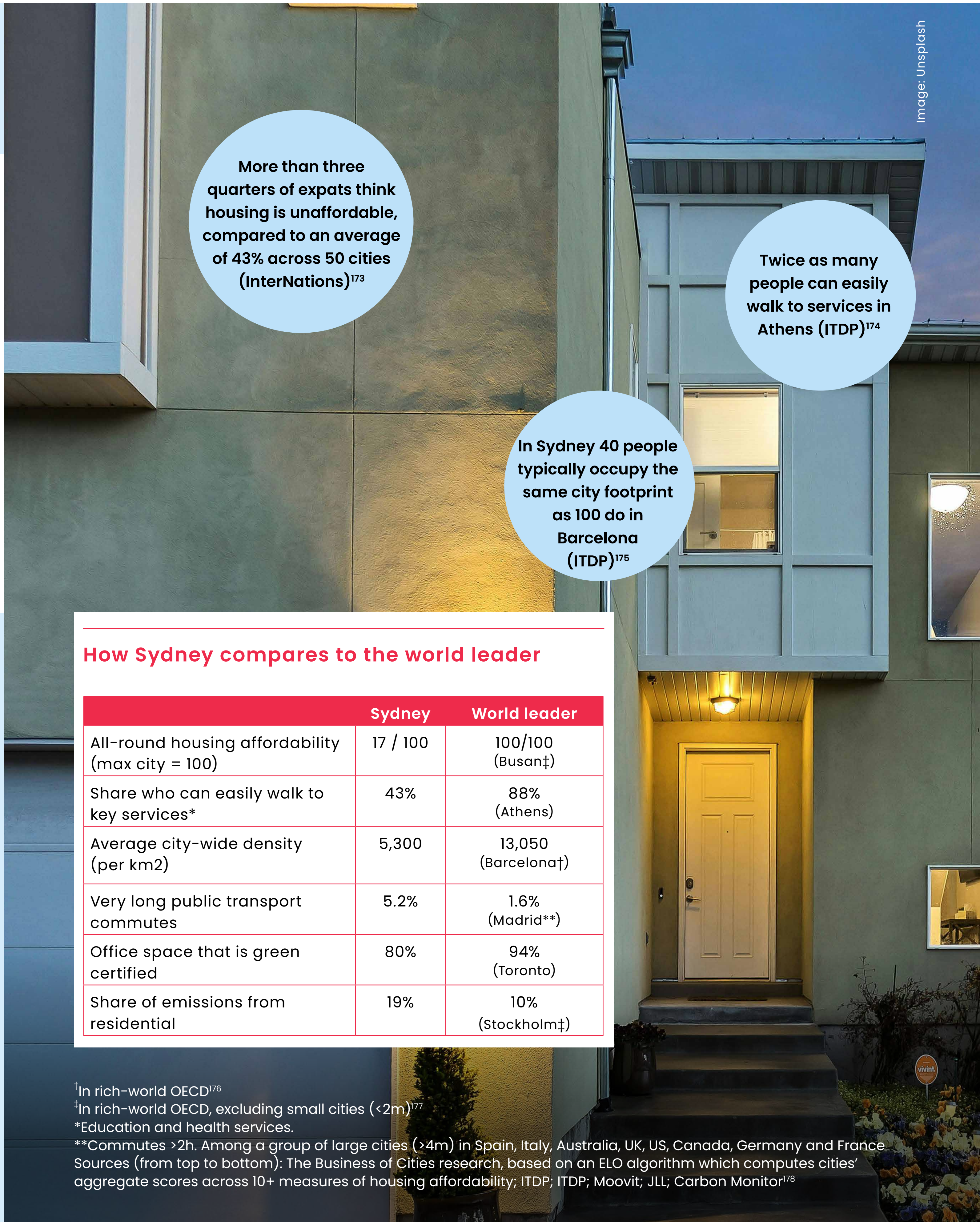


Image: Unsplash

More than three quarters of expats think housing is unaffordable, compared to an average of 43% across 50 cities (InterNations)[173]

Twice as many people can easily walk to services in Athens (ITDP)[174]

In Sydney 40 people typically occupy the same city footprint as 100 do in Barcelona (ITDP)[175]

How Sydney compares to the world leader

	Sydney	World leader
All-round housing affordability (max city = 100)	17 / 100	100/100 (Busan‡)
Share who can easily walk to key services*	43%	88% (Athens)
Average city-wide density (per km2)	5,300	13,050 (Barcelona†)
Very long public transport commutes	5.2%	1.6% (Madrid**)
Office space that is green certified	80%	94% (Toronto)
Share of emissions from residential	19%	10% (Stockholm‡)

