



STATE OF PLACE
**2023 AUSTRALIAN
LIVEABILITY CENSUS**

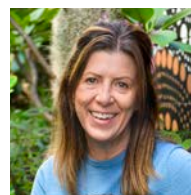
WELCOME

At Place Score we are passionate about hearing directly from the experts – the local communities who live in the neighbourhoods we help design, deliver and manage. We are proud that we are not alone in this commitment. We thank the 60+ government, not-for-profit and corporate partners who joined us in the 2023 Australian Liveability Census, and the over 25,000 people who responded, adding 89,000 records into Place Score's National Benchmark. The huge uplift in participation since 2021 reflects the growing value of social research in providing the evidence base for decision making that leads to better community outcomes.

The research also reveals important trends. In 2021 we were surprised to identify the significant impact of Covid lockdowns on community values regarding liveability. Since then, we have all been trying to understand what the 'new normal' will be. The 2023 results show that the community is more aligned than ever on how a liveable neighbourhood looks and works.

The 2023 State of Place report shares these important insights – we hope that you find it as invaluable as we do.

Place Score pays our respects to the traditional owners of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the continued rich culture and heritage of all Aboriginal people on this land.



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2023 Australian Liveability Census

Place Score's 2023 Australian Liveability Census is the country's largest social research project engaging residents from all states and territories, cities, towns and regions. It asks them to share their values regarding local neighbourhood design and management, how their neighbourhoods are performing as places to live, and captures community ideas for improvement.

Place Score has been collecting neighbourhood liveability data since 2016, however, the first national Liveability Census was undertaken in 2021. Two years later, the 2023 Australian Liveability Census continued to reveal what is really important to our communities and how we as planners, developers, designers and decision makers can work together to deliver the change needed to improve local lives.

Two years seems like a short time, yet so much has changed – globally, nationally, in our communities, and in our industry. International impacts such as climate emergencies, economic downturns, war and disease influence how we behave, help us redefine what is important, and in turn guide decisions regarding how, and where, we want to live.

As an industry, we need to respond to these external changes, as well as the evolving values of our communities, and to do so we need to have a rigorous evidence base.

89,000 records were collected during the 2023 Australian Liveability Census; 25,870 shared what makes an ideal neighbourhood for them, 25,830 rated the performance of their neighbourhood and 38,565 community ideas for local neighbourhood improvements were collected. Added to the 86,507 records already collected between 2016 and 2023,

Place Score's National Benchmark is the country's largest social research database regarding liveability – primary research collected directly from local community members across the country.

Social research such as Place Score's Liveability Census provides critical, human-centric data to balance the avalanche of secondary data being amassed every day. It reflects the Australian Curriculum's definition of liveability as 'an assessment of what it is like to live in a place', and respects our local communities as experts in their own places, an invaluable resource for evidence-based decision making.

“Liveability is an assessment of what it is like to live in a place”

Australian Curriculum

NOTES

1. Elias Visontay; "Living with density: will Australia's housing crisis finally change the way its cities work?"; Sun 16 Apr 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/>

FOCUSSING ON SHARED VALUES

The 2023 results paint a clear picture of Australia's ideal neighbourhood: it is green and celebrates the uniqueness of its natural environment, it is well maintained and cared for, and it offers local shops and services within walking distance of homes.

Sounds reasonable, doesn't it?

Yet *The Guardian* notes that 50% of the last decade's new housing in Victoria has been delivered in 'greenfield' suburbs in outer Melbourne. "In many cases residents have moved in before key infrastructure has been built."¹ This phenomenon is not isolated to one state or city. In many cases, the 'tabula rasa' approach turns what was once a green field into a multi-year construction site with a paucity of the basic amenity that is essential to nurturing the social connections needed to seed community: walkable streets, shaded open space, local businesses, public transport etc.

In the rush to build at any cost, we risk delivering unliveable neighbourhoods where price is the only attraction.

HOW ARE WE CHANGING?

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census was undertaken during a sweet spot: the period (April-June) when the whole country was between lockdowns, mostly working from home, enjoying mild weather, and spending a lot more time than usual where they lived. It was a perfect time to ask what is really important in our ideal neighbourhood and to see whether Covid had changed our values. It had.

Between 2019 and 2021 the most significant changes were a 14% increase in the percentage of participants who said that *Elements of the natural environment* were important in their ideal neighbourhood (now 73%), and a 7% decrease of the value of *Ease of driving and parking*.

The question for 2023 was of course, had our values changed again, or was this shift permanent?

In 2023 we have seen very few changes in community values, rather, what appears to be stabilisation of the increased value of greener and more walkable local neighbourhoods that meet our day to day needs. *Elements of the natural environment* is still our #1 shared liveability value and while *Ease of driving and parking* has increased by 5%, it sits at #31 out of our 50 liveability values.

THE LIVEABILITY OF AUSTRALIAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

There are two findings that are perhaps not surprising. The first is that not all neighbourhoods are created equal, and secondly that liveability has decreased according to our communities.

Nationally, the average performance score is PX67¹, down from PX68 in 2021. However, 82% of us are generally satisfied with where we live, rating the 50 metrics 'pass' or above. The best performing local government areas² around the country are all inner city, high amenity, mixed density environments with established landscapes – think Lane Cove in New South Wales, Boroondara in Victoria, and Vincent in Western Australia. The exceptions are Noosa in Queensland, and Surf Coast in Victoria – both regional tourism and retirement locations.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the major contributors to liveability for these communities are the very metrics most valued by everyone:

- *Access to neighbourhood amenities*
- *Connectivity*
- *Elements of natural environment*

NOTES

1. Place Score's Place Experience (PX) Score measures liveability for a place between 0 and 100. Each component place attribute score ranges between 0 and 10.
2. Only LGAs with over 45 responses have been included.
3. Priority attributes are valued by more than 40% of the community and performing under PX6.

PRIORITISING HIGH IMPACT INVESTMENT

At a national level there are no liveability attributes in the highest level of priority³, however, at a regional level, investments in the following places and metrics will benefit local communities:

- *Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, sustainable building design, density etc.)* in the ACT, Greater Brisbane, Greater Adelaide, Cairns and Townsville.
- *Things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, live music etc.)* in Albury-Wodonga.
- *Personal and neighbourhood safety* in Cairns, Greater Darwin and Townsville.
- *General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)* in Mackay.
- *Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)* in Newcastle-Maitland.

When planning for the next generation, national youth neighbourhood liveability priorities are:

- *Things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, live music etc.)*
- *Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, sustainable building design, density etc.)*

ABOUT PLACE SCORE

Place Score asks local people about the places they know best, to help governments and developers prioritise community benefits in their planning decisions.

Place Score is a groundbreaking place experience, diagnostic, engagement, benchmarking, tracking and advisory company. Our purpose is to make places better for people by providing community insights that help us understand local values and current place experience in order to build a clear evidence base for planning and investment.

Place Score offers two sophisticated data collection tools to gather and analyse community insights – Care Factor and Place Experience. Together they reveal both what people care about and how a place rates against that benchmark. Both Care Factor and Place Experience can be applied to three environments – workplace, street and neighbourhood.

Over 180,000 Australians have already participated in one of our research projects contributing to the country's largest social research dataset regarding places.

THE 2023 AUSTRALIAN LIVEABILITY CENSUS

The 2023 Australian Liveability Census was live from Sunday 26th March (Neighbour Day) until midnight on 30th June. The Liveability Census asked three important questions:

- What is important to you in your ideal neighbourhood?
- How is your current neighbourhood performing for you?
- What are your ideas to make your neighbourhood more liveable?

Over 50,000 data sets were collected across the first two parts of the Liveability Census and another 30,000 ideas for neighbourhood improvements captured. This represents a 60% increase in participation since 2021, and reflects the community's desire to be heard in a way that makes sense to them, answering questions which only they can.

PARTNERS

Place Score's model is based on collaboration with our partners in both data collection and sharing. In 2023 we are grateful for the 60+ state and local government, corporate, not-for-profit and community partners who shared the Liveability Census with their communities to enable their voices to be heard, and

to gain a better understanding of local liveability benchmarked against their region, state or territory and nationally.

A full list of the 2023 partners is included at the end of this report.

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

In 2023, data was collected principally online via our Census partners, paid social media campaigns and through face-to-face surveying.

The 2023 Australian Liveability Census was also distributed in English, Arabic, Hindi and Mandarin to encourage an increased diversity of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) respondents.

RESULTS

2023 AUSTRALIAN LIVEABILITY CENSUS



National liveability snapshot

Value and performance: 2023 versus 2021

The attributes of our ideal neighbourhood have remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2023, however **Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport** has moved up two places into the top 10 shared values of Australian communities to #9. The average liveability score has dropped 1% nationally with the biggest drops occurring in NSW and the Northern Territory at 3% each.

AUSTRALIA - TOP 10 SHARED VALUES¹

Our ideal neighbourhood is green, clean and safe, walkable and local. Focusing on what matters to most Australians will lead to higher levels of liveability for all.

CF #	COMMUNITY VALUES	CHANGE SINCE 2021
1	Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)	-2%
2	General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)	-2%
3	Access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.)	+4%
4	Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks etc.)	+2%
5	Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity (shops, parks etc.)	-4%
6 ^a	Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)	-4%
6 ^b	Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)	+1%
8	Protection of the natural environment	+2%
9 ^a	Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting etc.)	+2%
9 ^b	Landscaping and natural elements (street trees, planting, water features etc.)	-3%

STATE AND TERRITORY LIVEABILITY PERFORMANCE

Since 2021 our perception of liveability has changed: the +/- indicates the difference between the 2021 and 2023 results.

