

Geography Level 8

Chapter 2 — Place and liveability

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Measuring liveability — and how it shapes where people choose to live

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In this section

Everyone lives somewhere, and everyone has opinions about where they live. But geographers do more than give opinions. They look for **measures** — information that can be checked — to describe how good a place is to live in, and they use those measures to **evaluate** places: to make a reasoned judgement about them.

In this section you will learn:

- what **liveability** means, and how it is measured — and why the word is contested;
- the difference between **objective** measures (numbers that are counted or recorded) and **subjective** measures (people's perceptions, gathered by asking them) — the key distinction this whole chapter uses;
- the families of measures used to evaluate places: **environmental**, **economic** and **social**, plus the values that do not fit easily into any family;
- how organisations turn many measures into a single **liveability index** — and why the weights they choose can be contested;
- where Victorians actually choose to live, using real Australian data;
- the influences on where people choose to live: income, work, family and community, schools, lifestyle and environmental quality.

Key words to learn: liveability, measure, environmental measures, economic measures, social measures, objective, subjective, perception, survey, index, weighted score, density, median, remoteness, internal migration, tree change, sea change, aesthetic value.

1. What is liveability?

Defining our terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *liveability* but does not define it, and different organisations define it in different ways. In this section, *liveability* means **how good a place is to live in, judged by what the place offers the people who live there**. Where we refer to another organisation's definition, we say whose it is.

A place is **liveable** when it meets the needs of the people who live there and makes their lives safe, comfortable and enjoyable. Different people need different things from a place. A family with young children may care most about schools and parks. A retiree may care most about health services and quiet streets. A worker may care most about how long it takes to reach a job. So two things shape liveability: what a place *has*, and *who* is judging it. That second point is why liveability is contested — two people can look at the same place and judge it in different ways, and neither is wrong.

One more idea matters here. Liveability is not fixed: people change it. A new park, a new train line, a cleaner creek, a safer crossing — all of these change how good a place is to live in. Measuring liveability and changing liveability go together.

How do you measure something so personal? Geographers begin with one big distinction — between two very different kinds of measure. It is the key to the rest of this section, and to the whole chapter.

2. Objective and subjective measures

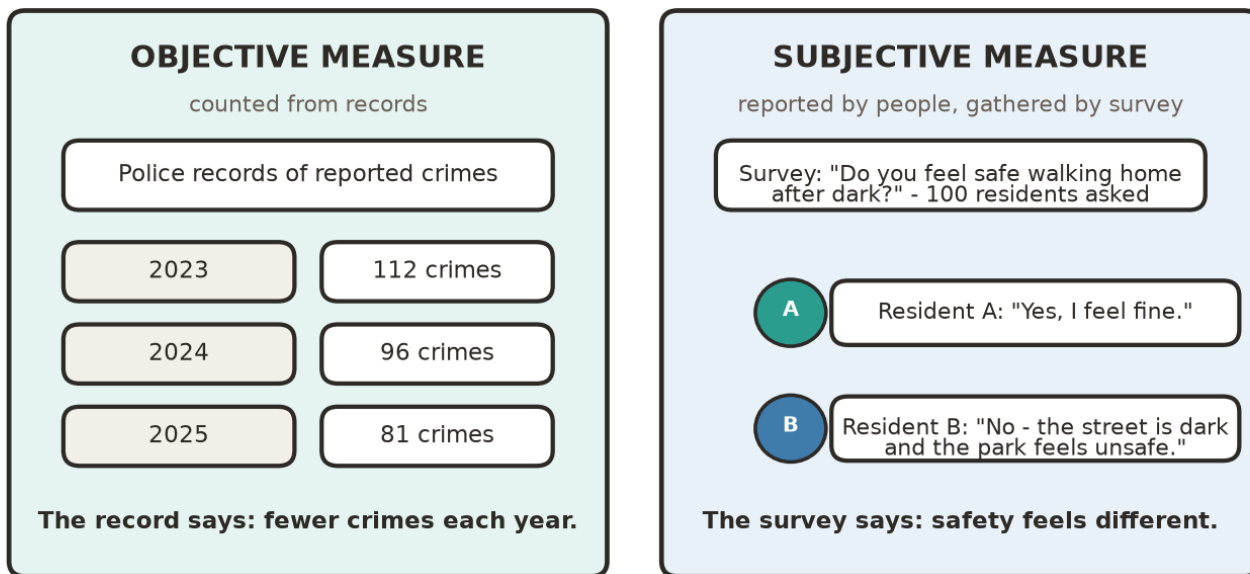
There are two very different ways to measure the same thing, and geographers need both.

An **objective measure** is one that is counted or recorded, so different people who check it should get the same answer. The number of crimes recorded in a suburb in a year is objective: it comes from police records. The average January temperature of a town is objective: it comes from a weather station. So are the things governments build and count — transport infrastructure such as train lines and roads, and medical services such as hospitals.

A **subjective measure** is one that reports people’s own perceptions — how things seem to them. Perceptions are gathered by asking people, usually through a **survey** (a set of questions asked to a group of people). How safe people *feel* walking home at night is subjective: two people can walk the same street and have different feelings about it.

Two ways to measure the same thing: how safe is this suburb?

A model suburb, invented for class discussion. Both measures are about safety.



Records count what happened. Surveys report how life feels.

Model data, invented for class discussion - neither card shows a real suburb.

Model diagram comparing two ways of measuring how safe a suburb is: on the left an objective measure, police records of reported crimes falling from 112 in 2023 to 96 in 2024 and 81 in 2025; on the right a subjective measure, a survey of 100 residents in which resident A feels fine while resident B does not, because the street is dark and the park feels unsafe

The numbers and responses in this figure are model data, invented for class discussion. They show the difference between the two kinds of measure, not real results.

Notice something important about the figure. The recorded numbers fall each year — the objective story is “this suburb got safer”. But one resident still does not feel safe after dark. Neither side is wrong. The records count what *happened*; the survey reports how life *feels*. A place’s liveability depends on both.

Objective and subjective measures can disagree in either direction:

- a suburb can have low recorded crime yet residents who feel unsafe (perhaps because of poor lighting or news reports);
- a suburb can have higher recorded crime yet residents who feel fine (perhaps because they know their neighbours well).

Comparing the two kinds of measure is one of the most useful things a geographer can do. It stops us thinking that numbers tell the whole story — and it stops us thinking feelings tell the whole story either.

3. Digital Twin Victoria: place data in layers

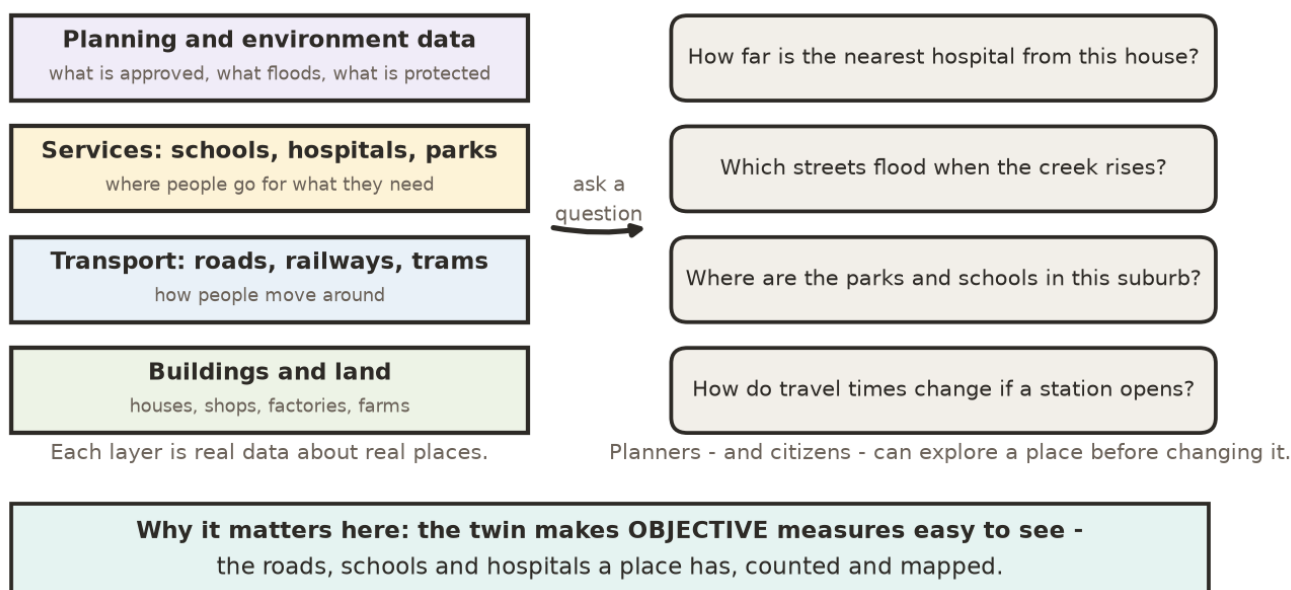
Victoria has a public online tool called **Digital Twin Victoria**. It is a digital 3D model of the state that brings together data about places — buildings, transport, services and more — stacked in layers, so that planners and citizens can explore information about an area on a screen.

Digital Twin Victoria: one place, many layers of data

A Victorian Government platform: a digital 3D model of the state, with place data stacked in layers.

The twin: a digital 3D model you can zoom into

Questions the layers can help answer



Schematic of the Digital Twin Victoria platform: on the left a stack of four place-data layers (buildings and land; transport: roads, railways, trams; services: schools, hospitals, parks; planning and environment data), and on the right four questions the layers can help answer, such as how far the nearest hospital is from a house and which streets flood when the creek rises

Tools like this are one way governments make objective data about liveability easier to see and compare. Each layer in the twin is an objective measure: counted, recorded and mapped. A question such as “how far is the nearest hospital from this house?” can be answered the same way by anyone who checks — that is what objective means. The twin cannot answer subjective questions, like “does this street feel safe at night?” — for those, you still have to ask people.

4. The families of measures

Objective or subjective, measures of liveability usually fall into three families: **environmental**, **economic** and **social**. Some things people value — such as beauty, culture and spiritual meaning — do not fit easily into those three families, so the content description also allows for **other** measures.

How good is this place to live in?

Three families of measures - plus the values that do not fit into them.

Family	What it asks	Examples	Usually...
Environmental	What is the natural world like here?	Clean air and water; parks favourable climate; low noise	objective it can be counted
Economic	Can people earn and afford life here?	Jobs and pay; housing costs transport; nearby shops	objective it can be counted
Social	Are people safe, healthy, connected?	Crime levels; hospitals; doctors schools; family and community	both records and surveys
Other measures	What meaning and beauty does it hold?	Cultural ties; spiritual meaning views; tree-lined streets; lights	subjective people report it

The same place can score well in one family and badly in another -
and two people can weigh the families in different ways.

Table figure sorting liveability measures into four families. Environmental measures ask what the natural world is like here (clean air and water, parks, a favourable climate, low noise). Economic measures ask whether people can earn and afford life here (jobs and pay, housing costs, transport, nearby shops). Social measures ask whether people are safe, healthy and connected (crime levels, hospitals and doctors, schools, family and community). Other measures ask what meaning and beauty a place holds (cultural ties, spiritual meaning, views, tree-lined streets, city lights)

Environmental measures describe the natural surroundings of a place and how clean and healthy they are: clean land, air and water; a favourable climate (not too hot, not too dry, not too stormy); parks, gardens and open space; low noise and low pollution.

Economic measures describe money, work and how much things cost: how many jobs there are and what they pay; the cost of housing, to rent or to buy; transport to work, schools and shops; whether shops and other services are nearby.

Social measures describe people's safety, health, learning and connections with others: safety and crime levels; access to hospitals, doctors and other health services; schools and other places to learn; being near family, friends and community.

Beyond the three families. Places also hold value that is harder to count. **Cultural** value comes from the traditions and connections of cultural groups — for example, living near a community, festival or place of worship that matters to you. **Spiritual** value comes from the meanings people attach to places — a memorial, a place of worship, or the town your family came from. **Aesthetic** value (say it: es-THET-ik) comes from beauty and what pleases the eye — a view over the sea, a tree-lined street, or the “bright lights” of a big city at night. These values are real reasons people choose where to live, even though they cannot be measured with a number.

5. One score from many measures: liveability indexes

You will sometimes see news stories saying that one city is “the most liveable in the world”. These claims come from **liveability indexes**. An **index** is a single score built by combining several measures.

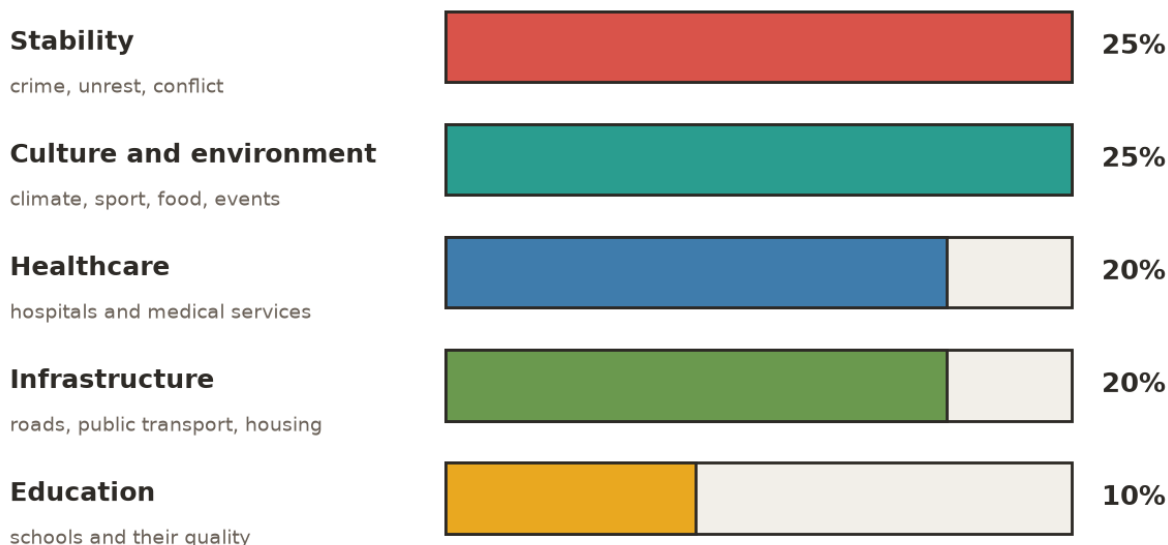
Building an index takes three steps:

1. **Choose the measures.** Decide which things matter (safety? hospitals? climate?).
2. **Score each measure.** Give each place a number on each measure, often out of 10 or out of 100.
3. **Combine the scores.** Add the scores together. Usually the scores are **weighted** first: a weighted score counts some measures as more important than others. For example, if healthcare has a weight of 20%, it contributes one-fifth of the total.

One of the best-known international indexes is the **Global Liveability Index**, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). It scores cities in five categories with these weights:

How one famous index builds its score

The EIU Global Liveability Index weights its five categories like this.



Weights published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (retrieved 25 August 2026).
Each category is scored out of 100, weighted, then added into one city score.

