

ATTACHMENT D

**SOCIAL SUSTAINABILTY EVIDENCE
PAPER 2016**

A City for All

ATTACHMENT D

Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney



Social Sustainability Evidence Paper
2016



Sydney2030/ Green/Global/Connected

city of villages

Understanding our city today: strengths and challenges

Our community today

Each day there are an estimated 1.2 million residents, workers, students and visitors in City of Sydney local area. Around 200,000 of these people are local residents – and this figure is rapidly increasing. Forecasts indicate that unprecedented growth seen since the 2011 Census will continue; the population will grow by another 50 per cent to 270,000 by 2031.

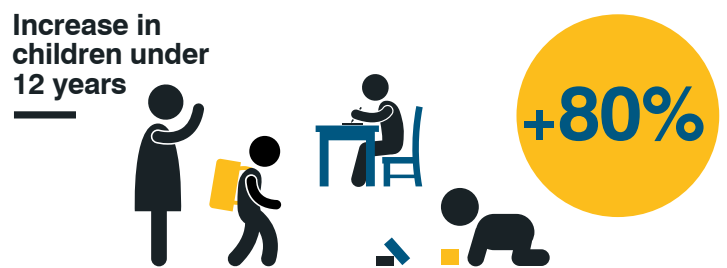
The City's main demographic is young adults, Just under half of residents are aged 18–34 years, more than double the proportion Australia-wide.

In the years to 2031, the youngest and oldest populations will grow much faster than this one: there will be nearly 5,000 more children under 12 and over 9,500 more people aged over 60 by 2031.

This reflects increasing numbers of families in the city and our ageing population.

2011–2031

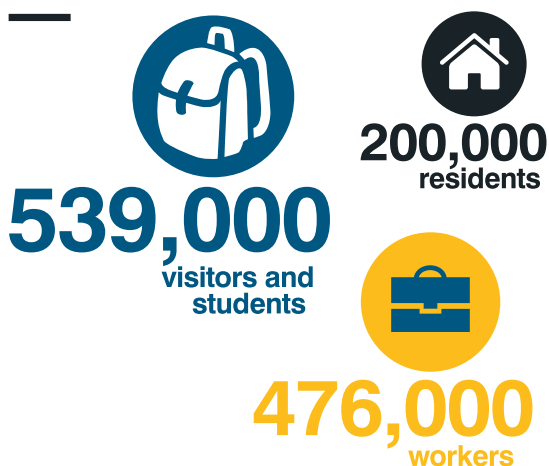
Increase in children under 12 years



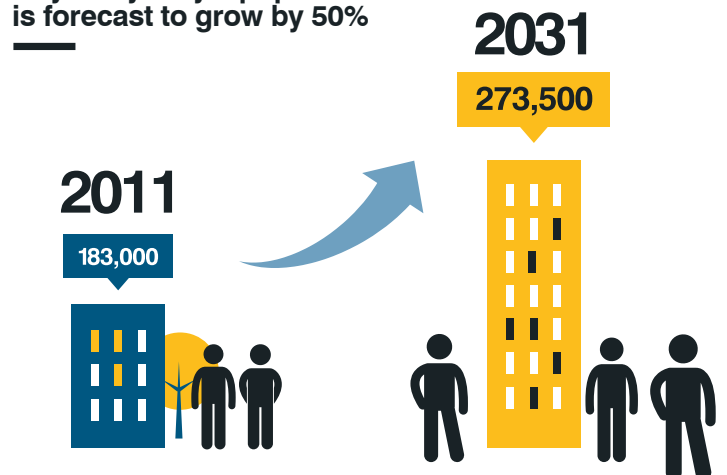
Increase in seniors over 60 years



Who's in our city on an average day?

