

SUBMISSION ON NATIONAL CITIES PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK



Australian Government Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development, and Communications

NationalCitiesPerformanceFramework@infrastructure.gov.au



Submission issued February 2021
National Cities Performance Framework Submission



Australian
Institute of
Architects

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 12,000 members across Australia and overseas.

The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design.

PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) in response to the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications consultation on the National Cities Performance Framework.
- At the time of this submission the National/Chapter President is Alice Hampson FRAIA.
- The Chief Executive Officer is Julia Cabbage.

CONTACT DETAILS

Australian Institute of Architects
ABN 72 000 023 012
2A Mugga Way Red Hill ACT 2603 +61 2 6208 2100
+61 2 6208 2100
policy@architecture.com.au

Contact

Name: Paul Zanatta | Advocacy and Policy Manager
Email: paul.zanatta@architecture.com.au

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2	DETAILED RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS.....	4
2.1	Purpose and use.....	4
2.1.1	Issue 1 – Relevance of NCPF	4
2.2	Issue 2 – Purpose of the NCPF	5
2.3	Structure of the NCPF	6
2.3.1	Issue 3 – Contextual indicators	6
2.3.2	Issue 4 – Visibility of Sustainability	7
2.3.3	Issue 5 – Representing Liveability	7
2.3.4	Issue 6 – NCPF themes	9
2.4	City geographies.....	9
2.4.1	Issue 7 – City inclusion	9
2.4.2	Issue 8 – City boundary definitions	10
2.4.3	Issue 9 – Sub-city data	11
2.5	Improvement of existing indicators	11
2.5.1	Issue 10 – More frequently updated indicators	11
2.5.2	Issue 11 – Indicator removal	11
2.5.3	Issue 12 – Refine Indicators	12
2.6	Identifying new indicators for inclusion.....	12
2.6.1	Issue 13 – New Liveability indicators	12
2.6.2	Issue 15 – Digital opportunities and Issue 16 – Planning	12
2.6.3	Issue 17 – Tourism	13
2.7	NCPF platform.....	13
2.7.1	Issue 18 – NCPF delivery	13
2.7.2	Issue 19 – Platform performance	13
2.8	Potential extensions of the NCPF	14
2.8.1	Issue 20 – Time series data	14
2.8.2	Issue 21 – International benchmarking	14

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia, representing around 12,000 members. The Institute works to improve our built environment by promoting quality, responsible, sustainable design. Architecture influences all aspects of the built environment and brings together the arts, environmental awareness, sciences and technology. By combining creative design with technical knowledge, architects create the physical environment in which people live, which in turn, influences quality of life. Through its members, the Institute plays a major role in shaping Australia's future.

Architects are a key component of Australia's \$100 billion built environment sector and there are around 13,500 architectural businesses in Australia with around 40,000 employees. Approximately 25,000 people in the labour force hold architectural qualifications (Bachelor degree or higher) and architectural services in Australia in 2017-18 had revenue of \$6.1 billion and generated \$1.1 billion of profit¹

Australian architects have a worldwide reputation for creative and innovative design leadership and Australia is known for producing contemporary and breakthrough architecture. We have a well-recognised, high quality and liveable built environment. To maintain this into the future and support our burgeoning population in both urban and regional centres, we must create buildings and public spaces that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and culturally rich.

The Institute therefore welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this consultation on the National Cities Performance Framework.

This past twelve months has presented the global challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic which has had different impacts across the globe and between cities and regions across Australia. It has also seen the delivery of a Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

To face these challenges and the lessons learnt, the government will require built environment expertise and strategic planning to support its development of effective policy and program solutions including those delivered through the City Deals Smart Cities programs of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

Structure of this submission

The Institute responds, in this submission, to all of the questions as they appear in order, individually or clustered, as set out in the *Consultation questions* section of the consultation paper. The questions are shown in the second section of this submission in green bold italicised text. The next two paragraphs immediately below comprise three significant overarching positions of our submission.

