THE LIVEABLE METROPOLIS
The opportunity of Intermediary Cities to deliver resilience, impact and prosperity
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the Monash Commission</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword by Monash University’s President and Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword by the Chair of the Second Monash Commission</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commissioners</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Intermediary Cities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the centre: Why Intermediary Cities? And why now?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging future-oriented features of Intermediary Cities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Balance of autonomy and integration within the larger metropolitan network</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Citizen and community wellbeing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Equitable and sustainable design</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Experimentation and innovation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diverse economic base, jobs and innovation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vision, leadership and sound governance</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The liveable metropolis: A complementary partnership approach to accelerate post-pandemic recovery</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to action: A new model of liveability</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT THE MONASH COMMISSION

The Monash Commission mobilises the expertise of thought leaders from Australia and internationally, through in-depth and comprehensive inquiries into priority issues facing our communities, business and government at a national and global level.

Established by Monash University in 2018, the overarching aims of the Commission are to:

- raise awareness of, and engagement in, important issues facing our communities, business and public policy, and contribute to the development of solutions to those issues for the public good
- contribute as a thought leader to matters of public interest
- enhance the impact and contributions that universities can make for the benefit of their communities, nationally and internationally.

The Monash Commission promotes open, evidence-based and robust debate to inform its work and conclusions. By engaging with a wide range of perspectives, each inquiry seeks to examine and rethink multifaceted, system-level problems. The Monash Commission seeks to design policy options that contribute in a substantive and sustainable way to practical system solutions in Australia and globally.

The second Monash Commission was conducted entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioners met formally on seven occasions, and a number of times informally, across an 18-month period with research and evidence gathering being completed in between.
From its beginnings in the early 1960s, Monash University has had a strong ambition to address complex challenges through its education and research. Monash has a significant interest in large-scale, multidisciplinary projects that make a positive difference to the communities in which we engage.

Our sponsorship of the Monash Commission forms part of this desire to examine and reconsider multifaceted, system-level problems important to communities, and contribute to the discussions, debates, research and policy development that lead to tangible solutions.

To achieve this, Monash University has brought together an independent panel of experts from various professional disciplines to deliver thought leadership on the topic of transformative cities of the future – beyond the infrastructure, technology and transport system requirements.

Now more than ever, cities of the future are considering the human implications and imperatives of sustainability, equity and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many of these issues into focus, with increased expectations around liveability, work/life balance and the natural environments of neighbourhoods in which people reside, work and recreate.

This report brings a global perspective to Intermediary Cities, identifying catalysts that have accelerated regions to become the site of polycentric cities. There are many lessons for Australian cities, particularly Melbourne, to consider in their next stage of development. Over the next two decades, Australian cities have large-scale infrastructure and transformation agendas, such as rail and connectivity projects like the Airport Rail Link and Suburban Rail Loop in Melbourne, or the Metronet in Perth. Significant capital investment through international sporting events, such as the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2026 and the Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Brisbane in 2032, are likely to leave a legacy. Much as they have done for cities in other parts of the world, legacy programs have the capacity to change the shape and opportunities of cities.

Monash University will consider the observations and recommendations contained in this report and, where relevant, champion discussions through the University’s role as an institution supporting communities that surround our campuses and in advocating change to policymakers, industry and government. ‘The liveable metropolis: The opportunity of Intermediary Cities to deliver resilience, impact and prosperity’ also provides significant insights for addressing global challenges and progressing future research opportunities.

I am delighted to accept this report of the second inquiry of the Monash Commission. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Commissioners, particularly Mr Mark Birrell AM in his role as Chair, and Professor Ken Sloan, for supporting its development over these challenging years. This collection of thought-provoking case studies demonstrates how Intermediary Cities can enhance liveability through innovation, policy, planning and governance.

Professor Margaret Gardner AC  
President and Vice-Chancellor, Monash University
FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR OF THE SECOND MONASH COMMISSION

This is a research report about cities that deserve more recognition and more attention, especially in a world that is rightly considering the changing roles or characteristics of urban centres in a COVID-19 affected environment.

We were asked by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Margaret Gardner AC, to “explore the concept and potential of the ‘intermediary city’, often referred to as ‘second cities’ or ‘non-CBD cities,’ which are smaller, but deeply connected in a larger city network.” The aim of this Monash Commission was to “shed new light on the liveability, resilience and inclusion debate of our cities by looking at the unique role played by intermediary cities”.

Many discussions, inquiries and reports over the years, especially in advanced economies, have focused almost exclusively on the Central Business District (CBD) or on primary cities. This Commission was clear from the outset, that looking outside of the CBD was an interesting prospect that could lead to a better understanding of how non-primary cities grow and how they can connect entire regions together. Our aim was to consider liveability and ways to spread opportunity to the widest set of citizens and what enablers could be employed in cities with similar aspirations.

By looking at a dynamic set of case studies, the Commissioners have arrived at an interesting perspective on the features of future-focused Intermediary Cities - one which we hope will: spur Intermediary Cities to consider their future role; assist in making targeted investments by all levels of government; and work towards a polycentric network of cities. This fresh approach could also see the development of new liveability indices, so that in the future we rank world-class cities on the extent to which the city contributes to economic and social prosperity in wider locations, and not just the city itself.

We hope the report provides useful guidance to policy-makers, governments and investors globally on how to enhance existing Intermediary Cities or develop new ones.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the panel of Commissioners, who have spent their spare time discussing and guiding this inquiry, including Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO, Professor Emeritus Kees Christiaanse, Professor Khoo Teng Chye, Professor Kris Olds, Ms Julie Wagner, Professor Jinhua Zhao and Ms Terri Benson. A special thanks from all of us to Professor Ken Sloan, who assisted significantly in the initiation and development of the Commission’s work.

Together we are pleased to present this report, which offers a collection of views that aims to lift the current urban, social and economic debate in relation to networked Intermediary Cities. Ideas raised in this report should be debated further and tested through considered research and policy development.

Mark Birrell AM
Chair, Second Monash Commission
THE COMMISSIONERS

The Monash Commission brings together a cross-disciplinary panel of eminent Australian and international thought leaders from across a wide range of sectors including: infrastructure, architecture, urban planning, transportation and human geography.

Mr Mark Birrell AM (Chair) Melbourne, Australia
- Non-Executive Director and Former Cabinet Minister in Victoria
Mark Birrell AM is a Non-Executive Director with a lifelong interest in cities and urban renewal. A well-respected leader spanning both private and public sectors, Mark brings a wealth of industry knowledge in the fields of infrastructure, transport and logistics. He also has deep experience in public policy, having served as a Minister for Major Projects in Victoria and as the founding Chair of the peak body, Infrastructure Australia.

Ms Gabrielle Trainer AO Sydney, Australia
- Board Member, Western Parkland City Authority, ACT City Renewal Authority and Major Transport Infrastructure Authority
- Chair, Construction Industry Culture Taskforce
Gabrielle Trainer AO brings over 25 years of experience sitting on boards in the public and private sectors, ranging from infrastructure, financial services, transport and urban development, to sports, arts and culture, and the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Gabrielle’s career has been characterised by her interest in creating quality of life through arts and culture, the public realm, design, sustainability and community engagement.

Professor Jinhua Zhao Boston, United States
- Edward H. and Joyce Linde Associate Professor, City and Transportation Planning, MIT
- Director, MIT Mobility Initiative
- Chief Scientist, TRAM GLOBAL
Professor Jinhua Zhao runs the JTL Urban Mobility Lab and Transit Lab at MIT and is the founder of the MIT Mobility Initiative. He is also the co-founder and chief scientist for TRAM, a mobility decarbonisation venture. His research focuses on bringing behavioural science and transportation technology together to shape travel behaviour, design mobility systems and reform urban policies. Professor Zhao sees transportation as a language to describe a person, characterise a city, understand institutions, and enable cross-culture learning between cities.

Ms Julie Wagner Ticino, Switzerland
- President, Global Institute on Innovation Districts
- Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute
Julie Wagner is president of the not-for-profit organisation the Global Institute on Innovation Districts, a first of its kind, practitioner-led network dedicated solely to the growth and evolution of innovation districts. As a prolific urban researcher, Julie has over 25 years’ work experience advancing cities and urban areas. A trained city planner, Julie served as a deputy planning director for the District of Columbia, where she developed the city’s long-range plan.

Professor Kris Olds Wisconsin, United States
- Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Professor Kris Olds is a Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he has also held a variety of senior administrative roles related to internationalisation and area studies, curricular matters, and educational innovation. Professor Olds’ current research focuses on the globalisation of higher education and research, as well as infrastructure, platforms and cities. His research agenda relates to his longstanding interests in the globalisation of the services industries (including higher education, architecture and property) and their relationship to urban and regional change.

Professor Teng Chye Khoo Singapore
- Professor in Practice, National University of Singapore
- Former Executive Director, Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore
Professor Khoo is a Professor in Practice at the National University of Singapore and was most recently the Executive Director of the Centre for Liveable Cities, Ministry of National Development, Singapore. He is a leading expert in the fields of liveability, engineering and urban planning and has held numerous Chief Executive roles with Singapore’s National Water Agency and Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore. Professor Khoo’s lifelong focus has been on creating platforms for knowledge-sharing on the successful attributes of liveable cities.

Ms Terri Benson Sydney, Australia
- Managing Director, Birkenhead Group
- Former Managing Director, South East Water
Terri Benson is a highly experienced Chief Executive Officer, having held a range of both executive and non-executive director roles in the government utility and private infrastructure sectors. Terri has also held Chief Executive roles with South East Water, SEQWater and Essential Energy, and was a former Chair of the Energy and Water Ombudsman New South Wales.

Professor Ken Sloan
- Vice-Chancellor and CEO of Harper Adams University
Professor Ken Sloan is the Vice-Chancellor and CEO of Harper Adams University. He served previously as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President (Enterprise and Governance) at Monash University and was the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer at the University of Warwick. Professor Sloan has extensive international experience in business development, commercialisation, university leadership and organisational governance.

Professor Margaret Gardner AC
- President and Vice-Chancellor of Monash University
Professor Margaret Gardner AC, President and Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, is the Founder and Executive Sponsor of the Monash Commission. Professor Gardner is a social scientist with a particular interest in industrial relations and human resource management. Professor Gardner previously served as the Vice-Chancellor and President of RMIT University and has held executive positions with The University of Queensland and Griffith University. Professor Gardner is Chair of the Group of Eight Universities and sits on the boards of Infrastructure Victoria, and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

Professor Emeritus Kees Bertschi
- Founding Partner, Kees Christiaanse Architects & Planners (KCAP)
- Distinguished Affiliated Professor, TU Munich
- Professor Emeritus, ETH Zurich
Professor em. Kees Christiaanse is a world-renowned architect and urban planner, and is the Founding Partner of KCAP Architects & Planners. Kees is an expert in the development of university campuses and in the revitalisation of former industrial, railway and harbour areas. He is also a supervisor of several international urban developments, including master planning for the HafenCity in Hamburg and the new Europaplatz development next to Zurich’s main railway station.

Ms Julie Wagner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEFINITION OF INTERMEDIARY CITY

Intermediary Cities are in population size small-to-medium cities and are a development of the concepts of secondary or satellite cities. They fulfill an important connecting role within their surrounding areas. The Monash Commission defines an Intermediary City as an urban entity that has emerged in the era of global urbanisation, with a population of less than one million and belonging to a city-network within a metropolitan area or forming part of a larger agglomeration.¹

INTERMEDIARY CITIES ARE CRUCIAL FOR POLYCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT

The post-pandemic metropolis must be polycentric, with concentrated areas existing among a constellation of interconnected parts. All of those parts contribute to meeting the needs not only of citizens of that particular city, but across the entire network of cities, the country or even the international region. In this way the Central Business District (CBD) and Intermediary City cannot exist without each other and tend not to be in direct competition for investment. By holistically considering cities’ existence and relationships as part of a larger metropolitan network, it becomes possible to determine how best to arrange each part of the system and leverage their advantages in a complementary way.

Intermediary Cities provide benefits across a number of domains that make them highly liveable.² In addition to their smaller-scale distributed infrastructure, these advantages have enabled them to demonstrate stronger urban resilience throughout the pandemic when compared to CBDs.³ Intermediary Cities are more compact and dense than suburban communities and provide vital infrastructure to regional areas supported by transit models that are hard to achieve without density. Their scale provides ideal conditions for citizen engagement and enables experimentation and innovation, particularly in sustainable practices and inclusivity.

WHY NOW?