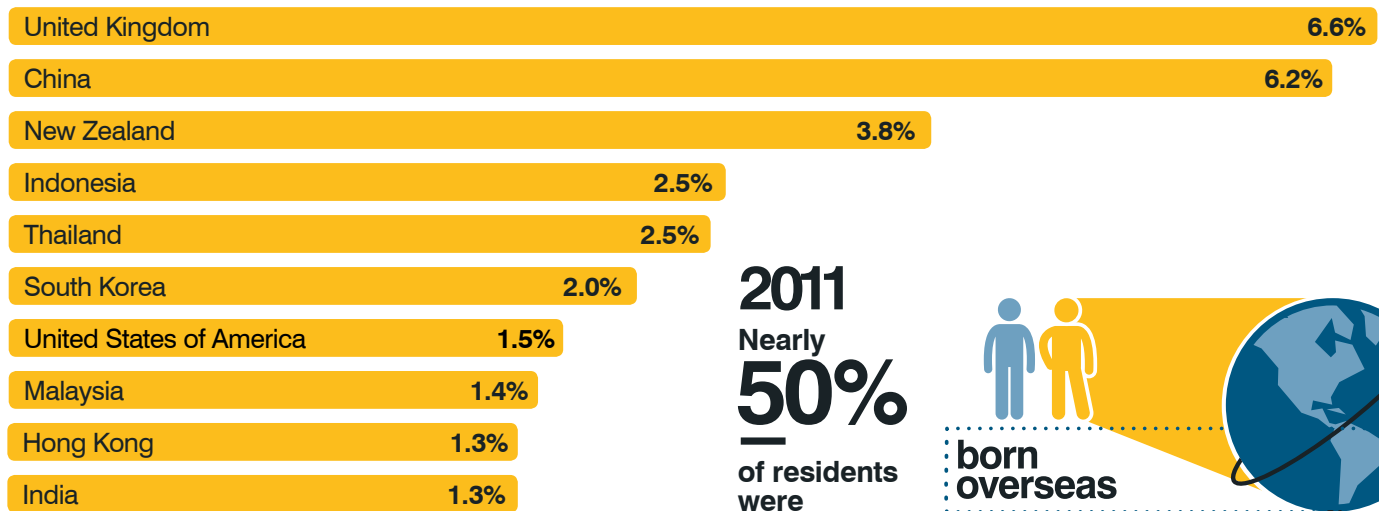


City of Sydney's population is forecast to grow by 50%



2011

Top 10 countries of birth for LGA residents



2011
Nearly
50%
of residents
were



Our strengths

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living culture

The urban heart of the world's oldest living culture is right here in our city, in Redfern. Sydney is home to diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities from across Australia.

At the last Census in 2011, over 2000 people (1.3 per cent of our residents) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and this is probably a conservative estimate of the true figure. The depth of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' living cultures and connections to place is a great strength: we have much to learn from the resilience and adaptive capacity of our first peoples.

Rich social and cultural diversity

Sydney is a vibrant cosmopolitan city made up of many culturally and socially diverse communities. Nearly half of our city's residents were born overseas at the time of the 2011 Census. They came here from over 140 different countries and more than a third came from countries where languages other than English predominate.

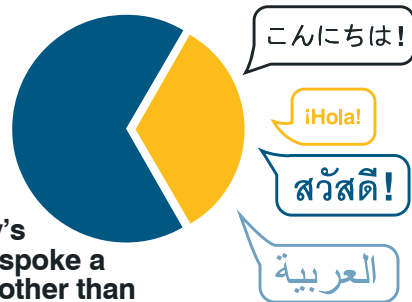
The most common non-English languages spoken at home are Mandarin, followed by Cantonese, Thai and Indonesian. The city is also home to approximately over 35,000 international students.

A feature of the city's social diversity is our proud and vibrant lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community. Nearly one in five residents surveyed in 2011 identified as being part of the LGBTIQ community.¹

Our residents value our city's rich social and cultural diversity: almost 85 per cent of residents surveyed in 2011 agreed it is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities.² The city's diversity – along with positive community attitudes towards diversity – is an asset for our social sustainability, contributing to a vibrant, rich and cohesive city.