At a city level³ regional areas rated most strongly with two of the biggest liveability improvements measured in:

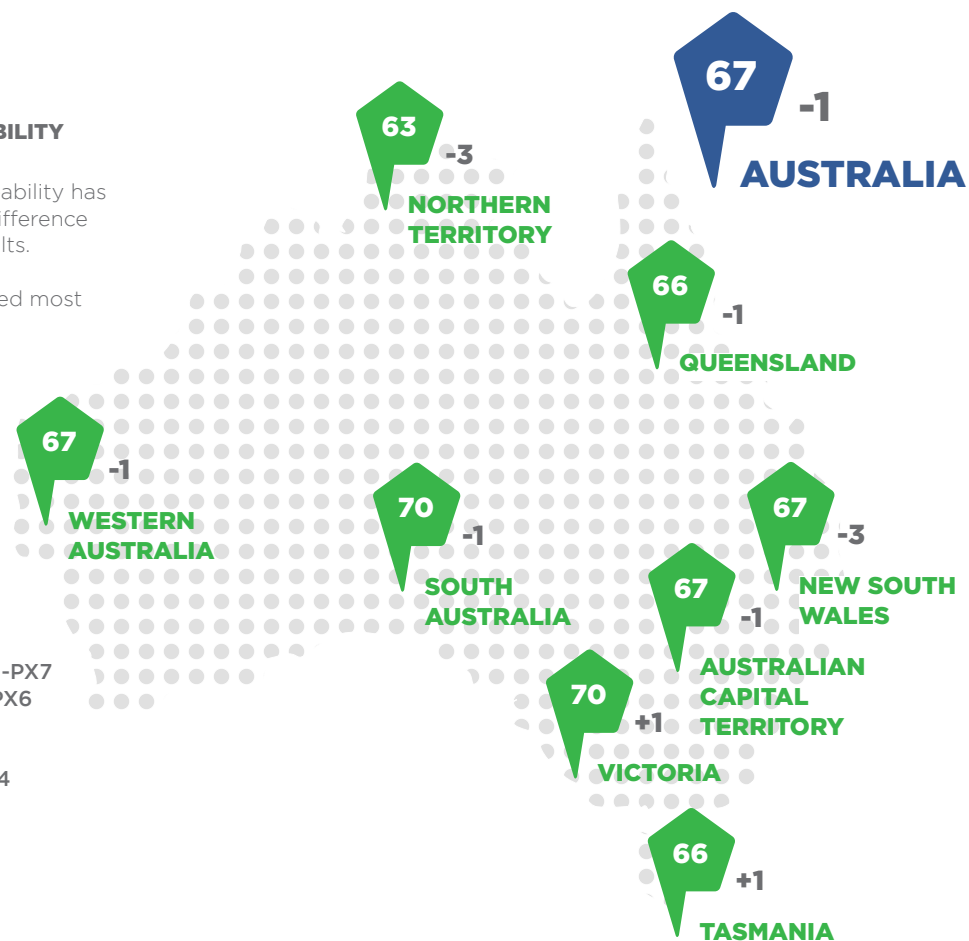
- Greater Geelong, Vic. +PX7
- Launceston, Tas. +PX5

Conversely, liveability scores reduced most significantly across all capital cities except Melbourne, with some of the biggest drops measured in:

- Gold Coast-Tweed Heads, Qld -PX7
- Albury-Wodonga, NSW/Vic. -PX6
- Greater Darwin, NT -PX4
- Greater Sydney, NSW -PX4
- Newcastle-Maitland, NSW -PX4

NOTES

1. Confidence level varies according to sample size between 95% ±0.5% and ±8.8%.
2. Equally ranked attributes are differentiated using a lowercase letter.
3. Cities mentioned here comprise a subset of the Significant Urban Areas tracked by ABS for which sufficient data was collected.



Making places that matter

Attributes of an ideal neighbourhood

Sometimes it is easier to articulate what we don't want - development, density, traffic - rather than what we do want. In the 2023 Australian Liveability Census over 25,000¹ Australians shared the attributes most important to their ideal neighbourhood. Our job now is to work out how to deliver.

71% or over 18,000 people agreed, that having unique natural features, whether trees, topography, views, water elements or the like, was important in their ideal neighbourhood.

Identifying the shared values of our community helps guide the planning, design and management of neighbourhoods that focus on what matters most to local communities. While values do vary between places, and between different demographic groups, there are four shared themes that have emerged.

GREEN

All four metrics associated with the environment, vegetation and nature are ranked in the top 10 shared values.²

The #1 shared value nationally is *Elements of natural environment* (71%):

- More important to residents of the ACT (79%), NT (76%), Tas. (76%)
- More important for those aged over 64 (74%)

CLEAN AND SAFE

There is a clear relationship between attributes associated with maintenance and cleanliness, and the perception of safety with three relevant metrics in the top 10.

The *General condition of public open space* is the nation's #2 shared value for ideal neighbourhoods:

- #2 in every state and territory

- #1 for men aged 15-44 years
- #3 for those aged over 64 years

LOCAL

The most significant increases in shared value since 2021 fall under this theme. 4% more people selected *Access to neighbourhood amenities* (56%) as important in their ideal neighbourhood and 2% more selected *Local businesses that provide for daily needs* (52%).

Access to neighbourhood amenities is:

- #2 for over 64s (67%)
- More important to residents of the ACT (63%), Vic. (59%)

WALKABLE

The value for local accessibility continues to increase in 2023 with only one new attribute moving into the top 10: *Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport* (46%). At #9 nationally this value supports the #5 ranked *Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity* (51%):

- More important to residents of the ACT (60%), NT (55%)
- More important for those aged 45-64 years (54%)

NOTES

1. Confidence level of 95% ±0.6%.
2. Refer to table p.8.

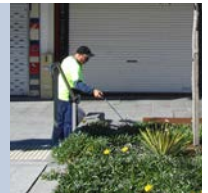
GREEN

... to provide visual character, human comfort and to nurture nature



CLEAN AND SAFE

... shows shared responsibility, pride and community trust



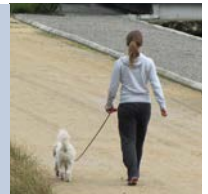
LOCAL

... to meet day to day needs and reflect community values



WALKABLE

... to provide options and opportunities to connect to people and places



GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

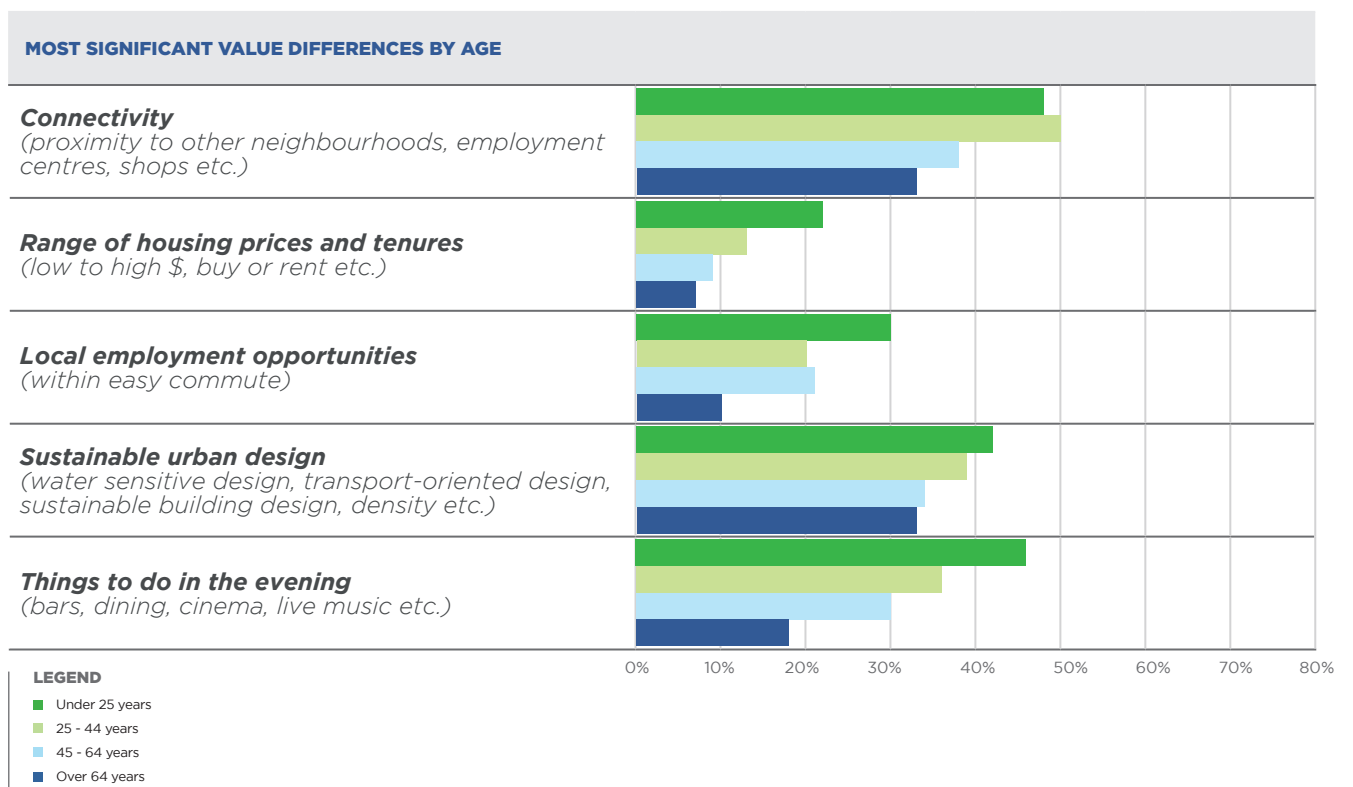
Perhaps not surprisingly, the most significant differences in values regarding ideal neighbourhoods are between the oldest and youngest members of our communities.