The liveability failings of the monocentric city and its CBD have crystallised over the COVID-19 pandemic. In advanced economies, the rising costs of living, environmental quality, social inequality, and traffic congestion are amongst the most prominent issues of the 21st century. Coordinated action to address these issues is a challenge that requires immediate attention. COVID-19 has accelerated behavioural shifts in people seeking better quality of life and space, facilitated through the adoption of flexible remote work and online service provision. Spurred by the transition towards a post-pandemic future, governments across the world are reviewing their economic recovery plans to decide where to direct investment. Now is an opportune time to encourage emerging behavioural shifts into long-term positive change, so that all cities are able to deliver liveable environments for citizens into the future.
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT

We can do better than returning to business as usual; now is the time to reconsider approaches to the spatial, social and governance structures that have the potential to deliver on a truly liveable metropolis by contributing to:

- Innovation led regeneration and growth
- Reducing congestion pressures while retaining agglomeration benefits
- Greater wellbeing and health outcomes
- Improving access to employment, cultural activities and transport within shorter distances to homes
- Understanding the diversity of communities and generating more nuanced public policies and governance processes that reflect the needs of the citizen
- Enhancing socioeconomic opportunities across the spectrum of age, race, gender, education and ability.

TRANSFORMATIONS FOR THE FUTURE – TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Monash Commission proposes two recommendations to elevate the critical importance of Intermediary City development in delivering a resilient, prosperous and highly liveable metropolis.

**Recommendation 1**

Pursue deliberate strategies to grow and enhance Intermediary Cities through complementary partnerships between all levels of government.

A complementary partnership approach involves the collaboration of key actors across all levels of governments in a metropolis to develop a more balanced model of investment that has the potential to deliver a better distributed range of benefits, while supporting the uniqueness of Intermediary Cities. A complementary partnership approach seeks to avoid a competition-based model, which is often observed in the development of secondary or satellite cities which compete for resources against a CBD, and often try to emulate the same characteristics as a CBD, albeit on a smaller scale.

**Recommendation 2**

Introduce a representative liveability index that reflects contemporary citizen needs.

Contemporary liveability indices are inadequately representative of the diverse and dynamic needs of its citizens, exhibiting strong bias towards a city’s urban core. Future definitions of liveability used to rank and evaluate world-class cities should be expanded to capture the following additional criteria:

- The extent to which the city contributes to and supports economic and social prosperity to citizens in the wider metropolis and in those wider locations, not just the core city itself
- The extent to which the city encourages citizens to be empowered to make choices on where and how they want to work and live
- The extent to which populations of all characteristics and backgrounds can enjoy a liveable existence wherever they live in the metropolis.

The report explores a selection of Australian and International Intermediary City case studies that are leading and emergent examples across the dimensions of social, spatial, governance and their collective impact on citizens. In addition, the Commission have made a series of suggestions on potential future directions for policymakers and researchers in developing Intermediary Cities.
EMERGING FUTURE-ORIENTED FEATURES OF AN INTERMEDIARY CITY

The Monash Commission has identified six emerging future-oriented features that innovative Intermediary Cities around the world possess and are using to pursue ambitious agendas to address long standing socio-spatial-structural issues and improve outcomes for their citizens.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Future-oriented Intermediary Cities…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. BALANCE OF AUTONOMY AND INTEGRATION WITHIN THE LARGER METROPOLITAN NETWORK</strong></td>
<td>Evolve over time, influenced and steered by planning interventions and policy strategies, where processes are open, flexible and adaptable to balance autonomy and integration within the metropolitan network.</td>
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<td><strong>2. CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING</strong></td>
<td>Focus on understanding and improving individual and community wellbeing through multifaceted forms of citizen engagement. Wellbeing outcomes are integrated into economic, educational, cultural and social opportunities.</td>
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<td><strong>3. EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN</strong></td>
<td>Maximise opportunities to address long standing inequities and unsustainable practices through deliberate approaches in long-term design, investment, policy and strategy.</td>
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<td><strong>4. EXPERIMENTATION AND INNOVATION</strong></td>
<td>Utilise their smaller size to experiment with solutions for scaling in the metropolis on multiple fronts – environmental, social and economic – to enhance the liveability for future generations.</td>
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<td><strong>5. DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE, JOBS AND INNOVATION</strong></td>
<td>Diversify the economic base by promoting a better alignment of proximate work/life opportunities and improving quality of life. Driving innovation actively promotes economic growth but also balances affordability impacts, thus protecting against market shocks.</td>
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<td><strong>6. VISION, LEADERSHIP AND SOUND GOVERNANCE</strong></td>
<td>Develop strong guiding visionary leadership and strategies to reach their long-term objectives, where top-down governance is complemented by bottom-up initiatives to co-create outcomes with significant citizen involvement.</td>
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DEFINITION

Building upon existing research, the Monash Commission defines an Intermediary City as an urban entity that has emerged in the era of global urbanisation, with a population of less than 1 million (though flexible to accommodate different geographies) and belonging to a city-network within a metropolitan area or forming part of a larger agglomeration.

An Intermediary City possesses advantages that are complementary to other cities in the networked metropolis, such as its ability to:

• Provide a more balanced urban system across different factors of livability
• Form a vital and connecting ‘activity hub’ in the metropolitan network and beyond
• Accommodate agile ‘human-scale’ development and experimentation
• Generate a high degree of sustainability and resilience within the entire urban ecosystem.

An Intermediary City may be identified by its:

• Balanced density for liveability and mixed-use development priorities
• High-degree of economic autonomy and diverse economic base
• Unique city identity
• High levels of cultural and/or social cohesion
• Ability to connect other cities within the metropolis
• Potential to be a catalyst and have a qualifying impact on its surroundings.

Many typologies of Intermediary Cities exist and, while not replicated by this study, are described through case studies explored in this report. Intermediary Cities generally fall into three broad typologies:

Clustered
Former industrial districts on the periphery of metropolitan or large urban regions, or take the form of new towns or ‘spill-over’ growth centres, such as Coventry in the UK.

Corridor
Connected cities along major transportation corridors, sometimes expanding across borders and countries, such as the cities that connect Los Angeles to San Francisco in the USA.

Regional
Regional urban centres of administration, manufacturing, agriculture, trade or social and cultural services, such as Bendigo, Victoria, in Australia.

Figure 1: Typology Intermediary City relationship to the metropolitan region.
Any examination of cities is inevitably complex. In 2022, there has been a sharpened global focus on small-to-medium sized cities as an avenue for sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, given the important roles that they played during restrictions and lockdowns. This inquiry focuses on Intermediary Cities, which are in population size small-to-medium cities and are a development of the concepts of secondary or satellite cities, elevating the vital connecting role they play within their surrounding areas. Language commonly used for satellite, secondary or edge cities is insufficient to effectively identify, fund and better network them into the metropolitan fabric.

If networked and harnessed correctly, Intermediary Cities can make a significant contribution towards future societal development. By population, Intermediary Cities are currently home to an estimated 20% of the global population and one third of the global urban population and as such, they have sufficient potential to deliver impact at scale.

The definition and imperatives of Intermediary Cities were explored by examination through the lens of three distinct yet inextricably linked topics: the spatial environmental, societal and behavioural impact and role of structural governance. Through this, the Commission has also identified current Intermediary Cities that are delivering positive outcomes for their citizens and how these benefits might be expanded. Through the discussion, understanding is drawn out to demonstrate how Intermediary Cities can complement and support the role of CBDs in delivering more equitable outcomes and enhanced liveability for citizens across the entire metropolis.

Ultimately, the report provides practical observations and suggestions to governments, investors and policy-makers globally on how to develop new, or enhance existing Intermediary Cities. In addition, the Commission argues that future definitions and rankings of liveability in world class cities must incorporate the connections to their Intermediary Cities and the benefits that these citizens experience.

The Monash Commission explored topics through a citizen led point of view. Three themes emerged as critical and are inextricably linked throughout this report.

The physical environment and the systems in place that support the movement and interactions of people and communities within and beyond Intermediary Cities.

The systems in place that provide leadership, community-support and strategic oversight regarding innovation in urban contexts.

The effect on people who live, work and interact in Intermediary City urban conditions.
Intermediary City development can unlock new potential in largely monocentric metropolitan areas. For large urban areas around the world, monocentric cities continue to be seen as the focus and the solution for liveability. The accepted paradigm of the monocentric CBD promotes the advantages of “economies of scale, access to skills, services, interconnectivity”. 

CBDs and primary cities such as Melbourne, New York and Vancouver could be said to have attracted the bulk of developmental focus. With major cities like these growing at a rapid pace, this was deemed to be where the highest return on investment of resources and overall impact could be achieved. Paradoxically, these cities are also synonymous with the stark disadvantages of this model – traffic congestion, housing affordability, environmental quality and social inequality are amongst the most prominent issues of the 21st century. Coordinated action to address these issues is an ongoing challenge.

Alongside this model, there has been a gradual developmental shift towards encouraging polycentric cities, or the existence of multiple centres in one geographic area, as evidenced across many regions in Europe and Asia. Polycentric networks aim to balance territorial development to ensure economic and social cohesion through the “development of mostly peripheral and more disadvantaged regions characterised by poor accessibility and low population densities”. Intermediary Cities are critical to the development of polycentrism to create connection between large CBDs, to outlying suburbs, and regional and rural communities.

Before the pandemic, countries like Australia and Canada were already experiencing net internal migration of people into outlying cities and regional areas as a result of the rising costs of living and real estate in desirable areas close to the CBD. This has accelerated throughout COVID-19 for many reasons, including behavioural shifts such as the adoption of remote working and people seeking better quality of life and space. This challenges assumptions about what was thought to be an irreversible trend of urban centralisation.
Spurred on by the transition towards a post-pandemic future, governments across the world are reviewing their economic recovery plans to decide where to direct investment. However, investment for economic recovery and growth, in and of itself, can and often inadvertently reinforces pervasive social inequalities that can lead to increased costs, divisive social ills and negative impacts on liveability and wellbeing at an individual and collective level.

Intermediary Cities provide benefits across a number of domains that make them highly liveable, which in addition to their smaller-scale distributed infrastructure, has enabled them to demonstrate stronger urban resilience throughout the pandemic when compared to CBDs. Even so, Intermediary Cities are more compact and dense than typical suburban communities and provide vital infrastructure to regional areas supported by transit models that are hard to achieve without density. Their scale provides ideal conditions for citizen engagement and enables experimentation and innovation, particularly in sustainable practices and inclusivity. All these attributes support a wider perspective on urban agglomeration in recovery from the pandemic.

The latent potential of Intermediary Cities is not a novel discovery, but has only recently been put under the spotlight for serious examination. The G20 describes Intermediary Cities as “offering a significant, untapped potential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”. The OECD predicts the rise of the Intermediate City as one of four possible future settlement patterns in the post-COVID world from a future of work perspective. Further, imperatives discussed by the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 6th Assessment report and outcomes at the COP 26 in Glasgow indicate that now is the best time to initiate discussion, planning and taking steps to develop Intermediary Cities.

Intermediary Cities hold many forms, typologies and functions – the current accepted definition is necessarily flexible to account for the vast differences across geographies, cultures and economies. While this Commission has adopted a position on a ‘scale’ or size of Intermediary City, this was done to focus the inquiry rather than to limit debate. Intermediary Cities offer possibilities in terms of investment because they can facilitate a multitude of ambitions and specialisations, capable of incorporating a suite of distinct investment strategies such as the concept of smart cities, eco cities, 20-minute cities and innovation districts.

The CBD and associated core cities will continue to be the foundational pillars of urban living for citizens, that is undisputed. The rate and scale of urban infrastructure investment necessitates this being so. International liveability league tables have contributed to this, leading to competition for performance across a number of defined measures, such as the Global Liveability Index. However, cities topping the liveability rankings are still experiencing significant challenges not captured in current indices such as racial discrimination, inequality, family violence, access to services, technology and green space, unsustainable urban climate and development, and food insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these urban vulnerabilities in many cities including those ranked as the world’s ‘most liveable’, leading citizens to question “liveable for whom?”

In Australia, we are seeing evidence that the policy environment and developmental focus has begun to diffuse away from the CBD in isolation. Infrastructure Australia, an independent advisory body, calls for the country to “attract growth to smaller cities and regional centres while maintaining quality of life by enhancing local identity”. Meanwhile, the Benchmarking Melbourne report developed by the Committee for Melbourne identifies the tale of two cities between Melbourne CBD and Greater Melbourne whereby the “distributed growth model does not reproduce enough of Melbourne’s experience and liveability advantage, and impedes access to urban opportunity for too many”. This suggests that future thinking and agendas could be directed to urban areas further from the CBD, but as yet, the way forward on how to get there is less understood.