Over
1/3

of the City's
residents spoke a
language other than
English at home



Estimated
19%



of residents identify as
GLBTIQ
(gay, lesbian,
bi-sexual, trans-sexual,
intersex, queer)

“I love the diversity of where I live and the sense of living in a small village where you know your neighbours, the shop keepers and café owner.”

Local resident



Jamie Williams

Good health

In 2011 the overwhelming majority of residents surveyed (90 per cent) self-reported their health as good, very good or excellent.³ From 2006 to 2013, the proportion of residents NSW Health estimated to be overweight decreased slightly, but there is recent evidence that obesity is increasing.

There remains significant room to improve our daily consumption of fruit and vegetables and our levels of physical exercise in line with recommended guidelines.⁴

The city is well served by a number of major hospitals, but the supply of aged care places is not keeping pace with the city's population growth.⁵

Education and learning

The city has a highly educated resident population. In 2011, of residents aged 25 years or older, three-quarters had a non-school qualification and over half had a bachelor degree or higher qualification.⁶

A number of major tertiary education institutions are located in the city, such as The University of Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney along with Sydney Institute of TAFE and numerous private colleges.

But access to local public schools and child care is an issue with more families with young children living in the city and many services already operating at capacity.⁷

2011

How would you rate your personal health?



Average level that residents rated their personal wellbeing



Residents with a Bachelor degree in the City of Sydney local area





George Street, Sydney / Jamie Williams

Growing jobs and employment opportunities

The city is a major employment hub, providing jobs for more than 437,700 people in 2012.⁸ Despite the global financial crisis, employment in the City grew by 14 per cent in 2007 to 2012 and growth is forecast to continue, with the workforce reaching 560,000 by 2031.⁹

Sustainable jobs growth is important to the economic prosperity and social sustainability of the city into the future, particularly given that just under two-thirds of our working residents work in the local area.¹⁰

While unemployment in the City in 2014 (4.3 per cent) was lower than in the Sydney metropolitan area (5.3 per cent) overall, we know that unemployment disproportionately affects different parts of the community.¹¹

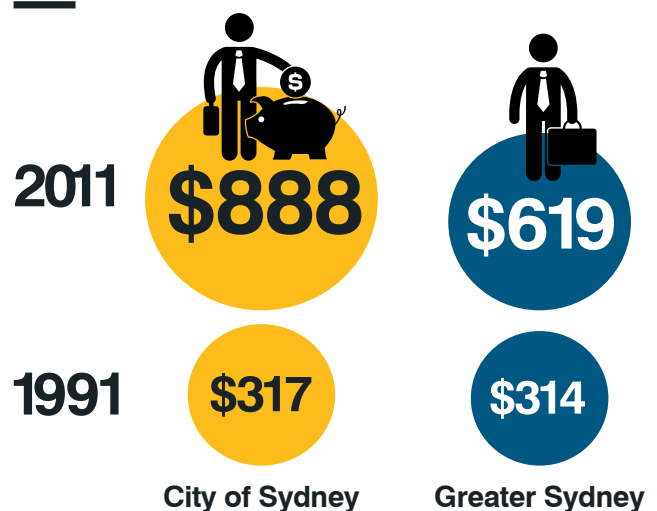
Strong and diversified local economy

The City of Sydney local economy is strong and growing. In 2013/14, the City of Sydney local economic output was estimated at \$108 billion.¹² This accounted for close to a quarter of the NSW economy and around 7 per cent of national GDP.¹³ There are estimated to be more than 22,000 businesses across the city.¹⁴

Sydney is a leading knowledge-based economy and home to Australia’s largest and most globally connected finance and insurance district – a sector which, along with the professional and business services accounted sector, accounted for around 40 per cent of the city’s workforce in 2012.¹⁵

The city is also Australia’s international gateway for business and tourism, and in 2014, Sydney was ranked ninth in the Pricewaterhouse Coopers ‘Cities of Opportunity’ index, which assesses performance against ten categories including economic clout, ease of doing business, transport and infrastructure.¹⁶

Median weekly income



Rising incomes

The city’s resident population earns substantially more than the Greater Sydney metropolitan population and this prosperity is relatively recent. In 1991, income disparity between the two populations was negligible. But by 2011 the median weekly income in the city was 43 per cent higher than the Greater Sydney median.¹⁷

Combined household incomes also increased dramatically in the city in the two decades to 2011. Nearly 18,000 more city households were counted in the highest 25 per cent of NSW income earners in 2011 compared with 1991 – more growth than in the other three quartiles combined.