¹ Industry Profile: Architectural Services in Australia, IBISWorld April 2019

Overarching positions on the National Cities Performance Framework

The first overarching position made by the Australian Institute of Architects in relation to the National Cities Performance Framework, through this submission, is that there must be strong, well-articulated and well-promoted links between NCPF indicators, and corresponding cities' specific strategic objectives, priorities and programs, which the City Deals and Smart Cities are intended to achieve. For this reason, the Institute has already recommended to Australian Government Treasury in its 2021 pre-Budget submission that all new City Deals or Smart Cities partnerships and funding agreements must be linked, at the outset, to the achievement of outcomes that enhance sustainability and liveability as measured by a minimum of two sustainability indicators and two liveability indicators from the National Cities Performance Framework.

Our second overarching position acknowledges that City Deals and Smart Cities partnerships and funding are useful in encouraging various levels of government and their regional and statutory planning, land development and infrastructure bodies to consider their cities in an integrated way. However, there is currently no clearly identifiable, overarching and pre-eminent national cities strategy for Australia. Individual cities' strategic objectives and priorities are not linked to a national cities strategy. The Institute therefore recommends that the National Cities Performance Framework, its themes and indicators are used as a foundation upon which to build a comprehensive National Cities Strategy for Australia.

In this submission we have suggested approaches to achieve more comprehensive indicators measures of Sustainability and Liveability. In recognition of the need to gain the strongest support and commitment to developing and implementing these indicators and our proposed comprehensive National Cities Strategy for Australia, we make our third overarching position. This position is that the Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional, Development and Communications seeks to drive the development of much more comprehensive Sustainability and Liveability indicators and the development of comprehensive National Cities Strategy for Australia through the new Planning Ministers meeting or the Building Ministers' meeting under the new National Cabinet arrangements.

2 DETAILED RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

2.1 Purpose and use

2.1.1 Issue 1 – Relevance of NCPF

Is there an ongoing need for the NCPF?

Yes, there is an ongoing need for the National Cities Performance Framework as it is too important to leave to chance the achievement of goals that our Australian cities should aspire to across the six policy priority areas of:

- Jobs and skills
- Infrastructure and investment
- Liveability and sustainability
- Innovation and digital opportunities
- Governance, planning and regulation and
- Housing

In a developed and sophisticated society and economy, the achievement of goals in each of these areas can be strongly augmented by government policy settings and consequent policy implementation actions of planning, strategic investment, fiscal interventions, guidelines, standards and statutory regulations and controls. The ability to identify those policy priorities and cities for needed interventions and investment and to evaluate the effect of these is clearly enhanced by having ‘hard’ or objective measures. These can be measures of the longer-term goals themselves or measures of early impacts that indicate the change towards achieving longer term goals. Agreement on these diverse measures creates the basis for comparability of performance and sets the parameters by which the social, economic and environmental health of all of our cities are to be measured.

Does the NCPF add value to other data products you use?

Yes, for two reasons,

1. The inclusion of any single measure in the framework elevates the importance and shared understanding of that measure, especially less heard of, yet important, measures.
2. It brings the information from many different data sets into one location.

2.2 Issue 2 – Purpose of the NCPF

Is the current stated purpose still appropriate for NCPF? What else do you use NCPF for? What would you like to use the NCPF for but currently cannot?

The stated purpose “*to help governments, businesses and communities better understand and measure the performance of our cities*” is still relevant.

Architecture retains a strong interest in both governments and communities as these are the clients of architects through whom our cities’ built-environments are designed and built. Architects are strongly aware of the very long-term nature of the legacy they often create. As such they are also share responsibility for the impacts of the built environment.

An example of how architects can influence cities in this way is that our Institute has formally adopted and is promoting a policy that the Australian Government establishes a national plan towards zero carbon buildings by 2030.

Indicators such as those in the NCPF therefore enable our organisation to measure the progress of government and society towards achieving the broader objectives set out in our policy priorities.