The pandemic has highlighted many areas of economic and social life that were not being adequately served or where resilience to absorb shocks was insufficient. Have CBDs failed? Undoubtedly not. What the pandemic has shown is that the concentration of infrastructure and systems do not necessarily translate into positive outcomes for all citizens. It raises the question: what can be done differently?
EMERGING FUTURE-ORIENTED FEATURES OF INTERMEDIARY CITIES

The Monash Commission has identified six emerging future-oriented features that innovative Intermediary Cities around the world arguably possess and are using to pursue ambitious agendas to address long standing socio-spatial-structural issues and improve outcomes for their citizens.

1. BALANCE OF AUTONOMY AND INTEGRATION WITHIN THE LARGER METROPOLITAN NETWORK
   Evolve over time, influenced and steered by planning interventions and policy strategies, where processes are open, flexible and adaptable to balance autonomy and integration within the metropolitan network.

2. CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
   Focus on understanding and improving individual and community wellbeing through multifaceted forms of citizen engagement. Wellbeing outcomes are integrated into economic, educational, cultural and social opportunities.

3. EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
   Maximise opportunities to address long standing inequities and unsustainable practices through deliberate approaches in long-term design, investment, policy and strategy.

4. EXPERIMENTATION AND INNOVATION
   Utilise their smaller size to experiment with solutions for scaling in the metropolis on multiple fronts – environmental, social and economic – to enhance the liveability for future generations.

5. DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE, JOBS AND INNOVATION
   Diversify the economic base by promoting a better alignment of proximate work/life opportunities and improving quality of life. Driving innovation actively promotes economic growth but also balances affordability impacts, thus protecting against market shocks.

6. VISION, LEADERSHIP AND SOUND GOVERNANCE
   Develop strong guiding visionary leadership and strategies to reach their long-term objectives, where top-down governance is complemented by bottom-up initiatives to co-create outcomes with significant citizen involvement.

The selection of Intermediary Cities showcased in this report are leading and emergent examples across the dimensions of social, spatial, governance, and their collective impact on citizens. Case studies cover different geographical, national, social and spatial contexts. The aim is not to provide a ‘formula’ that can be repeated in any context but to indicate what factors have influenced decision-makers in these unique contexts, so that relevant insights can be drawn and considered elsewhere.

By addressing some or all of these features in combination, new and existing Intermediary Cities have the opportunity to contribute significantly to improving the liveability of communities within and beyond their boundaries. Intermediary Cities can act as connectors and transmitters to improve quality of life across the metropolis, alongside and in support of the CBD. The Monash Commission urges governments, investors, employers and anchor institutions to consider aligning investment into these areas to support inclusive and sustainable growth that distributes liveability, resilience and inclusion to all geographic areas in the metropolis.
BALANCE OF AUTONOMY AND INTEGRATION WITHIN THE LARGER METROPOLITAN NETWORK
Intermediary Cities evolve over time, influenced and steered by planning interventions and policy strategies. Processes are open, flexible and adaptable to balance economic autonomy alongside being vitally integrated within the metropolitan network. Adaptive reuse of brownfield sites for mixed use development and inner densification are prioritised against greenfield development. Large-scale development should be subject to open planning processes and guided by independent development agencies in public-private partnerships.

**POLYCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Intermediary City and the CBD cannot exist successfully without each other. The metropolis should be considered as polycentric, with concentrated areas existing among a constellation of interconnected parts. All of those parts contribute towards meeting the needs of not only the citizens within that particular city, but across the entire network of cities, the country or even the international region. By holistically considering cities’ existence and relationships as part of a larger metropolitan network, it becomes possible to determine how best to arrange each part of the system and leverage their advantages in a complementary way.

Fundamentally, cities are essentially concentrations of people and infrastructure designed to exploit economies of scale. However, it is important to recognise the principle of diminishing returns and the negative impacts of unbalanced and excessive urban centralisation. The Randstad region in the Netherlands demonstrates that by leveraging unique competitive advantages, Intermediary Cities can enable the entire ecosystem to achieve greater outcomes.
CASE STUDY | THE RANDSTAD, NETHERLANDS

The ‘Compact City’ Policy

Figure 3: The Randstad, Netherlands.

Impetus for Change

During the 1960s-70s strong population and economic growth in the Randstad led the Dutch government to develop the concept of "bundled concentration", intended to avoid over-concentration and excessive sprawl.

Intervention

The four large cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) and ten Intermediary Cities (including Delft, Leiden, Haarlem, Hilversum) were nominated to be "Growth-Nodes" to accommodate the development pressure. Several new towns like Almere – a rapidly-growing planned town with extensive green space – was created to counter urban sprawl in Amsterdam; and Zoetermeer – which had the same function as a spill-over town for The Hague – were also developed.

An urban planning policy was subsequently introduced in the 1970s-80s that focussed on creating the conditions for urban renewal and economic growth, ultimately evolving into the ‘compact city’ policy that has been adopted across the Netherlands and also adapted by cities such as Singapore. National policy on urban and regional development focused intentionally on concentrating functions evenly across the metropolis. The decentralisation-focussed urban planning policy was designed to strengthen the economy by stimulating ‘agglomeration economies’ through the clustering of both firms and people, in a balanced way.

Enablers

Devolved planning powers empowered strategic infrastructure decisions to regional bodies, while directing concentration of development along transport corridors. The Randstad Vision 2040 plan specified the need to improve internal mobility to sustain the networked nature of its cities and their compact character.

In 2020, the Dutch government enacted the National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment, which presents a vision on the future development of the living environment in the Netherlands by 2050. The national plan outlines the dilemmas facing the Netherlands from an environmental, economic, political and societal perspective. The central focus of the plan is on the sustainable renewal of the Netherlands, signifying the long-term actions and cooperation needed to achieve climate change adaptation and energy transition as the core focus. The plan illustrates how the COVID-19 pandemic has made communities vulnerable and has demanded more of governments than ever before, but also articulates that balance must be struck between immediate recovery and aligning actions to the long-term environmental goals. In relation to the Randstad 2040 Vision, the national plan aligns its focus to support the natural and economic strengths of the region, and notes its intent to protect the landscape qualities and existing identities of cities in the Green Heart in a sustainable manner. It also recognises opportunities for developments, based on inter-administrative cooperation with the provinces, municipalities and water authorities.

Outcome

The Randstad region is explicitly referred to in the national planning memorandum as the political, administrative, social, economic and cultural heart of the country. Despite covering approximately 20% of the surface area of the country, it contains over 40% of the national population, and about half of the national income is earned in the region. It boasts a highly educated population, low unemployment rates and is Europe's fifth-largest region by economy.
ADAPTIVE AND FLEXIBLE PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

While Amsterdam stands out as the Netherlands’ largest city, this is not at the cost of competitiveness of other urban centres within the Randstad region. A high-speed rail network connects each city and enables them to retain their identities and attractiveness, while contributing to an effective, complementary network of places. The Randstad case study exemplifies the need for long-term planning to enable the entire region to evolve in concert, through a flexible system of strategy, development and governance that recognises the nuances to be tackled at different levels. Recently there has been a shift, particularly in Europe, from traditional planning towards rather more strategic master plans that serve as flexible frameworks. ‘Open’ plans can be applied to various levels – from regional ‘structure visions’ to local master plans for specific city districts. Adaptive frameworks rather than fixed designs allow for adequate versatility in reacting to uncertainty and changing circumstances over the long term, without compromising visionary direction. In this way, the implementation design and governance process is just as important as the spatial design, and also allows multiple plans to interconnect. A delicate balance is critical to ensure that neither control nor inaction are dominant forces shaping development. Case studies show that successful projects are often the outcome of years of iteration, revision and incremental action.

In Australia, the non-profit organisation Committee for Melbourne has called for a ‘One Melbourne’ paradigm to guide the future development in the city. As part of this, the Committee recommended the introduction of a metropolitan-wide management mechanism such as a Greater Melbourne Commission that is empowered to act in the interests of Greater Melbourne and thus breaking down political divisions across the three tiers of government. Further, the Committee recognised the need for the ‘Creation of a Meaningful Polycentric City’, having planning mechanisms for ensuring the prosperity of satellite centres and accommodating future growth in the city.

Opportunity for the adaptive and temporary use of space

Urban planning and renewal projects inevitably take time, meaning available land is often left unused for long periods, which is not ideal for safety, social inclusion or participation. Intermediary Cities should consider experimentation with unused spaces as they develop. Intelligent utilisation of limited space to address urban sprawl and its associated detriments is a core priority as cities continue to grow. Many cities have sought to make efficient and innovative use of limited space during COVID-19 such as transforming vacant buildings, car parks and plots into public spaces, for example pedestrian walkways, dining areas, playgrounds and museums. The T-Factor project is currently working with six global city pilots to transform and regenerate temporary urban spaces so that they become vital parts of flexible, sustainable, inclusive thriving cities. These pilots become hubs for co-creative experimentation, unlocking a multitude of innovative cultural, social and entrepreneurial activities that contribute to forging a shared public value of an area under regeneration and act as prototypes for future neighbourhoods and areas. Examples include temporary gardens for community use, temporary ‘start-up’ spaces (offices, conference rooms etc), and residences for the vulnerable (recent refugees and homeless).
Urban design cannot be prescriptive and rigid. This principle demonstrates the need for cooperation and continuous learning at multiple levels of government to understand the direction cities are heading towards and what aspirations might be achieved. From mega region development through to hyperlocal temporary use of space, these initiatives should work together cohesively to become levers for more flexible and resilient regeneration processes of adaptation. More than that, they can ignite preferred futures, transforming the trajectory of masterplans toward higher ambitions of quality of life and prosperity for all.

POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as access to land, improved internal mobility, alignment across tiers of government and devolved planning powers, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities within a broader urban network. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

Intermediary Cities

• Develop a robust understanding of its specific and unique advantages including how it can contribute to the wider metropolis
• Consider and pursue temporary and meanwhile uses of space in underutilised or vacant plots of land, while recognising that urban development is a long-term process.

CBD Cities

• Development strategies must consider the impact of Intermediary Cities to complement strengths of the CBD rather than try to compete for the same resources and economic activity.

Metropolis

• Develop a strategic long-term metropolis level planning process that considers each city within the entire network and how to utilise their competitive advantages in order to achieve a collective vision. Note that long-term plans (master plans and strategies) require flexibility in their approach.

Further Research

• Localised best practice for creating interconnected polycentric cities with mixed-use development and optimal configuration that maximises competitive strengths of each city in the metropolis in a synergistic manner
• Best practice long-range city planning that embeds sufficient flexibility to adapt to change (governments, environment and technology).

Adaptive frameworks rather than fixed designs allow for adequate versatility in reacting to uncertainty and changing circumstances over the long term, without compromising visionary direction.
CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Intermediary Cities are focused on understanding and improving individual and community wellbeing through multifaceted forms of citizen engagement. Intermediary Cities are well positioned to integrate the crucial aspects of wellbeing including economic, educational, cultural and social opportunities because of their stronger sense of local identity, as well as deeper connections to citizens and anchor institutions. At the metropolis level, Intermediary Cities can contribute to spreading liveability beyond the CBD and arguably increasing resilience of the overall community.