Altogether, almost 40 per cent of all city households were in this top quartile in 2011 – substantially more than the Greater Sydney metropolitan area (at 30 per cent).¹⁸ The dramatic increase in incomes in the city is reflected in the gentrification of our previously working-class neighbourhoods.



Liveable city with a strong local identity

Sydney consistently ranks as one of the most liveable cities in the world.¹⁹ Our harbour and beaches, temperate climate, parks and open spaces, cultural assets, entertainment venues and wide range of recreational facilities make it a highly desirable place to live. The vast majority of City residents report they are satisfied with their access to community facilities.²⁰

The City's villages provide a focal point for the social life of the community, offering retail outlets, cafés, restaurants, bars, pubs and music venues. During consultations by the City, residents have expressed their love for the unique character of their local neighbourhoods. Residents see the history and heritage of the City as a real strength.²¹ This strong sense of identification and connection to place is a major social sustainability asset.

Vibrant creative and cultural life

Sydney's creative and cultural life is vibrant and dynamic, transforming the city over time and reflecting the rich diversity of its communities. The unique identity of the city, which is on Gadigal Country, is shaped by 40,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures, which are acknowledged and celebrated today.

The city's cultural facilities, festivals, public art programs and events provide wide-ranging opportunities for creative expression and participation – both at a global city level and throughout local neighbourhoods. Iconic institutions such as the Sydney Opera House and events like the Sydney Festival and Vivid Festival are internationally renowned, further strengthening Sydney's creative life.

In 2011, 87 per cent of city residents surveyed reported attending or observing artistic or cultural activities in the previous year.²² Providing ongoing access to arts and cultural events to diverse communities, including people on a range of incomes, will help ensure Sydney's creative and cultural life continues to flourish.

“I would love to see our vibrant community continue and thrive. I hope rising rental prices don't homogenise the area and drive creative people away such as artists, students and other 'lower income' individuals.”

Local resident

2011

Perception of safety

86%

of residents surveyed felt safe at home alone, after dark



50%

of residents surveyed felt safe walking alone, after dark



Do you help out as a volunteer?

43%

of residents surveyed had helped out as a volunteer often or sometimes



High levels of community safety

By world standards, Sydney has a reputation for being a very safe city.²³ Despite the increasing population between 2006 and 2014, in general, incidence of both property crimes and crimes against a person decreased.²⁴ A city with a reputation for being safe attracts new residents, tourism, and investment and helps boost the local economy.

The majority of resident groups report feeling safe or very safe, day and night, whether at home or walking in their local areas.²⁵ However, social housing residents surveyed by the City in 2013 were much more likely than other residents to report feeling unsafe in the city on some occasions.²⁶ Residents who did feel safe all or most of the time had higher reported levels of wellbeing than those who felt unsafe.²⁷

Democracy and civic participation

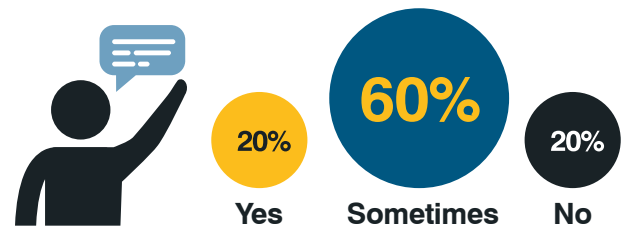
The City of Sydney has a robust system of democratic government and many of our residents actively participate in local community activities. More than half of our residents surveyed in 2011 volunteered.²⁸

Our residents have told us they want more opportunities to participate and have a say on issues that are important to them. In 2011 one fifth of residents felt there were definitely enough opportunities for them to have a say on issues that were important to them.²⁹

Less than half of residents surveyed in 2011 were satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia³⁰ and, despite compulsory voting, just over two thirds of enrolled residents voted in the 2012 local government elections.³¹

Democracy

Do you feel there are opportunities to have your say on issues that are important to you?