Bar chart of the five categories of the EIU Global Liveability Index and their weights: stability 25 per cent, culture and environment 25 per cent, healthcare 20 per cent, infrastructure 20 per cent and education 10 per cent

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Liveability Index method (category weights only — no city rankings are reproduced), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Why indexes are contested. Look closely at the figure. Two people who both care about liveability can still disagree about those weights. Someone who values schools above all would give education more than 10%. Someone who values safety might want stability weighted more heavily. Changing the weights can change which city comes first. That is why a liveability index is not “the truth about a city”. It is one organisation’s measured judgement, built on choices about what to include and how much each part should count.

Indexes also rely mainly on objective measures. They struggle to include the subjective side — whether people feel at home, welcome and connected. Two places can score the same on an index while feeling very different to live in.

The next figure proves the point with model data. The two towns have *the same scores* on every measure. Only the weights change — and the winner flips.

Same scores, different weights - a different winner

Two model towns scored out of 10 by the same three families of measures.

Weights A: environment first				
Measure (out of 10)	Weight	Hillcrest	Seaview	
Environment	50%	8	6	
Economy	20%	5	9	
Social	30%	7	7	
TOTAL		7.1	6.9	

Hillcrest wins, 7.1 to 6.9

Hillcrest: $4.0 + 1.0 + 2.1 = 7.1$

Seaview: $3.0 + 1.8 + 2.1 = 6.9$

Weights B: economy first				
Measure (out of 10)	Weight	Hillcrest	Seaview	
Environment	20%	8	6	
Economy	50%	5	9	
Social	30%	7	7	
TOTAL		6.2	7.8	

Seaview wins, 7.8 to 6.2

Hillcrest: $1.6 + 2.5 + 2.1 = 6.2$

Seaview: $1.2 + 4.5 + 2.1 = 7.8$

Nothing changed except the weights - yet the "best" town changed too.

Model data, invented for class discussion. The arithmetic is the point.

Every index hides choices like these. Asking "what weights did they use?" is geography.

Two worked scorecards for the model towns Hillcrest and Seaview, each scored out of 10 for environment (8 and 6), economy (5 and 9) and social (7 and 7). With weights of 50, 20 and 30 per cent, Hillcrest wins 7.1 to 6.9; with weights of 20, 50 and 30 per cent, Seaview wins 7.8 to 6.2. The weighted working for each town is written out under each scorecard

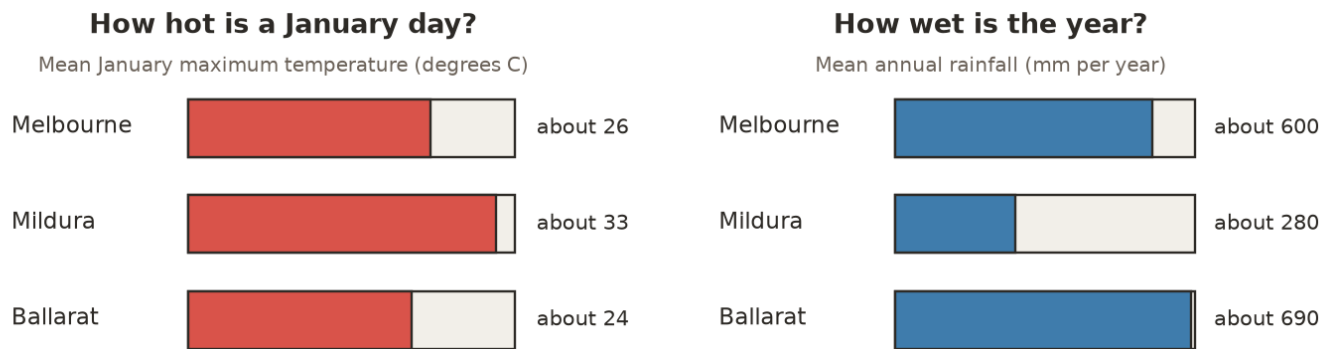
The scores in this figure are model data, invented for class discussion. The weighted-total arithmetic is what you should learn.

Worked demonstration 1 — Comparing the environmental quality of three Victorian places

Environmental quality is one family of liveability measures. The curriculum's own list of environmental-quality measures includes how clean the land, air and water are, views, facilities for recreation, and a favourable climate. Let us compare three real Victorian places on one of these: climate.

Three Victorian climates, side by side

Bureau of Meteorology long-term averages (1991–2020), rounded.



Mildura: hot and dry. Ballarat: cool and wet. Melbourne: in between.

The numbers are objective. Deciding which climate is "best" is a human judgement.

Source: Bureau of Meteorology climate averages, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Two bar charts comparing the climate of three Victorian places: mean January maximum temperature about 26 degrees in Melbourne, 33 in Mildura and 24 in Ballarat; and mean annual rainfall about 600 millimetres in Melbourne, 280 in Mildura and 690 in Ballarat

Source: Bureau of Meteorology long-term climate averages (1991–2020), rounded, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Step 1 — Read the temperature chart. Mildura's January days average about 33 °C — a full 9 degrees hotter than Ballarat's. Melbourne sits in between.

Step 2 — Read the rainfall chart. Ballarat receives about 690 mm of rain a year, more than twice Mildura's 280 mm. Melbourne is in between again.

Step 3 — Describe the climates in words. Mildura: hot and dry. Ballarat: cool and wet. Melbourne: moderate on both counts.

Step 4 — Think like a geographer. Which place has the "best" climate? The question has no single answer, because climate is an objective measure but our *judgement* of it is subjective. A person who grows fruit for a living may prefer Mildura's hot, sunny, dry summers. A person who loves cool, green hills may prefer Ballarat. Someone who dislikes both heat and damp might choose Melbourne.

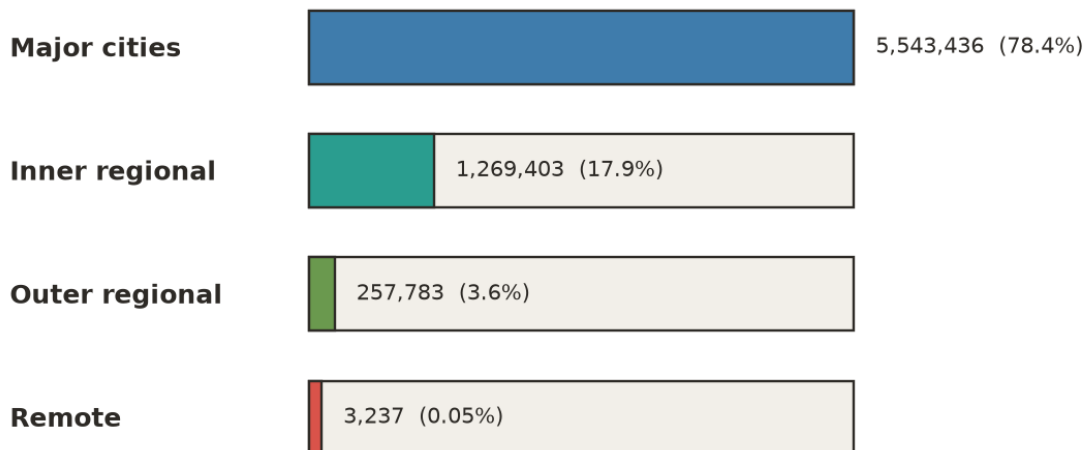
Geographer's conclusion: the same objective measure — climate — can suit one person and not another. That is why liveability studies must always say *who* they are measuring for, and *which* measures they chose. Environmental quality influences where people choose to live — but in different ways for different people.

6. Where do Victorians choose to live?

Now for the second half of the content description: how liveability shapes where people choose to live. Start with the facts about where Victorians live today.

Where do Victorians live?

Estimated resident population by Remoteness Area, 30 June 2025 (ABS cat. 3218.0).



Nearly four in five Victorians live in a major city - almost all in Melbourne.

Remoteness Areas group places by how far they sit, by road, from service centres.

Victoria total: 7,073,859. Figures from ABS Regional population, 2024-25; percentages computed.

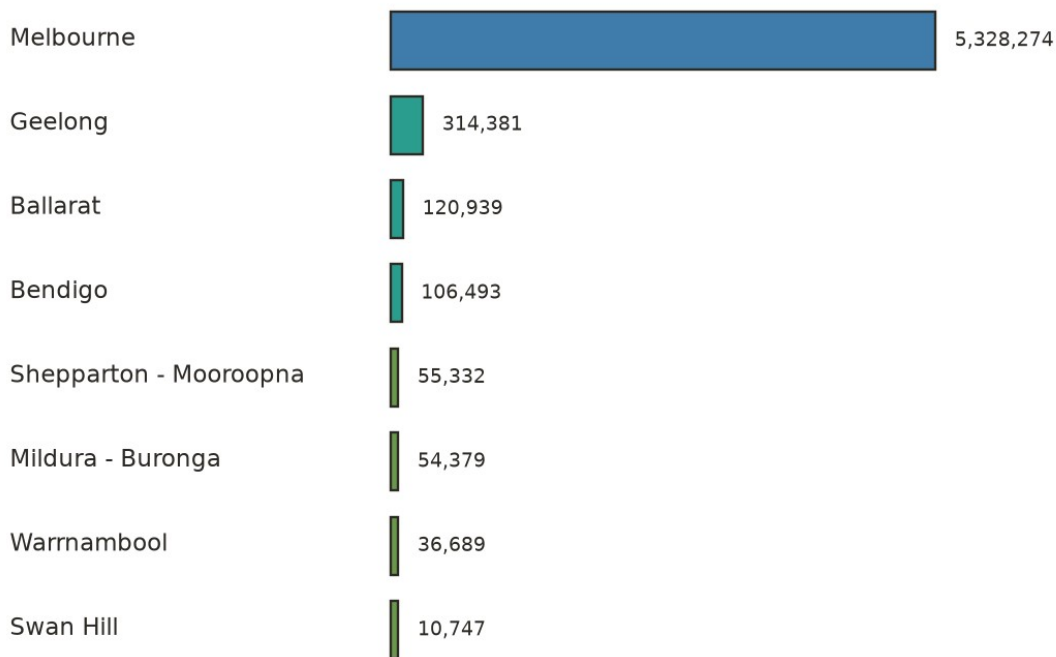
Bar chart of where Victorians live by remoteness area at 30 June 2025: major cities 5,543,436 people (78.4 per cent), inner regional 1,269,403 (17.9 per cent), outer regional 257,783 (3.6 per cent) and remote 3,237 (0.05 per cent), out of a Victorian total of 7,073,859

Source: ABS, Regional population, 2024–25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026. Remoteness areas describe how far places are from the big services of the cities.

Nearly four in five Victorians live in the major-city area. The next figure looks at the same pattern a different way — as a ladder of Victoria's cities and towns.

Victoria's settlement ladder

Estimated resident population of Victoria's biggest urban areas, 30 June 2025.



Melbourne is about 17 times bigger than Geelong - and about 500 times bigger than Swan Hill.

Source: ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0); ratios computed from the published values.

Bar chart ladder of the populations of Victoria's cities and towns at 30 June 2025: Melbourne 5,328,274; Geelong 314,381; Ballarat 120,939; Bendigo 106,493; Shepparton-Mooroopna 55,332; Mildura-Buronga 54,379; Warrnambool 36,689; and Swan Hill 10,747 — Melbourne is about 17 times the size of Geelong and about 500 times the size of Swan Hill

Source: ABS, Regional population, 2024–25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Melbourne concentrates jobs, hospitals, universities, transport, sport and entertainment — many of the economic and social measures from Section 4. The concentration is striking when you look at **density**: how many people live in each square kilometre.

How crowded is one square kilometre?

Population density = people divided by land area. Worked from published figures.



Victoria is crowded by Australian standards - but the average hides the pattern:

most of those people live in Melbourne, while the Mallee and the Alps are nearly empty.

Data: ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0); ABS ASGS Edition 3 land areas; computed here.

Two panels computing population density: Victoria, 7,073,859 people divided by 227,444 square kilometres, gives about 31 people per square kilometre; Australia, 27,613,654 people divided by 7,692,024 square kilometres, gives about 3.6 people per square kilometre

Data: ABS, Regional population, 2024–25 (cat. 3218.0); ABS ASGS Edition 3 land areas; densities computed here; retrieved 25 August 2026.

Victoria is crowded by Australian standards — about 31 people per square kilometre against about 3.6 for the whole country — but the average hides the pattern: most of those people live in Melbourne, while the Mallee and the Alps are nearly empty. Density shapes liveability in both directions: high density puts shops, jobs and transport close by, but it can also bring noise, traffic and little garden space. Low density brings space and quiet, but services are further away.

Where people live is not standing still. The fastest-growing places in Victoria are on Melbourne's outer fringe — suburbs of newer houses that cost less than homes closer to the centre — and some regional towns are growing too. Worked demonstration 2 looks at the growth numbers and asks why people are making these choices.

7. What influences where people choose to live?

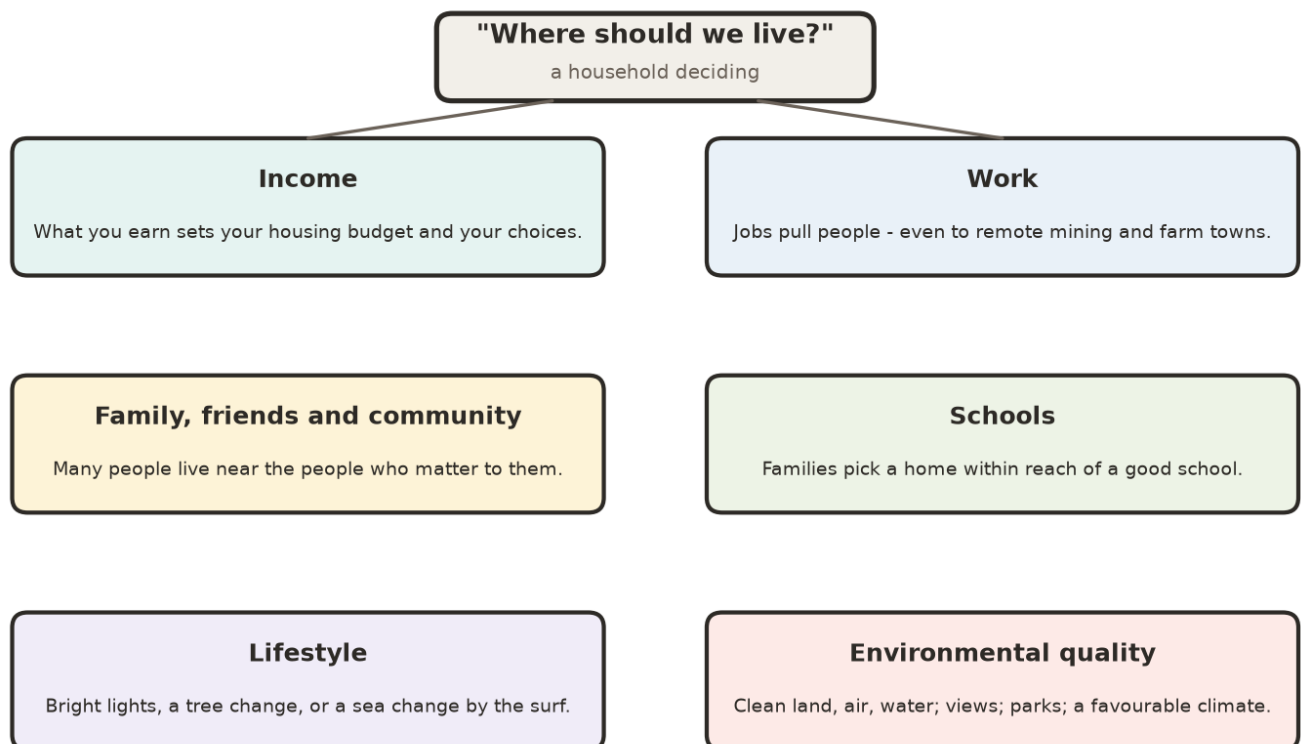
Geographers have studied this question for decades. The main influences are:

- **Income.** What you earn sets your housing budget. In 2021, the **median** household income in Victoria was \$1,639 a week, and across Australia it was \$1,746 (ABS 2021 Census; the median is the middle value — half of households earn more, half earn less). Housing near the centre of Melbourne costs more than housing on the fringe or in country towns, so many households move further out to find a home they can afford.
- **Place of employment.** People choose homes within reach of work. Some jobs even pull people to remote places — for example, mining and farm work pay wages that draw workers to places far from the cities.
- **Family, friends and community.** Many people live near relatives or near others who share their culture or language. Being near the people who matter to you is a social measure of liveability with real pull.