CITIZENS AT THE HEART OF GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES

The life of a city should be bound by the culture, aspirations and needs of its inhabitants. For citizens, wellbeing outcomes are of equivalent importance to quality, value for money and economic impact. Decision-makers worldwide are increasingly cognisant of the importance of embedding frameworks that measure wellbeing, health and happiness into their governance strategies. Intermediary Cities are well placed to engage with citizens due to their compact size and stronger links with community. While there are many novel forms of citizen engagement, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government’s Wellbeing Framework is a systematic example on the use of data to understand both collective and individual wellbeing; drive policy, investment and infrastructure decisions based on these needs; and measure the impact of the integration of these variables over time. It provides information on geographic areas falling behind, and shows how active intervention can address developing inequities. Most importantly, it is embedded within government decision-making and budget processes.
**CASE STUDY | CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA**

### Wellbeing Framework

**Impetus for change**

In Australia, the capital city of Canberra brings the benefits of serving as an Intermediary City to the Sydney metropolitan network and for its politically centred economy as the seat of the Australian Government. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government, in recognising that economic growth alone does not account for a community’s success or progress over time, sought to develop a Wellbeing Framework that measures the range of factors that contribute to quality of life. The Framework is intended to enable better sharing of growth in a more inclusive way, ensuring that all in the community feel the benefits of improved wellbeing through Government prioritisation in policy, programs and investment.51

**Enablers and intervention**

The Wellbeing Framework was developed through an extensive process of community consultation and state-wide surveys, covering 12 domains of wellbeing.52 Tracking through open-source data, indicator reports and outcome evaluations, the Government has committed to embedding the Framework into government budget processes and service delivery. This will ensure greater consideration of the linkages between government decisions and the benefits and trade-offs on individual and collective wellbeing and quality of life.53

**Outcome**

In December 2020, the first indicator report was published, demonstrating collective community wellbeing levels as well as distinct differences of wellbeing across several individual characteristics (such as age, gender, race and socioeconomic status) and across geographic neighbourhoods. Data showed that bushfires, hailstorms and COVID-19 are affecting collective wellbeing.56 Through new budgetary assessment processes, the ACT delivered its inaugural wellbeing budget in 2021-2022, which has explicitly identified infrastructure investment delineated by the 12 domains of wellbeing.57

**What is emerging because of COVID-19**

While the Framework was conceived before COVID-19, a further report was commissioned to explore overall vulnerability and resilience in the ACT. The report notes that the study of resilience and vulnerability is an emerging area of research. Initial findings mapped emerging, growing and continuing COVID-19 vulnerability among socio-demographic groups in the community, providing the government with further information on how to address emerging inequities.59
INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Governments aiming to improve policy outcomes are well positioned to align the intersectional and complex needs of citizens to the decision-making process. Citizen participation or ‘bottom-up’ governance provides important flows of information that enable effective decision-making that is more responsive and reflective of citizen needs. Such approaches don’t dismiss the fact that developments and investment opportunities must be affordable and achieve good return on investment. Instead, economic and social drivers are not seen as mutually exclusive, and emerging evidence is pointing to a correlation between opportunities for wellbeing and increased economic growth.

When comparing this framework to current liveability league tables, it becomes clear how concern about maintaining status in such rankings can detract from investments that have tangible effects on the lives of citizens outside of the city centre. Global liveability rankings are aggregated to the CBD level, leaving little opportunity to identify any liveability changes in areas outside of the extended metropolitan area. Despite this, governments in the CBD, the metropolis and even at the national level fiercely defend these rankings and fear losing the marketable status of being designated as ‘highly liveable’. In reality, these types of indices have arguably contributed to increased funding directed to the centre, at the expense of other areas.

The ACT Wellbeing Framework demonstrates Intermediary Cities’ unique capabilities to connect urban growth and renewal not only to economic outcomes, but also educational, cultural and social opportunities. Intermediary Cities are known for their strong offer of community assets. Anchor institutions are ideally aligned to act as placemaking facilitators to support a community cohesion and societal integration at a local level, while spearheading efforts to advance inclusive growth and equity.

Anchor institutions such as universities, hospitals and other large non-profit organisations are often grounded in, and are an enduring element of their local communities; withstanding political changes, economic and health disruptions. Universities in Intermediary Cities play a critical socio-cultural role as place-based anchors and economic and innovation drivers. As is evident across the world, universities often become synonymous with places, with vivid examples such as Stanford, Cleveland, Berkeley, Madison, as well as Cambridge in both the UK and the US. The following examples illustrate the power of anchor institutions in Intermediary Cities that contribute to community wellbeing.
Community wellbeing and opportunities for anchor institutions

Bradford, UK – Winners of the 2023 UK City of Culture Competition.
Credit: Karol Wyszyński

The pandemic is accelerating institutional desire to be further attuned to the needs of citizens in their surrounding communities

**Professor Ken Sloan**
Vice-Chancellor and CEO, Harper Adams University and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President Enterprise and Governance at Monash University

**Arts, culture and the creative economy**

Culture and wellbeing are entwined and Intermediary Cities can play a significant role in the pandemic recovery. Prior to COVID-19, the creative economy was booming, with predictions for 2030 having the sector account for 10% of global GDP. The pandemic has decimated many creative industries, with predictions of long-term damage without targeted intervention, as those in the sector leave to find work elsewhere.66

While cultural economies are generally more difficult to establish outside of CBDs, enabling factors exist in Intermediary Cities making them prime candidates for cultural investment and regeneration.67 Large-scale programs such the UK City of Culture Competition68 invest in Intermediary Cities to combine powerful cultural and community regeneration alongside infrastructure investment.69 In 2021, the winning bid by Coventry was a collaborative effort between Coventry University, University of Warwick, Coventry City Council and the Coventry City of Culture Trust.70

Australian anchor institutions are also working alongside urban transformation in a considered approach. The Western Sydney University has made a commitment to the geographic region through its Decadal Strategies, which align with the Western Sydney Parkland Authority’s transformation of Western Sydney.71 In particular, the Arts and Culture Decadal Strategy makes a commitment to the cultural economy of the region through placemaking, education, research, programs, entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities.72

**Collaborative impact**

Universities by their very nature are connected to industry and government through research and development, however they also play a role in connecting students to citizens. In Singapore, the Liveability Framework, developed by the Centre for Liveable Cities, piloted a new approach to revitalise the mature public housing estate of Tampines and improve the integration of policy and programs to improve liveability for residents. The project brought students and the community together in the development of guidelines for local projects for a more cohesive town,73 leading to outcomes such as pedestrian prioritisation, reduced surface parking, traffic calming and provision of inclusive, sustainable open spaces.74

**Community hubs during crises**

During COVID-19 – alongside developing treatments, vaccines, protective equipment and undertaking critical research and teaching – universities utilised infrastructure and resources to benefit their local communities. Across the world, universities engaged in a variety of community engagement and support activities, including: vaccinations and testing, food relief, local business grants and procurement, as well as providing housing to frontline workers.75 Anchor institutions are able to have great impact through collaborative efforts with government, industry and local community groups, as well as harnessing available infrastructure and resources.

Post-pandemic opportunities for anchor institutions include:

- The development of community and cultural strategies
- Active partnership with government and partners on cultural regeneration efforts, crisis management and urban design
- Aligning institutional developmental plans with governmental strategies as well as independent planning agencies
- Convening and facilitating networking and collaborative opportunities between government, industry and the community
- Providing expertise, resources and space for experimentation and pilots that can be translated into use for the wider metropolis.
This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as relevant research, open conversations, effective utilisation of anchor institutions and access and utilisation of data, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities through deeper engagement with citizens and understanding of community wellbeing and resilience. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

**Intermediary Cities**
- Demonstrate detailed understanding and engagement with the community, beyond traditional consultation mechanisms to form a view on whole-of-population citizen wellbeing
- Focus on place-based strategies that harness the unique local identity and Indigenous cultures alongside arts, culture and innovation to create vibrant communities, and support wellbeing from ground-up initiatives
- Work with anchor institutions to integrate innovation, arts and culture, as well as structural plans to ensure the surrounding community can benefit from the infrastructure around them.

**CBD Cities**
- Complementary budget actions with Intermediary Cities to balance investment for economic growth and improving wellbeing.

**Metropolis**
- Embedding and incorporating wellbeing mechanisms that keenly consider the wellbeing impact across the entire population, to ensure that nonpartisan decision-making on policy is working towards a common purpose.

**Liveability Index**
- Liveability indices to be aggregated beyond the CBD to the wider metropolis to understand liveability on a larger scale.

**Further Research**
- Wellbeing and resilience of the metropolis are invariably linked to liveability. Further studies are required to understand how wellbeing initiatives can affect resilience and liveability.

Governments aiming to improve policy outcomes are well positioned to align the intersectional and complex needs of citizens to the decision-making process.
Intermediary Cities are maximising opportunities to address long-standing inequities and unsustainable practices evident in the large metropolitan CBDs, through deliberate approaches in long-term design, investment, policy and strategy.

INCORPORATING EQUITY INTO SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

The Liveable and Sustainable Cities Framework developed by the Singapore Government’s Centre for Liveable Cities outlines three liveability goals (quality of life, competitive economy and sustainable environment) that are supported by integrated master planning and development, alongside dynamic urban governance. Efforts by cities to achieve environmental sustainability are exemplified worldwide through initiatives such as the C40 Cities goal to decarbonise cities; efforts in resource optimisation to reduce, reuse and recycle as circular economies; and projects creating a nexus between urbanisation and natural capital in policies such as City in Nature, ABC Waters, Water Sensitive Cities and Sponge Cities. Intermediary Cities are now looking to combine equity and sustainability approaches in the design phase.

The size of Intermediary Cities presents distinct advantages for addressing structural inequity and advancing sustainability across the metropolis through experimentation and later application across investments, initiatives and infrastructure planning throughout the metropolis. Inequity may be seen in many forms and can be unique to the community, geography and historical context, including those specific to Indigenous communities.

Aspern, the largest greenfield development in Vienna, provides an example of how Intermediary Cities are able to experiment, adapt and translate social interventions and sustainable practice into the broader metropolis. Aspern is working to embed diversity into community life, ensuring all genders are equitably accounted for within policy, legislation and resource allocation. The Aspern case study aims to demonstrate how structural community changes can occur through deliberate community engagement, alongside sustainable design and policy. Distributed social infrastructure helps communities to thrive, without imposing structural disadvantage on any pockets of the community. In this way, equity, sustainability and social infrastructure are tied heavily together to improve the liveability of citizens.

Aspern Seestadt, Vienna, one of Europe’s largest urban development projects built on a foundation of innovative concepts that combines high quality of life with economic drive.
LAND USE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Land use and configuration of space shapes social cohesion, contributing to safety and providing opportunities for more diverse social and economic activities. Density of social infrastructure including schools, hospitals, libraries and community centres is positively associated with local civic action and social cohesion. Physical wedges such as roads, rivers or barriers, and social holes such as unused spaces, earmarked government land, or underdeveloped areas can cause community fragmentation and reduce opportunities for social inclusion and ‘chance encounters’. As such, liveability indices which aim to be accurately representative of a populace should include metrics such as local proximity and access to amenities, employment opportunities and social infrastructure. These metrics should be captured across the metropolis, as opposed to just the CBD, where such measures are likely to skew higher due to urban centralisation.

ACCESS TO NATURE IS AN EQUITY ISSUE

Access to green and blue spaces brings a multitude of benefits for equity, sustainability, mental health and overall health of the population. As such, liveability indices which aim to be accurately representative of a populace should include metrics such as local proximity and access to amenities, employment opportunities and social infrastructure. These metrics should be captured across the metropolis, as opposed to just the CBD, where such measures are likely to skew higher due to urban centralisation.
For many, the COVID-19 pandemic stay at home orders necessitated residents to seek out such spaces to recreate, exercise and improve mental health. However, multiple studies on blue and green space before and after the pandemic suggest that there is inequitable access to these spaces, with underserved communities globally.

88 Access to open public space is a critical element in consideration of liveability, which is notably absent in high profile liveability league tables.

Understanding equity and sustainability from a user’s perspective is critical. In 2020, during Victoria’s pandemic lockdown, researchers CrowdSpot and Monash University’s XYX Lab partnered with 23 local and state governments to understand how women, girls and gender-diverse people perceive safety when exercising and recreating for health and wellbeing in Victoria’s open spaces through interactive community crowd-mapping participation. The resulting YourGround Victoria Report showed that green spaces are highly valued across localities and many strategies exist to promote safe access to space. The report identifies that people are differentiated by many factors: geographic location, age, socioeconomic resources, ethnicity, sexuality and others. Consequently, the report notes that through data collection and community engagement, cities can develop strategies and pursue multiple initiatives that support different segments of the population to access nature.

89 Sustainability and enabling new technology

Intermediary Cities, particularly the new and the planned, have a great opportunity to accommodate new technology for environmental sustainability because of their localised scale, consciously and long-term planned infrastructure and higher contemporary awareness of critical issues facing communities. The new City of Bradfield in Western Sydney will have Australia’s most comprehensive hydrogen facility, with green hydrogen being blended into the NSW gas network with the ability to increase the amount of renewable generated blended gas into the network. This shift is expected to have an overall effect on the state of Sydney through technology enabled areas transferring knowledge, skills, products and jobs to areas within the broader metropolis.

The size of Intermediary Cities presents distinct advantages for addressing structural inequity and advancing sustainability across the metropolis

POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as access to land, funding, research, citizen engagement and governance, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities to be at the forefront of embedding sustainable and equitable practices. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

Intermediary Cities

• Equitable and environmentally sustainable urban design is critical in regeneration or greenfield developments and is based upon a variety of data indicators and improved understanding of citizens’ needs
• Distribution of social infrastructure is considered in parallel to the development of other infrastructure while also minimising division of major roads, transport corridors, as well as empty spaces to improve social cohesion for citizens and improve liveability.

CBD Cities

• Understand where inequities and sustainability issues are occurring and support Intermediary Cities to experiment solutions. Solutions should be assessed for suitable application in CBDs and other areas in the metropolis.