Only **45%**

of residents surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia





Zetland / Mark Metcalfe

Our challenges

Living at higher densities

Two decades of sustained population growth has made the city one of the most densely populated areas of Australia. Between 2004 and 2014, the city's population density increased by around 30 per cent, as a result of the combined pressures of unprecedented population growth and constrained land supply.³²

This trend is set to continue with significant urban renewal sites such as Green Square, Ashmore in Erskineville, Barangaroo, and Harold Park in Glebe.

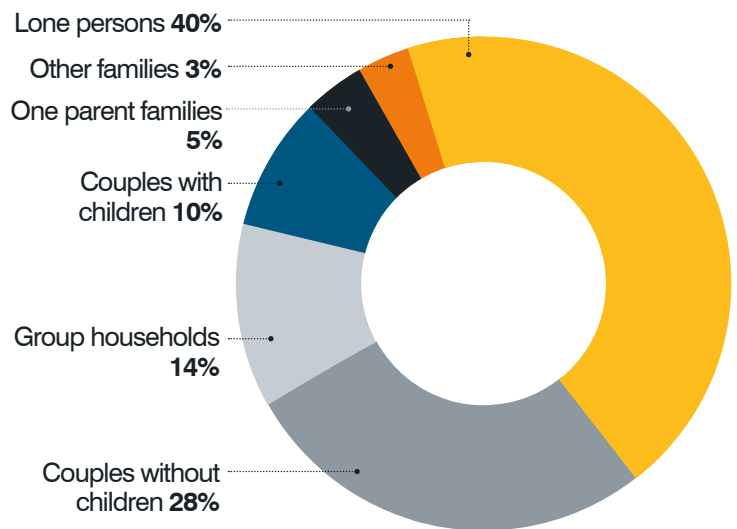
In 2011, three quarters of our households lived in high density dwellings, and this is projected to increase to over 80 per cent of households by 2031.³³

The rapid increase in city residents will put increasing pressure on schools, early education and care facilities, open space, transport, essential services and other infrastructure.

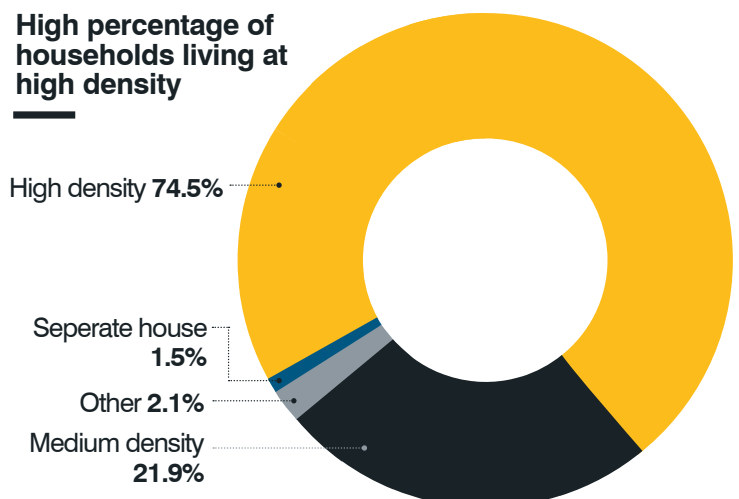
Higher density city living has implications for our lifestyles, including the need for tolerance and negotiation around issues such as access to spaces and facilities, noise, pets, and parking.