- **Schools.** Families with children compare schools and often choose a home within reach of the school they want.
- **Lifestyle.** Some people want the “bright lights” of the city — its cafes, sport and events. Others make a **tree change** (moving to the country or the bush) or a **sea change** (moving to the coast) to gain space, scenery and a slower pace.
- **Environmental quality.** Clean land, clean air and clean water, good views, places for recreation, and a favourable climate all draw people. Worked demonstration 1 showed that different climates attract different people.
- **Liveability itself.** When people can choose, they compare places — consciously or not — on the measures in this section.

Why do people live where they live?

Six influences geographers look for - plus liveability itself.



And the seventh: liveability itself - when people can choose, they compare places.

Model diagram. The influences pull together - and in different ways for every household.

Model diagram with the household question “Where should we live?” above six influence cards: income; work; family, friends and community; schools; lifestyle; and environmental quality

Model diagram. The influences pull together — and in different ways for every household.

One last caution, linking back to Section 2. A place’s liveability numbers can look good while some residents still do not thrive there — because their income, their family ties or their needs are not reflected in the averages. Measures describe a place on average; individual lives vary. Good geography keeps both ideas in mind at once.

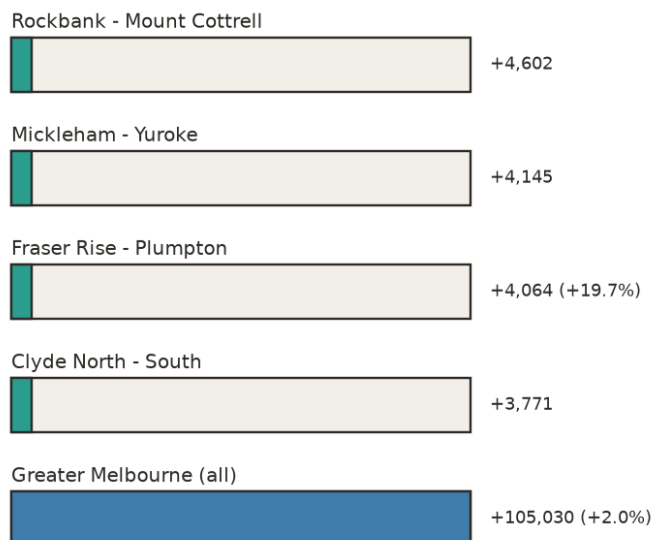
Worked demonstration 2 — Where Victoria grew in 2024–25, and why

The growth data below is real, from the ABS. Let us reason with it like geographers about where people choose to live.

Where Victoria grew in 2024-25

ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0). Left: people added. Right: Australia-wide.

People added, 2024-25



All of Australia, 2024-25



More people left the capital cities for other parts of Australia than arrived in them.

That is the tree change and sea change, measured.

All four top growth areas are on Melbourne's outer fringe.

Source: ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Bar chart of population change in 2024-25: people added in Rockbank-Mount Cottrell (+4,602), Mickleham-Yuroke (+4,145), Fraser Rise-Plumpton (+4,064, up 19.7 per cent) and Clyde North-South (+3,771), compared with Greater Melbourne overall (+105,030, up 2.0 per cent); beside it, Australia-wide figures for the same year: the capital cities lost 29,800 people through net internal migration, while regional Australia grew by 94,700 people

Source: ABS, Regional population, 2024–25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Step 1 — Read the growth chart. In 2024–25, the four fastest-growing places in Victoria were all on Melbourne's outer fringe: Rockbank – Mount Cottrell (+4,602 people), Mickleham – Yuroke (+4,145), Fraser Rise – Plumpton (+4,064, up 19.7%) and Clyde North – South (+3,771). Greater Melbourne as a whole grew 2.0% — the fringe grew many times faster.

Step 2 — Ask who is moving. Suburbs that grow by a fifth in a single year are full of new houses and new households — above all, young families buying their first home.

Step 3 — Bring in income and housing. The median weekly household income across Australia was \$1,746 at the 2021 Census (ABS), and \$1,639 in Victoria. Houses close to Melbourne's centre cost far more than many such households can pay. On the fringe, newer houses are within reach.

Step 4 — Read the Australia-wide numbers. In the same year, the capital cities lost 29,800 people to the rest of Australia (net internal migration — people moving within the country), while regional Australia grew by 94,700. More people left the capitals for other parts of Australia than arrived in them. That is the tree change and sea change, measured.

Step 5 — Weigh the trade-off. Fringe households accept longer trips to work, hospitals and events. In return they gain space, a newer home, and schools and parks built for young families. Tree changers accept fewer services for space, scenery and pace. The growth numbers tell us that many households judge these trades worth making.

Geographer's conclusion: patterns of where people live are liveability choices made visible. The fastest growth is not chance — it is thousands of household decisions about income, housing, work, family and lifestyle, the same influences you met in Section 7.

8. Fieldwork hook: measuring your own place

You now have the tools to measure the liveability of your own suburb or town. The survey below is a model you can adapt.

LIVEABILITY SURVEY - MY LOCAL AREA

MODEL FORM - copy it and adapt it to your suburb or town

1. I feel safe walking near my home after dark.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

2. Public transport gets me where I need to go.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

3. There are parks and open spaces near my home.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

4. The streets near me are clean and quiet.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

5. I know some of my neighbours.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

6. I could reach a doctor quickly if I needed one.

☐ strongly agree ☐ ☐ unsure ☐ ☐ strongly disagree

About you (no names):

age group: under 18 / 18-39 / 40-64 / 65+ years lived here: _____

Keep the scale the same for everyone - then the answers can be compared.

Model liveability survey form for a local area, with six agree-disagree questions (feeling safe near home after dark; public transport reaching where you need to go; parks and open spaces nearby; clean and quiet streets; knowing some neighbours; reaching a doctor quickly), each on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, plus an age-group and years-lived-here field, ready to copy and adapt to any suburb or town

Model form. Keep the scale the same for everyone — then the answers can be compared.

Three rules make a survey worth doing:

1. **Ask the same questions, with the same scale, every time.** Then answers can be compared and tallied.
2. **Record who answered** (for example, an age group) — never names. Different groups may judge the same place in different ways.

3. **Pair subjective questions with objective checks.** “I feel safe walking near my home after dark” is a perception; the recorded crime level and the street lighting are the objective side. Comparing the two is the Section 2 skill, practised on your own place.

You now have subjective liveability data about your own place — and the habit of checking it against the records. Section 2F of this chapter takes local responses further, and Section 5B teaches fieldwork and survey methods in full.

Practice — scaffolded

- Q1.** Define **liveability** as it is used in this section, and give one reason why another organisation might define the word in a different way.
- Q2.** Classify each of these as an objective measure or a subjective measure: (a) the number of hospitals in a town; (b) residents rating their local park out of 10; (c) the recorded crime rate; (d) how safe residents feel at the train station; (e) the average January temperature.
- Q3.** Use the families-of-measures figure. (a) Add one example of your own to each of the three families, not already in the figure. (b) Name one aesthetic value near where you live, and say who it matters to.
- Q4.** Use the EIU weights figure. (a) Which two categories carry the highest weight? (b) Which carries the lowest? (c) If you built an index for choosing where your family lives, which category would you weight most heavily, and why?
- Q5.** Use the weights-flip figure. (a) With weights A (50%, 20%, 30%), show with your own working that Hillcrest’s total is 7.1. (b) In one sentence, explain why the winner changes under weights B even though no score changes.
- Q6.** Use the three figures in Section 6. (a) What percentage of Victorians lived in the major-city area at 30 June 2025? (b) About how many times larger is Melbourne than Swan Hill? (c) Give one economic and one social measure that help explain why so many Victorians live in one city.
- Q7.** Use the model survey in Section 8. (a) Which of its six questions collect subjective data? (b) For question 1 (feeling safe after dark), name one objective measure you could check it against, and say where that record would come from.
-

Practice — unscaffolded

- Q8.** “A liveability index tells you how good a place is to live in.” Identify one strength and one weakness of this claim. Use the EIU weights figure and the weights-flip figure in your answer.
- Q9.** Explain, using two named Victorian places from worked demonstration 1, why the same objective measure can attract one person and repel another.
- Q10.** In 2024–25 the capital cities lost 29,800 people to the rest of Australia through net internal migration, while regional Australia grew by 94,700. What do these two numbers suggest about the choices Australians made that year? Link your answer to the tree change or sea change, and to one economic measure.
- Q11.** A friend says: “Objective measures are facts, so we should ignore surveys about how people feel.” Write a short reply arguing for or against this view. Refer to the crime example in Section 2.
-

Extended response

Q12. “Liveability rankings tell us which places are the best to live in.”

Evaluate this claim in about 200 words. The strongest responses will:

- state a clear position (agree, disagree, or agree with limits);
 - steelman the other side — give the best argument *against* your position before you answer it;
 - use at least **two** figures from this section as evidence;
 - refer to the difference between objective and subjective measures, and to the choices hidden in weights;
 - refer to the sources of the evidence.
-

Teaching notes (for the teacher)

This section delivers VC2HG8K06 and draws on elaborations .E01, .E02, .E03 and .E05. Elaboration .E04 is excluded per the series content policy and §2A of this build’s TOC; nothing in this section draws on it, and no task assumes it. Cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values (.E01) are taught in neutral, non-Indigenous examples only.

This is the Level 8 book — the band’s destination year, where the Levels 7 and 8 achievement standard is stated. The standard’s expectation that students explain liveability and think about how people measure it and change it is practised here to assessment depth: the objective-versus-subjective distinction and the weighting arithmetic carry the measuring half, Section 1’s “liveability is not fixed: people change it” carries the half about people changing it, and the extended response (Q12) asks students to *evaluate* — the CD’s own verb — with a steelman and sourced evidence. The section hands forward to 2E (the concept-application capstone, which must draw its evidence from 2A–2D) and to 2F/5B for the local fieldwork investigation; the fieldwork hook in Section 8 is deliberately light.

Suggested sequence: define the term and its contested nature → objective versus subjective (the chapter’s analytic engine, per the TOC chapter notes, including Digital Twin Victoria at awareness level) → the families of measures (plus cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values from .E01) → how an index is built and why it is contested → worked demonstration 1 (environmental quality, .E05) → where Victorians live (real 2024–25 data) → the influences on where people live (.E01, .E03) → worked demonstration 2 (growth and movement) → the fieldwork hook. The two worked demonstrations use real, cited data (BoM climate averages; ABS population, growth, internal-migration and income figures); the two-measures, weights-flip, choices and survey figures are clearly-labelled model data, for teaching the objective/subjective distinction, weighting arithmetic, influence mapping and fieldwork design respectively.

Data sources, all retrieved 25 August 2026: ABS *Regional population, 2024–25* (cat. 3218.0) (ERP by remoteness area and by city/town at 30 June 2025; 2024–25 growth of the outer-fringe SA2s and of Greater Melbourne; capital-city net internal migration –29,800 and regional Australia growth +94,700); ABS ASGS Edition 3 land areas (used to compute the density figures); ABS 2021 Census (median weekly household income: Australia \$1,746; Victoria \$1,639); Bureau of Meteorology climate averages 1991–2020 (rounded); Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Liveability Index methodology (category weights only — no city rankings are reproduced). Densities are computed from the published population and land-area figures as shown.

Vocabulary sits at or below the Year 8 ceiling except three exemption classes: (1) the curriculum’s own words (e.g. *evaluate*, *recreation facilities*, *infrastructure*); (2) subject terms defined at first use (e.g. *liveability*, *weighted score*, *median*, *density*, *remoteness*, *internal migration*, *aesthetic value*); (3) proper nouns and numerals (Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Mildura, Warrnambool, Swan Hill, Rockbank, Mount Cottrell, Mickleham, Yuroke, Fraser Rise, Plumpton, Clyde North, the Mallee, the Alps, EIU, ABS, BoM), which the raw gate flags above the ceiling and which are accepted under this exemption. Figure text is registered in .txt manifests beside each PNG and is included in the vocabulary gate.

Glossary

Liveability — how good a place is to live in, judged by what the place offers the people who live there (this section's working definition; see Section 1). **Measure** — a piece of information, usually a number, used to describe or compare something. **Environmental measures** — measures of the natural surroundings: clean land, air and water; climate; parks; noise and pollution. **Economic measures** — measures of money and work: jobs, incomes, housing costs, transport, nearby shops and services. **Social measures** — measures of safety, health, learning and connection: crime, hospitals, schools, family and community. **Objective measure** — a measure that is counted or recorded, so different checkers should get the same answer. **Subjective measure** — a measure that reports people's perceptions, usually gathered by survey. **Perception** — the way something seems to a person. **Survey** — a set of questions asked to a group of people to gather their views. **Index** — a single score built by combining several measures. **Weighted score** — a score in which some measures count for more than others, according to set weights. **Density** — the number of people living in each square kilometre. **Median** — the middle value: half of the group is above it and half below it. **Remoteness** — how far a place is from the big services of the cities; ABS remoteness areas run from major cities to remote. **Internal migration** — people moving within a country; net internal migration is the balance of people arriving and leaving an area. **Tree change** — moving from a city to the country or the bush. **Sea change** — moving to the coast. **Aesthetic value** — value that comes from beauty, or from what pleases the eye.

Close to what you need: access to services and how liveable a place feels

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Geography, Levels 7 and 8 band, strand *Geographical Knowledge and Understanding*, sub-strand *Place and liveability*. Content description: VC2HG8K07.

Elaborations drawn on: VC2HG8K07.E01 · VC2HG8K07.E02 · VC2HG8K07.E03 · VC2HG8K07.E04.

In this section

Section 2A showed that liveability is measured in families of measures — environmental, economic and social — and that a place’s liveability is in part a matter of **perception**: how the place seems to the people who live there. This section zooms in on one of the biggest influences on those perceptions: whether the things people need and want are within reach.

In this section you will learn:

- what **services and facilities** are — the retail, education, health and entertainment places a community uses — and what **distribution** means: where those places sit across space;
- what **accessibility** means, and why the word is contested — two people can define it in different ways and both be right;
- how Australia sorts places by access, using the ABS remoteness classes, and where Australians actually live on that ladder;
- what the access gap looks like in real health data — GP visits, telehealth and hospital stays — and what it means for people’s perceptions of their places;
- how services thin out from inner urban to remote areas, and how **transport** decides what “within reach” really means;
- how Melbourne and Singapore plan for access in different ways, and how to read the distribution of services from an aerial-style view of contrasting Australian places.