Metropolis

• Investment is aligned against the ability of local cities to actively address social and structural inequalities and unsustainable practices prevalent in communities, and demonstrate willingness to experiment and adopt/adapt solutions to the metropolis.

Liveability Indices

• Liveability indices reflect access to blue and green spaces, and proximity to social infrastructure, such as educational institutions and childcare, health facilities, and community centres.

Further Research

• Exploration of environmental sustainability combined with equity design that enhances liveability for a wider range of communities
• Vital discussions are required to make systemic connections between Indigenous ways of being included into urban design, policy, strategy, operations, culture and art. Intermediary Cities are primed to revive the cultural economy alongside regeneration to achieve greater social cohesion in traditionally underserved areas.
Autonomous buses in Sweden form a part of the country’s drive to hold a leading position for integrated, shared and electric self-driving vehicles.
Intermediary Cities are utilising their smaller size to experiment with solutions for scaling in the metropolis on multiple fronts – environmental, social and economic – to enhance the liveability for future generations.

EXPERIMENTATION SUPPORTING THE METROPOLIS

Intermediary Cities are well positioned and ideally sized to pursue experimentation leading to innovation that can be adopted by other areas in the metropolis. Much of the current large-scale focus is on developing ‘smart cities’. However, emergent experimentation is occurring within cities globally through urban living labs that focus on a wide range of topics such as housing, food systems, mobility and energy. Intermediary Cities can utilise their human scale, along with their own economic strengths, identity, culture and space to experiment while strategically utilising partnerships with anchor institutions, industries, communities and tiers of government.

Intermediary Cities are demonstrating leadership in sustainable mobility, recognising that their compact scale presents opportunities for mobility experimentation, which can later be scaled in the metropolis. The urban transport sector’s ecological footprint is enormous and continuing to rise. Road transport alone comprises almost half (48.6%) of the total oil consumption within the OECD and is attributable to 11.9% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions. As we continue to experience first-hand the impact of climate change, now is the time to act in order to realise a sustainable mobility future.

Contemporary sustainable mobility solutions often focus on the transition to alternative modes of transport such as public transit and active transport (e.g. scooters, bicycles and walking). However, sustainable mobility is not a purely technological or solutions-based paradigm – it also encompasses the themes of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Social sustainability wherein the shared benefits of mobility are equitable, affordable and fairly distributed and economic sustainability where resources are effectively and efficiently utilised to maximise benefits and provide value for investment in improving citizen outcomes (e.g. jobs, health and economy).

INTERMEDIARY CITIES LEADING IN THE TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

It could be argued that the fundamental goal of a mobility system is not to move people around but rather, to facilitate access to goods, services, jobs and social networks. This is why cities which incorporate mixed-use development, where citizens are close to amenities and jobs, are desirable, as this reduces the inherent need for travel. Much of a city’s mobility infrastructure could be considered public space, which has the potential to become an important community and social assets that contributes to wellbeing and liveability if utilised intelligently. This is why it is necessary to consider sustainable mobility in a multi-dimensional way; where integrated, cross-sectoral approaches are required to achieve the best outcomes for all citizens, not just the commuter.

Experts have argued for prioritising transition to sustainable modes such as cycling and public transport rather than returning to the pre-pandemic status quo of private vehicle dominance. This is feasible in geographies such as Europe, where favourable conditions exist to accommodate such a shift, however in many other places such as Australia or North America, it is far more challenging to foster behaviour change as many still perceive cars as the only option that meets their needs. Ultimately, every city faces its own unique challenges and conditions in its evolution towards the future of mobility and therefore flexibility is inevitably required.

Forcing the transition through economic disincentives such as road-use taxes may be effective, however could lead to a further widening of social inequities for those without alternatives, such as vulnerable populations who are experiencing transport poverty and disadvantage. Instead, if sustainable alternatives are made more attractive than the car, one can reasonably foresee an organic transition towards these modes of transport. Infrastructure is core to achieving this, and as such, the transition will face more hurdles in areas with heavily entrenched private automobile biases.

Intermediary Cities acknowledge that a human-scale form factor is able to better deliver innovations in sustainable mobility. Their smaller size characteristically means they carry less administrative and political encumbrance and are ideal sandbox environments for mobility innovation that can be later scaled to the wider metropolis. They often have well-connected social communities and their compact form is ideal for active modes of transport. Through their development, many have deliberately planned for active transportation as a viable means of getting around.
Intermediary Cities such as Lund in Sweden acknowledge that the shift to sustainable mobility, as a heavily infrastructure-driven endeavour, is an inevitably slow and gradual transition. Accordingly, the city has developed robust long-range plans that involve multiple stakeholders (citizens, industry, government) cooperating together in a public-private partnership to build a collective, enduring vision for the future of urban mobility. These plans, embedded within government policy and decision-making mechanisms act as a city’s ‘true north’, allowing it to continually develop in a way that is ever-striving towards achieving their mobility goals over an extended period of time.

**CASE STUDY | LUND, SWEDEN**

**Experimental mobility and adaptation**

**Impetus for change**

Lund is a medieval university town and Intermediary City located in the Øresund region in Scandanavia. In the 1990s, debate on climate change was already underway in Lund, providing impetus to the creation of an enduring sustainable mobility plan. This has matured over the last two decades to achieve sustainable mobility from both a social and economic perspective.

**Enablers and intervention**

Today, *LundaMaTs* is an internationally-recognised transportation plan. Over three iterations, the plan has evolved from an environmentally adapted transportation plan to also encompass economic and social considerations, bringing emphasis to urban planning, security, traffic safety, health and placemaking transport. In 2013, *LundaMaTs III* took into account the growth of Lund and the need for more efficient land and transport use to make it sustainable by 2030.

**What is emerging because of COVID-19**

Lund has announced its intent to join the European Commission’s mission for climate-neutral and smart cities, aiming to be one out of a targeted 100 such cities by 2030 and establishing itself as a role model regarding climate action and innovation. The mission is based on a multi-sectoral approach and will involve local governments, individuals, corporations, and investors. It will contribute to the European Green Deal target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 and, in more practical terms, to offer cleaner air, safer transport and less congestion and noise to their citizens.

55%

Lund will contribute to the European Green Deal target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030.
Advances in technology have presented an opportunity to solve the many issues of the 21st century, but technology by itself cannot be the answer; the solution must be built from and around the needs of citizens.

**LONG-TERM VISIONARY PLANNING THAT FACILITATES INNOVATION**

It is critical that governments and planners reimagine long-term strategies to form a coherent vision around the highest potential for post-pandemic liveability. Experimentation must start now so that future generations and successors can reap the benefits of innovation in fields such as energy or mobility, which are particularly reliant on prerequisite infrastructure.

On the mobility front, policies and plans need to reflect the fact that modern city dwellers’ travel requirements are diverse, dynamic and demand flexibility, where it is clear that no single transport mode can cater for them. As such, future transportation systems need to be designed around the specific mobility needs of a diverse range of citizens, all while contributing towards a more sustainable future. Likewise, the transition towards renewable energy is a multidecadal endeavour that goes through many phases. The best innovations will not bear fruit if there is insufficient political will or capacity to embrace and adopt them, and long-term planning is a way to ensure that progress endures.

New technology and global events have precipitated large-scale shifts in human behaviour and demands. We are living through a period where both new technology and significant socioeconomic events are occurring simultaneously, presenting a vital but limited window to influence future energy, transportation and land use outcomes. Advances in technology have presented an opportunity to solve the many issues of the 21st century, but technology by itself cannot be the answer; the solution must be built from and around the needs of citizens. Through effective policy leadership informed by thoughtful, coordinated research, we might finally take advantage of a liminal moment to shape a more sustainable future.

**Energy experimentation through urban development processes**

Governments and industry are facing challenges in ensuring sufficient energy provision. While technological innovation is progressing rapidly, the results have not been field tested for suitability for everyday use. Experimentation through the urban development processes in Intermediary Cities provides an opportunity to test solutions and translate them into everyday use across the metropolis.

The Aspern Smart City Research (ASCR) is a dedicated applied energy research partnership attached to the urban development of Aspern. It conducts experiments to inform city development but also with the specific intent to capitalise on the development so that it can be translated to the metropolis.

The research partnership is a joint venture by Siemens Österreich, Wien Energie, Wiener Netze and the City of Vienna, which uses "real-time data to analyse interactions and correlations between user behaviour and building technology in energy-efficient buildings". During the second phase of research, ASCR is testing 17 smart city applications within Aspern. "To date, ASCR has supplied answers to over 60 research questions, developed 15 prototype solutions in the fields of smart buildings and grid infrastructure, and filed applications for 11 patents". Pilots have already been used in other new construction projects, and in product development by Siemens.
POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as relevant research, identification and utilisation of anchor institutions, governance, partnership approaches and funding, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities to offer higher levels of experimentation and innovation for the benefit of the metropolis. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

Intermediary Cities

• Deliberate experimentation of initiatives based on their areas of expertise and strategic partnerships to explore solutions for enhanced liveability
• Develop long-term strategies for sustainable mobility transition
• Coordinate cross-sector collaborators to develop innovative mobility governance mechanisms that can be translated to the metropolis if successful.

CBD Cities

• CBDs offer size, capabilities and capacities beyond those of Intermediary Cities. However, Intermediary Cities can serve as a useful testbed for initiatives, before they are translated into larger programs across the CBD and beyond
• Consider and embed Intermediary City mobility planning as an extension of CBD mobility planning in tackling issues such as congestion
• CBD level policy and processes should not focus solely on bringing people to the centre – but as a node in the wider metropolis network.

Metropolis

• Metropolis development plans to consider aspects that require piloting and ensure that Intermediary Cities have the required funding and opportunity to deliver. This includes recognising that while initiatives may fail, they will bear important learnings for the future
• Governments and planners to contemplate and develop long-term strategies for the future of mobility, to be able to form a coherent vision around the progressive evolution of their city’s transportation system that endures across changes in governments.

Liveability index

• Liveability indices measure factors of an ideal sustainable mobility system such as greenhouse gas emissions, air and noise pollution levels, ‘walkability’ and accessibility (or level of isolation/social participation) across citizens.

Further Research

• Best practices and lessons learned in relation to innovation ecosystems such as living laboratories
• Mobility innovation is fast advancing in the digital age, which undoubtedly will produce novel ways to accelerate the transition towards a more sustainable future of mobility. Research is needed to identify those effective innovations and how to embed them into the region while minimising significant disruption to the current system, yet also leaving room for further technological innovation.
To be an effective functional node in the metropolitan network, Intermediary Cities have a diverse economic base that promotes alignment of proximate work/life opportunities and improves quality of life. In a post COVID-19 landscape, the future of work means maximising opportunities outside of CBDs. Unique innovation and areas of speciality of Intermediary Cities should complement jobs and economic activity of the metropolis. Intermediary Cities also actively drive economic growth while balancing affordability impacts and protecting against market changes.

**ECONOMIC POTENTIAL IN INTERMEDIARY CITIES**

Intermediary Cities hold significant economic potential and contribute to the growth of the metropolis in which they are located. An Australian study found that ‘agglomeration economies’ can occur in small to medium sized cities through three principal processes: availability of large labour pools (employees); cost effective provision of facilities or services; and clustering of firms to allow faster transmissions of ideas into new services, products and technology.

Intermediary Cities possess unique attributes such as sector concentration and lower real estate costs which are attractive to companies. They also often develop distinct characteristics, shaped by the symbiotic development of anchor institutions and industries that contribute significantly to economic activity. Anchor institutions play a vital role in realising inclusive growth and cultural growth within many Intermediary Cities.

However, it is important that this growth is not detrimental to the CBD, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic where lockdowns led to an increase in the unused space within the city centre. The interconnected relationship between the CBD and Intermediary Cities must be well understood to ensure there is a balance that enables citizens to reside close to job opportunities, while maximising efficiency.

Intermediary Cities like Surrey in the province of British Columbia, Canada, have identified their own market strengths and are making deliberate economic plans to grow their parts of the region to redirect density pressures and benefit the greater metropolis. Surrey has been denoted as an ‘in-between city’, neither a downtown CBD centre nor a suburban municipality, and has the benefits of physical mobility infrastructure and a diverse mix of development and residents. Intermediary Cities like Surrey are leveraging their economic strengths and pursuing agendas to become a nexus between the CBD and regional areas.

Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau announcing investment in new energy systems building at Simon Fraser University in Surrey, B.C.
Case Study | Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

Economics and job attraction

Figure 7: Greater Vancouver Metropolitan Area.