2011

City of Sydney households

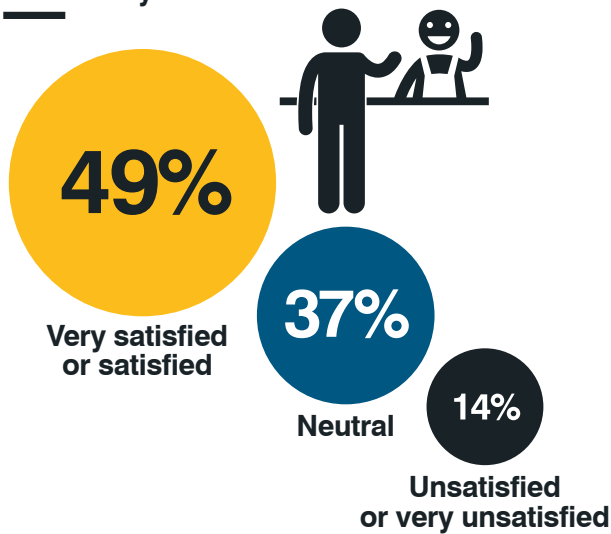


High percentage of households living at high density

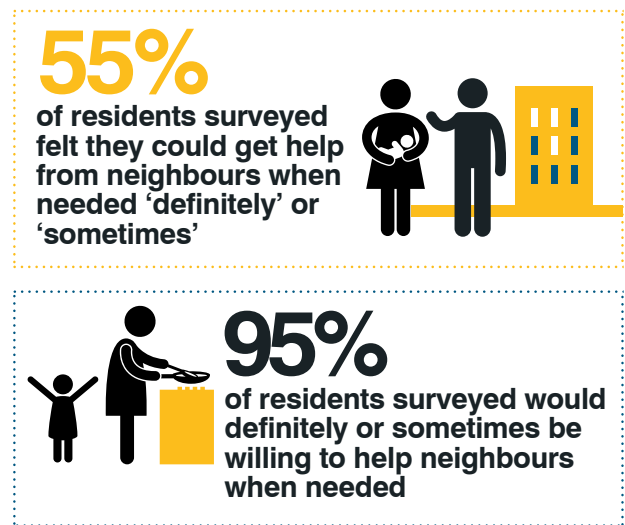


2011

Feeling part of the community



Neighbourliness



Maintaining social connectedness

The city's growing and highly mobile population, combined with a high number of lone-person households, present challenges to maintaining our social connectedness and community cohesion. Sole-person households are the most common household type in the city: around 40 per cent of all households.³⁴

While living alone can be an indicator of social advantage, particularly for young women, it can also be a risk factor for social isolation, particularly for people who are frail aged, with limited mobility, or recent immigrants.³⁵

The city's resident population is highly mobile: nearly 65 per cent of the city's population changed address in the five years to 2011 and more than half of residents had lived in the city less than five years.³⁶

This reflects an increase in availability of new dwellings, a higher proportion of residents renting than in other areas and a large student population – particularly international students.

Population growth and residential mobility, in and out of the city, can present challenges to generating and sustaining community connectedness, civic engagement and a shared sense of 'the public good.'

These challenges are illustrated in the fact that while more than two-thirds of residents surveyed in 2011 agreed most people can be trusted, only around half reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with feeling part of the community.³⁷ Similarly, while 95 per cent of residents said they would be willing to help a neighbour when needed, only 55 per cent felt their neighbours would help them. Residents surveyed in 2013 that felt they had good relations with their neighbours were also more likely to feel safe and had higher levels of wellbeing than those residents that felt they had neutral or poor relationships with neighbours.³⁸

“I don't have any family in the city, or close friends that I can ask a lot of. I worry about who will take me to hospital or look after me in an emergency all the time.”

Local resident

“We are low income earners and just hope we will be able to live in our area forever. My biggest fear is being kicked out and not being able to find somewhere we can afford in our area.”