Understanding these differences enables urban planners and designers to ensure neighbourhood design delivers on the values of their future communities.

The most significant differences between the values of younger respondents (under 25 years) and those aged over 64 are:

- *Things to do in the evening* (+28%)
- *Local employment opportunities* (+20%)
- *Range of housing prices and tenures* (+15%)
- *Connectivity* (+15%)
- *Sustainable behaviours in the community* (+14%)

In addition to the shared national neighbourhood themes, youth are wanting neighbourhoods to work a lot harder in meeting all their needs from work, to leisure, and be well connected, sustainably designed - all with diverse, affordable housing options.



UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL VALUES

2023 is a historical milestone for Australian society. It marks 70 years since the end of The White Australia Policy, and the year of the Voice referendum.

With more planning and design focusing on connecting to Country, hearing the voices of our First Nations is increasingly important. Respondents who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders shared many of the same liveability values as the wider community. However, the following attributes are important to more members of this community¹:

- *Cultural and/or artistic community* (+28%)
- *Child services* (+9%)
- *Landmarks, special features or meeting places* (+8%)

Migration has brought people from all walks of life to Australia, which is reflected in a diversifying population.

Chinese interest and investment in Australian housing², is reflected in the importance of *Quality of buildings* for those born in China (+9%). For those who were born in India, the *Mix or diversity of people in the area* was selected by 25% more than the national average.

NOTES

1. Confidence level 95% ±6.4%.
2. *Quarterly Report on Foreign Investment*, edition 1 January to 31 March 2023.
3. Respondents could select from four neighbourhood typologies/densities.

DOES DENSITY IMPACT VALUES?

It could easily be assumed that those living in different neighbourhood typologies and locations are likely to value different neighbourhood characteristics. Interestingly, regardless of whether people live in rural or suburban standalone houses, or in a high rise apartment in a city centre³, the following values are common to all:

- *Elements of natural environment*
- *General condition of public open space*
- *Access to neighbourhood amenities*

These neighbourhood attributes are valued more by those living in the lowest densities, compared to the average:

- *Elements of natural environment* (+5%)
- *Sense of neighbourhood safety* (+4%)

These neighbourhood attributes are valued more by those living in the highest densities, compared to the average:

- *Things to do in the evening* (+12%)
- *Connectivity* (+10%)
- *Evidence of government management* (+9%)



Measuring liveability

Community assessments of local places

25,830 people rated 50 different aspects of liveability¹ to help us understand how neighbourhoods are performing across Australia in 2023. While the national average has dipped slightly since 2021, 82% of respondents are generally satisfied with their neighbourhoods². What these averages do not show you is who, and where, the disadvantage lies.

Every neighbourhood has some aspect that is unique – whether that be the place, the people, or a mixture of both. As liveability is really an assessment of what life is like for the people living in each place, it is essential that we ask them about their experience.

The 2023 national liveability score is PX67, down 1% since 2021. This may not seem much, but it reflects the reduced satisfaction of over 25,000 respondents. In addition, while a few areas have seen an increase in performance (Victoria +1 to PX70, and Tasmania +1 to PX66), others have seen a decline (New South Wales -3 to PX67 and Northern Territory -3 to PX63).

The best performing local government areas tend to be older and more established, with fine grain retail in local centres, mature tree canopy and proximity to high quality amenity - think Lane Cove in New South Wales (PX79), Port Phillip in Victoria (PX76) and Noosa in Queensland (PX76).

Conversely, some of the places and people groups with the lowest liveability scores are where and who you would expect. Some of our fastest growing local government areas are also our poorest performers; the outer ring of suburbia with infrastructure playing catch up with population growth. In many cases these have also seen a significant drop in liveability since 2021.

WHAT IMPACTS LIVEABILITY

Of the 50 place attributes assessed nationally, the following are contributing most, and least to liveability:

HIGHEST CONTRIBUTORS	SCORES (2023 VS 2021)	
<i>Welcoming to all people</i>	7.7	7.7
<i>There are people like me</i>	7.7	7.8
<i>Connectivity</i>	7.6	7.8
<i>Elements of natural environment</i>	7.5	7.5
<i>Local businesses that provide for daily needs</i>	7.5	7.6

POOREST CONTRIBUTORS	SCORES (2023 VS 2021)	
<i>Things to do in the evening</i>	5.1	5.4
<i>Unusual or unique buildings and/or public space design</i>	5.2	5.4
<i>Sustainable urban design</i>	5.5	5.5
<i>Range of housing prices and tenures</i>	5.5	5.8
<i>Local history, historic buildings or features</i>	5.7	5.9

NOTES

1. Dataset includes 1.3 million individual ratings from 374 local government areas.
2. Satisfaction determined by counting the proportion of liveability attributes which were rated Pass or above across all respondents.

Nationally, it is interesting to note that the two most significant contributors to liveability are often considered ‘intangibles’ and therefore hard to measure. However, these are the social aspects of place that make us feel welcome and safe.

It is testament to the quality of the majority of our neighbourhoods that the next three contributors (*Connectivity*, *Elements of the natural environment* and *Local businesses that provide for daily needs*) are a result of good planning, protection of nature and nurturing local economies.

What has been surprising is the universality of attributes that are not contributing positively: the lack of a local evening economy or social opportunity, the paucity of unique features such as quality design or heritage elements, the perception that our neighbourhoods’ design is not sustainable, and of course low housing affordability and choice.

The performance of all attributes varies, and reflects the diversity of our neighbourhoods and the people they serve.

LIVEABILITY INEQUALITY

While on average, Australians are generally satisfied with local liveability, not all our communities are enjoying the same advantages.

SAMPLE ¹	PX 2023								
City of Subiaco, WA	81								
Lane Cove Council, NSW	79								
Municipality Hunters Hill, NSW	78								
City of Boroondara, Vic.	77								
Over 65 year olds	71								
South Australians	70								
Born in North America	70								
Born in India	69								
Youth (under 25 years)	69								
Those living in higher densities	69								
Those earning \$3,000 a week or more	69								
Men	68								
Those with some high school education	68								
Australia	67								
Women	67								
Those living in lowest densities	67								
Those who live alone	67								
Tasmanians	66								
25-44 year olds	65								
One parent families	65								
Northern Territorians	63								
Those with vocational training	63								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	62								
Non-binary ²	59								

NOTES

1. Confidence levels vary based on sample size and range between 95% \pm 0.4% and \pm 9.8%.
2. Respondents who self-identify as neither male nor female.

GENDER OR GENERATION?

Right now, women, under 25, living in Tasmania or the Northern Territory are experiencing some of the lowest levels of liveability (PX60 and PX52 respectively). Only non-binary² residents (of any age) are rating liveability worse, around 7-10% lower on average. So does gender or age have the most impact on liveability?

- Over 64s rate liveability 7% higher than the average (PX71 vs PX64)
- Over 64s are more satisfied with where they live, than any other age group, in every state or territory except for New South Wales
- New South Wales and Victoria are the best places to live if you are under 25 (PX70)
- Men rate liveability slightly higher than women (PX68 vs PX67), except in Victoria (PX72 vs PX69) and the ACT (PX70 vs PX66) where men are notably more satisfied
- 25-44 year olds are rating liveability lower across the board, most likely impacted by cost of living, accessibility, back to office working etc
- The ACT is the only state or territory where non-binary respondents rate liveability on par with the national average (PX67)

Improving local lives

Community insights for maximising liveability benefits

There are four standout opportunities for enhancing liveability at the national level: investment in soft and hard infrastructure that will make local neighbourhoods better for the communities they serve. Improving walkability, maintenance and safety, the protection and integration of nature and quality of open space are all key to improving national liveability outcomes.

PRIORITISING COMMON GOOD

Place Score's methodology relies on understanding the gap between what is most important to us and how it is contributing positively, or negatively to our day to day lives.

These charts illustrate the percentage of neighbourhood place attributes that are performing above (green) or below (orange/red) the value the community places on them. Four thematic areas are, on average, underperforming across the country: Movement, Management and safety, Environmental sustainability, and Open space.

Of course, not all places are created equal, and different communities value different neighbourhood qualities. This is the underlying opportunity of place based social research.

Over the following pages we will share the key directions for improving outcomes in the neighbourhoods we are designing, delivering and managing.

NOTES

1. Charts represent the percentage of liveability metrics under or over performing compared to their community value, and associated with each of the nine themes.

AUSTRALIA¹

While on average, Australians are generally satisfied with local liveability, not all our communities are experiencing the same advantages. Human-centric, place-based liveability data provides the unique insights necessary for high impact investment.



QUEENSLAND UNDER 25s



WALKABLE NETWORKS THAT MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HOME AND THE PLACES WE WANT TO GO

Covid lockdowns changed the way many of us move around our neighbourhoods, giving us a chance to explore and connect with people and places at a hyper-local level. In 2023, there is still a significant gap between the value we place on modal choice and the number of connected paths where we live.

Metrics associated with active and public transport are both highly valued (#5 and #9) but under performing, however *Ease of driving and parking* is only ranked #31 in terms of importance and performing better than the other modes. In addition, 39% (14,000+) of all neighbourhood improvement ideas were related to movement, with the majority requesting local paths that connect them to shops, services and social infrastructure.