Which of these purposes should be the primary focus of the NCPF dashboard? (Please choose one).

- *Measuring and comparing the performance of cities using the latest available data?*
- *Monitoring how the performance of a city is tracking over time?*
- *Supporting the selection, focus and evaluation of City Deals*

The primary purpose should be monitoring how the performance of a city is tracking over time. Without measurement occurring over time, it is not possible to understand the impact of any measures, especially those of investments made through the City Deals and Smart Cities programs. If all cities are subject to the same measures, then it follows that it will be

possible to compare cities, not only for their ‘point in time’ measures, as is currently possible, but also the rates of change between cities.

What should be the role of the NCPF for City Deals?

The role of the NCPF for City Deals should be to underpin the evaluation of each City Deal. These evaluation measures should be determined at the outset, not performed as a post-hoc measure. In this way, City Deals investment and initiatives should be designed to achieve the outcomes as measured through the evaluation measures that have been selected. In other words, there should be a strong link between the indicators and an overarching strategy. Moreover, there should be a broad strategy that links to all City Deals as stated in the introduction.

We highlight the issues of sustainability and liveability for which there should be a broader strategy and a commitment to measure outcomes. For this reason, the following recommendation was made by the Institute in our 2021 Federal Budget submission,

All new City Deals or Smart Cities partnerships and funding agreements must be linked, at the outset, to the achievement of outcomes that enhance sustainability and liveability as measured by a minimum of two sustainability indicators and two liveability indicators from the National Cities Performance Framework.

Is the current balance between NCPF and other data sources appropriate for monitoring progress?

Our organisation has not undertaken that level of analysis of all of the agreements to enable a sufficiently informed response to be provided.

2.3 Structure of the NCPF

2.3.1 Issue 3 – Contextual indicators

What is your view on removing the contextual indicators as a separate theme?

Contextual indicators should be removed as a separate theme. The issue is the pretext provided in the discussion paper that,

Contextual indicators are indicators that help us understand what a city is like and why it functions like it does. Performance indicators are intended to assess city performance and cover aspects of cities that can be measured and tracked against policy priorities.

However, context indicators such as annual average population growth rate, population density and share of employment in goods producing sector:

- could also be performance measures in their own right (e.g goal to increase population)
- are no more ‘contextual’ or ‘explanatory’ than performance measures such as the percentage of adults who have completed year 12 schooling, which would help explain other measures such as youth unemployment rate or the percentage of workers in knowledge intensive services

Contextual indicators, should refer to much more ‘fixed’ or long-term attributes such as geography (e.g. access to sea) climate zone (tropics).

2.3.2 Issue 4 – Visibility of Sustainability

What is your view on promoting the Sustainability sub theme to a theme?

The Institute strongly supports promoting the sustainability sub theme to a theme in its own right and including a broader range of indicators and data sources. These should include:

- climate change, climate change events and impacts
- vulnerability to wind, flooding drought, fire and heat exposure
- vulnerability of cities including heat vulnerability and mitigation measures such as greening and cooling canopy, landscaping to reduce thermal mass, reflective surfaces
- data available from Bureau of Metrology (BoM) national performance reporting validated data from the Low Carbon Living Cooperative Research Centres²
- 202020 vision indicators of green space in our cities, including canopy cover, that reflect how both private and public space in our cities are changing³.
- better built environment indicators Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) and Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star.

2.3.3 Issue 5 – Representing Liveability

What is your view on how well Liveability is represented in the NCPF?

Liveability is insufficiently represented in the Nation Cities Performance Framework for two reasons:

- The area represents a potentially broad suite of measures in its current configuration.
- In itself, together with the two other sub-themes of Safety and Crisis Support and Wellbeing, it could belong to a larger theme as suggested in the consultation paper of 'Society'⁴.