†In rich-world OECD[176]
‡In rich-world OECD, excluding small cities (<2m)[177]
*Education and health services.
**Commutes >2h. Among a group of large cities (>4m) in Spain, Italy, Australia, UK, US, Canada, Germany and France
Sources (from top to bottom): The Business of Cities research, based on an ELO algorithm which computes cities' aggregate scores across 10+ measures of housing affordability; ITDP; ITDP; Moovit; JLL; Carbon Monitor[178]

> Equity and Fairness

A fair go but not for all

On the surface, Sydney is an inclusive, equitable and fair city and is doing well on many fronts. Of the ten peer cities, we rank fifth, and not too far behind the leaders. Sydney ranks in the top 15% globally for social equity ingredients and outcomes. These include among other things, policies to protect and promote gender and racial equity, availability of healthcare and female workforce participation.

In general, opportunities exist for many. We are globally recognised as an LGBTIQ+ friendly city, ranking eleventh out of 30 cities globally. From a gender equity perspective, Sydney ranks second of the ten peer cities.

We have lower levels of poverty variance across ages compared with the US cities of San Francisco and Miami. Sydney places fourth of nine peer cities for people who think social mobility is a key challenge (only 15% of Sydneysiders are concerned with social mobility) and we are 20th in the world for how happy people are in their lives in general.

For those seeking employment, Sydney ranks third of nine peer cities for how easy people think it is to access employment-finding services. Sydney rates first of six peer cities for the share of female start-up founders and is the only peer city to have a university rated in the top fifty in the world for progress towards gender equality (Western Sydney University).

But for all of these positives, issues regarding fairness and equity remain. Scratch the surface and opportunity varies dramatically depending on geographical, cultural, gender and other characteristics.

Culturally, Sydney is last of four peer cities for the share of First Nations people that progress to higher education, although the income gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people is smaller.

Geographically, the connectivity gap between inner and outer suburbs is bigger – for digital speeds and for access to high-capacity public transport. We also have the second biggest difference between the inner city and suburbs for walkable access to services, among four peer cities.

Sydney has the second highest reported incidence of sexual harassment towards women compared with six peer cities and we are also behind the European peers on income equality.

Inter-generationally, the home ownership gap between younger and older generations is growing rapidly. Compared with other highly unaffordable cities Sydney is better than Miami and San Francisco but worse than Toronto.

This tells a story of a city that performs well from an equity and fairness perspective at an aggregate level, but where issues of inequality persist across several indicators and where, like many of the peer cities, there is still significant work to do.

Sydney's headline stats

✓ 9th out of 55 cities for ingredients to attract and support female founders[179]

✓ Top 15% globally for social equity ingredients and outcomes[180]

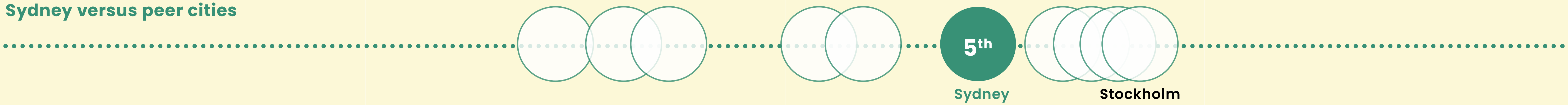
✓ 11th lowest share of workers on short-term contracts among 195 OECD regions (NSW data)[181]

! Bottom third of OECD regions for gender gap in part-time work (NSW data)[182]

- ✓ 20th in the world for how happy people are with their lives in general (survey data)[183]
- ✓ Publicly rated as 11th most LGBTQ+ friendly city out of 30 cities globally[184]
- ✓ Top third among 140 cities globally for share of people who think finding fulfilling work is not a challenge (survey data)[185]
- ✓ Western Sydney University is top rated city glob-ally for progress towards gender equality[186]
- ✓ 1st among 15 top business cities for share of women who say they have equality of wealth opportunity compared to men (survey data)[187]

- ! 8th out of 13 for how well its public transport system supports people with reduced mobility[188]
- ! Bottom 25% for how many restaurants there are in the inner city and how easy local people find it to walk to restaurants across the whole city[189]

Sydney versus peer cities



› Equity and Fairness

Sydney in context

In a polarised era for big cities, there are some important plusses in Sydney. Compared to the entrenched and racialised inequalities in many North American cities, and integration challenges in some European centres, Sydney still rates as fundamentally more inclusive, welcoming, happier and easier to find work. Fewer people are in poverty, up until now fewer are as agitated about social mobility. Sydney also has a smaller gender gap in terms of jobs, entrepreneurs and perceptions. That said, in terms of equity for indigenous communities the picture relative to other cities is patchy and more mixed.