This is a particular priority for those aged between 25-64 years with Australians wanting more public transport options, increased frequency and extended hours, more lighting, maintenance and signage.



Being able to walk to the shops or park provides a viable option to the private car with social, economic and environmental benefits.



Innovative service delivery ideas such as this Northern Beaches SWAT team are visible reminders to the community regarding cleaning and maintenance and provide passive surveillance.

MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY - IMPROVED PERCEPTIONS INCREASES SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The *General condition of public open space* is ranked the #2 shared value of an ideal neighbourhood, with low performance correlating with lower levels of perceived safety.

When we reinvest in our shared spaces, keeping them clean, mowing verges, fixing issues as they arise, there is an increase in place pride and in people using the public domain. This in turn, increases opportunities for social connection, which has a positive impact on how safe a space feels. 24% (9,000+) of all community ideas related to improving place management and neighbourhood safety for all.

In practical terms, providing curbs and gutters, footpaths, crossings, separated lanes and road maintenance makes getting around the whole neighbourhood better for everyone.

Our fastest growing areas are often in lower density neighbourhoods with significant public domain to manage, but without the rate base to support the expected levels of service. This is an area that needs much more consideration.

NURTURE NATURE FOR A SENSE OF UNIQUENESS AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The #1 shared value of an ideal neighbourhood across Australia is *Elements of the natural environment* with 71% selecting this as important. Fortunately, this attribute is also performing well (PX7.5). However, the contribution of the natural environment to local liveability could be at risk with *Protection of the natural environment* underperforming across the board.

From the community's perspective, local liveability would be enhanced by the integration of natural features, street trees, and planting. A variety of reasons feature in over 5,000 ideas: visual character, uniqueness, shade, and habitat.

Perhaps not surprisingly, *Sustainable urban design* is one of only two priorities for under 25 years nationally. They, and other groups (residents of Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory for example), are asking for neighbourhoods with a reduced environmental footprint: local energy sources and waste management, walkable, green and cool, and well connected by public transport.

While huge improvements have been made in this theme over the last 20 years, best practice is often the outlier rather than the standard.



Pressure on open space during Covid lock downs could be a sign of things to come.



The local environment, topography, climate, vegetation etc are authentic points of difference that also support healthier communities.

DENSER NEIGHBOURHOODS NEED BETTER SHARED AMENITY AND SERVICES

The importance of social infrastructure is often underplayed when compared to transport or economic investment. However, these local assets, from parks to libraries, health care to education, will become progressively essential in the face of increased costs of living, climate emergencies, and potential future pandemics.

Local open space quantity, quality and diversity feels like an easy win and one that is supported by 31% (11,500+) of community ideas for neighbourhood improvements. These shared spaces need to offer opportunities for exercise, rest, socialisation, play and the quiet enjoyment of nature, be accessible into the evening and respond to changing cultural behaviours and needs. With private open space getting more expensive, and thus smaller, accessing shared spaces will become an extension of our day to day lives.

Of course, there are increased costs associated with the delivery and management of these spaces, but this is part of the trade-off that needs to be resolved in the densification of our cities.

EASTERN METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Averages can be useful to gain an overall understanding of liveability, but mask the differences across regions, between local government areas or even between suburbs.



WESTERN METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE



2023

OPINION PIECES



Density is not a dirty word

Jonathan O'Brien

The housing crisis has been at the centre of 2023's political and placemaking discussions. And at the centre of that discussion lies the question of urban density. Evidence gathered in this area tends to focus on the ways that providing dense, abundant housing around existing infrastructure reduces per capita environmental impact and infrastructure costs, all while increasing productivity and reducing rents.

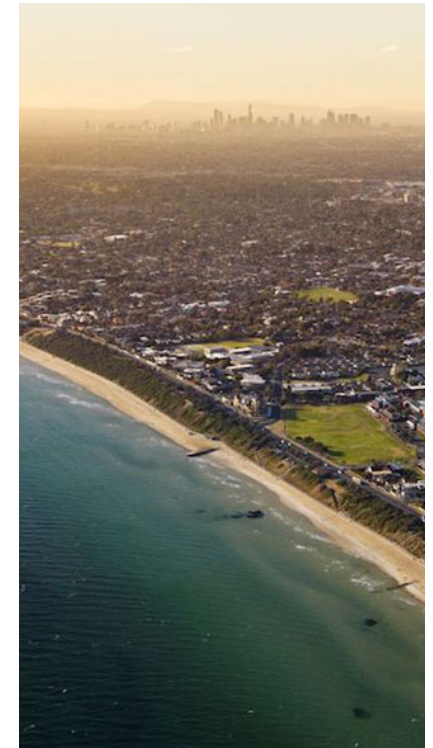
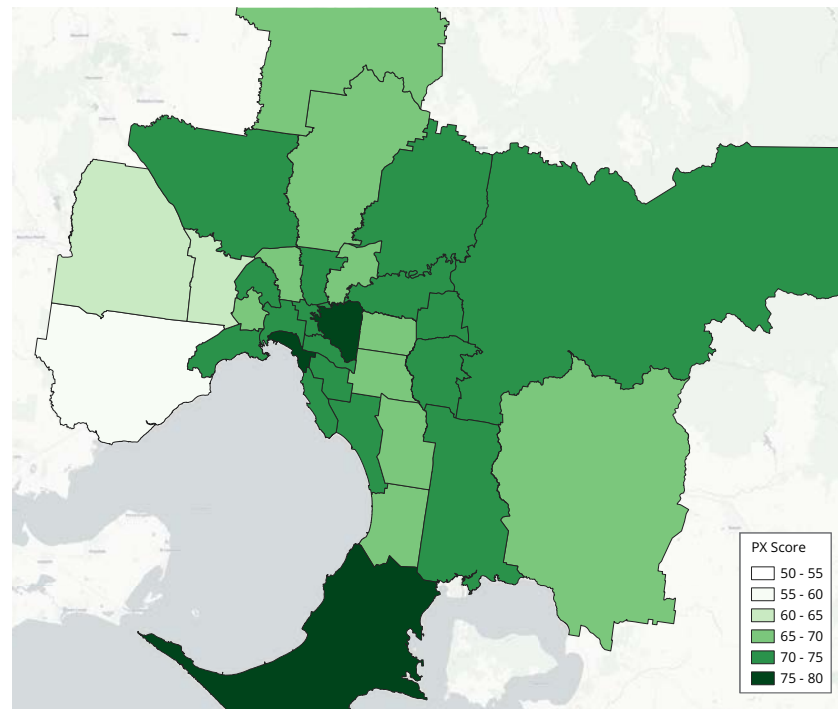
There is less focus, however, on evidence pointing to the extent that people enjoy living in denser, more urban areas. Indeed, in contrast to the mythologised Australian dream of a detached house on a quarter-acre block, this year's Liveability Census tells a different story - the story of the modern Australian backyard.

Using my home of Melbourne as a case study, medium-to-high density areas in the inner city earn the highest overall score on the Liveability Census (PX72 vs average of PX69 for metropolitan Melbourne). This is significant: it's neither the tall buildings of the inner-city nor the ever-expanding flat suburban fringe that people find most liveable. Instead, it's the happy medium that exists between them.

Let's start by examining housing—the chief concern of our team at YIMBY Melbourne. People living in medium density dwellings report the highest levels of liveability across the metropolitan Melbourne region. In particular the sense of community, the thriving economy and the range of housing types and sizes are rated well. This is a testament to the more abundant options that medium density housing provides. There is a wide range of housing types that

MELBOURNE METRO LIVEABILITY

Liveability appears to have a correlation with neighbourhood typology, and access to either urban or natural amenity.



Middle ring LGAs like Kingston still offer great connectivity, and access to the water.

exist between tall towers and individual detached homes. Medium density areas, by offering a broad range of housing choices, enable a greater diversity of people to thrive within given areas and communities.

These diverse housing options and communities are reinforced and complemented by a diverse range of neighbourhood amenities, with the surveyed Melburnians in medium density areas also reporting the best access to shared community and commercial assets. This makes sense, of course: greater density allows more people to access the same resources, enabling more local businesses and community hubs to be viable. It's no surprise, then, that those living in medium density areas report the highest score within the 'Things to do' dimension of the census.

The 2023 Liveability Census should be a rallying cry for councils, state governments, and policymakers seeking more sustainable, politically viable housing policies all across the country: density is not a dirty word. In fact, the results of the Liveability Census demonstrate that those living in these areas report higher liveability than anywhere else. The difference is not enormous, but it is there. And it shows clearly that while Australians love living all across Australia, we love living in urban, medium density areas just that little bit more.