Local resident

Housing affordability and financial stress

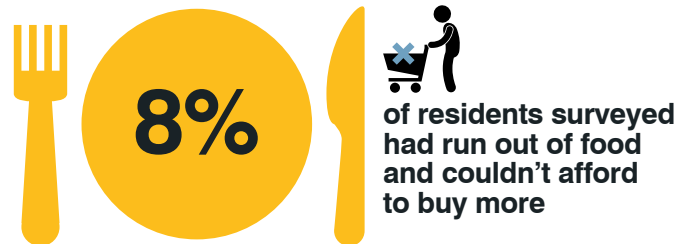
As for many Australian cities, housing affordability is an increasing issue for the city. Population and workforce growth, investor demand and limited land supply are driving affordability pressures across Greater Sydney, which are acute in inner Sydney. The cost of housing is rising far faster than incomes: during 2013–14 alone, the growth in dwelling sales prices was nine times average earnings growth. The dwelling price-to-earnings ratio in Sydney (9.0) is the fourth highest of major international cities and the highest of all Australian cities (the average median multiple is 6.3).³⁹

In 2011, 84 per cent of lower-income households in the city were in housing stress.⁴⁰ Evidence is emerging of people living in overcrowded and poor quality housing.⁴¹

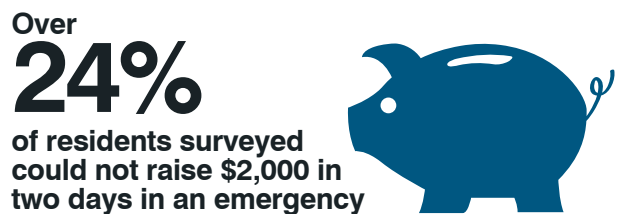
The lack of available social and affordable housing in the city is exacerbating this problem. There are less than 900 affordable rental housing dwellings in the city that are managed by community housing providers and rented at rates that are affordable for essential urban services workers and other lower income earners.⁴² This means many people cannot afford to live in the city, including teachers, nurses and ambulance drivers and other people who are typically lower paid, such as artists.

People on lower incomes who remain in the city more often have to make tough choices, such as cutting spending on essentials, such as food and clothing. This chronic financial stress impacts on people’s wellbeing, and threatens Sydney’s sustainable growth and productivity.

2011
Food security



Financial Stress





Northcott Estate / Kate Sharman

Social housing

Historically City of Sydney has had a higher proportion of social housing than Greater Sydney as a whole. In 2006 12 per cent of households lived in social housing, dropping to 10 per cent in 2011 (approximately 7,600 households).⁴³ This was double the Sydney metropolitan rates of 6 and 5 per cent respectively. In 2011 60 per cent of city households in social housing were lone persons, much higher than the city-wide rate of 40 per cent lone-person households.⁴⁴

The chronic undersupply of social housing across Sydney means public housing estates have increasingly become areas of concentrated disadvantage.

With increasing transformation of neighbouring suburbs and communities, public housing tenants have indicated they can feel socially excluded.⁴⁵ It is important as the city continues to develop that all residents feel they are included and respected with the opportunity for a good quality of life.

Homelessness

The City faces a serious undersupply of short-term rental accommodation for rough sleepers and people in crisis, along with longer term affordable housing options for lower income earners.

Homelessness is a big issue. In February 2016, 486 people were sleeping on the city's streets, a 77 per cent increase since 2013.⁴⁶

While complex social and economic factors cause homelessness, housing affordability is a major cause of the issue in the inner city. In a register of people sleeping rough in the city, 65 per cent stated that they just need housing they can afford and short term support to get them back on their feet.⁴⁷

“As inequality grows, so do the social distances and distinctions between us, and so does the potential for the pain of low social status, stigma and shame. To a great extent, we see ourselves through each other’s eyes and, in more unequal societies more of us find ourselves wanting in those reflections.”

K. Pickett & R. Wilkinson, UK⁴⁸



Poverty and rising inequality

While the city is becoming increasingly wealthy, communities experiencing poverty and disadvantage remain. These are dispersed throughout the local area, and more concentrated in areas of social housing.