**Impetus for change**

Over 40 years, the City of Surrey has developed a unique and diverse economic identity, noted as one of the few areas in the world where workers can find traditional agricultural farms alongside cutting-edge technology firms.¹¹⁹ According to Census data, its labour force by industry is fairly even across the board, with a comparable split between commuting within and outside the City for work.¹²⁰ It is also one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, predicted to surpass the population of Vancouver, the region’s primary city, by 2030.¹²¹

**Enablers and interventions**

In recognition of this growth, the City of Surrey has designed an economic plan to support its ambition to become a regional nexus for commerce and a nationally recognised centre for innovation by 2027, as well as deploying international best practices in using technological advances and innovation to enhance life and work within Surrey.¹²² The City of Surrey is a member city of the Consider Canada City Alliance, which unites 14 of Canada’s largest municipal regions to build a sustainable and globally competitive national economy by working closely with the Federal Government of Canada, as well as national and international networks of partners to make Canada the preferred location for foreign investment. The Alliance allows cities to leverage capabilities across the network and utilise data to identify market strengths and pursue opportunities to support continued investment.¹²³ Investment has also centred on expanding anchor institutions via new regional campuses of Simon Fraser University¹²⁴ and the University of British Columbia,¹²⁵ to create more educational opportunities closer to living and working opportunities.

**Outcomes**

The 2020 Investment and Innovation Impact Committee Annual Report outlines that City of Surrey has so far negated the economic impacts of COVID-19, seen in other city centres. Surrey has supported the local economy throughout the pandemic through deliberate actions such as the Shop Local, Shop Surrey initiative, unlocking co-working spaces to accelerate working from flexible locations, increasing broadband access across the city and exploring emerging technologies.¹²⁶
The third space in hybrid work and investment in jobs

Digitalisation and globalisation have sparked radical shifts in how we live and work. The coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has accelerated these beyond anything we could have imagined.

– OECD Future of work

Intermediary Cities present an opportunity to balance job creation in the metropolis. The pandemic has created a dilemma, with CBDs needing large populations of remote workers to return to the office to revitalise businesses, while emerging evidence suggests that workers are hesitant to return fully, having established new routines and improved quality of life closer to home. Outlying suburban and regional areas are booming with remote workers enthusiastically supporting their local businesses and appearing reluctant to forgo these gains. Significant questions remain about the right balance to achieve outcomes for the CBD, the wider metropolis, and suburbia simultaneously.

The pandemic has led to the emergence of a spectrum of spatial possibilities in relation to workspaces. Work is no longer necessarily bound by the binary of the home and the centrally located work office but has expanded to include “third spaces” such as satellite offices, co-working spaces, public spaces, libraries, community centres and cafés. Researchers considered this and found that more than a third of all remote working hours are spent in locations other than the home. Flexible work reduces the demand for traditional offices and the demand for travel during peak hours, freeing up commercial space and transportation infrastructure for alternative uses. A study on US commercial real estate prices noted a decline in the premium for centrally located office space, pointing out that the effects are more prevalent in dense, transit-oriented cities than in car-oriented cities. Many organisations are devising long-term hybrid and remote working strategies to expand access to talent, increase employee satisfaction, and reduce real estate costs.

A shift in working arrangements towards co-working spaces could provide new, additional benefits, especially in smaller communities. A study in Italy surveyed co-working space users and found that 85% believe that co-working space has a positive impact on their community by increased exposure to cultural events, procuring local goods and services and improving security. These effects were amplified for co-working spaces located outside of major metropolitan areas. Policymakers in some European countries have already begun promoting co-working spaces in peripheral areas to boost economic development and reduce commutes.

DIVERSITY IN JOB CREATION

The Intermediary City case studies examined in this report have often received catalytic investment for infrastructure, creating new growth opportunities that attract job creation. Affordability issues and understanding how investment into Intermediary Cities can lead to perverse outcomes that affect socioeconomic inclusion and equity is a less understood topic. Clustering services, infrastructure and mobility has served Intermediary Cities well in ensuring financial, density and agglomeration benefits to attract new workers to these areas, spurring other economic development and enabling the development of unique identities in support of the metropolis. However, well known examples around the globe demonstrate that investment in pockets has the potential to amplify inequality as an area becomes gentrified, displacing original inhabitants. Intermediary Cities in many respects are aiming to balance regenerative investment with supporting the local communities that they serve, through deliberate local procurement, economic and social strategies.
POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as open conversations about the future of hybrid work, strong economic plan focusing on diversity and networks between cities to grow investment narrative based on unique capabilities, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities to offer a productive competitive economic environment in the metropolis. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

Intermediary Cities

• Actively pursue a diverse economic base and investment in jobs, leveraging local identity, market strengths and anchor institutions and industry specialisation
• Develop local active interventions to address affordability concerns that arise with increased investment and development
• Pursue local procurement approaches to support economic growth of the City.

CBD Cities

• Provide networks and alliances to support the growth and capacity building of Intermediary Cities and leverage investment strengths to support growth throughout the metropolis.

Metropolis

• Invest in the creation of jobs and remote working sites for industries to promote proximate work/life opportunities
• Mass transit investment to help integrate and also support access
• Consider governance mechanisms to address affordability issues alongside investment.

Liveability Index

• Inclusion of distance to available jobs and industries.

Further research

• The scale of transformation in innovative Intermediary Cities and changing sub-urban areas does not match the level of research attention. Therefore, building qualitative and quantitative evidence base about the economics of Intermediary Cities is critical to understand their potential for growth as well as quantifying their relationship in the metropolis
• Regeneration and investment in outlying cities and strategies to address affordability, exclusion, gentrification and equity
• Future of work opportunities and how to balance economics of a CBD, which may not see the return of full-time workers.
VISION, LEADERSHIP AND SOUND GOVERNANCE
Intermediary Cities develop strong guiding visionary leadership and strategies to reach their long-term objectives, recognising the importance of achieving a balance between control and a laissez-faire approach. Where top-down governance is complementary with bottom-up initiatives to co-create outcomes with significant citizen involvement.

GOOD GOVERNANCE SUPPORTS LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Vision, leadership and sound governance are defining features in many future-oriented Intermediary Cities. These cities have developed an intelligent and thoughtful long-term approach and plan, garnered strong buy-in across government, industry and citizens and delivered through robust top-down, bottom-up governance mechanisms. Bradfield in Sydney, Australia, illustrates the importance of strong visioning, a resolute political will and committed leadership, as well as a sound governance mechanism through the Western Sydney Parkland Authority (WPCA). This has accelerated the development of a future Intermediary City with grand plans to become a leader in liveability, sustainability, advanced manufacturing, and one of the best connected places in Australia, reaping benefits not just for the city, but also strengthening the metropolis and the country.

Bradfield City, Western Sydney (Artists Impression). Credit: Western Parkland City Authority
CASE STUDY | BRADFIELD CITY CENTRE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Aligned governance through the Western Parkland City Authority

Figure 8: Greater Sydney: A Metropolis of Three Cities.\(^{133}\)

**Impetus for change**

The population of Greater Sydney is projected to grow to eight million people over the next 40 years. In 2018, the Greater Sydney Commission released a plan for the region to meet the needs of a growing and changing population, seeking to transform Greater Sydney into ‘A Metropolis of Three Cities’ – the Western Parkland City, the Central River City and the Eastern Harbour City. The vision brings new thinking to land use and transport patterns to boost Greater Sydney’s liveability, productivity and sustainability by spreading the benefits of growth where residents live within 30 minutes of jobs, education and services.\(^{140}\)

**Interventions**

With almost half of the population residing in Sydney’s west, rebalancing economic and social opportunities leverages growth and delivers the benefits more equally and equitably.\(^{141}\)

In an infrastructure blueprint, WPCA Chair, Jennifer Westacott AO has urged governments to recognise that the Western Parklands City will account for 25% of the population growth of NSW and should receive a commensurate proportion of the infrastructure spend.\(^{142}\) Bradfield, the centre of Western Parkland City, plans to be Australia’s first 22nd century city, a high-tech, hydrogen-ready city centre focused on advanced manufacturing industries on the doorstep of the new Western Sydney International Airport. The city is an example of the outcomes of aligning vision, leadership, good governance and investment to achieve a new connected Intermediary City.

**Enabler**

The WPCA is an NSW Government agency established as part of a 20-year partnership between federal, state and eight local governments to deliver transformative change to shape the region to become an epicentre for liveability in Sydney. A broader authority boundary allows the full benefits of a collaborative approach to master planning, infrastructure, investment attraction and housing acceleration across the whole of the Western Parkland City. The creation of the authority as a governance mechanism is intended to overcome the historical problems of piecemeal decision-making.

**Outcomes**

Investment and political will were critical drivers for success, with the Commonwealth and NSW Governments committing approximately $20 billion through the Western Sydney City Deal to develop infrastructure, allowing the Western Parkland City to connect both locally and globally with the new 24-hour airport, rail, bus and road connections. The NSW Government further committed more than $1 billion to start building Bradfield City Centre and its related infrastructure. This signals a shift away from the traditionally centralised locus of government investment. The Western Sydney City Deal governance model has been in practice for three years and has recently undergone a formal review. The WPCA has also released an Economic Development Roadmap to unlock economic and investment opportunities in support of the NSW Government’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy, including the need to improve supply chains, enhance advanced manufacturing and sovereign capability.
BOTTOM-UP INITIATIVES AND TOP-DOWN DIRECTIVES

Government commitment, agreement and capability combined with citizen engagement are key enablers for innovation and quality of life. Many governance models exist that attempt to optimise the top-down and bottom-up governance approaches that have been observed in successful large-scale Intermediary City development and regeneration. Leading Intermediary Cities rarely exist solely because of top-down strategies, but rather a flexible combination of strong vision, leadership and strategic investment, combined with community-led approaches and horizontal forms of governance.

Governance arrangements should be structured to create space formally and genuinely for citizens’ voices to influence decision-making. This needs to go beyond consultation tacked onto an otherwise conventional governance process. Envisioning and planning should draw on community voice and local knowledge so that their values and aspirations determine the vision and direction of plans.

Today we see many examples of technological innovation, social and economic developments moving faster than legislation and governance bodies can easily keep up with. This creates clashes and also speeds up conditions as the city is not static, but subject to continuous change. Adaptive governance and flexible strategic plans could be utilised to overcome uncertainty and other political forces that may hinder development over the long term.

SPREADING THE DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY

Investment in Intermediary Cities is complex and multifaceted. New models of investment are moving away from being purely economically or profit driven, to models that take a more high-level approach to spreading prosperity and resilience across the metropolis. These models attempt to capture the complex interaction between multiple players, local, city, regional and national policy, to deliver widespread benefits to the citizen through culture, jobs, transport, education and connectivity.

The ‘Levelling Up’ strategy proposed in the UK is one such example that comprises a bold program of systems change that reorients central government decision-making around geographic allocation of funding and empowers local decision-makers. The national strategy supports the devolution agenda pursued in the UK since 1997, with the government increasing local capacity through the creation of regional, or metro, mayoral roles, with increased delegation of powers. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), is convened by an elected ‘metro mayor’ who has economic functions in relation to transport, adult skills, infrastructure, housing and business support. The WMCA comprises 18 local councils and three local enterprise partnerships made up of businesses and education leaders. While Birmingham is the central city with the largest economic power, the WMCA provides a levelling out effect that enables Intermediary Cities like Coventry to network effectively and support Birmingham, creating innovation across the metropolis.

There is no single best practice approach to urban governance. What works for one city may not necessarily work in another if it does not appropriately encapsulate local sociocultural and political considerations. As the Grattan Institute observes, what is important instead is that citizens are involved in decision-making from an early stage, at both a metropolitan and local level, that their views encompass a genuinely representative population and that there is firm commitment to follow through. This points at the critical importance identified by many Intermediary Cities for a convergence in governance across government, industry and citizens.
POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This case study and discussion aim to draw out critical enablers, such as access to land, funding, alignment between governments and unique governance structures alongside private-public partnerships, which may contribute to the development of Intermediary Cities through strong visionary leadership, partnership and unique governance arrangements. Future directions are suggested for consideration.

Intermediary Cities

- Intermediary Cities expand their vision beyond the city and work in line with the metropolis rather than seeing themselves as a ‘town’ competing with other ‘towns’ for shared resources.
- Leverage advantages to more effectively convene government, industry and citizens in decision making to deliver better outcomes.

CBD Cities

- CBDs should have distinct plans for leveraging advantages that complement Intermediary Cities rather than in competition to work effectively in symbiosis.

Metropolis

- Focus on a greater alignment of strategy and policies designed to create responsibilities between Intermediary Cities and CBDs to work together to create outcomes for the entire metropolis.