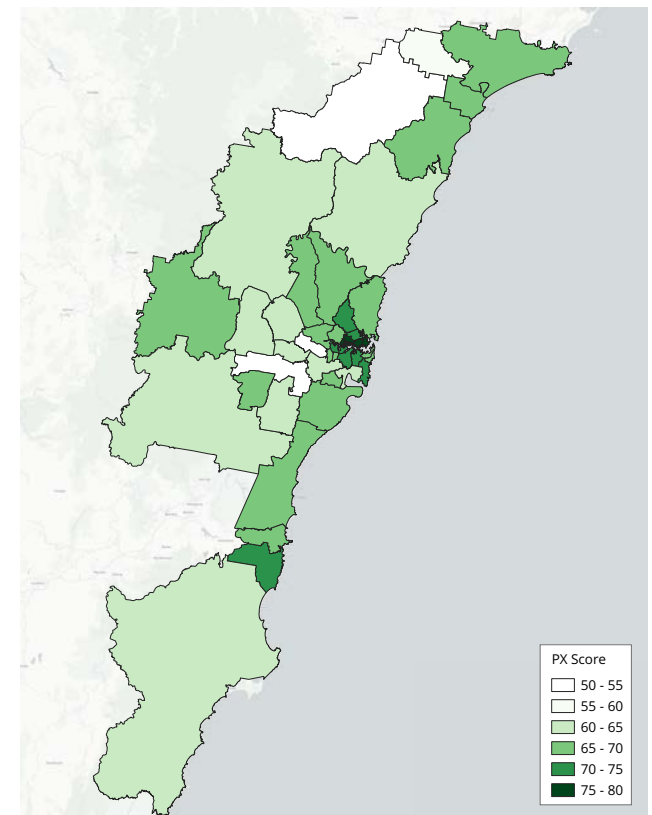
SYDNEY METRO LIVEABILITY

Similar to Metropolitan Melbourne, there is a concentration of better performing LGAs adjacent to the coast and primary centres for work and leisure.



Investments such as Parramatta Square, Parramatta, New South Wales, are changing perceptions of western Sydney as a place that is welcoming to both business and cultural diversity. These emerging regional centres uplift the liveability of the surrounding areas. (Source: City of Parramatta, 2023)

Jonathan O'Brien is a writer, software developer, and housing supply advocate. In 2023, he founded YIMBY Melbourne, a group advocating for planning reform and housing abundance. He is an inaugural Fundraise For Australia Fellow.



Health, wellbeing and liveable neighbourhoods

Marcus Crowley

In the 2023 Australian Liveability Census we asked two addition sets of questions about how we travel to work and how we rate our mental and physical health. We were interested to understand how our post pandemic lives had changed, and how our neighbourhoods and behaviours might be impacting our wellbeing.

In July 2023 the Federal Government released the Measuring What Matters¹ framework. It tracks “our progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous Australia”. The framework focusses on a topic that is close to our hearts at Place Score – the wellbeing of our communities, and how to answer the question:

How can we create more liveable neighbourhoods that lead to better health outcomes?

HOW ARE YOU?²

A heartening 85% of respondents reported they had good, or better, physical health. However, while our ratings of physical health are fairly stable as we age, the mental health responses reveal a serious inequity.

The lowest rating comes from those aged under 25 years (where only 57% report good or better mental health), but improves with age (92% of over 64s report good or better mental health).

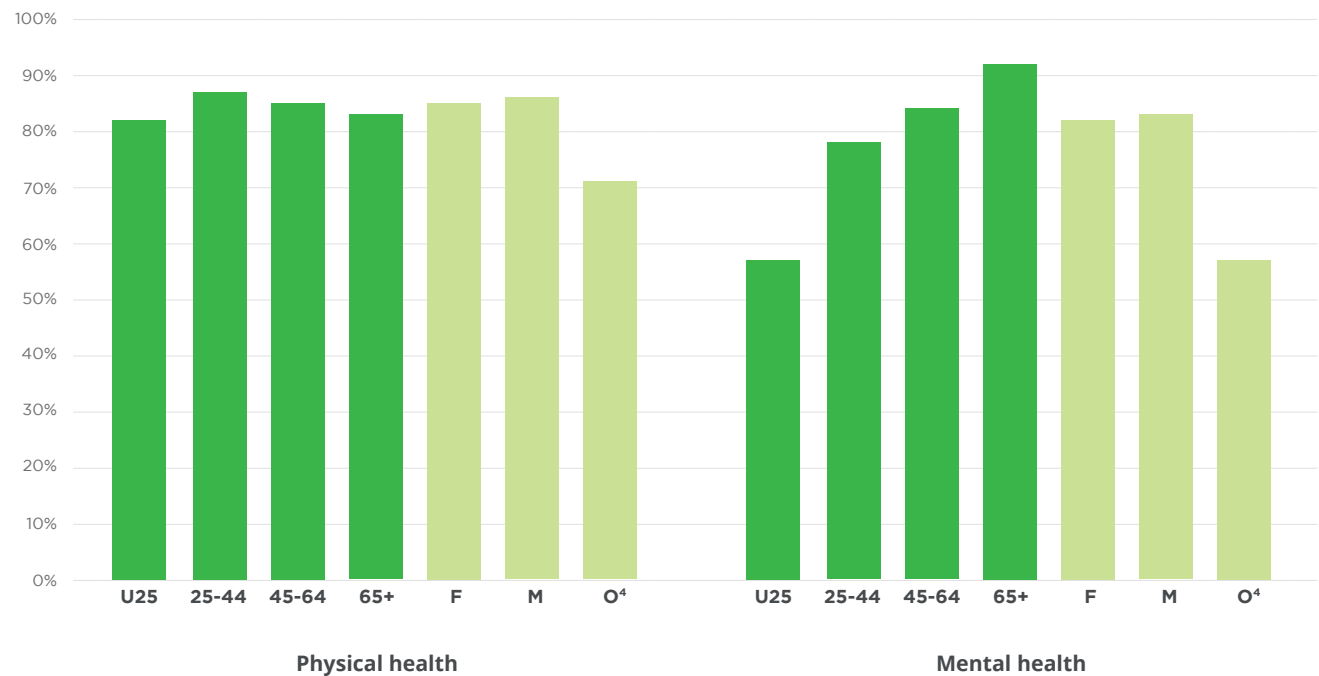
This reflects broader studies on youth mental health³. One possible explanation is that young people are more comfortable acknowledging poor mental health, however, daily life is putting undue stress on this community, as well as those who self-identify. For planners the opportunity is to understand how neighbourhoods can contribute to improved health for all.

NOTES

1. *Measuring what Matters*: <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters>.
2. We asked respondents to tell us how they rated their physical and mental health. These questions were optional but were answered by over 80% of our participants. Answers ranged along a 5-point scale from excellent to poor.
3. headspace *National Youth Mental Health Survey 2022*.
4. Non-binary respondents.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

% of respondents who rated their physical and mental health good or above, by age and gender.



HEALTHY LIVEABILITY ATTRIBUTES

Analysis of the Place Score liveability data reveals that local government areas with higher liveability performance coincide with residents reporting better mental health¹.

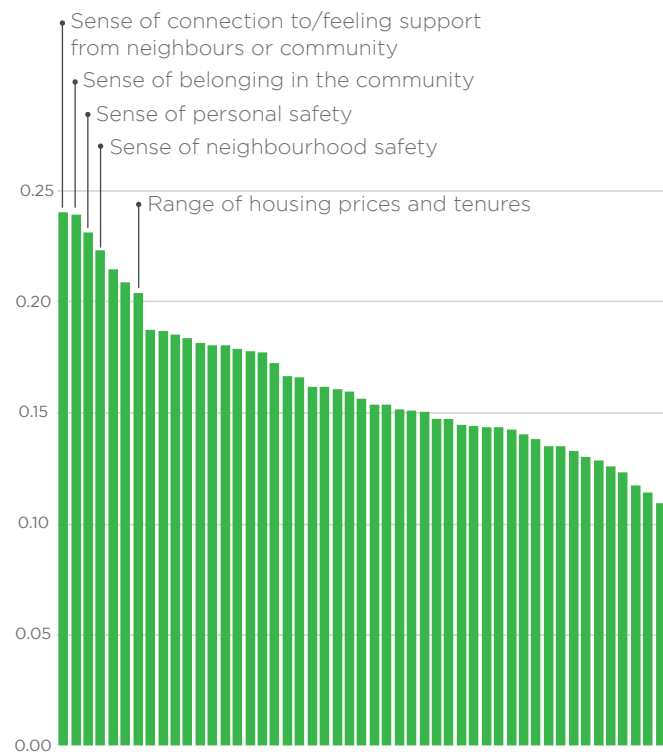
Our analysis of individual liveability attributes aimed to reveal a potential correlation between neighbourhood performance and mental health. At this granular level, the individual liveability attributes most strongly correlated with mental health are a *Sense of connection and belonging in the community* (0.24), followed by a *Sense of personal and neighbourhood safety* (0.22 - 0.23) and the availability of a *Range of housing prices* (0.20).

This means that we're likely to find people with better mental health in places where there is a strong sense of community and safety, with affordable housing.

A correlation between liveability and physical health was also identified. In this domain, *Sense of safety* bears a higher correlation (0.18 - 0.19), followed by the *Sense of connection and belonging to a community* (0.17 - 0.18).

It is not surprising that healthy people are more likely to be able to afford to live in nice places, but it is remarkable how relevant these intangibles are for both mental and physical wellbeing.

CORRELATION BETWEEN LIVEABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH²



NOTES

1. See *The impact of disadvantage*, p.31.
2. A correlation of 1 is perfect, while a correlation of 0 indicates that there is no discernible relationship between the two datasets. A negative correlation would indicate that one variable grows as its counterpart reduces.