However, a broader encompassing term could be "Inclusion and Health Indicators". Inclusion involves both social and economic inclusion and can contain the broader safety net indicators of Safety and Crisis Support, while health can also include direct wellbeing measures and even validated Quality of Life measures such as the SF-36⁵ or the WHOQOL or WHOQOL-BREF⁶.

These Quality of Life measures could assist the establishment of international benchmarking measures and would be undertaken by sample, not whole of population survey. This is not dissimilar to the survey of Disability Ageing and Carers⁷ being used as the source of the disability statistic reported in the Planning theme and is conducted on the basis of a sample of almost 66,000 people across Australia.

² <http://www.lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au/>

³ <https://202020vision.com.au/media/41955/202020visionplan.pdf>

⁴ Ibid. p23.

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5052926/>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/tools/whoqol>

⁷ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release>

What other suggestions do you have to highlight liveability? What sub-themes or indicators would you consider liveability?

A glaring gap in the current Liveability measures is that of accessibility of our cities for people living with disabilities. There needs to be more than one measure of accessibility for people living with disabilities under the current theme of Liveability or our proposed theme of Inclusion and Health.

Measures of accessibility of our cities for people living with disabilities could include measures of accessibility and adaptability of housing using standards such as the Liveable Housing Australia Standards⁸.

Further access to premises, in addition to residential buildings, could be measured using the Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index which includes is a quick organisation self-appraisal of premises access amongst a suite of organisation accessibility measures⁹.

Premises access standards are legislatively enshrined in the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*¹⁰ delivered through the Disability Access to Premise Standards (2010) which are currently under review¹¹. The standards are, in turn, a requirement to be met under the National Construction Code (NCC).

While it is assumed that new buildings and major upgrades are required to meet the requirements of the NCC through relevant building planning approvals, inspections and certifications, it is more difficult to ascertain the degree to which existing building stock, that may not have undergone major upgrades work, has been retrofitted for *all-abilities*¹² access.

Other liveability measures that could be included are measures of play friendly places especially making inclusive, integrated spaces that allow for play in the urban environment. It is important to consider children in our cities as they are our nation's future. Play spaces can promote health, reduce crime, and increasing learning outcomes. Play is not just about 'playgrounds' but also promoting opportunities for play through traffic calming, and inherent design features built into parks and public spaces such as water feature play spaces and grassy knolls for children to roll down (Jonathon, 2016¹³).

⁸ <http://www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au/>

⁹ <https://accessandinclusionindex.com.au/quick-assessment/question/274/>

¹⁰ <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/access-all-improving-accessibility-consumers-disability>

¹¹ <https://www.industry.gov.au/regulations-and-standards/building-and-construction/premises-standards-reviews>

¹² Or 'disabilities', though 'all-abilities' is the more inclusive term.

¹³ Donovan, J. 2016. Enabling Play Friendly Places. *Environment Design Guide EDG 87 JD August 2016* Australian Institute of Architects. Sourced from: Australian Institute of Architects Acumen Practice Notes https://acumen.architecture.com.au/globalassets/asset-import/files/environment-notes/edg_87_jd.pdf

Of particular note is the work of Jackson (2016)¹⁴ in Australia in reviewing twelve international urban rating tools developed to assist with the regeneration of existing and new sustainable communities and cities, particularly those supported for use in Australia (i.e. where training and support are locally provided). The tools include design guidelines, calculation tools, assessment tools and rating systems, with some tools comprising more than one of these formats. As they are international tools, they also lend themselves to the opportunity of International Benchmarking as per Issue 21 of the NCPF consultation paper.

2.3.4 Issue 6 – NCPF themes

Would you suggest any further changes be made to the NCPF themes or policy priorities?

There is a gap in the measures that does not capture the essence of the way life is experienced in our cities owing to their aesthetic appeal and character. While the NCPF indicators necessarily tend towards the objective measures of single parameters, more complex measures (e.g such as Quality of Life) are validated measures involving a number of constructs. They might be more complex and challenging to implement, but they should nonetheless be pursued as there is a need to include these more qualitative elements to fully appreciate our cities. These qualitative elements are critical to understand when marketing our cities as great places to live, do business and as tourist destinations.