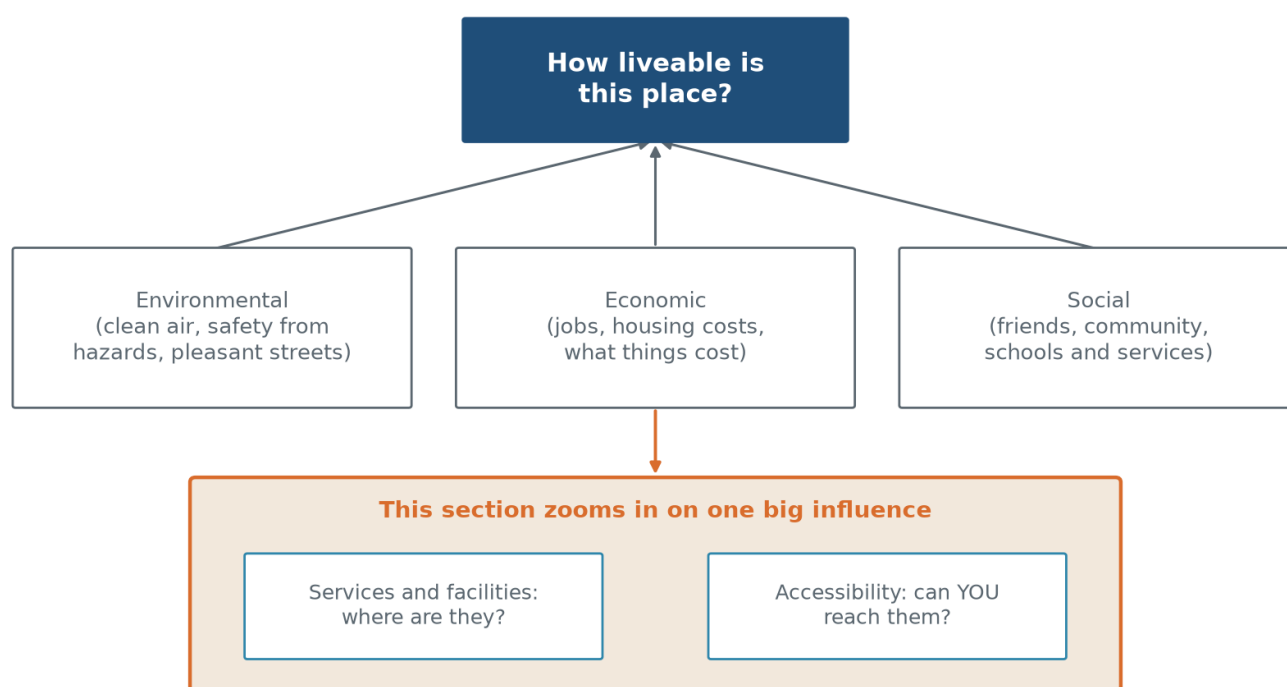
Key words to learn: accessibility, services and facilities, distribution, remoteness, telehealth, bulk-billed, perception, 20-minute neighbourhood, hospital separation, potentially preventable hospitalisation.

1. Services, facilities and their distribution

A **service** or **facility** is a place a community uses: a shop or supermarket (retail), a school or library (education), a doctor’s clinic, chemist or hospital (health), a pool, cinema, park or community house (entertainment). Section 2A sorted these into the economic and social families of liveability measures. This section asks a different question about them — not “do they make a place liveable?” (they do) but **where they are**, and **who can reach them**.

Distribution is the geographer’s word for where things sit across space. The distribution of hospitals in Australia is not even: hospitals cluster where people cluster. The same is true of schools, supermarkets and cinemas. Uneven distribution is not automatically a problem — what matters is whether people can still reach what they need. That question has a name: accessibility.

Liveability has many influences — one of them is access



Concept map for this section: at the top the question “How liveable is this place?”, fed by three families of influences — environmental (clean air, safety from hazards, pleasant streets), economic (jobs, housing costs, what things cost) and social (friends, community, schools and services); at the bottom a zoom frame labelled “This section zooms in on one big influence”, in which “Services and facilities: where are they?” points to “Accessibility: can YOU reach them?”

Original model diagram for this section. No real places or data.

The map makes the section’s argument in one picture. Where services sit is the objective half of the story — it can be counted and mapped, exactly as Section 2A counts objective measures. Whether *you* can reach them is the half that shapes how liveable a place seems to you.

2. Accessibility: defining a contested term

Defining our terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *accessibility* but does not define it, and different organisations define it in different ways. In this section, *accessibility* means **how easy it is for people to reach and use the services and facilities they need or want**. Where we refer to another organisation’s definition, we say whose it is.

Accessibility is contested because two sensible definitions compete:

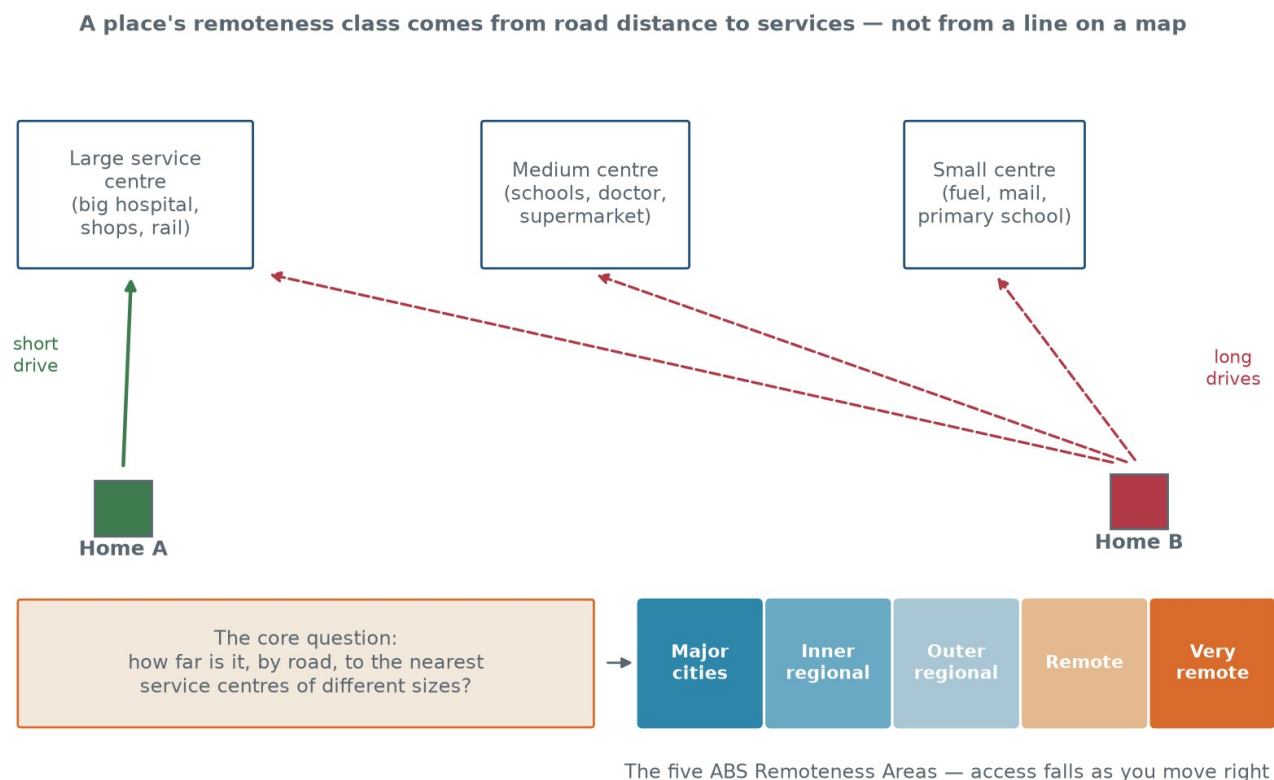
- **Access as distance and time.** Many planners measure accessibility by travel: how many minutes to the nearest doctor, shop or station, by car or on foot. On this definition, accessibility is an objective measure — anyone checking the map gets the same answer.
- **Access as what people can actually use.** Others argue a service only counts as accessible if the people who need it can genuinely use it. A bus stop 400 metres away is not accessible to a wheelchair user if the path has no ramp. A clinic is not accessible if its appointments only appear online and you have no internet. On this definition, two people at the same address can have different accessibility.

Both definitions are legitimate, and good geography keeps both in mind. The first is easier to measure; the second is closer to lived experience. Which one you use changes what you see — and that is exactly why accessibility is a strong shaper of **perception** (how a place seems to a person, Section 2A). Two households on the same street, one with two cars and one without, experience the same suburb as two different levels of liveable.

3. How Australia sorts places by access

Australia has an official way of describing access to services: the **ABS Remoteness Structure**, part of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS, Edition 3). It sorts every part of the country into five classes — major cities, inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote — using road distance to service centres of different sizes.

Remoteness, in other words, is not about how far you are from the coast or a state border; it is about how far you are from the things services do for you. Section 2A met the same classes in Victorian data; here they appear at the national scale.

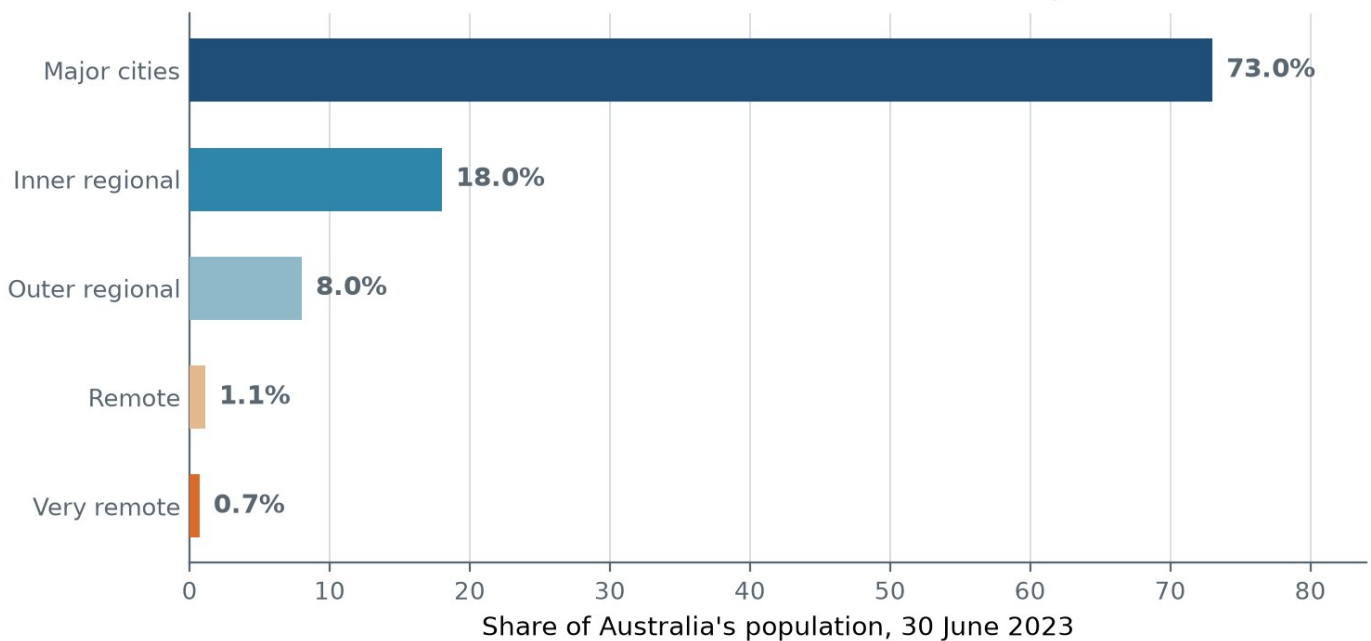


Schematic of the idea behind the ABS Remoteness Structure: three service centres (a large centre with a big hospital, shops and rail; a medium centre with schools, a doctor and a supermarket; a small centre with fuel, mail and a primary school); Home A close to the large centre with a short drive, and Home B far from every centre with long drives; below, the core question “how far is it, by road, to the nearest service centres of different sizes?” leading to the five ABS Remoteness Areas — major cities, inner regional, outer regional, remote, very remote — with access falling from left to right

Original schematic after the ABS ASGS Edition 3 Remoteness Structure, which sorts places by their relative access to services. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Now add the population. At 30 June 2023, about three in four Australians lived in the major-city class — the class with the shortest drives to the biggest services.

About three in four Australians live in major cities



Horizontal bar chart of the share of Australia's population by remoteness area at 30 June 2023: major cities 73.0 per cent, inner regional 18.0 per cent, outer regional 8.0 per cent, remote 1.1 per cent, very remote 0.7 per cent — about three in four Australians live in major cities, and around 7 million people (27 per cent) live in rural and remote areas

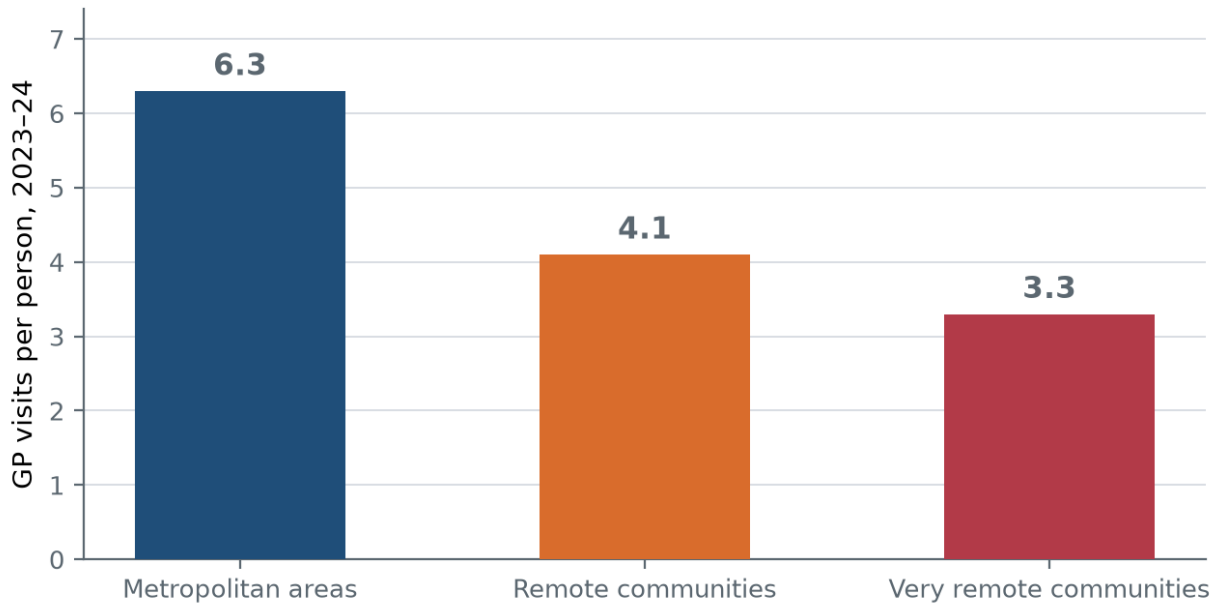
Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Rural and remote health (page updated 20 November 2025), citing ABS 2024b. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

That single pattern — most people living where services cluster — drives the rest of this section. Services follow people: a supermarket needs thousands of customers within a reasonable drive to survive. Where people are few and far between, services thin out, and the people who remain face longer trips for the same needs.