In 2011, nearly a quarter of city residents reported experiencing financial stress and 8 per cent experiencing food insecurity at some point in the preceding 12 months.⁴⁹

In 2011, eight of the city's 29 suburbs scored in bottom half of Australia in terms of socio-economic disadvantage.⁵⁰ Three ranked in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged areas (deciles 1 and 2) of either Australia or NSW.⁵¹

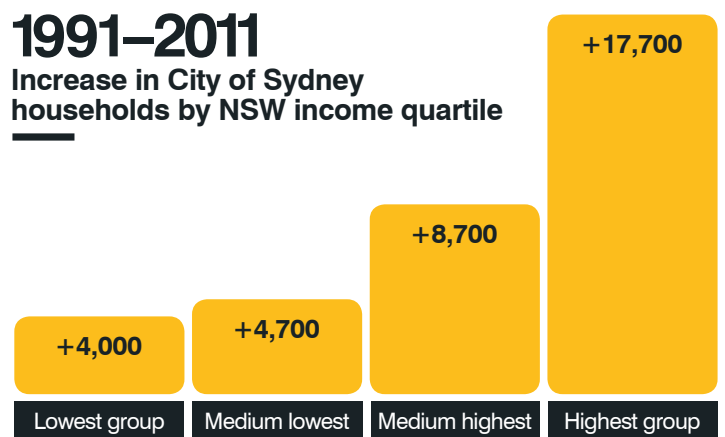
Inequality is also growing as the city becomes increasingly wealthy and the income gap widens between the most well-off residents and the least well-off residents.⁵² In 2011, the city had the fourth greatest level of income inequality in Greater Sydney region.⁵³

While the city has historically had a relatively large proportion of low-income households, over the past two decades there has been a significant shift towards a larger proportion of high-income households, with a relatively low proportion of people in the middle income quartiles.⁵⁴

The growing polarisation between rich and poor is increasingly recognised as a grave challenge to social sustainability – to our social cohesion, political and economic stability, and productivity.

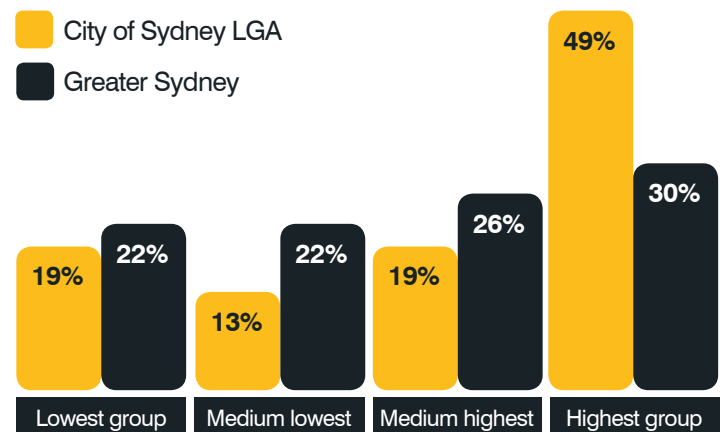
1991–2011

Increase in City of Sydney households by NSW income quartile



2011

Percentage of households in each NSW income quartile





Climate change and its impacts on us all

An important longer-term challenge – both locally and globally – is the impact of our changing climate.

Climate data and modelling shows that Sydney in 2070 will likely experience increased average temperatures and extreme heat days, more air pollution, less rainfall and increased drought conditions, and increased sea levels with coastal flooding.⁵⁵

The potential impacts include property damage from severe storms and flooding, power and transport infrastructure failure from extreme heat, and increased deaths and disease.

Some community members will be particularly vulnerable to these impacts, especially frail older people, children, people with a disability, and people who can't afford adequate cooling, heating or other 'climate-proofing'.⁵⁶

We need to understand the projected climate changes and the likely impacts so we can prepare and reduce the risks we face over time to ensure the City of Sydney remains a resilient, liveable and globally competitive place to live, work and play.

“Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.”

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

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SydneyYourSay.com.au

city of villages