GETTING TO WORK

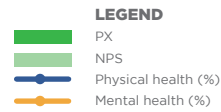
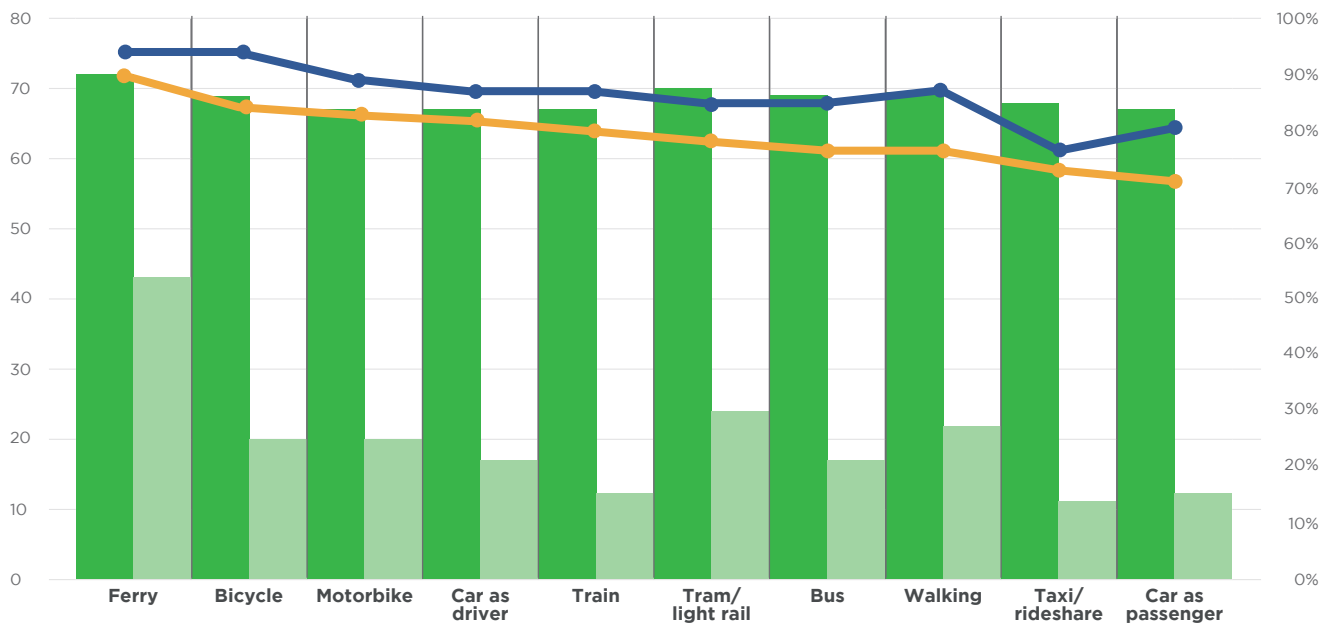
This year we also asked people where they worked and how they travelled to work. Waiting for a bus, walking down the street or being stuck in traffic: we suspected that people might feel strongly about these place-based experiences. We wanted to know whether there was any correlation between our transport answers, our self-reported health, and our willingness to rate our neighbourhoods positively.

We will leave it to others to explain whether active transport is a precursor to or a consequence of good physical health. What we found interesting when taking 'place' out of the equation, and looking at the country as a whole, was the variation in place experience, mental health and willingness to promote one's own neighbourhood depending on which mode of transport we take to work.

Those of us who travel to work by bicycle and - for the lucky few - by ferry, are more likely to report good physical and mental health, to rate our home suburbs highly and to recommend those suburbs to others as good places to live or visit. At the other end of the spectrum, being driven to work by someone else is associated with a lower place experience and a lower likelihood of gushing to friends and family about our neighbourhoods.

TRAVEL TO WORK¹

The following graph captures the relationship between physical health, mental health, neighbourhood performance (PX) and NPS² by travel to work mode.



NOTES

1. We asked, "If you are employed, where is your main place of work?" then "How do you usually get there?".
2. Our Net Promoter Score question asked, "How likely is it that you would recommend this place to a friend or colleague as a place to live or spend time in?" NPS results range from -100 to +100, with results above 0 being positive.

Living on one of the world's largest and flattest islands, we have scope for both more cycling and water transport. The 2023 Australian Liveability Census reveals these modes provide more opportunity for increased social connection, and its associated impact on mental health than increased private car access.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Compared with the rest of the world, Australia continues to be a fortunate country. Along with a handful of other nations, we've embraced the fact that we need more than fiscal data to plot our course.

We now know which parts of the country are most liveable and which aspects align with good health. The data collected in the 2023 Australian Liveability Census should help unlock investment in neighbourhoods that not only work better but improve the lives of local communities and the individuals within them.

Marcus Crowley is the Head of Product at Place Score and a graduate of the University of Melbourne.

Planning for Gen Z

Luke Hodgson

Young people are often overlooked in regards to the planning and design of our urban environments. One factor behind this may be that many young people find planning and urban design relatively intangible, as well as difficult to influence. The 2023 Australian Liveability Census took a proactive approach to engaging under 25 year olds - with around 3,000 participating. When thinking about planning for the future, shouldn't our focus be on those that will be most impacted?

In the first month of data acquisition for the 2023 Australian Liveability Census, the Place Score team found young people less likely to undertake the Census than older age groups. It might be easy to assume because of this that my generation does not care.

I don't think youth engagement is a new challenge for planners. Youth are a group that is easily dismissed and our voice is often ignored, or not sought, whether that be because of a perceived lack of experience, a lack of authority or this preconception that we don't care.

I believe we do care, but we do need easier, more transparent models of engagement where our inputs are respected and responded to.

Interestingly, youth perceptions of liveability are amongst the highest nationally (PX69 vs PX67), We are generally more positive about many of the aspects that older residents complain about, but when something is impacting us negatively we will let you know. For example, youth rate the impact of their neighbourhood's *Range of housing prices and tenures* 6% lower than the rest of the country. In fact housing choice and affordability is our worst performing liveability attribute overall - with a failing score of PX4.9.

When looking at what younger people value in their ideal neighbourhoods, the top five shared liveability values are:

- *Elements of natural environment* (62%)
- *General condition of public open space* (59%)
- *Sense of personal safety* (50%)
- *Connectivity* (48%)
- *Protection of the natural environment* (47%)

These values are very similar to other age groups, revealing that great neighbourhoods have the same qualities regardless of what age we are.

If urban planners and designers want to create places that resonate specifically with the next generation it is important then to look at what we care about more, or less than the average.

Our ideal neighbourhoods also have:

- *Things to do in the evening* (+15%)
- *There are people like me* (+11%)
- *Range of housing prices and tenures* (+11%)
- *Local employment opportunities* (+11%)
- *Sustainable behaviours in the community* (+10%)

It's worth noting that the under 25 age group includes people with many different life experiences. As a

cisgender male born in Australia and living in Sydney, I'm likely to have very different values and perceptions of place than someone with different life experiences. So what can planning and urban design do to cater for as many different young people as possible?

GENDER AND SAFETY

The 2023 Australian Liveability Census revealed that regardless of your gender all young people place a high value on their *Sense of personal safety* (#3 shared value nationally). Unfortunately, the lived experience is quite different for each group.

The ratings ascribed to these same attributes by the different genders reveal that young women and those who identify themselves as non-binary rate their sense of personal safety where they live, up to 15% lower than young men.

SENSE OF PERSONAL SAFETY - UNDER 25 YEARS



All Australian Liveability Census respondents were asked to share their ideas for making their neighbourhoods better for them. These are some of the responses regarding safety provided by young people:

Enhance safety measures such as installing more street lighting, improving pedestrian crossings, and promoting community safety education

M, U25, NEW SOUTH WALES



Improving safety -it can be a bit unsafe because of misbehaving younger people. Maybe more watchful security from the police

F, U25, QUEENSLAND



Improve and increase to increase confidence in personal safety at night and encourage night-time exercise, particularly for women.

F, U25, TASMANIA



There needs to be an increase in police patrols, safety is key.

M, U25, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

My experience as a young person, and my studies as a town planner, reflect my peers' responses: passive surveillance through the use of street lights and designing areas that are open and very visible is a non-invasive way to make young people feel safer. Other safety options, like increased surveillance cameras, can have an unintended side effect of making the space feel less safe because this signals an unsafe area.

WOULD WE RECOMMEND OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Our Net Promoter Score question asks respondents how likely they would be to recommend their neighbourhood as a place to live. Youth, while generous with their liveability scores, are much less likely to recommend. This reflects a reduced level of place attachment or place loyalty which may lead to lower levels of community participation, sense of belonging and of course perceived safety.

More connected community through something like social media for community events, so the suburb has more connection between people.

M, U25, VICTORIA

More local painting displays and murals around the town, which can create more cultural connection within the community. Local Indigenous painters would be amazing.

M, U25, NEW SOUTH WALES

A community support and outreach center that also holds activities such as game nights, dances, fitness classes etc.

F, U25, QUEENSLAND

Activating younger people in our communities through authentic opportunities to influence decision making and connect with others in a meaningful way is essential if we want to empower youth with the skills they will need to tackle in the future.

Urban planners and designers need to think to the next generation. This will not only have the direct benefits of creating neighbourhoods that reflect the values of their future residents, but will also help educate youth about their own role as advocates of a more sustainable future.

Luke Hodgson is a Junior Research Assistant at Place Score and a graduate of Planning from Macquarie University.

Places for people in metropolitan Melbourne

Dan Ferguson

As the world's most liveable city for seven years in a row and the current third most liveable city in the world¹ – it is no shock to see Melbourne receive a solid Place Experience Score of 69 out of 100, with no Place Attributes rated lower than the National Benchmark. At the core of this international liveability reputation is the extensive public open space network across the 32 local government areas that make up metropolitan Melbourne.

As the Victorian State Government's *Open Space For Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne* highlights, these open spaces are at the heart of our city, and provide social, health and wellbeing, environmental and economic benefits for the whole community. They also help cool our city, build resilience to climate change, and create and maintain healthy biodiversity across our urban landscape.