Garau and Pavan (2018)¹⁵ have reported on their case study, of Cagliari in southern Italy, of the application of a number of different Smart Sustainable Cities Measures that consider our cities quality of urban design, housing, and the aesthetic character of the built environment,

“With regard to the category Appearance, we referred to analyses of architectural and environmental values. It takes into account parameters such as the quality of urban design, housing, the urban-aesthetic character of the built environment, whether there are well-defined streets and open spaces and a well-structured building layout, the presence of green areas throughout the neighbourhood, value placed on restoration and preservation, the state of conservation, and safeguards implemented to protect cultural heritage and make positive contributions to improving the quality of the urban landscape” (pp8, ibid)

2.4 City geographies

2.4.1 Issue 7 – City inclusion

Should the scope of the NCPF be expanded to include smaller cities?

The scope should be expanded to include smaller cities. The risk of not including smaller cities is that both the positive and negative aspects of the performance of smaller cities will fail to be understood.

¹⁴ Jackson, S. 2016. A summary of urban assessment tools for application in Australia. [Environment Design Guide. EDG 84 SJ • February 2016](#). Australian Institute of Architects. Sourced from: https://acumen.architecture.com.au/globalassets/asset-import/files/environment-notes/edg_84_sj.pdf

¹⁵ Garau, C. and Pavan, V. 2018. Evaluating Urban Quality: Indicators and Assessment Tools for Smart Sustainable Cities. [Sustainability 2018, 10, 575; MDPI](#), Basel, Switzerland. Sourced from <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/3/575/pdf>

It is from such information that governments can understand a much larger picture of optimal city sizes. It would feed into an important discussion of the role for smaller cities in reducing sprawl in much larger cities.

Should the NCPF population threshold be retained at 80 000 or should it be lowered? And if so, what should the new population threshold be? What are the potential benefits of such a change? What issues would arise? How much of a priority is expansion of the NCPF to include smaller cities?

On the basis of the above response, the threshold should be lowered. The 2014-15 State of Australian Cities report¹⁶ noted that in 2015, 80% of Australia's population lived in the country's twenty largest cities (these are the same cities shown in Table 5 of the consultation document with the exception of the more recent addition of Mackay). The capture of 80% of the population would seem an appropriate way to define the new threshold.

2.4.2 Issue 8 – City boundary definitions

Do the existing city boundary definitions meet your needs?

There are a range of arguments presented for the use of various statistical versus administrative classifications. As with some specific indices such as the suite of Social and Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA)¹⁷ there should be multiple geographic areas used. SEIFA data can be displayed in Statistical Areas, Local Government Areas, Postal Areas or State Suburb. The boundary definition will depend on the use of the measure, and who is using the measure.

It is important to be aware that many Commonwealth Government grants applications, including those applied for through the Community Grants Hub¹⁸, use Statistical Areas as the basis for allocating funding and seeking applications (sometimes at multiple levels e.g SA3 and SA4). The use of a broad geography going well into the hinterland of a city may be critical to understanding the need for access to services or the city as a hub for commerce serving a large population. However, a much narrower boundary is more appropriate for considering issue of density and access to green space.

If not, what geographic boundary is preferred for your city? Would it make sense to use that alternate geography more widely within the NCPF?

Our organisation is not expressing a preference. It is important to recognise that different boundaries will suit different purposes.

¹⁶ Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. 2015. [State of Australian Cities 2014-2015](#). Commonwealth of Australia. Sourced from:

https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/soac/files/2015_SoAC_full_report.pdf

¹⁷ See:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001-2016-Main%20Features~IR/SAD%20Interactive%20Map~16>

¹⁸ See: <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants>. NB the name of the hub does not reflect the breadth – e.g. current grant as at 15-2-21 included Assistance Grants – Access to Industry Priority Uses of Agvet Chemicals 2020-21

2.4.3 Issue 9 – Sub-city data

What are the benefits of such a change? Is a map-based presentation preferred over a chart or table-based presentation? Are there other locations for which sub-city indicators should also be provided? How much of a priority is expansion of the NCPF to present sub-city data?