Liveability indices

- Current weightings of liveability indices are at best arbitrary and should be realigned to capture what citizens care about most by measuring participation in governance processes and decision making on matters that affect them.

Further research

- Further research is needed to understand the role of leadership in driving best practice development of cities and its influence on governance and systems – investment requires an alignment of layers of government and shared commitment.
The observations of this inquiry have led the Commission to conclude that a complementary partnership approach is recommended to pursue a deliberate strategy to grow and enhance Intermediary Cities.

A complementary partnership approach involves the collaboration of key actors across all levels of governments in a metropolis to develop a more balanced model of investment that has the potential to deliver a better distributed range of benefits, while supporting the uniqueness of Intermediary Cities. A complementary partnership approach avoids a competition-based model, which is often seen in the development of secondary or satellite cities that compete for resources against a CBD and try to emulate the same characteristics as a CBD albeit on a smaller scale. A polycentric governance approach instead balances cohesion and productive competitiveness between cities.

During the pandemic, different types of urban communities have flourished, developing a new identity and purpose with and for their citizens. With these points in mind, the six future-oriented features of Intermediary Cities identified through the Commission can be harnessed together to support recovery, equity and resilience in the broader metropolis.

Intermediary Cities are underutilised existing entities that have the greatest opportunity to share social and economic benefits to the widest group of citizens. They provide a vital opportunity to accelerate the post-pandemic recovery of the CBD and the wider metropolis. Intermediary Cities should be strategically identified, further developed and networked into the metropolitan fabric with the perspective of contributing to solutions of sprawl and inequality.

Monocentric cities continue to form the basis of liveability for many large urban areas around the world, with investment naturally coalescing into concentrated areas to support economic growth and bringing people into the centre for work, living and leisure. The benefits to liveability that this model brings however are only obtainable by a few, and intractable problems surface for many, including congestion, long disconnected travel, cost of living, access to services, social and environmental inequalities.

In juxtaposition, polycentric networks of cities aim to work in complementary ways to support each other, improve connectedness and quality of life for citizens across much wider areas. However, the development of polycentric networks is a long-term endeavour that requires a multitude of critical enablers, actors and conditions to make happen. To be successful, it requires both organic and deliberate interventions. Ultimately it must make sense to and deliver on the aspirations and needs of a diverse range of citizens.

COVID-19 has accelerated conditions for change through economic and societal shifts in patterns of work and where people are choosing to live. We are at a key point in history to address long standing environmental and equity issues, exacerbated by the pandemic.

We can do better than returning to business as usual; now is the time to reconsider approaches to the spatial, social and governance structures that have the potential to deliver on a truly liveable metropolis by contributing to:

- Reducing congestion pressures while retaining agglomeration benefits
- Innovation led regeneration and growth
- Greater wellbeing and health outcomes
- Improving access to employment, cultural activities and transport within shorter distances to homes
- Understanding the diversity of communities and generate more nuanced public policies and governance processes that reflect the needs of the citizen
- Enhancing socioeconomic opportunities across the spectrum of age, race, gender, education and ability.
ENABLERS TO PURSUE A DELIBERATE STRATEGY TO GROW AND ENHANCE INTERMEDIARY CITIES

Practical considerations have been developed based on the case studies throughout this report, through the identification of critical enablers, as well as actions that can be taken across the differing levels of government, which intend to maximise the full potential of Intermediary Cities.

ENABLERS OF AN INTERMEDIARY CITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabler</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to land and land use zoning changes</td>
<td>Case-by-case consideration of particular rights over land access, land use and deregulation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Adequate bipartisan national urban planning is needed to identify the long-term objectives for the country and region, including logical nodes connecting the city centre to other areas in the metropolis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Investment by all levels of government is required and includes large-scale, public-private partnerships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open conversations</td>
<td>Open and flexible plans allow for adaptation as development evolves and is in tune with citizen needs through bottom-up engagement strategies. Key actions for significant urban development include public discussions to cement willingness to undertake incremental change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant research</td>
<td>Urban development should be based on a continuous learning narrative around best practices. Engagement with research agencies can support visionary, experimental and flexible development plans, as seen in places like Singapore and its development of the Centre for Liveable Cities and cooperation with universities in situ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification and utilisation of anchor institutions</td>
<td>Anchor institutions are long standing establishments, many deeply connected within the communities they serve. Often, they provide significant infrastructure and resources, while fulfilling a role as key drivers of job creation within the local economy. The identification and utilisation of anchor institutions, such as universities in novel ways can improve bottom-up governance and closer collaboration with the community.</td>
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6 FUTURE-ORIENTED FEATURES OF AN INTERMEDIARY CITY

1. Balance of autonomy and integration within the larger metropolitan network
2. Citizen and community wellbeing
3. Equitable and sustainable design
4. Experimentation and innovation
5. Diverse economic base, jobs and innovation
6. Vision, leadership and sound governance
**SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY GOVERNMENTS TO PURSUE A COMPLEMENTARY PARTNERSHIP**

Identified throughout the report are deliberate actions by government actors in collaboration with communities and industries to pursue long-term future oriented plans. To summarise the following actions required to pursue a networked metropolis include:

**Intermediary City actors**
Usually local governments, or a collection of local municipalities

Intermediary City actors should identify and leverage their strengths and market advantages, and understand how best they can contribute towards achieving collective goals of the CBD and metropolis.

- Seek active engagement with CBD and metropolis level actors to form a collective regional vision
- Commit to experimentation across societal, spatial, technological, governance and share results and findings wider
- Consider appropriate distribution and diversity of work and cultural activities
- Invest in understanding community wellbeing and what citizens value
- Develop approaches for horizontal community engagement, leveraging the convening power of anchor institutions and other key local industry players
- Pursue local procurement approaches to support economic growth of the city
- Embed local inclusion and intersectionality strategies
- Develop long-range strategies for future mobility needs and sustainable mobility transition.

**CBD City actors**
Usually local governments, or a collection of local municipalities

CBD City actors should seek to leverage the advantages of Intermediary Cities complementary to their own development, understanding that they play distinct but interconnected roles within the metropolis towards shared goals.

- Develop mechanisms for engaging and working with Intermediary Cities on development to understand how best to allocate resources in the most effective and efficient way towards achieving regional objectives
- Provide networking opportunities for Intermediary Cities to develop tools, capability and capacity to undertake innovative development
- Provide leadership and commitment to support not only the transport direction into the city but contribute to the solutions of people flowing out, seeing the mobility planning of Intermediary Cities as an extension of CBD mobility planning
- Partner with and support Intermediary Cities in experimentation, from which the learnings can later be adapted and scaled within the CBD.

**Metropolis actors**
Usually state and/or federal governments

Metropolis actors should aim to align and guide developmental planning across the network, considering the competitive advantages of the CBD and Intermediary City in contributing towards the collective regional vision.

- Identify existing and potential Intermediary Cities for strategic and urban development plans and provide them with adequate funding and opportunity to deliver
- Develop an understanding of liveability throughout greater metropolitan areas, providing strategic support to those with emergent and long-standing issues
- Invest in distributed creation of jobs and remote working sites for industries, to promote proximate work/life opportunities
- Commit to metropolis planning over the long term – develop cogent designation of development areas based on set criteria/characteristics features
- Develop a long-range mobility strategy for the metropolis that considers future needs such as population growth, availability of land and the transition towards sustainable modes of transportation
- Investment into Intermediary Cities should consider the impact of affordability impacts on local communities and vulnerable citizens. Strategies to counteract these effects should be prioritised and consideration given to governance mechanisms that address affordability issues alongside investment.
Commission Recommendation 2

CALL TO ACTION: A NEW MODEL OF LIVEABILITY

The Commission recommends a more representative liveability index that reflects contemporary citizen needs.

New or improved liveability indices have been suggested through the examination of global Intermediary City case studies. This Commission recommends that any future definition of liveability used to rank and evaluate world-class cities includes criteria measuring the extent to which:

- The city contributes to and supports economic and social prosperity to citizens in the wider metropolis and in those wider locations, and not just the city itself
- The city encourages and empowers citizens to make choices on where and how they want to work and live
- Populations of all characteristics and backgrounds can enjoy a highly liveable existence, regardless of where they live within the metropolis.

At present, a plethora of liveability indices exist that attempt to aggregate the multifaceted elements of liveability and differentiate themselves from each other. In assessing the state of today’s liveability indices, the Commission contends that aspects and locales of the city remain deeply affected by issues that are not captured in current liveability criteria.

Societies and cities defined as highly liveable based on many league tables still experience significant issues such as: diversity inequity, family violence, crime, access to green space and unsustainable urban development, housing affordability, access to services such as healthcare, education, employment, transport, food insecurity and many other challenges that negatively impact on social cohesion.

This means that liveability indices in their current state only represent a limited subset of citizens and are not appropriately representative of its populace, as is commonly assumed. Cities care about these rankings, thus arguably, this unduly influences further concentration of resources to the city centre at the expense of outer areas.

Liveability as examined through a COVID-19 influenced environment is rapidly gaining policy traction and was already under scrutiny prior to the pandemic, as to whether it is reflective of the reality faced by many living in today’s so-called leading cities.

The impact of the pandemic has further amplified inequities, which are not captured in current indices. Research identifies the need to understand liveability in the context of community health and wellbeing, for a variety of diverse cohorts, and with the ability to identify subsections of the community at risk.

Also often mentioned is the need to consider sustainability as a core criterion of liveability.

Liveability rankings attract criticism and controversy due to their being a simple list attempting to encapsulate the inherently multi-faceted and complex paradigm that is liveability. Rankings are often wielded for promotional purposes to attract foreign investment and immigration or are used by governments and institutions to attribute their achievements. As such, caution should be exercised in taking these indices as definitive, still they are a useful marker to understand key changes in liveability over-time, and therefore can be improved marginally while retaining simplicity.
The observations and recommendations the Commission has developed in this Report are designed to help to advance the liveability and resilience of post-pandemic communities.

The Monash Commission has identified new liveability factors that could enhance popular liveability league tables.

### A NEW MODEL OF LIVEABILITY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1: Stability (weight: 25% of total)</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Inclusions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prevalence of petty crime</td>
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<td>Prevalence of violent crime</td>
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<td>Threat of terror</td>
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<td>Quality of private healthcare</td>
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<td>Availability of public healthcare</td>
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<td>Quality of public healthcare</td>
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<td>Citizen wellbeing factors</td>
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<td>Discomfort of climate for travellers</td>
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<td>Level of corruption</td>
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<td>Social or religious restrictions</td>
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<td>Level of censorship</td>
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<td>Sporting availability</td>
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<td>Cultural availability</td>
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<td>Food and drink</td>
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<td>Consumer goods and services</td>
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<td>Access and proximity to blue and green spaces</td>
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<td>Access and proximity to quality cultural and entertainment spaces</td>
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<td>Access and proximity to community centres</td>
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<td>Contribution to environmental sustainability and environmental quality (emissions, pollution)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Category 4: Education (weight: 10% of total)</th>
<th>Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of private education</td>
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<td>Quality of private education</td>
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<td>Public education indicators</td>
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<td>Availability and proximity to quality childcare</td>
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<td>Availability and proximity to tertiary education</td>
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<th>Category 5: Infrastructure (weight: 20% of total)</th>
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<td>Quality of road network</td>
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<td>Quality of public transport</td>
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<td>Quality of international links</td>
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<td>Availability of good-quality housing</td>
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<td>Quality of energy provision</td>
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<td>Quality of water provision</td>
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<td>Quality of telecommunications</td>
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<td>Housing and rental affordability and conditions</td>
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<td>Access to public transportation</td>
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<td>Walkability and congestion</td>
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### Weighting

- **Qualitative Indicators**: A rating is awarded based on the judgement of in-house analysts and in-city contributors. For quantitative indicators, a rating is calculated based on the relative performance of a number of external data points.
- **Inclusions**: The score is also given for each category relative to New York and an overall position in the ranking of 140 cities is provided.
- **Segmentation**: The ability to segment data (by geography) to identify changes in liveability.
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IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT LANGUAGE AND CASE STUDIES USED IN THIS REPORT:

• This report has sought to avoid use of technical language used in academia and urban planning to describe the complex functionality of cities and urban forms to ensure meaning and application for a broad audience.

• Significant geographical differences exist in cities globally. For example, the urban terminology and historical contexts of European and Anglo-Saxon cities differ greatly from those used in East Asian urban terminology. Because this report originates in Australia, terminology such as metropolis has been adopted to explain the wider agglomeration or metropolitan region, and the use of Central Business District (CBD) is adopted to describe the largest or most significant activity centre of the metropolis.