4. Health: what the access gap looks like in real data

Health services show the access gap more clearly than any other family, because the stakes are high and the data is good. In 2023–24, people in metropolitan areas averaged **6.3 GP visits per person**, while remote communities averaged **4.1** and very remote communities **3.3**.

How often people saw a GP, by how remote they live



Bar chart of GP visits per person in 2023-24: metropolitan areas 6.3, remote communities 4.1, very remote communities 3.3

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Rural and remote health (page updated 20 November 2025). Retrieved 25 August 2026.

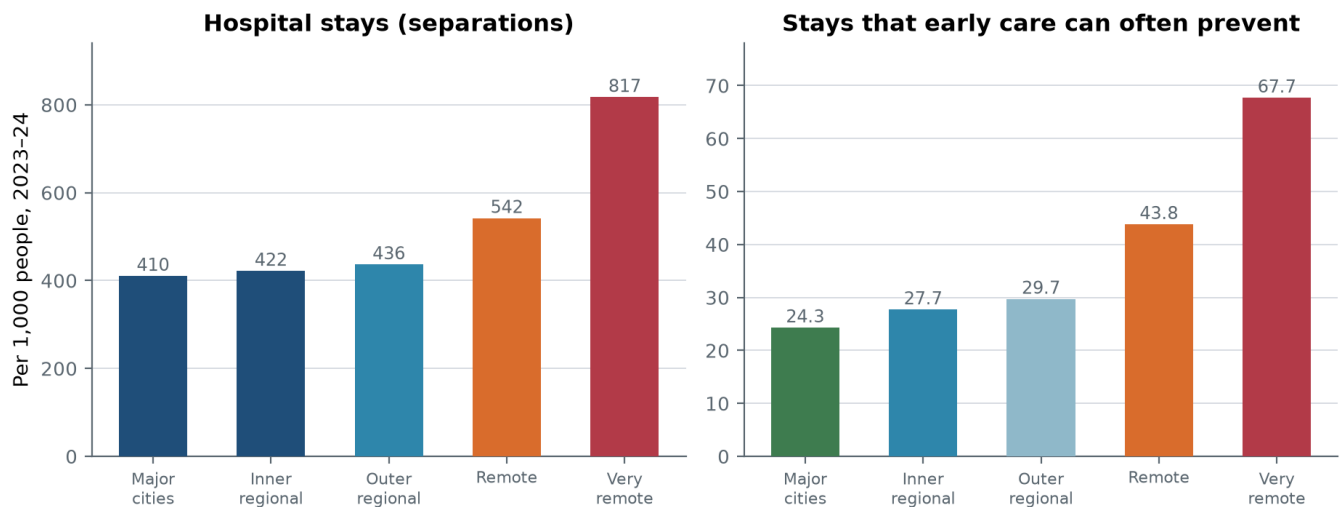
The gap is not mainly about money. In 2023–24, **88%** of GP attendances in very remote communities were **bulk-billed** — the patient pays nothing, with the visit paid through Medicare — a higher share than the 74% in regional centres and 77% in metropolitan areas. Cost was removed, and the gap in visits remained. Distance and availability did the rest: fewer clinics, longer trips, harder bookings.

The gap also shows up in who feels they wait too long. Among people with disability, **34%** in outer regional and remote areas felt they waited longer than was acceptable for a GP appointment, against **21%** in major cities (AIHW, same report). The service exists; for some groups it is still not accessible in the second, lived sense of Section 2.

Worked demonstration 1 — The health access gradient, and what it does to people

The figures below are real, from the AIHW. Let us reason with them like geographers.

The further people live from services, the more hospital time they have — and more of it is preventable



Two bar charts by remoteness area for 2023-24. Left panel: hospital stays (separations) per 1,000 people — major cities 410, inner regional 422, outer regional 436, remote 542, very remote 817. Right panel: stays that early care can often prevent (potentially preventable hospitalisations) per 1,000 people — major cities 24.3, inner regional 27.7, outer regional 29.7, remote 43.8, very remote 67.7

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Rural and remote health* (page updated 20 November 2025). Retrieved 25 August 2026. A **hospital separation** is one finished period of care for one patient; a **potentially preventable hospitalisation** is a stay that good early care outside hospital — like seeing a GP in time — can often avoid.

Step 1 — Read the left panel. Hospital stays per 1,000 people rise steadily with remoteness: 410 in major cities to 817 in very remote areas — double.

Step 2 — Read the right panel. Preventable stays rise even faster: 24.3 per 1,000 in major cities to 67.7 in very remote — nearly triple.

Step 3 — Describe the pattern in words. The further people live from services, the more hospital time they have — and the bigger the share of that time is for conditions early care could have handled.

Step 4 — Infer the relationship. A hospital stay that could have been prevented usually means an illness got worse before it was treated. That is what happens when the GP is a long drive away, when appointments are scarce, or when there is no transport to get to them. The right panel is, in effect, a shadow map of the access gap in the GP figure from Section 4: where access to early care is hardest, preventable stays are highest. Two trends moving together are not proof by themselves — a careful geographer would also check other influences, such as the age and health of each population — but the pattern is strong and runs in the direction the access gap predicts.

Step 5 — Connect to perception. How would this shape the way people see their own place? A family that has driven three hours twice for treatment does not need a statistic to tell them their town's liveability is being judged by its accessibility. Perceptions of liveability respond to lived access — which is exactly the influence the content description names.

Geographer's conclusion: the distribution of health services and the accessibility of those services jointly influence how people perceive the liveability of their place — objectively, in the hospital records, and subjectively, in how safe people feel that care will be there when they need it.

5. The service ladder: from inner urban to remote

Health is one family. The pattern repeats across all four families the curriculum names — retail, education, health and entertainment — plus the service that unlocks the others, frequent public transport. The next figure is a generalised model: read it as the pattern the data predicts, not as a fact about any one town.

Services thin out as settlements get smaller and more remote (model)

	Inner urban	Outer urban	Regional city	Rural town	Remote homestead
Retail (shops, supermarkets)	close by, with choice	basics close, choice far	basics close, choice far	basics close, choice far	few or none close by
Education (schools, libraries)	close by, with choice	close by, with choice	close by, with choice	basics close, choice far	few or none close by
Health (doctors, hospitals)	close by, with choice	close by, with choice	close by, with choice	basics close, choice far	few or none close by
Entertainment (pools, cinemas, parks)	close by, with choice	basics close, choice far	basics close, choice far	few or none close by	few or none close by
Frequent public transport	close by, with choice	basics close, choice far	basics close, choice far	few or none close by	few or none close by

A generalised model for discussion — real places vary (a tourist town may hold more entertainment than shown).

close by, with choice basics close, choice far few or none close by

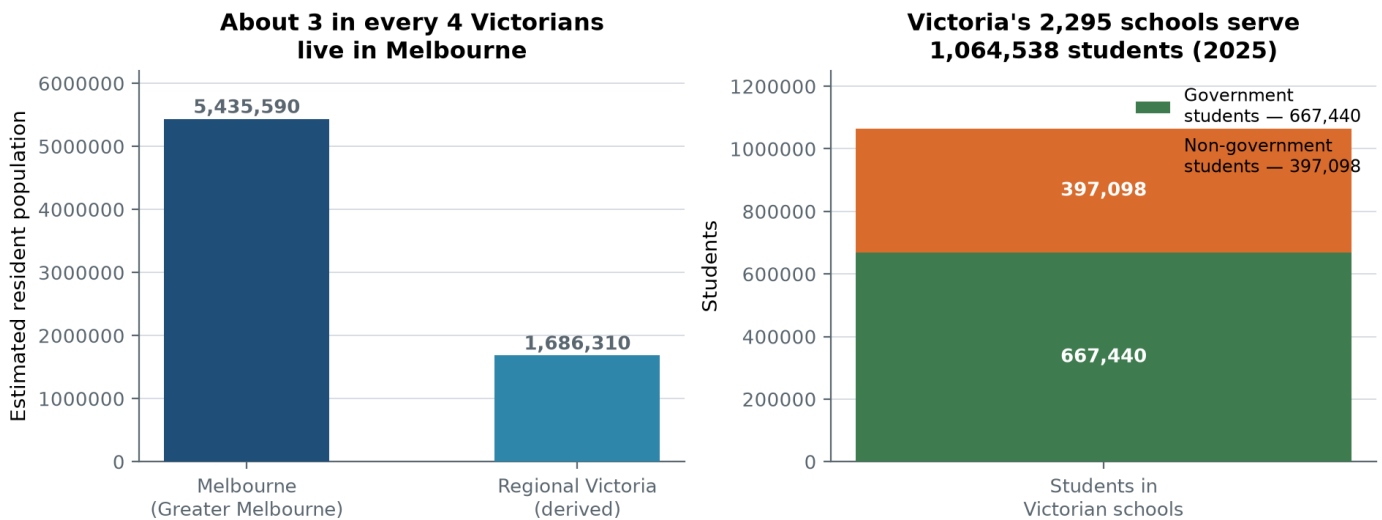
Grid model of how services thin out across five settlement types (inner urban, outer urban, regional city, rural town, remote homestead) for five service groups (retail, education, health, entertainment, frequent public transport), with a three-step colour key: green = close by, with choice; gold = basics close, choice far; red = few or none close by. Entertainment and frequent public transport turn red first (at the rural town), education and health hold green longest (to the regional city), and every service group is red at the remote homestead

Original model for this section — a generalised pattern for discussion; real places vary (a tourist town may hold more entertainment than shown).

Three things to notice. First, **choice thins before basics**: a rural town may still have a school and a clinic (the basics) long after it loses its cinema and its second supermarket (the choice). Second, **education and health hold on longest**, because governments fund schools and hospitals even where they are not profitable — shops close when customers thin out, but a rural school usually stays open. Third, **frequent public transport disappears early**, and that matters twice: it is a service in its own right, and it is the way people without cars reach every other service.

Victoria’s real school data checks the model against one state. At mid-2025, Greater Melbourne held 5,435,590 people against a derived 1,686,310 in regional Victoria — about three in every four Victorians. Victoria’s 2,295 schools served 1,064,538 students in 2025: 667,440 in government schools and 397,098 in non-government schools.

Victoria: people and schools, 2025 (ABS)



Two panels of real Victorian data. Left panel: about 3 in every 4 Victorians live in Melbourne — Greater Melbourne 5,435,590 people (estimated resident population, 30 June 2025); regional Victoria 1,686,310 (derived: the state total at 31 December 2025 minus Greater Melbourne; the two reference dates differ slightly). Right panel: Victoria's 2,295 schools serve 1,064,538 students (2025) — 667,440 government students and 397,098 non-government students

Sources: ABS Regional population; ABS National, state and territory population; ABS Schools, 2025. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

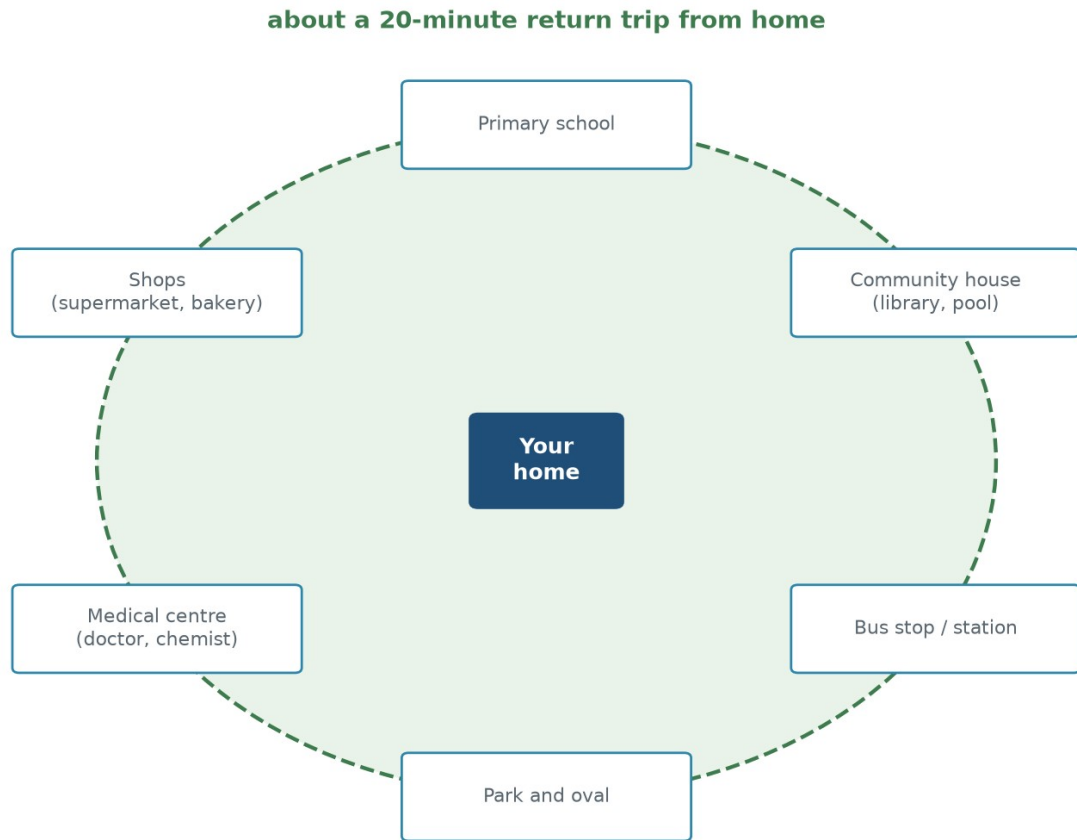
Because most students live in Melbourne, most school *choice* lives in Melbourne: dozens of schools within a short trip, government and non-government alike. A family in a rural town may have one primary school close by and the nearest secondary college a bus ride or a drive away — exactly the model's "basics close, choice far". Nothing here says one choice is better than the other; it says the distribution of a service and the accessibility of its choices are different things, and families feel that difference.

6. Transport: the service that unlocks the others

Transport is the hinge of this whole content description. A shop ten minutes away by frequent tram is close; the same shop forty minutes away with no bus is far. **Transport decides what "within reach" means** — which is why the curriculum treats it twice, as a service to compare between cities and as the key to participating in local life.

One planning idea shows this clearly. **Plan Melbourne 2017–2050**, the Victorian Government's long-term plan for the city, works with the idea of **20-minute neighbourhoods**: the goal that most daily needs sit within about a 20-minute return trip from home, by walking, riding or local public transport. The figure below is a model of the idea, not a map of any one suburb.