Melbourne works hard to maintain its international reputation, guided by Plan Melbourne which embeds the '20-minute neighbourhood' concept where people can meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk from their home. Open space is central to this concept and collectively it was the second highest performing Place Score liveability theme underpinned by no individual attribute scoring below PX6.9. It is clear now more than ever, Melburnians value open space and it is delivering positive outcomes.

However, people's access to quality open space across the metropolitan network is not equal. And as Melbourne faces its third and largest wave of population growth, a growing burden of ill health and increasing climate change impacts, this inequity will be further exacerbated unless we act. A key component of determining where best to act, is understanding what our community values most

and how they perceive it is currently performing. Place Score's Liveability Priorities work hard at doing this for us. They indicate opportunities for better community outcomes, identify where we should focus our attention in order to protect and build on current strengths, and they also show where we should invest to improve attributes that are under performing and impacting our community.

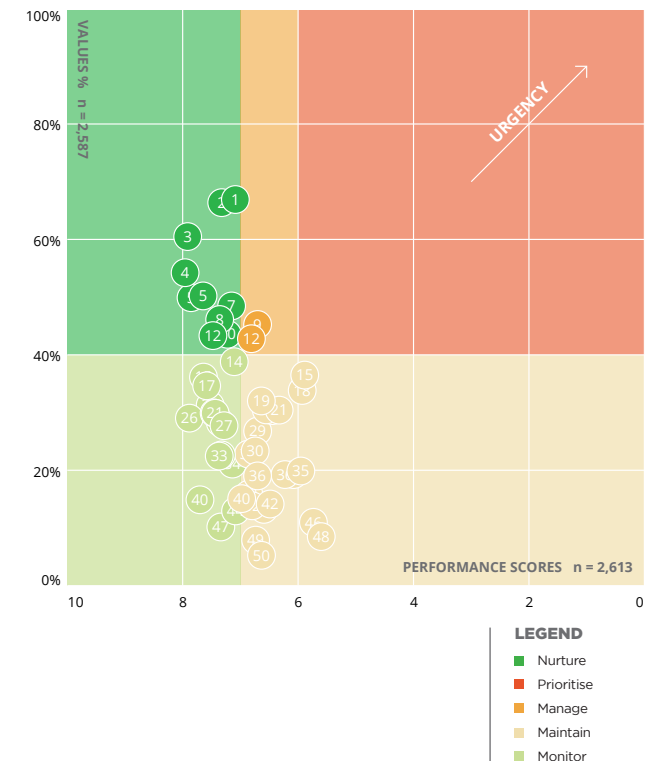
Unsurprisingly, many liveability attributes for Melbourne fall in the Place Score's 'nurture' category, meaning the community values these highly and rates their experience with them positively. Included here are the condition and quality of public space, landscaping and natural environment features, connectivity and access to local amenities and businesses, walking/cycling infrastructure and personal safety.

Within the open space theme specifically, *Quality of public space* should be nurtured as it is a high value, high performing attribute. *Spaces suitable for play (from toddlers to teens)* falls in the 'maintain' category, meaning it is among the poorest performing attributes but also not the most valued, so efforts to future-proof or de-risk this attribute should be explored. The remaining four of the six attributes fall within the 'monitor' category, meaning they are performing well but are not highly valued compared

NOTES

1. Economist Intelligence Unit; 24th Oct 2023, <https://www.eiu.com>

LIVEABILITY STRENGTHS AND PRIORITIES METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

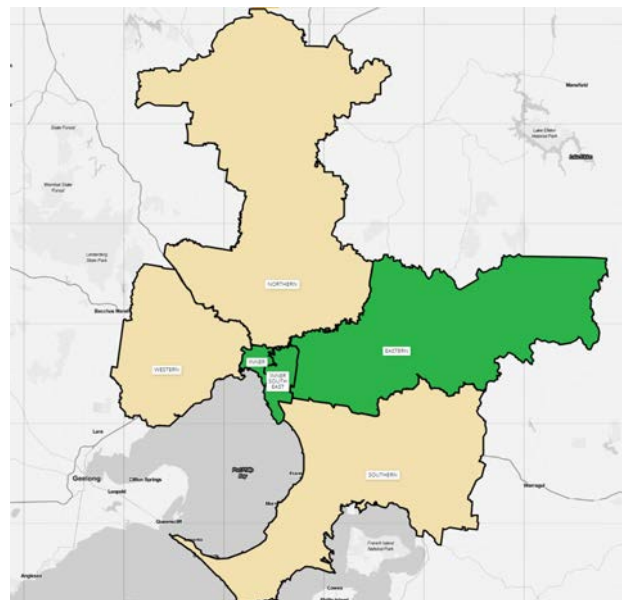


to other attributes, so we just need to keep tabs on them into the future.

The quality of open space is generally highly valued, with the Inner South East and Eastern parts of the city scoring particularly well, and young adults being most content.

As the accompanying Open Space map shows, the Northern, Southern and Western regions tend more negatively than the other regions of metropolitan Melbourne. The detailed data reveals that the amount of public space is less of an issue than the quality, diversity and level of embellishment which may not be meeting community expectations.

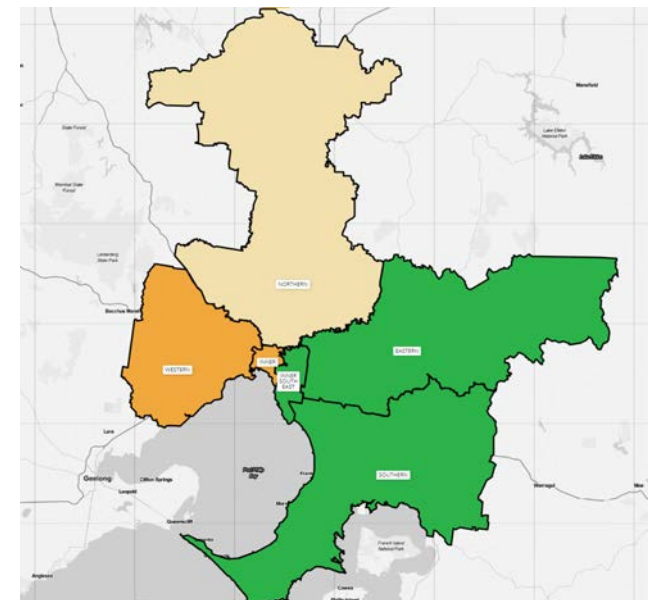
OPEN SPACE PRIORITY SNAPSHOT METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE



LEGEND

- Nurture
- Prioritise
- Manage
- Maintain
- Monitor

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITY SNAPSHOT METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE



While understanding the values, performance and priorities that the numerical results provide is helpful, there is nothing quite like reading actual community suggestions.

The open space theme attracted the second highest number of qualitative ideas (31%). This was true across all age groups indicating that Melbourne's open spaces really do cater for all of us.

Of the 1,199 open space ideas provided by Melburnians, key terms that kept popping up include:

- Park (n= 407) – both quality and quantity
- Tree (n= 351) – more trees/canopy and better protection of existing trees
- Path (n= 103) – both new and improved maintenance of existing
- Play (n= 96) – new and improved facilities with specific reference to water play (n=12)
- Dog (n= 95) – references to specific fenced areas and provision of poo bags
- Open space (n= 53) – more and activation of existing
- Light (n= 36) – improved lighting of key activity areas such as paths within parks and in surrounding streets

- Seat (n= 33) – provision of new and more seating as places to gather
- Sport (n= 27) – the need to balance providing for formal sport and maintaining natural environments and local park settings
- Shade (n=18) – often mentioned in tandem with trees

While Melbourne has a wonderful network of open space, we know that access is not equal and will only be exacerbated by population growth, climate change and other external factors. The legacy we enjoy today is the result of the vision and commitment of our community and custodians of the land that came before us to deliver on many incremental projects over time. It is now our turn to build on this work and ensure we continue to deliver open space for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age, gender, identity, culture, or ability. Place Score is a great place to start.



Making our public areas more accessible with paths, seating, sun/rain protection and neatly regularly maintained grass and gardens. Dog poo bags/bins in these areas.

M, 45-64, MAROONDAH

More open spaces for children to play and people to meet.

F, 65+, GREATER DANDENONG



More green spaces: more trees, plants, grass and shade, to lessen the concrete aspects and make pedestrian commutes more comfortable.

F, 25-44, MARIBYRNONG



Dan Ferguson is a public servant turned consultant and academic researcher. He is now the director of boutique planning consultancy theCommunityCollaborative, and Executive Officer of industry association Parks and Leisure Australia (Vic/Tas). Combining a background in exercise science and urban planning, he teaches and is completing a PhD at Swinburne University of Technology, with a research focus on the role of governance in the planning and provision of open space and public infrastructure that supports physical activity.

Case Study: Liveability in Parkes, NSW

Michael Carter

Achieving equity regarding liveability in regional parts of Australia has a number of unique positive opportunities but also a number of significant challenges.

Parkes Shire is located 355 kilometres west of Sydney with a population of around 14,000, residing over an area of just under 6,000 square kilometres.

Recently Parkes Shire Council invited the local community to participate in a Place Score liveability study as part of the foundation research for the first Parkes Liveability Strategy. The project is a great example of tackling the challenges being faced in some regional areas experiencing rapid growth and development - through a human-centric lens. For Parkes this growth is a result of the Inland Railway, the NSW government Special Activation Precinct at Parkes, and mining and sustainable energy projects in the area.