Spatial drivers are a big factor in Sydney's equity challenge. Access to services, jobs and amenities is less evenly distributed than other large growing cities. Safety and inclusive mobility are also issues. Sydney has a higher incidence of reported harassment towards women, while public transport and amenities are less accessible to those with reduced mobility.

The fairest and least unequal cities tend to be those with strong connections between suburbs and centres, a more compact development model, and a longer period of investment and policy to reduce barriers for minorities.

Sydney and its peer group

Many areas of Sydney's gender equity are up there almost with Scandinavian cities, but the city is much less equal in terms of incomes, and where you live dictates more outcomes. Cities like Stockholm and Barcelona lead the way here.

Among a close peer group of 10 cities, across all measures Sydney rates:

4th/10 For intergenerational equity:

- ✓ 4th out of 9 for share of people that think social mobility is a key challenge (survey data)[190]
- ✓ Fewer school and university leavers in poverty than in Miami and San Francisco[191]
- ✓ Lower variation in poverty across different ages in Sydney than in Miami and San Francisco[192]
- ! The homeownership gap between younger and older generations is growing rapidly and is middling even among other highly unaffordable cities. For example, it is smaller than in Miami and San Francisco, but bigger than in Toronto[193]

=2nd/10 For gender equity:

- ✓ 1st out of 7 for gender gap in unemployment rate (NSW data)[194]
- ✓ 1st out of 6 for share of female start-up founders[195]
- ✓ Only city among peers to have a university rated in top 50 in the world for progress towards gender equality[196]
- ! 2nd highest reported incidence of sexual harassment towards women among 6 peers (survey data)[197]

7th/10 For geographical equity:

- ✓ 3rd out of 9 for how easy people think it is to access employment-finding services across the whole city (survey data)[198]
- ! 7th out of 9 for how many shops there are in the inner city and how easy local people find it to walk to retail shops across the whole city[199]
- ! 3rd biggest difference between walkable access to services in inner city versus suburbs, out of 4 measured peers[200]

6th/10 For a city for everyone:

- ✓ 4th out of 9 for share of people who think minorities feel welcome (survey data)[201]
- ✓ 2nd smallest income gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people out of 4 peers[202]
- ! Behind European peers for income equality[203]
- ! 4th out of 4 for share of indigenous people that progress to higher education[204]

Image: Unsplash

Sydney is 1st among 15 top business cities for women's perceptions of fair pay (Bloomberg, survey data)[205]

In Sydney, 1 in 7 tech managers are women. In Washington DC, nearly 1 in 5 are (Times Higher Education)[206]

In Copenhagen and Nanjing, it is as easy to get a tram, metro or train in the city fringes as in the inner city. In Sydney it is 5 times harder (GHSL, OSM)[207]

HOW SYDNEY COMPARES TO THE WORLD LEADER

	Sydney	World leader
People concerned about social mobility (survey data)	15%	9% (Wellington†)
Start-ups with at least 1 female founder	30-40%	70%+(Brisbane)
Share of women who think they are treated as well as men (survey data)	52%	64% (Singapore‡)
Tech managers who are women	15%	22% (Washington DC)
Access to high-capacity public transport, city fringes versus inner city*	80% lower	113% higher(Nanjing**)
Internet speeds, city fringes versus inner city	10% higher	223% higher (Seoul†)
Tours that are wheelchair accessible	14%	44% (Graz†)

‡Among 15 leading global business cities[208]
†In rich-world OECD. Excludes small cities (<2m)[209]
*Tram, metro or train
**Among the 100 most globalised cities in the world, excluding developing world cities[210]
Sources (top to bottom): IMD, StartupGenome, Bloomberg, Times Higher Education, The Business of Cities research based on Open Street Map and Global Human Settlement Layer data, The Business of Cities based on MLab data, Kayak
Note: city fringe = 25-30km from city centre. Inner city = 0-5km from city centre[211]

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2 Local statistics agencies via StatCan data portal. Data for Toronto CMA. In Sydney the share is 39%.

3 OECD – Summer daytime urban heat island: difference in land surface temperature: www.oecd.org/regional/regional-statistics/. Among 1,200 cities in OECD. Sydney is among the top 50 most affected.

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5 Brand Finance City Index 2023: https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-city-index-2023-final.pdf.

6 Z/Yen The Global Financial Centres Index 35: https://www.longfinance.net/media/documents/GFCI_35_Report_2024.03.21_v1.0.pdf

7 Local statistics agencies via US Census data portal. In Sydney the share is 39%.

8 Demographia World Urban Areas: http://www.demographia.com/db-worldua.pdf. Measures 986 major built-up areas of more than 500,000 people globally.

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