The 20-minute neighbourhood: services close enough to reach without a car (model)



walk, ride a bike, or catch a local bus — most daily needs without depending on a car

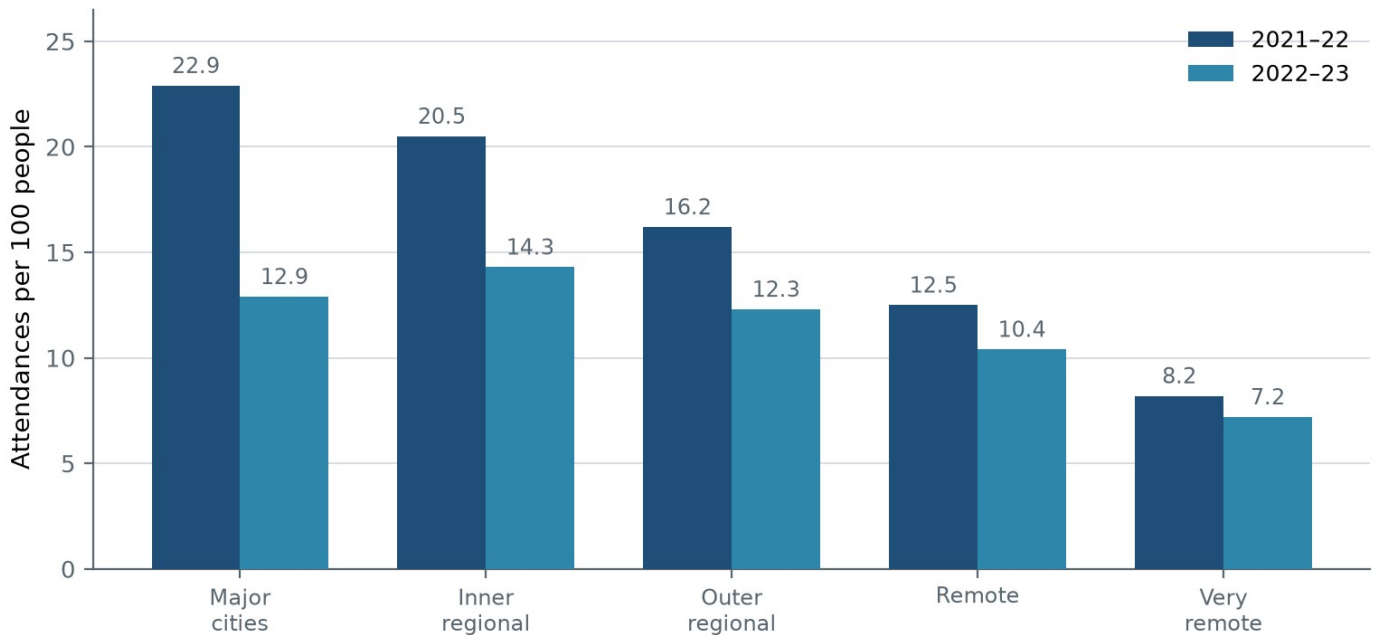
Model of a 20-minute neighbourhood: “Your home” at the centre of a dashed green ring labelled “about a 20-minute return trip from home”, with a primary school, shops (supermarket, bakery), community house (library, pool), medical centre (doctor, chemist), bus stop/station and park and oval set around the ring; below, “walk, ride a bike, or catch a local bus — most daily needs without depending on a car”

Model sketch; the concept is from Plan Melbourne 2017–2050 (State of Victoria, 2017), paraphrased. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Notice what the ring is doing. It is not measuring distance in kilometres — it is measuring distance in **time and mode**, which is the lived definition of accessibility from Section 2. A neighbourhood that meets the 20-minute test gives car-free households real access to services; one that fails it quietly makes a car compulsory, and car-free households experience the same streets as less liveable.

Responses can change access — and remember from Section 2A that liveability is not fixed: people change it. One recent change is **telehealth**: a consultation with a doctor or specialist by video call instead of a trip.

Specialist care by video call reaches fewer people the more remote they live



Grouped bar chart of specialist telehealth visits per 100 people by remoteness area for two years. 2021-22: major cities 22.9, inner regional 20.5, outer regional 16.2, remote 12.5, very remote 8.2. 2022-23: major cities 12.9, inner regional 14.3, outer regional 12.3, remote 10.4, very remote 7.2

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Rural and remote health* (page updated 20 November 2025). Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Read both years before concluding anything. In 2021–22, telehealth use fell steadily with remoteness — the cities, with the best internet and the most specialists, used it most. In 2022–23, overall use fell as clinics reopened, and the pattern bent: inner regional (14.3) overtook major cities (12.9). Where the trip is longest, the video call keeps more of its value. Telehealth does not remove the access gap — very remote use stays lowest — but it bends the gap, and it shows a strategy doing exactly what strategies in this band are supposed to do: change a place’s liveability.

7. Two cities, one goal: Melbourne and Singapore plan for access

Australian cities are not the only ones wrestling with access. The curriculum invites a comparison with cities in Asia or in Europe; Singapore is a clean contrast, because it is almost the opposite shape from Melbourne.

One question, two answers: how do people reach services?

Melbourne	Singapore
Plan: Plan Melbourne 2017–2050	Plan: Land Transport Master Plan 2040
Big idea: 20-minute neighbourhoods — most daily needs within about a 20-minute return trip from home, by walking, riding or local bus	Big idea: 20-Minute Towns and a 45-minute City — towns where daily needs sit close, linked by fast rail
Shape of the city: spread out; many trips still depend on cars	Shape of the city: dense; an MRT network of more than 200 km sits under the plan
Population: 5,435,590 (June 2025)	Goal year: 2040

Both cities are planning around the same goal: bring services within reach of more homes.

Two comparison cards. Melbourne card: plan — Plan Melbourne 2017-2050; big idea — 20-minute neighbourhoods, most daily needs within about a 20-minute return trip from home by walking, riding or local bus; shape of the city — spread out, many trips still depend on cars; population — 5,435,590 (June 2025). Singapore card: plan — Land Transport Master Plan 2040; big idea — 20-Minute Towns and a 45-minute City, towns where daily needs sit close, linked by fast rail; shape of the city — dense, with an MRT rail network of more than 200 km under the plan; goal year — 2040. Bottom note: both cities are planning around the same goal — bring services within reach of more homes

Sources: State of Victoria (2017), Plan Melbourne 2017–2050; ABS Regional population (Greater Melbourne, June 2025); Singapore Land Transport Authority, Land Transport Master Plan 2040 (lta.gov.au). Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Worked demonstration 2 — One question, two city shapes

Step 1 — Find the shared goal. Both plans promise the same thing in almost the same words: daily needs within about 20 minutes of home. Two governments, one continent apart, have decided that accessibility — not just the presence of services — is what their citizens experience as liveability.

Step 2 — Compare the starting shapes. Melbourne is spread out: 5.4 million people over an area so wide that many trips still need a car. Singapore is dense: homes, shops and schools sit close together, and a rail network of more than 200 km threads the town.

Step 3 — Compare the strategies. In a dense city, fast rail can carry the 20-minute promise across the whole city — Singapore’s “45-minute City” layers a city-wide rail trip on top of its 20-minute towns. In a spread-out city, rail cannot reach every street, so Plan Melbourne leans on the neighbourhood itself: services clustered close enough to walk, ride or bus to.

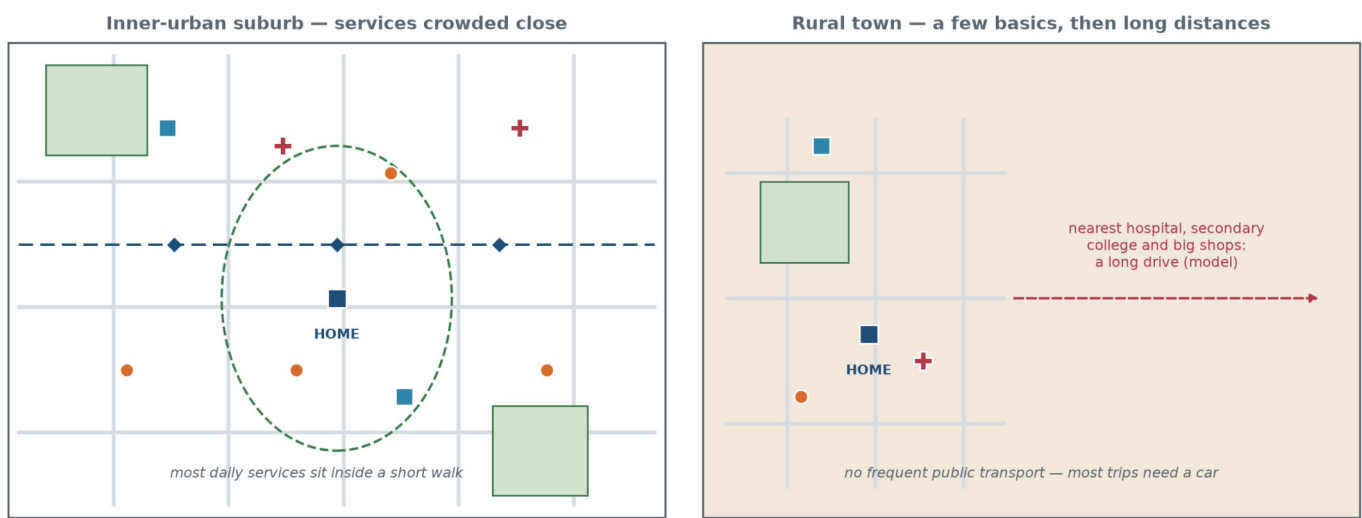
Step 4 — Evaluate. Which shape makes the goal easier to reach? Density gives transport a better chance: more riders within walking distance of each stop means more frequent services, which means more of the service ladder from Section 5 stays green without a car. Spread gives space and quiet — real liveability gains of another kind — but makes the car-free version of the 20-minute promise harder to deliver everywhere. Neither plan is “better” at liveability in total; they trade different bundles of it. What both refuse to accept is that access should simply be left to chance.

Geographer’s conclusion: comparing cities in Australia and the Asia region shows that accessibility is something governments actively plan, and that the shape of a city — dense or spread — decides which strategies are even possible. Perceptions of liveability, in Melbourne as in Singapore, will keep tracking how well the promise of “within reach” is kept.

8. Reading services from above

Aerial views are one of the quickest ways to see distribution. Real aerial imagery is licensed, so this section uses original aerial-style sketches built from primitives: two model settlement types, an inner-urban suburb and a rural town, with their services marked.

Services seen from above: two contrasting Australian settlement types (model sketches)



square = school cross = health dot = retail green patch = park or oval diamond = public transport stop blue square = home

Original aerial-style sketches from primitives — modelled patterns, not photographs, not counted from any real place.

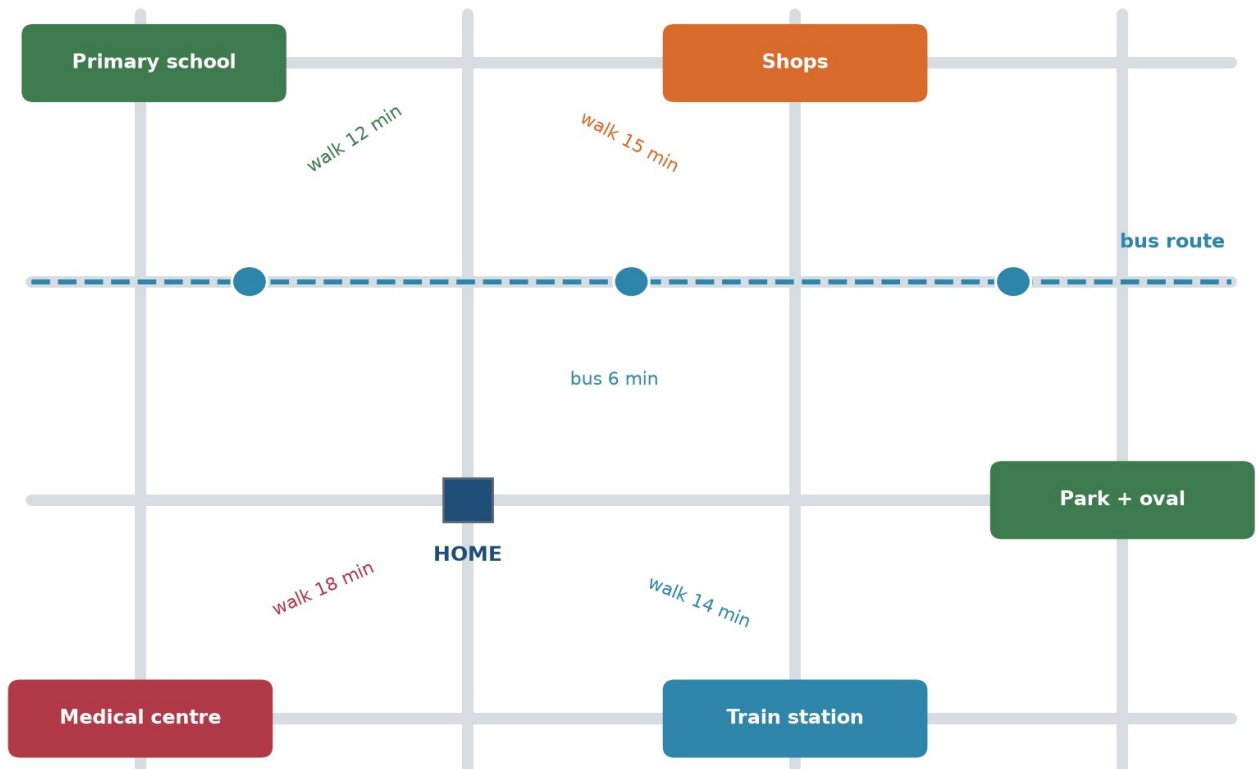
Two aerial-style sketch panels. Left: inner-urban suburb, services crowded close — a dense street grid with a tram line and three stops, two parks, two schools, two health services and four retail dots, with HOME at the centre and most daily services inside a dashed short-walk ring. Right: rural town, a few basics then long distances — a small street grid on open country with one oval, one school, one medical clinic and one shop, HOME in the town, and a dashed arrow to “nearest hospital, secondary college and big shops: a long drive (model)”; note “no frequent public transport — most trips need a car”

Original aerial-style sketches from primitives — modelled patterns, not photographs, not counted from any real place.

Read the two panels the way an analyst would. Count what each HOME can reach inside a short walk: the inner-urban home has schools, health, retail, parks and frequent transport inside its ring; the rural home has the basics — one school, one clinic, one shop — and then a long drive for everything larger. The **implications** (what it means for people) are exactly the ones the service ladder predicted: in the rural town, a household without a car cannot reach most services at all on most days, and a teenager without a licence experiences the same town as far less liveable than a household with two cars. Same place, two perceptions — the contested definition of accessibility from Section 2, drawn from above.

Now turn the method on your own locality. The sketch below is a worked illustration with made-up streets and walking times, showing the form.

A sketch like this one — but of YOUR local area — is your task in Q7



Worked illustration only: streets, services and walking times are made up to show the method.

Sketch-map template for a local area: a generic street grid with a dashed bus route and three stops, HOME marked, and around it a primary school (walk 12 minutes), shops (walk 15 minutes), medical centre (walk 18 minutes), train station (walk 14 minutes), park and oval, and a bus stop (bus 6 minutes); labelled a worked illustration, with the task inviting students to draw their own local area

Worked illustration only — streets, services and walking times are made up to show the method. Draw your own local area, whatever Victorian locality that is.

Sketch your own locality the same way: your home, the services you actually use, and the time each one takes to reach by your usual mode. Then ask the section's question of your own place: which services sit inside your ring, which sit outside it, and who in your household or neighbourhood would draw a different ring from yours? Section 2F takes local liveability studies further, and Sections 5B and 6C teach the fieldwork and reporting methods — here, the sketch is simply the habit of seeing access spatially.

Practice — scaffolded

Q1. Define **accessibility** as this section uses it, and give one reason why a planner might define it by travel time while a wheelchair user might define it by what they can actually use.

Q2. Use the remoteness schematic. (a) What measurement decides which class a place falls into? (b) Home A and Home B: which remoteness class would each most likely fall into, and why? (c) In one sentence, explain why remoteness is a measure of access rather than of distance from the coast.