• Studies into Intermediary Cities often focus on developing economies; this Commission has chosen to focus on the most advanced Intermediary Cities in developed economies, as a way of extracting the most innovative of learnings to advance the investment and prioritisation of Intermediary Cities globally.

Agglomeration/metropolis
A contiguous built-up area, shaped by one core city or by several adjacent cities, sharing industry, infrastructure and housing-land use with high-density levels as well as embedded open spaces. Urban agglomerations can be addressed in different ways ranging from ‘large cities,’ ‘urban economic zones,’ to ‘metropolitan network/region’, depending on the geographical context or academic context.

Agglomeration economies
Economic term commonly used to describe the combination of cost savings, efficiencies and increased market potential that benefit firms when they locate in more heavily populated cities, higher-density cities or cities with a greater diversity of firms, economic sectors and individuals (workers).

Anchor institutions
Organisations that have an important presence in a geographic place, usually through a combination of being large-scale employers, the largest purchasers of goods and services in the locality, controlling large areas of land and/or having relatively fixed assets. Anchor institutions may also be tied to a geographic place through their mission, histories, physical assets and local relationships. Examples include local authorities, universities, trade unions, large local businesses, the combined activities of the community and voluntary sector and housing associations.

Brownfield development
Generally refers to the development of a parcel of land that was previously used for industrial purposes and which may be contaminated by low concentrations of hazardous chemicals.

Central Business District (CBD)
A city’s focal or primary point or business and commercial centre. The area is characterised by a concentration of commercial land use with a high number of commercial offices, retail shops, and services such as finance and banking. It is noted this term is not used globally and can also be known as ‘downtown’ ‘capital city’ or ‘primary city’.

Conurbation
A city area containing a large number of people, formed by various towns growing and joining together.

Green and blue spaces
Refers to physical elements in nature, such as forests, reserves and parks (green) or rivers, creeks and sea (blue).

Greenfield development
Any kind of real estate development in previously undeveloped areas.

Horizontal governance
An umbrella term that covers a range of approaches to policy development and governance, replacing a hierarchical structure with collaboration, coordination, shared responsibility for decisions and outcomes, and a willingness to work through consensus, particularly amongst government groups, community and industries.

Monocentric planning
Monocentric planning focuses on developing one main urban pole with related suburban areas in the vicinity of the main core.

Placemaking
A philosophy and process centred around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole to create a common vision for that place.

Polycentricity/polycentrism
A flexible concept regarding the distribution of economic activities in a metropolitan territory determined by multiple nodes instead of a single node or the coexistence of more than one urban centre.

Secondary city
A term most commonly used to describe the second tier, or level, in the hierarchy of cities below the primary level. Some countries have several orders, or levels, of cities. A primary city is defined as “the leading city in its country or region, disproportionately larger than any others in the urban hierarchy.”

Satellite city
Generally refers essentially to smaller metropolitan areas, located near a big city, most likely a capital, but still self-sufficient and independent.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

By preparing papers, conducting in-depth investigations and delivering a final report, the Monash Commission will present authoritative and evidence-based findings, ideas and proposals for the future of the liveable and vibrant metropolis by unlocking the true potential of Intermediary Cities.

The Commission will explore the concept of Intermediary Cities by providing definition and meaning to this term in connection with middle-scale cities in advanced economies within Australia and globally.

The Commission will consider the role of an Intermediary City in addressing existing societal challenges, and those emerging as a result of a COVID-19 influenced world, by driving sustainability, productivity and inclusion for the collective metropolis.

The aim of the Commission is to articulate essential attributes of Intermediary Cities through a variety of cross-cutting themes and case studies to inform and guide the development of the future urban agenda.

As an independent inquiry, the Commission will represent its findings and proposals in a fair and balanced way. The options it presents will have regard to any matter it considers relevant, including:

• design that equally represents the aspirations of many and improves the quality of life for a sustainable future
• best practice policies that incentivise a region, or funders, to opt into intermediary development projects, shifting the paradigm from profit to societal value
• experimental governance structures that are complementary to existing intergovernmental structures and governance
• improving the resilience and innovation of urban infrastructure and communities to respond to rapid societal and environmental change
• consideration of the role of Indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, lands, health and sense of place in the development of intermediaries
• fostering sustainability with respect to water, resources and energy to help urban communities reduce climate impacts, generate low carbon energy sources and improve the efficiency of energy transmission
• designing integrated transport corridors to create green, connected urban landscapes that encourage public transport use, promote active lifestyles and foster a sense of place
• design and utilisation of integrated infrastructure networks to foster research, innovation and collaboration
• the function of anchor institutions (e.g. libraries, universities, TAFEs, major employment centres, sporting facilities, research entities and other cultural and civic institutions) as well as public and private spaces in activating thriving communities and participation.

The Commission is able to commission expert papers across particular themes or attributes of Intermediary Cities that require particular analysis, culminating in publishable reports with recommendations to be used by Commission members to inform the discussion and development of their own findings and recommendations.

The Commission will facilitate discourse that brings together experts, industry, government, business and community leader representatives, and to explore ways to foster transformational Intermediary Cities now and into the future.

At the end of the agreed period, it will deliver a final report to Monash University. The Commission will make the report public, along with other publishable artefacts such as expert papers.
The second inquiry of the Monash Commission examined the potential of Intermediary Cities to enhance liveability in the form of social, cultural and economic resilience within greater urban networks (emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic).

The inquiry explored the potential contribution that small-to-medium sized cities can make towards developing sustainable and liveable polycentric urban environments for people residing beyond established Central Business District (CBD) boundaries. The focus of the inquiry is on the complementary and networking role Intermediary Cities are able to play, to the CBD and other centralities within a larger urban agglomeration.

Commissioners examined the urban typology of Intermediary Cities through case studies and explored their distinctive features, advantages and benefits complementary to larger city centres. In parallel, subject matter experts acting on the request of the Commission collated and presented evidence on pressing post-pandemic challenges facing Intermediary Cities, spanning diverse considerations as urban planning, transportation, climate and natural resources, health and wellbeing, geography, social sciences, public policy and systems of government and economics.

The Commission’s aim is to inform and foster discussion and debate, not necessarily to resolve it. After decades of focus on urban concentration, some of the issues raised in this report are fundamental. Discussion and recommendations are framed to be of use to governments, investors, policy-makers and actors involved in developing models to enhance and extend liveability in the post-pandemic period.

The Commission has made a series of observations and recommendations about the potential for Intermediary Cities to promote and enhance liveability and the quality of life of citizens. The recommendations and accompanying discussion are internationally informed and are not bound to the Australian context. Given that the Commission was undertaken while COVID-19 continued to make a significant impact across the world, observations made are inevitably emergent.


5. Roberts, Iglesias and Llop, "Intermediary Cities: The Vital Nexus Between the Local and the Global", 133-220.


11. Such as Canary Wharf in London, or Zuid-As in Amsterdam, see also “Edge City” by Joel Garreau from 1991, or the 2e Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening on “bundled de-concentration” in the Netherlands from 1974.


Endnotes


27 Infrastructure Australia, Reforms to meet Australia’s future infrastructure needs: 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan (Sydney, 2022).


31 OECD, Implications of Remote Working Adoption on Place Based Policies: A Focus on G7 Countries (2021).

“A decline of cities (CBDs) is unlikely. Benefits from agglomeration economies will likely be a predominant factor to retain workers and firms in cities. A big exodus from cities would not be desirable for economic, social and environmental aspects. A decline in large urban centres would lead to a loss of economies of scale affecting national growth, efficiency in provision of public services and meeting environmental goals”.


34 Merijn van der Werff et al., Commuting & the Definition of Functional Urban Regions: The Randstad (Institute of Community Studies, 2005).


36 Stead and Majiers, Urban planning and transport infrastructure provision in the Randstad Netherlands.


39 Dutch Government, National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (The Hague, Netherlands: 2020). “By 2050, the Netherlands will be a country in which it is healthy, safe and pleasant to live. A country where the people recognise and appreciate the high quality of their living environment. Where everyone has the space they need to develop further. It will be a country with a healthy, futureproof economy. An economy that is sustainable and circular, and flourishing. It will be a country where scarce natural resources are left untouched or reused, and where fossil fuels have been replaced by renewable energy sources. A country that shares close ties with its neighbours and the rest of the world, and is an active player in the international community. A country where vital sectors are equipped to be robust. To fulfil these ambitions, the Netherlands has been required to make a number of fundamental choices; after all, not everything is possible and not everything is possible, everywhere. The effective and consistent application of these choices has resulted in a secure, sustainable and economically strong country, with a high quality of life”.

40 Stead and Majiers, Urban planning and transport infrastructure provision in the Randstad Netherlands.

41 Merijn van der Werff et al., Commuting & the Definition of Functional Urban Regions: The Randstad.

42 Clark and Moonen, International Case Studies of Connected Cities.

44 As noted by Monash Commissioner, Kees Christiaanse, in his professional capacity as an architect, who has managed a significant number of world-renowned urban planning projects.


48 Michael Wagemans and Ignace De Somer, TFactor’s Theory of Change (TFactor, 2021).


53 ACT Government, ACT Wellbeing Framework.

54 Jacki Schirmer, Living well in the ACT region: exploring the wellbeing of ACT residents in 2019-20 (Canberra, Australia: University of Canberra, 2020).

55 ACT Government, ACT Wellbeing Framework.

56 Schirmer, Living well in the ACT region.

57 ACT Government, ACT Wellbeing Framework.


59 Schirmer, Living well in the ACT region.


64 Nevana Dragicevic, Anchor Institutions (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2015), https://hdl.handle.net/1807/80124.


68 “UK City of Culture Working Group Report,” UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2009, https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukga/wa/20100512162238/http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/ukcc_workinggroupreport.pdf. Established in 2009, is a significant government investment program designed for cities left behind by the fourth industrial revolution, such as those tied to traditional manufacturing industries which have suffered negative socio-economic effects from these changes.


Urban historians describe our current period as moving from the rational use of cities towards more sustainable and inclusive urban development, where cities are not just centres of economic activity but also places of social and environmental regeneration. This shift has been driven by a growing recognition of the importance of urban green spaces in promoting health and well-being, reducing social inequalities, and improving environmental sustainability.


86 Schneider, email.


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95 Cervero, “Transport Infrastructure and the Environment in the Global South”.

Gabriel Ayabami Ogunkunbi, Havraz Khedhir Young Al-Zibaree and Ferenc Meszaros, "Evidence-Based Market Overview of Incentives and Disincentives in Electric Mobility as a Key to the Sustainable Future," Future Transportation 1, no. 2 (August 2021): 290-302, https://doi.org/10.3390/futuretransport1020017.


The most widely published model of cross-border integration in the European Union comprises two major cities, Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden. The Øresund was established to achieve critical mass and reap the benefits of agglomeration economies by creating a larger metropolitan region with an integrated labour market, to overcome the disadvantages of the area’s relative peripheral location.


Lund was awarded recognition as Sweden’s most environmentally sustainable city, particularly in transportation. Despite already being reputed as a city with high mobility safety, Lund has a vision of zero deaths and injuries from traffic, having already halved this figure in the past decade.


108 Caros and Zhao, “Preparing urban mobility for the future of work.”


111 Developing energy solutions for everyday urban life."


113 Rodríguez-Pose and Griffiths, "Developing intermediate cities", 441-456.


115 Rodríguez-Pose and Griffiths, "Developing intermediate cities", 441-456.

116 Leishman et al., Inquiry into population, migration and agglomeration.

117 Rodríguez-Pose and Griffiths, "Developing intermediate cities", 441-456.


121 ‘Surrey Economy: Top Industries, Biggest Employers, & Business Opportunities”.


126 Investment & Innovation Impact Committee (IIC) Annual Report.


141 “A Metropolis of Three Cities – The Greater Sydney Region Plan”.


151 The most commonly referenced Global Liveability Index (The Economist) was intended to guide businesses in assigning expatriate worker compensation and is coupled with a range of paid services for clients looking for deeper insights based on the index data. Conversely, indices such as the Global Liveable and Smart Cities Index developed by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore) takes a more holistic approach that attempts to encapsulate what liveability means for the ordinary citizen, with the purpose of informing public policy decision making.


160 “This is the problem with ranking the world’s most liveable places”, World Economic Forum, 2018, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/09/this-is-the-problem-with-ranking-the-worlds-most-liveable-places/.

161 Figure x highlights gaps in one of the most frequently referenced indices – The Economist’s Global Liveability Index. Note that inclusions are not exhaustive but represent some of the key measurable gaps absent in many current liveability indices, drawing upon the six future-oriented features detailed in this report.