The liveability study results reflect a lot of the common issues facing residents of regional communities: insufficient access to particular services and amenities (entertainment, health, retail), limited local employment and business opportunities (outside of key event times) and a need for improved access to open space and nature.

One of the benefits of the Place Score platform is that insights for each liveability attribute can be identified for different age groups. This is particularly important for Council when deciding how to target investment to achieve relevant improvements in

liveability. For example, in the under 25 age group, the most important liveability attribute for their local neighbourhood is *Things to do in the evening* which was selected by 76% of respondents in this age group. In contrast, *Things to do in the evening* is one of the least important liveability attributes for the over 64 age group. This attribute was also the poorest performing liveability feature overall (out of 50) with a score of very low score of PX3.1 (out of possible 10). Being able to extrapolate this type of synthesised data can help Council plan and make better investment decisions to best benefit the community.

The stand-out liveability value for Parkes Shire is *General condition of public open space*, which is an important contributor to liveability for 71% of respondents. Having a well-maintained public domain is appreciated by the community, and importantly, can have flow-on benefits to other liveability attributes. Quality public spaces reflect a well-functioning community and can lead to local investment that benefits the local business community, increasing local spending and the provision of desirable local services. The Place Score Liveability Platform provides scope to 'connect the dots', including synergies between local and state government initiatives that can enable such outcomes.

The liveability data results also confirmed some of the

More support to improve unemployment in the town. Support to help the town with opening more business/shops or supporting a new manufacturing business.

F, 45-64, PARKES



Footpaths everywhere, with a focus on pedestrians, adequate lighting. Everything is so close but walking is dangerous and unappealing.

M, 25-44, PARKES



intangible aspects of the community that are working well and contributing to a good quality of life for locals. *A sense of belonging in the community* was the highest performing attribute in the North and Western sub regions, scoring PX7.5 and PX7.8 respectively. This community spirit, or goodwill, can be an invaluable asset when needing to implement local changes that support liveability uplift in a community.

Being part of the Place Score cohort also means Parkes' liveability performance can be benchmarked against other communities around Australia. Identifying other communities that are similar to Parkes and are experiencing similar liveability challenges, can open conversations around solutions and sharing ideas for things that have worked well, or not, to address those specific challenges. This means liveability uplift can be achieved more effectively and efficiently across the country.

Adding more available fast food, shops and activities for family and friends, e.g cinema, bowling, shopping mall, Kmart, Mad Mex, etc.

F, U25, PARKES



Michael Carter is a Director of Currajong planning consultancy with 25 years' experience in regional planning.

The impact of dis/advantage

M Jameel Baig

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) are ranking tools developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to capture the relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage of areas across Australia.¹

NOTES

1. In this article we use the IRSAD (Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage).

In Place Score's 2021 State of Place report, we examined for the first time, the relationship between the SEIFA and liveability scores for local government areas across the country. Our analysis uncovered a positive correlation: the higher the liveability score the more advantage and conversely, the lower the score, the higher the rate of disadvantage.

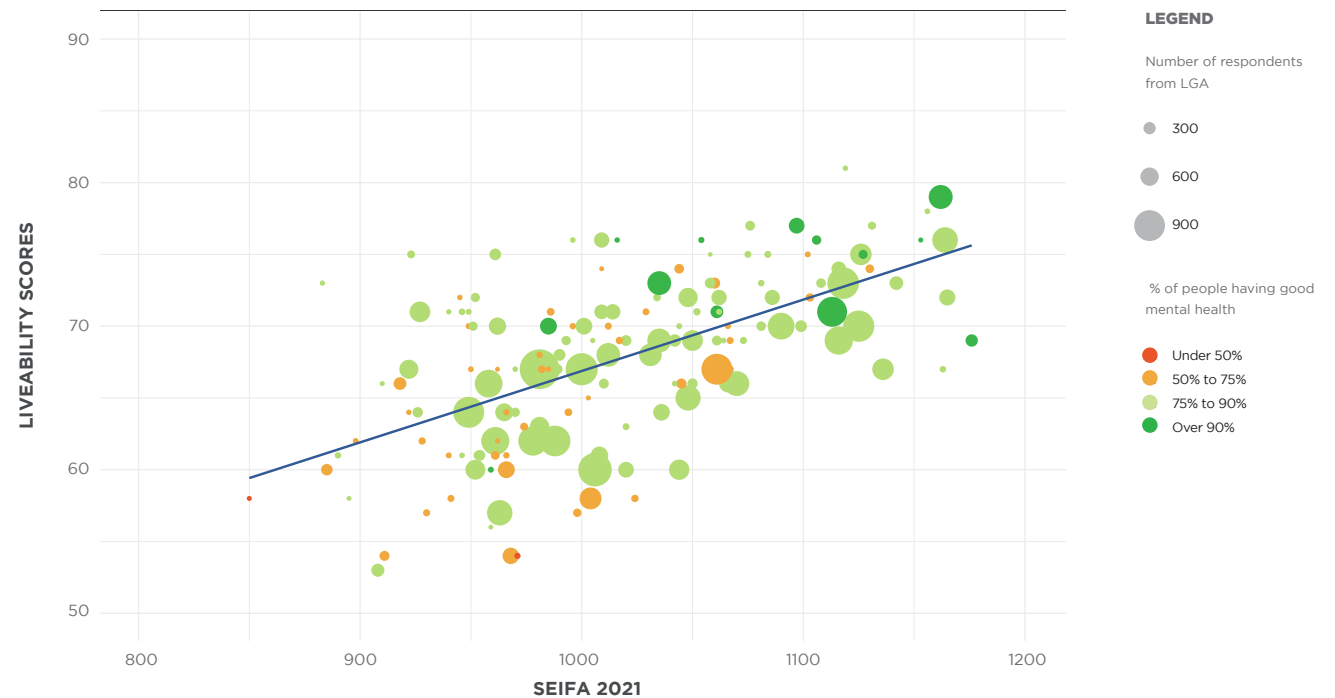
This year, we have updated the research with the 25,000+ place experience ratings from the 2023 Australian Liveability Census, and the most recent SEIFA data released in late 2021. In addition, we have enriched our analysis with the self-reported mental health of respondents. We were curious to understand how the mental health of residents of an LGA might be related to the LGA's liveability score, its SEIFA score, or both.

As in 2021, we continue to see a close relationship between the SEIFA and liveability scores: for every increase of 100 points of SEIFA, we can expect an average increase of 5 liveability points. Put simply, the less disadvantaged the area, the higher the liveability.

For example, Northern Beaches in New South Wales has a liveability score of PX70 and a SEIFA score of 1,125. Greater Dandenong in Victoria has a liveability score of PX66 and a SEIFA score of 918.

SEIFA, PLACE PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH¹

This chart shows the relationship between SEIFA IRSAD and Place Score's liveability score for 156 LGAs, along with a line of best fit.



More interestingly the highest band for mental health (local government areas where over 90% of residents report a positive mental wellbeing) generally have good liveability: liveability scores over PX70 (with the national average being PX67), and SEIFA scores over 1,050.

Considering the previous example of the Northern Beaches where the liveability score is PX70 the SEIFA score is 1,125, 90% of the residents of this LGA report good or better mental health. Meanwhile in Greater Dandenong (PX66, SEIFA 918), 74% of residents report good or better mental health.

Playford, South Australia (SEIFA 850) and Armadale, Western Australia (SEIFA 971) are two local government areas in the lowest band for mental health (where less than 50% of residents report having good mental health). Both also have a liveability score of under PX60.

Improving liveability in these low performing areas could have a positive impact on mental health and also relative advantage. For Playford and Armadale, the 2023 Australian Liveability reveals the communities' liveability priorities are improving safety and opportunities to connect and integrate the natural environment. At the other end of the scale, these attributes are actually strengths of the

more liveable LGAs, reinforcing their importance in fostering improved liveability and good mental health.

As we wrestle with the question of how (un)equal we want to allow our society to be, understanding the correlation between liveability, disadvantage and mental health provides a new tool for supporting investment in neighbourhood design, planning and management that improves outcomes for the communities most in need.

Mohammad Jameel Baig is a data analyst and software developer at Place Score. He is a graduate of Monash University.





If you would like to join us for the next liveability census, the EOI is now open at placescore.org

**THANK YOU TO OUR
2023 AUSTRALIAN LIVEABILITY CENSUS
PARTNERS**

- Bayside Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Burwood Council
- Camden Council
- Campbelltown City Council
- Central Coast Council
- Cessnock City Council
- City of Busselton
- City of Canada Bay Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Newcastle
- City of Parramatta
- City of Stirling
- City of Sydney
- City of Victor Harbor
- City of Vincent
- City of Wanneroo
- City of Wyndham
- Georges River Council
- GPT
- Greater Cities Commission
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Inner West Council
- Kiama Municipal Council
- Ku-ring-gai Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Landcom
- Lane Cove Council
- Mackay Regional Council
- Maitland City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- North Sydney Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Penrith City Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- QCOSS
- RACT
- Randwick City Council
- Shellharbour City Council
- Shoalhaven City Council
- Singleton Shire Council
- Strathfield Council
- Sutherland Shire Council
- Transport for New South Wales
- The Hills Shire Council
- Western Downs Regional Council
- Willoughby City Council
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Woollahra Municipal Council



A photograph of a park with a large tree and people sitting on the grass. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. In the foreground, two people are sitting on the grass, facing each other with a dog between them. In the background, there are several trees and a large building with a grid-like facade. The overall scene is peaceful and green.

PLACE SCORE

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