Q3. Use the population-share figure. (a) What percentage of Australians lived in major cities at 30 June 2023? (b) About how many millions of people lived outside them? (c) Predict what the service ladder in Section 5 will show, and say which of your two figures you would check it against.

Q4. Use the GP-visits figure. (a) How many fewer GP visits per person did very remote communities average than metropolitan areas in 2023–24? (b) Give one reason for the gap that is about distance, and one that is about availability. (c) Why does the bulk-billing fact in Section 4 show the gap is not mainly about money?

Q5. Use the service-ladder model. (a) Which two service groups turn red first as settlements get smaller and more remote? (b) Which two hold green the longest, and one reason why? (c) Name one kind of real Australian town that might break the model's entertainment row, and say why.

Q6. Use the Victoria people-and-schools figure. (a) Show, with working, that about three in every four Victorians live in Melbourne. (b) How many Victorian students attended government schools in 2025, and how many non-government? (c) Using the service ladder, explain in two sentences why a Melbourne family usually has more school *choice* within reach than a rural family, even when both have a school close by.

Q7. Use the 20-minute neighbourhood model. (a) List four services shown inside the ring. (b) Which three modes of travel does the model rely on? (c) Name one service in your own locality that sits inside a 20-minute return trip from your home, and one that does not.

Practice — unscaffolded

Q8. Use the two hospital panels in worked demonstration 1. Describe the pattern in each panel, then infer the relationship between accessibility to early care and potentially preventable hospitalisations. Name one other influence a careful geographer would check before accepting the inference.

Q9. Two households on the same rural street describe their town's liveability in opposite ways: one calls it the best place on earth, the other calls it "cut off". Using the two contested definitions of accessibility and the idea of perception, explain how both accounts can be true at once.

Q10. "Telehealth closes the access gap." Evaluate this claim using both years of the telehealth figure. Your answer must use at least three numbers and must say what changed between 2021–22 and 2022–23.

Q11. Use the two aerial-style sketches. Analyse what they show about life without a car in each settlement type. Use the ideas of distribution and accessibility in your answer, and state one implication for people in each panel.

Extended response

Q12. *"With a car, every place is equally liveable — accessibility is just distance."*

Evaluate this claim in about 200 words. The strongest responses will:

- state a clear position (agree, disagree, or agree with limits);
 - steelman the other side — give the best argument *against* your position before you answer it;
 - use at least **two** figures from this section as evidence;
 - refer to both definitions of accessibility and to the idea of perception;
 - refer to the sources of your evidence.
-

Teaching notes (for the teacher)

This section delivers VC2HG8K07 and draws on elaborations .E01–.E04 in full; no elaboration of this CD is excluded (the CD carries no First Nations disposition in §2A). Suggested sequence: services, facilities and distribution (1) → accessibility as a contested term, with both definitions steelmanned (2) → the ABS remoteness structure and the national population pattern (3) → the health access gap in real AIHW data (4) → worked demonstration 1 (the access gradient and its human meaning) → the service ladder across settlement types, checked against real Victorian school data (5) → transport and responses, including the 20-minute neighbourhood and telehealth (6) → the Melbourne–Singapore comparison and worked demonstration 2 (7) → reading distribution from aerial-style views, closing on a light local sketch (8).

This is the Level 8 book — the band’s destination year, where the achievement standard is stated. The standard’s expectation that students explain liveability and think about how people measure it and change it is practised here to assessment depth: accessibility is treated as both an objective measure (distribution, road distance, counted visits) and a lived, perception-shaping one (the contested second definition), the measuring half is carried by the AIHW gradient work in worked demonstration 1, and the half about people changing it by the responses thread (telehealth, 20-minute planning) and worked demonstration 2’s strategy evaluation. The skills verbs of the standard — analyse, infer, draw reasoned conclusions — are set as student tasks at full depth (Q8, Q10, Q11, Q12), not as teacher narration.

Elaboration mapping (linkage only, per TOC D10): .E01 sections 4–5; .E02 sections 6 and 8; .E03 section 7 and worked demonstration 2 (Asia region chosen over Europe — the Asia priority is live in this band); .E04 section 8. For .E04, real aerial imagery is licensed material, so the section builds original aerial-style **sketches from primitives** (per SOURCE_USE D6) modelling two contrasting Australian settlement types, and teaches the analytic move — count, compare, state implications for people — which students then apply to their own locality in the sketch task. That sketch is a desk task generic to any Victorian locality; it is **not** fieldwork and does not teach fieldwork method — the local liveability investigation is owned by 2F and fieldwork method by 5B, with reporting in 6C (D11).

Continuity: the objective/subjective distinction and the definitions of liveability, perception, survey and remoteness are established in 2A and re-glossed here, not re-taught; environmental-quality perceptions are 2C’s territory and are not pre-empted; 2E (the concept-application capstone) may draw its evidence from this section’s figures.

Data sources, all retrieved 25 August 2026: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Rural and remote health* (page updated 20 November 2025) — population shares by remoteness at 30 June 2023 (citing ABS 2024b); GP non-referred attendances per person 2023–24; bulk-billed shares 2023–24; the disability GP-wait comparison (34% outer regional and remote vs 21% major cities); specialist telehealth attendances per 100 people, 2021–22 and 2022–23; hospital separations and potentially preventable hospitalisations per 1,000, 2023–24. ABS Regional population (Greater Melbourne ERP 5,435,590 at 30 June 2025; regional Victoria 1,686,310 derived from the state total of 7,121,900 at 31 December 2025 — reference dates differ slightly and the figure says so); ABS National, state and territory population; ABS Schools, 2025 (2,295 schools; 1,064,538 students; 667,440 government and 397,098 non-government). ABS ASGS Edition 3, Remoteness Structure (ARIA+). State of Victoria (2017), *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050* (20-minute neighbourhood concept, paraphrased); Singapore Land Transport Authority, *Land Transport Master Plan 2040* (20-Minute Towns and a 45-minute City; MRT network >200 km). All model figures (concept map, remoteness schematic, service ladder, 20-minute ring, aerial-style sketches, local sketch) are original to this section and labelled as such.

Vocabulary sits at or below the Year 8 ceiling except three exemption classes: (1) the curriculum’s own words (e.g. *accessibility*, *distribution*, *implications*); (2) subject terms defined at first use (*accessibility*, *distribution*, *remoteness*, *telehealth*, *bulk-billed*, *hospital separation*, *potentially preventable hospitalisation*, *perception* re-glossed from 2A); (3) proper nouns and numerals (ABS, AIHW, Medicare, Melbourne, Singapore, Victoria, ARIA+, ASGS, Plan Melbourne, MRT), which the raw gate flags above the ceiling and which are accepted under this exemption. Figure text is registered in .txt manifests beside each PNG and is included in the vocabulary gate.

Glossary

Accessibility — how easy it is for people to reach and use the services and facilities they need or want (this section’s working definition; contested — see Section 2). **Services and facilities** — the places a community uses: retail (shops, supermarkets), education (schools, libraries), health (clinics, chemists, hospitals), entertainment (pools, cinemas, parks). **Distribution** — where things sit across space; the pattern of locations of services, people or any other feature. **Remoteness** — how far a place is from services of different sizes; the ABS remoteness classes run from major cities to very remote (introduced in 2A). **Telehealth** — a consultation with a doctor or specialist by video call instead of an in-person trip. **Bulk-billed** — a medical visit the patient does not pay for at the clinic; it is paid through Medicare. **Perception** — the way something seems to a person (introduced in 2A). **20-minute neighbourhood** — a planning idea (Plan Melbourne 2017–2050) in which most daily needs sit within about a 20-minute return trip from home by walking, riding or local public transport. **Hospital separation** — one finished period of care for one patient in hospital. **Potentially preventable hospitalisation** — a hospital stay that good early care outside hospital, such as seeing a GP in time, can often avoid.

Does a cleaner environment make a place more liveable?

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Geography, Levels 7 and 8, strand *Geographical Knowledge and Understanding*, sub-strand *Place and liveability*. Content description: VC2HG8K08. Elaborations drawn on: VC2HG8K08.E01 · VC2HG8K08.E02 · VC2HG8K08.E03.

In this section

Liveability is how good a place is to live in, judged by what the place offers the people who live there. Section 2A looked at liveability measures as a whole — environmental, economic and social. This section takes the environmental family of measures and studies it at full depth: what **environmental quality** is, how it is measured in Victoria with real standards and real monitoring stations, and how it shapes the way people feel about the places they live.

In this section you will learn:

- the six parts of environmental quality, and why each part can be checked by instruments and felt by people;
- the four pathways — health, comfort, safety, and pride and enjoyment — by which environmental quality influences people's perceptions of liveability;
- how air quality and noise are measured in Victoria, and what Australia's national standards and the World Health Organization's guidelines say the numbers should be;
- how to survey people's perceptions of environmental quality in their local area;
- how to compare other people's perceptions with your own assessment, and with measured data;
- why the measured story and the felt story about the same place can disagree, and why good geography uses both.

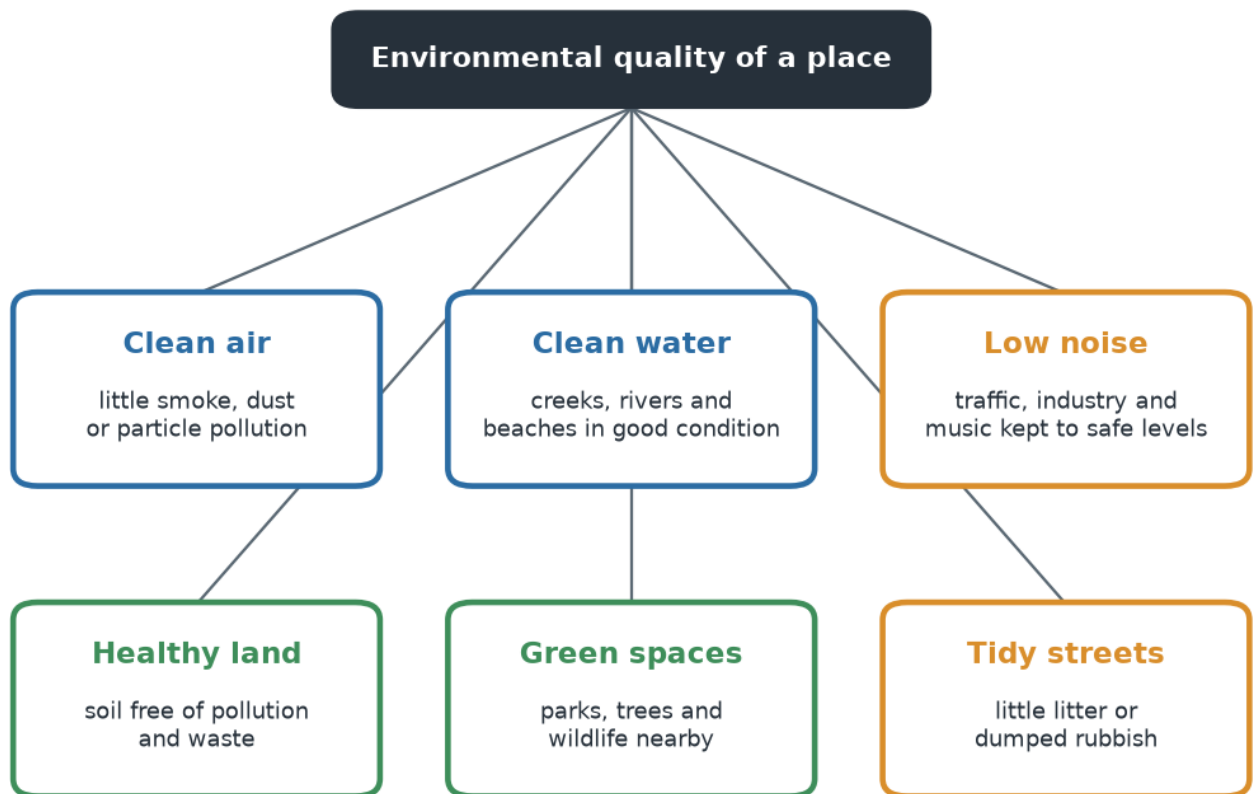
Key words to learn: environmental quality, perception, pollutant, particle, monitoring station, survey, objective measure, subjective measure, standard, liveability.

1. What is environmental quality?

Defining our terms. The curriculum does not define *environmental quality*, so this section uses a working definition: **environmental quality is the condition of the natural surroundings of a place — how clean, healthy and pleasant they are.** Where we use another organisation's numbers, we say whose they are.

The **environment** of a place means the natural surroundings people live in: the air, the water, the land, the living things, and the sounds of the area. Environmental quality asks one question about those surroundings: what *condition* are they in?

The six parts of environmental quality



Every part can be CHECKED by instruments or records, and FELT by the people who live there.

A concept diagram with “Environmental quality of a place” at the centre, joined to six labelled boxes — clean air, clean water, low noise, healthy land, green spaces and tidy streets — each with a short description, and a footer saying every part can be checked and felt

The six parts in the figure are the ones this section uses. Notice the footer: every part can be **checked** (counted, tested or recorded) and **felt** (noticed and judged by the people who live there). Clean air is something instruments can measure — and it is also the difference between a street that feels fresh and one that feels smoky. That double nature gives this section its two kinds of evidence.

Two ways to know about environmental quality

	Objective measure (measured)	Subjective measure (perceived)
What is it?	A number counted or recorded, so anyone who checks gets the same answer	A report of how the environment seems to people
How is it gathered?	Instruments, monitoring stations and official records	Surveys and interviews, asking people to rate it
Example	"PM2.5 was 18 micrograms per cubic metre at the monitor today"	"Residents rated the air quality 3 out of 5"
Who judges it?	The instrument does	Each person does
Can it differ between people?	No - the reading is the same for everyone	Yes - people feel the same place in different ways

Good geography uses both: the measured side says what is happening; the perceived side says what it means for people.