A map-based presentation is useful to quickly compare locations and should be selectable in addition to chart and table data. The priority for sub-city locations should be those sub-city areas for which a separate City Deal has been established, as well as any sub-city area for which a proposal is being considered.

Which sub-city geography would you prefer be used to present NCPF indicators? (Please choose one)

- *Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)*
- *Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3)*
- *Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2)*
- *Local Government Area (LGA)*

As per the above response about city boundaries, multiple geography (e.g. Statistical Areas or Local Government Area) should be selectable. Levels of resolution within the geography will depend on the scale of the sub-city and whether the City Deal is attempting to resolve and measure:

- local issues (e.g. economic dead zones within the Sub-city region), or
- disparities for a given measure across a city (e.g a large variation in population densities where a sub-city might extend from the inner suburbs out to the urban-rural interface).

Statistical Areas lend themselves to being able to vary the resolution and ensure that important variations are not masked.

2.5 Improvement of existing indicators

2.5.1 Issue 10 – More frequently updated indicators

Do you have concerns about any of the existing indicators? Please describe. What alternatives would you suggest?

Our organisation has not sufficiently analysed all 53 indicators currently in use to enable a sufficiently informed response to be provided

2.5.2 Issue 11 – Indicator removal

Are there indicators which could be removed?

Our organisation has not sufficiently analysed all 53 indicators currently in use to enable a sufficiently informed response to be provided

Are there too many indicators? Is there a preference for a smaller set of indicators?

No. There is already a challenge in attempting to comprehensively understand our cities and sub-cities across the major themes with so few indicators. Our indication, above, of the potential inclusions for sustainability and liveability alone would suggest that there are too few, rather than too many.

2.5.3 Issue 12 – Refine Indicators

Are there indicators which could be refined?

The disability indicator taken from the ABS survey Disability Ageing and Carers (DAC) should be refined to include the proportions of people requiring assistance with mobility as an indicator of the need to improve physical access in our cities.

Many measures pertaining to people and their attributes should be calculated on the basis of an age standardised rate – standardised to a reference population (e.g whole of Australia) – as certain attributes such as levels of disability or proportion of people who volunteer may be found to be impacted by the age of the population.

2.6 Identifying new indicators for inclusion

2.6.1 Issue 13 – New Liveability indicators

What new liveability indicators should be included in the dashboard? How does this indicator contribute to measuring the performance of cities? How might we access data for that indicator?

Our response to these questions is the response we have provided to the question put under Issue 5, *What sub-themes or indicators would you consider liveability?*

Issue 14 – New Sustainability indicators

What new sustainability indicators should be included in the dashboard? How does this indicator contribute to measuring the performance of cities? How might we access data for that indicator?

Our response to these two questions is included in the response we have provided to the question put under Issue 4, *What is your view on promoting the Sustainability sub theme to a theme?*

2.6.2 Issue 15 – Digital opportunities and Issue 16 – Planning

What new planning indicators should be included in the dashboard? How does this indicator contribute to measuring the performance of cities? How might we access data for that indicator?

Examples of further planning indicators, following the pattern of existing planning indicators could take into account:

- English language proficiency (Australian Bureau of Statistics) which is important for workforce participation.
- Measures of employment and education participation taking into account women in order to ascertain how well our cities perform for the social and economic participation of women (Australian Bureau of Statistics).
- Levels of government payment for a range of benefits such as Job Seeker/ New Start to fine tune the impact of employment stimulus measures and similarly for the disability support pension to ascertain the extent to which people living with a disability are able or unable to gain access to work (Australian Govt Dept of Social Services)¹⁹²⁰

¹⁹ <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/labour-market-and-related-payments-monthly-profile-publications>

²⁰ Data is also resolved down to LGA and even SA2 level for these measures at the Australian Government Data.gov.au data repository website.

