



State of Australian Cities 2012

Sydney



Population and Settlement

- Sydney's population increased from 4,128,347 in 2001 to 4,605,993 in 2011. This represents a growth rate of 1.1 per cent, below the Australian average of 1.5 per cent and notably lower than Melbourne's annual growth rate of 1.7 per cent.
- Sydney remains Australia's largest city, home to 63.9 per cent of New South Wales' population and 20.6 per cent of Australia's population.
- Over the five years 2006-11, Sydney's stock of private dwellings increased by 97,859. With a population increase of 272,483 over the same period, Sydney had 2.78 additional people for each new dwelling. Sydney's 2011 household occupancy rate of 2.88 people per dwelling is above the 2011 average major city occupancy rate of 2.73.
- Of Sydney's total stock of 1,640,199 private dwellings in 2011, 6.91 per cent were unoccupied, well below the major city average of 9.16 per cent and the lowest figure for any of the major cities.
- The proportion of Sydney's total housing stock that is flats and units is steadily rising, and is second only to the Gold Coast. For every three new dwellings built in Sydney, two will be units.
- In the year to March 2012, Sydney hosted 56.5 million international visitor nights, up from 47 million in 2008, and 22.4 million domestic visitor nights, up from 21.8 million in 2008.

Productivity

- There is a growing concentration of jobs and economic value in the finance and transaction sectors which tend to be located in capital city centres.
- The further a resident lives from the CBD, the further they travel in an average day. However, the *time* devoted to daily commuting is very similar across the city.
- The proportion of the operating costs of mass transit systems being recovered through fare collection in Sydney is declining steadily and in 2011 the shortfall exceeded \$3 billion.
- Sydney's docks handle more than a million containers (TEUs) per year and 85 per cent of these are unpacked within 40 kilometres of Port Botany.
- Sydney remains Australia's top destination for both international and domestic visitors. In 2011, 24.2 million domestic passengers and 12 million international passengers passed through Kingsford-Smith Airport.
- Sydney's hotel occupancy rates are high at 85 per cent and, in the absence of major new development, are forecast to rise to 88 per cent by 2014.
- Between 2000 and 2008, Sydney's labour force participation rate increased more than two per cent, but has since dropped slightly to 65.6 per cent, just above the national average of 65.1 per cent.

- Since 2000, the labour force participation rate for females in Sydney has increased by more than three per cent to 58.6 per cent while male participation rates have fallen slightly to 73 per cent. The skill level of females in Sydney is estimated to have increased much faster than males between 1996 and 2006.

Sustainability

- Between 1952 and 2011, Sydney's average annual minimum and maximum temperatures trended upwards, while rainfall trended downwards.
- Pollutants from residential land make up the largest proportion of the nitrogen load entering Botany Bay.
- Sydney has by far the highest insurance cost payments of the major cities since 1967, with hail damage the most expensive natural disaster.
- Sydney's agricultural areas produce more than two thirds of New South Wales' production of popular vegetables.
- As part of its *Green Infrastructure Plan*, the City of Sydney reduced greenhouse gas emissions in its own buildings by 18 per cent between 2009 and 2011 through building energy efficiency retrofits. Additional work is currently underway aiming to reduce emissions by a further 24 per cent.

Liveability

- Sydney continued a slow decline in the rankings of the Mercer Quality of Living Index, a measure of liveability that provides an indication of the 'attractiveness' of cities for investors and international talent. In 2011 Sydney was ranked 11th, slipping from 10th in 2010 and fifth in 2004.
- According to the *Australian City Liveability Index* survey of residents in 10 Australian cities:
 - A high proportion of Sydney residents agree that the city offers 'quality urban design, recreational and cultural opportunities and amenity' (74%) and a 'quality natural environment' (74%).
 - Only 27 per cent of Sydney residents agree that the city provides 'good transport infrastructure and services', the lowest rate of all Australian capital cities, and only 42 per cent feel that Sydney is a 'safe place for people and their property'.
- Of Sydneysiders living in flats, units or apartments, 43 per cent are households with children. Growth in inner city populations in capital cities over the past two decades has resulted in notable increases in the number of children in these areas.
- Single person households comprise one in five of all households living in multi-unit dwellings such as flats, units or apartments in Sydney. This is the lowest rate of all capital cities.
- The proportion of people travelling to work by car in Sydney (67%) is lowest of the capital cities, while the proportion travelling to work using mass transit systems (22.3%) is the highest.
- In Sydney, the number of workers who regularly or occasionally work from home (telecommuters) increased markedly, from 3.8 per cent of the workforce in 2001 to 7.5 per cent of the workforce per cent in 2009.
- The importance of early life experience on long-term health and wellbeing is being increasingly recognised. In 2009, the proportion of children in low socio-economic groups in Australian cities reported to be developmentally vulnerable was lowest in 'Metropolitan NSW' (comprising Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong), including 13 per cent of children in the lowest socio-economic quintile.
- The cost of living in Australian cities has been relatively stable for over two decades. According to the 2012 AMP NATSEM *Income and Wealth Report's* analysis of typical household goods and services, Sydney continues to be the most expensive of the capital cities with the highest average costs for electricity, mortgage interest, transport and recreation.

Governance

- The NSW Government's directions and strategies for strategic planning in Sydney are embodied in the *Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney* and the *Long Term Transport Master Plan*. Both documents are currently in development.