

# Australian Urban Observatory

## Liveability in Action

### Research to Impact

The Australian Urban Observatory is a new digital liveability planning tool, developed by our team from RMIT University's Centre for Urban Research. It has been specifically designed to support decision makers prioritise action and planning that promotes health and wellbeing in their communities.

The AUO's liveability indicators are underpinned by years of policy-relevant urban research by RMIT University. Research that connects the built environment with public health, social equity, sustainability with all indicators aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To learn more about the academic background to the AUO, download our Creating Liveable Cities 1 – Essays from the Conversation document [here](#).

### The AUO can help your community:

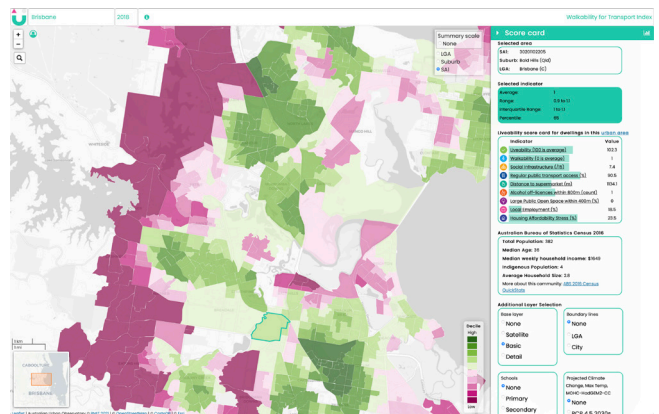
- Improve **health and wellbeing** through a deeper understanding of how social, economic, natural and built environments connect together.
- Identify **key social determinants of health** in your LGA, suburb or neighbourhood.
- Tackle the impacts of **climate change** by addressing the drivers of vulnerability.
- Meet the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals** through our systems thinking approach to issues of liveability, health and wellbeing, climate change action and social equity.
- Create **specific and measurable targets** to meet planning and policy objectives.
- **Advocate for real change** by providing a clear understanding of where to invest for liveability.

### What is the AUO?

Founded in the social determinants of health, the Australian Urban Observatory represents years of research into the connections between urban planning and public health. We map these key liveability measures across the 21 largest cities in Australia and currently include 42 indicators across 9 different domains. These domains include:

- Liveability
- Walkability
- Social Infrastructure
- Transport
- Food
- Alcohol
- Public Open Space
- Employment, and
- Housing

You can download a list of AUO Cities and Indicators [here](#). We map to three levels of detail, covering approximately 40,000 neighbourhoods (ABS SA1s), 3,100 suburbs (ABS SSCs) and 170 Local Government Areas across Australia.



Above is an example of our Neighbourhood level indicators located in the northern suburbs of Brisbane for our *Walkability for Transport Index*. This is an example of the detailed nature of the measures available through our site, as well as the systems thinking - demonstrated through the right-hand side Score Card - that underlies the development of our domains and indicators.

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## Supporting Community Health and Wellbeing

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The AUO is used by our industry partners in local, state and federal government for a range of purposes including:

- Public health and wellbeing planning
- Strategic planning and policy development
- Monitoring, evaluation and goal setting
- Shared measurement for collective impact
- Advocacy
- Health promotion, and
- Applied research

We have prepared a Knowledge Sharing document which contains examples of a number of these policy and planning documents, it can be downloaded [here](#).

And you can download our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance Note [here](#).

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## Tackling Climate Change

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Planning for climate change and public health is a major challenge facing many local governments. The AUO has partnered with the Centre for Just Places at Jesuit Social Services and several local governments to investigate how local communities can be supported to plan for these critical issues now. This includes addressing the drivers of vulnerability, including poverty reduction, improved access to housing and housing quality, access to open space, and improved social infrastructure, all of which are key aspects of liveability mapped in the Australian Urban Observatory.

We developed new climate change related indicators as part of this project including greenspace, housing heat vulnerability, demographics and health, as well as the inclusion of customised council provided indicators. You can learn more about this project [here](#).

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## Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals

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The AUO connects to many of the SGD goals, key amongst these is *Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals*. The AUO was developed to build partnerships with local, state and federal governments, as well as other important decision makers, to share our research knowledge with practitioners to create real-world impact.

The AUO is focused on improving liveability, health and wellbeing, climate change action and equity, meaning that other key SGD goals are:

- Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 13: Climate Action

And you can download our Sustainable Development Goals Guidance Note [here](#).

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## Goal Setting, Monitoring, Evaluation & Advocacy

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All of our indicators are linked to specific and measurable targets to help you meet policy objectives. Our indicators show where the liveability strengths and weaknesses are in your community, supporting partnership, engagement and advocacy, and giving direction for future infrastructure investment.

The AUO indicators are currently calculated from 2018 data. In the coming months we will be releasing 2020 liveability measures, enabling organisations to monitor and evaluate change over time and see improvements, or deterioration, of local liveability issues.

Our purpose is to provide decision-makers and everyday citizens with the very best indicators to promote health and wellbeing in their communities and help them prioritise actions that support healthy liveable cities.

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## Accessing the AUO

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The AUO has two levels of accessibility.

Our indicators are mapped to three levels of detail – LGAs, Suburbs and Neighbourhoods (ABS SA1s) – some are available free through the site or, as is the case for most of our detailed indicators, as part of a Paid Partnership with the AUO.

All indicators at the LGA level, as well as the Liveability and Social Infrastructure indices to suburb and neighbourhood levels, are available without charge with a simple [registration](#) on the site. All other Suburb and Neighbourhood (ABS SA1) indicators are available through AUO Paid Partnerships.

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## Become a Paid Partner of the Australian Urban Observatory

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Leverage our research to support health and wellbeing in your community. Paid partnerships support and shape the long term development of the AUO to meet the liveability planning needs of the future. Our partners are valued members of our research team, supporting understanding that leads to more meaningful outcomes for all Australians.

Download our Paid Partnership Prospectus [here](#).



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