2.6.3 Issue 17 – Tourism

How useful would a tourism spend per capita indicator be? Are there any other new indicators that should be considered for inclusion in the NCPF? How does this indicator contribute to measuring the performance of cities? How might we access data for that indicator?

Our organisation recognises the benefits that tourism brings to cities and regional economies. However, tourism can also create disbenefits such as environmental degradation²¹. It can also lead to housing shortages²² which have been highlighted not only in Australia but overseas, as an impact of the shift away from hotels to apartments and short stay accommodation in the local dwelling stock.

Consequently, we recommend that new measures could be created to measure the ratio of short stay accommodation to residential dwelling stock and the levels of hotel accommodation to compare with the housing affordability measures of the NCPF. There should also be measures to ensure that there are local strategies and facilities to accommodate tourism – not just accommodation but also tourist friendly infrastructure²³ such as excellent public transport and education and controls which ensure that tourists respect Australia’s built and natural environs.

2.7 NCPF platform

2.7.1 Issue 18 – NCPF delivery

How would you prefer to access the NCPF? (please choose one)

- *Statistical reports in PDF*
- *Data download in spreadsheet or related format*
- *Dashboard*
- *Other format (please specify)*
- *I don't interact with the NCPF*

The preferable method is an easy to navigate dashboard (with the addition of heat maps) which enables the atomic level data to be additionally downloaded in spreadsheet or .csv file.

Issue 19 – Platform performance

We note that the platform is slow to load. We recommend a separate User Acceptance Testing (UAT) process is undertaken with a cross section of users including people living with disabilities who require access enhancements, using a variety of commonly used browsers and environments (tablet, PC/MAC, phone). There should a menu in the dashboard of all individual indicators as the dashboard views in each theme do not present all indicators until the dropdown menu is accessed. This could lead a user to think that the only indicators are the one or two shown in direct display.

²¹ <https://www.thegreynomads.com.au/litter-7/>

²² See for example: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-15/exmouth-housing-shortage-due-to-border-closures,-tourist-season/13150896>

²³ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-16/north-stradbroke-island-sandmining-tourism-fail/13155896>

2.8 Potential extensions of the NCPF

2.8.1 Issue 20 – Time series data

Should the NCPF dashboard be extended to present time series data for Australian cities? What are the benefits of such a change? What issues would arise? Should the dashboard be redesigned to make time series data the principal focus (rather than comparing cities at a point in time)?

We strongly support the proposal to present time series data. If the indicators are sufficiently robust to do so, time series should be created, as the whole picture cannot be understood without knowing what change is occurring and the rate of change. The impacts of City Deals and Smart Cities funded improvements cannot be properly measured without being able to see how an indicator has changed over time.

We have no specific preference for the default view. For some purposes the most appropriate data is between city comparison data for which point in time is highly relevant while for some purposes – especially when looking at a single city, a times series will be highly relevant. Moreover, there should also be the ability to compare cities on a single parameter over time. The dashboard should be able to deliver all of these views.

2.8.2 Issue 21 – International benchmarking

Which of the following possible extensions of the NCPF is the highest priority to you?

- *Extending coverage to include smaller cities*
- *Presenting data for city subregions*
- *Including time-series data*
- *International benchmarking of Australian cities.*

The order of priority should be:

1-Including time-series data – to enable the impacts of each and every City Deals initiative to be properly evaluated and to understand what changes are generally occurring.

2-Inclusion of smaller cities so that the full picture of Australian cities and a larger cities strategy can be developed

3-Presenting data for city subregions so that a better understanding of what is happening in any city can be gained where it may be masked by a whole of city picture (through regression to the mean effects).

4-International benchmarking – although important – it is less easy to compare on many parameters. We agree with the view put forward in the consultation paper that this warrants its own project.