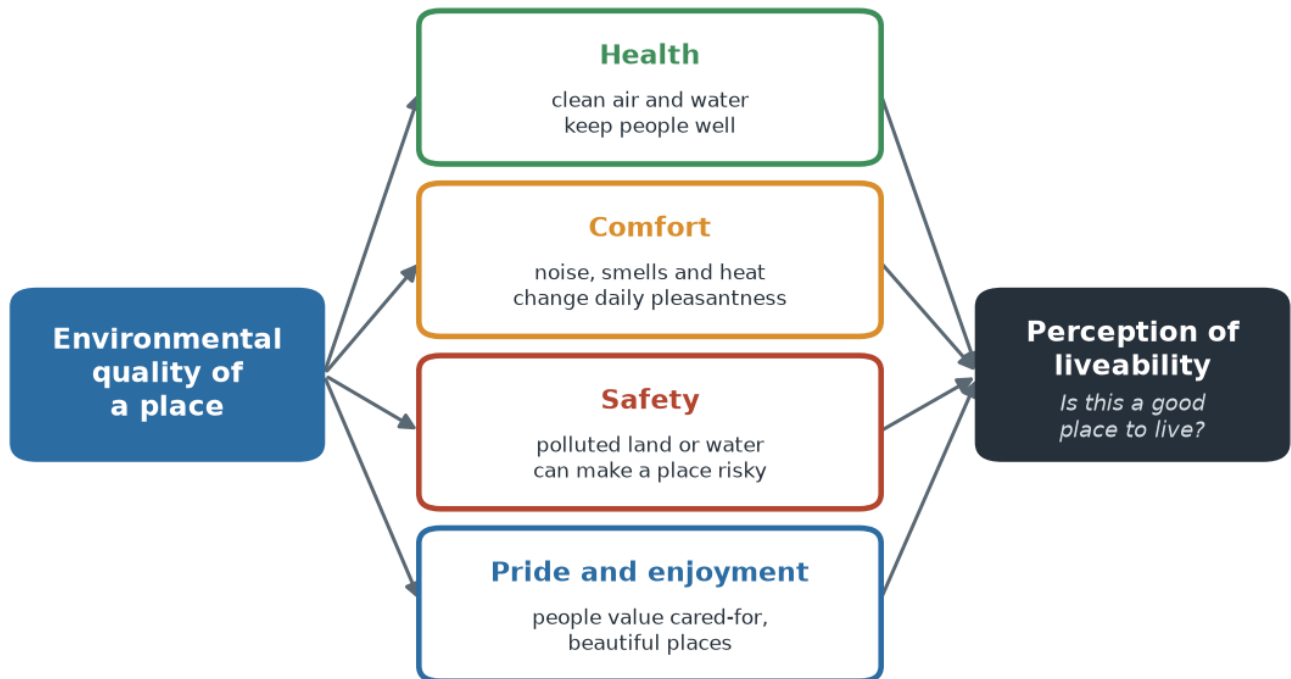
A two-column comparison table titled "Two ways to know about environmental quality": objective measures are counted or recorded so anyone who checks gets the same answer, while subjective measures report how the environment seems to people; a footer says good geography uses both

An **objective measure** is counted or recorded, so anyone who checks gets the same answer. A **subjective measure** reports how things seem to people, so it can differ from person to person. A **perception** is the way something seems to a person, so perception data is subjective. Both kinds are evidence: the number says what is happening in the environment, and the perception says what it means for the people who live there.

2. How environmental quality influences perceptions of liveability

The content description for this section is about *influence*: how does the condition of the surroundings change how good a place seems to live in? The link runs through four pathways.

From the environment to a judgement about liveability



The same surroundings can be felt in different ways: the person with asthma notices the smoke; the night-shift worker notices the noise; the parent notices the litter.

A diagram showing four pathways from environmental quality to people's perceptions of liveability: health, comfort, safety, and pride and enjoyment, each with a short example

- **Health.** Polluted air makes breathing harder, especially for people with asthma; dirty water closes creeks and beaches; long-running loud noise harms sleep and hearing. A place that makes people unwell seems a worse place to live.
- **Comfort.** Smoke on the washing line, traffic noise at an open window, heat in a street with no shade: these make daily life less pleasant, so people rate the place lower.
- **Safety.** A creek that floods, a street clouded by truck fumes, soil left polluted by old industry: where the environment seems dangerous, people feel the place is less liveable.
- **Pride and enjoyment.** A clean beach, a leafy park, a quiet street with birdsong: people enjoy and take pride in a pleasant environment, and that lifts how good the place feels.

The same feature can cut two ways, because people are interconnected with their environment in different ways. A busy road gives some households easy access to work — and gives the households behind it noise and fumes. A factory provides jobs its workers value — and smoke its neighbours resent. When you explain an *influence*, you are explaining an interconnection between people and their environment: who is touched by the feature, through which pathway, and how strongly. That is the geographical explanation this section builds toward.

3. Measuring environmental quality in Victoria

Air. Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) runs a network of **monitoring stations** — sites where instruments record air quality hour by hour — including stations at Alphington, Footscray, Brooklyn and Geelong South. The stations measure six **pollutants** (substances that pollute the air).

The air pollutants EPA Victoria monitors

Pollutant	What it is	Where it mainly comes from
PM2.5	Very fine particles that reach deep into the lungs	Smoke, traffic, industry, wood heaters
PM10	Larger particles and dust	Dust, construction, unsealed roads, industry
Nitrogen dioxide (NO2)	A gas	Traffic, power stations
Ozone (O3)	A gas formed when fumes react in sunlight	Traffic and industry fumes in hot, still weather
Carbon monoxide (CO)	A gas	Traffic, wood heaters
Sulfur dioxide (SO2)	A gas	Industry, power stations, ships

Source: EPA Victoria, How we measure air pollution (epa.vic.gov.au, retrieved 25 August 2026).

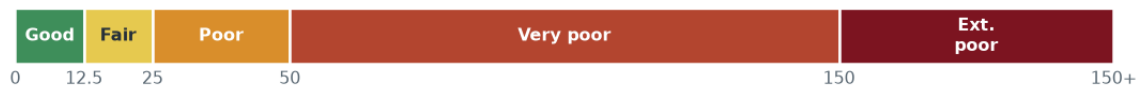
A three-column table of the six air pollutants EPA Victoria monitors — PM2.5, PM10, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide — saying what each is and where it mainly comes from, with an EPA Victoria source line

The two particle pollutants matter most for this section. **Particles** are tiny pieces of solid or liquid matter in the air; PM2.5 particles are fine enough to be breathed deep into the lungs. EPA Victoria reports particle readings against five **categories**, from Good to Extremely poor.

EPA Victoria's air quality categories for PM2.5

PM2.5 is very fine particle pollution, measured in micrograms per cubic metre of air.

How much PM2.5 is in the air



What EPA advises for each rating

Good	0 to 12.5	No change needed to your normal outdoor activities.
Fair	12.5 to 25	Keep track of conditions. Most people can keep up their normal outdoor activities.
Poor	25 to 50	Keep track of conditions. Sensitive people should think about cutting time outdoors.
Very poor	50 to 150	Reduce time outdoors. People with heart or lung illness, older people and young children should take action to cut exposure.
Extremely poor	150 and above	Stay indoors as much as possible, with windows and doors shut.

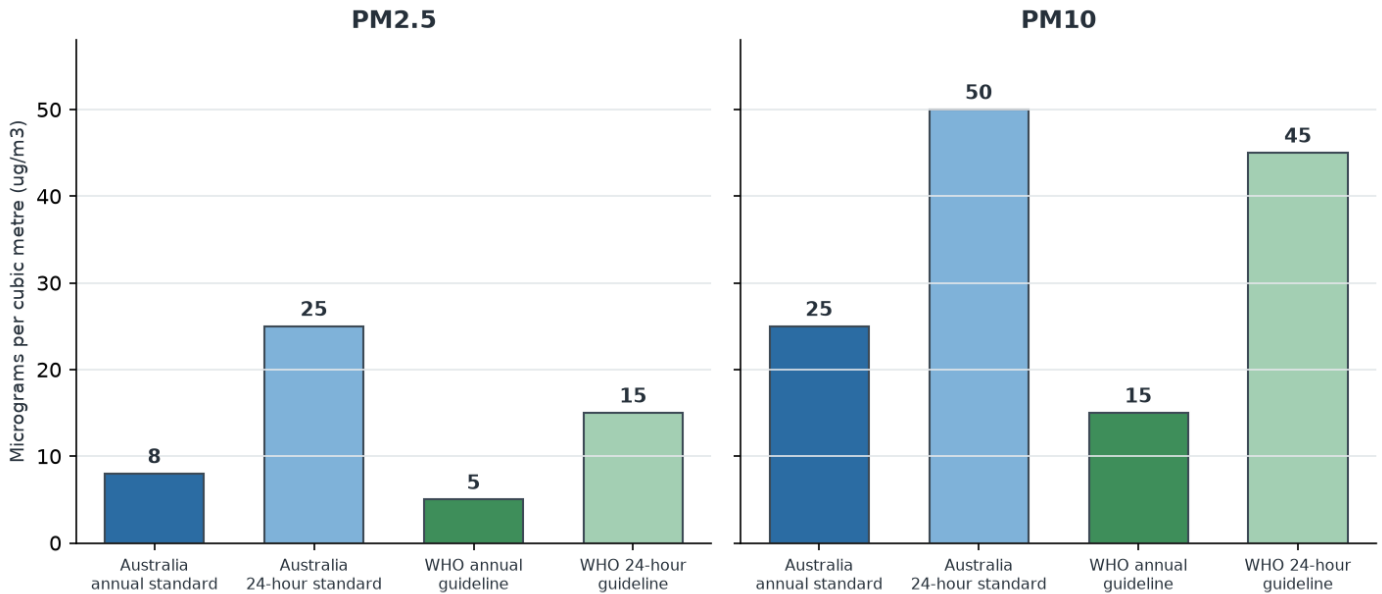
Source: EPA Victoria, Air quality categories (epa.vic.gov.au, retrieved 25 August 2026). EPA rates the other pollutants the same way, with its own band for each.

A colour scale of EPA Victoria's five air quality categories for PM2.5 — Good below 12.5, Fair 12.5 to 25, Poor 25 to 50, Very poor 50 to 150, Extremely poor 150 and above, in micrograms per cubic metre — with the health advice EPA gives for each rating, and an EPA Victoria source line

Readings are given in **micrograms** per cubic metre of air — a microgram is one-millionth of a gram, so 12.5 micrograms in a cubic metre is a very small mass of particles in a large volume of air. Even that small mass matters to health, which is why standards exist.

Standards. A **standard** is an agreed limit: air meeting the standard is judged clean enough. Australia's national air standards are set in the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure — *ambient* means the outdoor air around us. The World Health Organization (WHO) also publishes **guidelines** based on health research. The two do not match.

How clean must the air be? Standards and guidelines for particle pollution



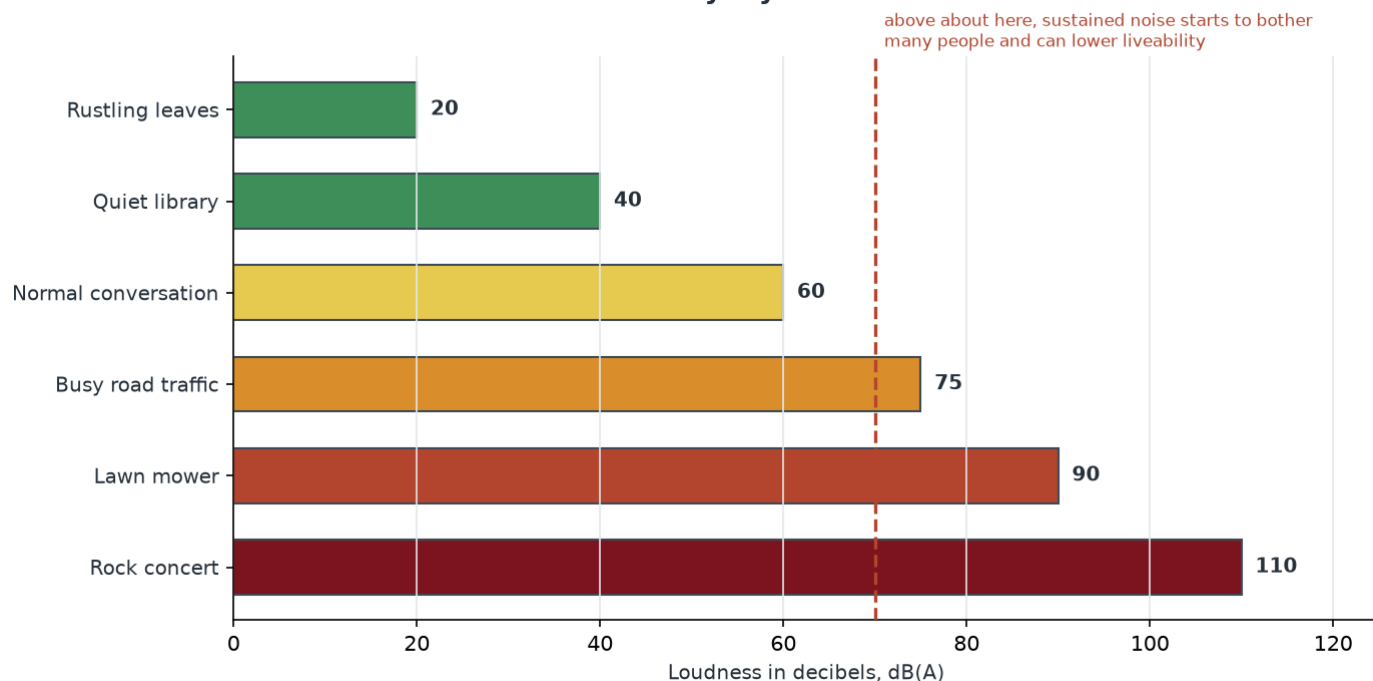
Australia's standards come from the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure; the WHO figures are its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines.

A paired bar chart comparing Australia's national standards with the WHO's 2021 guidelines: for PM2.5, Australia 8 annual and 25 per 24 hours against WHO 5 and 15; for PM10, Australia 25 and 50 against WHO 15 and 45, all in micrograms per cubic metre, with a source line naming the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure and the WHO 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines

Look closely at the annual PM2.5 figures: Australia's standard is 8, the WHO guideline is 5. The same air — say, a year averaging 6 — meets one and misses the other. A standard is a human decision about how clean is clean enough, weighing health against the cost of cleaning the air; a health guideline states what research says is safest. So “how clean is the air?” always has a second question behind it: *clean by whose measure?* That is exactly the kind of thinking the band achievement standard points to when it expects students to think about how liveability gets measured and changed.

Noise. Sound level is measured in **decibels**, dB(A). The chart below uses standard reference levels from acoustics; the comfort marker is a general guide to where noise that continues for a long time starts to bother many people — it is not a legal limit. EPA Victoria also handles noise complaints from homes, traffic and industry.

Everyday sound levels



A horizontal bar chart of everyday sound levels in decibels: rustling leaves about 20, a quiet library about 40, normal conversation about 60, busy road traffic about 75, a lawn mower about 90 and a rock concert about 110, with a dashed marker at about 70 decibels labelled as the point above which sustained noise starts to bother many people and can lower liveability

Notice the pattern across air and noise: each part of environmental quality has an objective side (a reading, a category, a standard) and a subjective side (how it feels to live with). Section 4 turns to that subjective side.

4. Surveying people's perceptions of environmental quality

To measure perceptions you ask people. A **survey** is a set of questions asked to a group of people to gather their views. The model below shows the shape and wording of a survey a class could run in any local area.

Environmental quality of my local area - perception survey

MODEL - written for this book; not real survey data

About you: How long have you lived in this area?

Under 1 year 1 to 5 years 5 to 10 years More than 10 years

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
1. The air quality where I live	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The noise level in my street	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Parks, trees and green spaces near me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. How clean and tidy my area is	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The creeks, rivers or beaches near me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Overall environmental quality of my area	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. What one change would most improve the environmental quality of your area?

Design rules: one aspect per question, a clear five-point scale, no names collected, no leading questions.

A model survey sheet titled “Environmental quality of my local area”, marked MODEL and not real survey data, with an about-you question on time lived in the area, six rating questions — air quality, noise level, parks and green spaces, cleanliness, waterways, and overall environmental quality — each with a five-point scale from Excellent to Very poor, an open question asking what one change would most improve the area, and a footer listing the design rules

The design rules in the footer carry the method:

- **One aspect per question.** “The air and the water” is two questions in one — a person who rates the air well and the water badly has no answer to give.
- **A clear rating scale.** The same five points for every question, so answers can be counted and compared.
- **No leading questions.** “Don’t you agree the litter is terrible?” tells people what to answer instead of asking them.
- **No names collected.** People answer more honestly in private.

Perceptions gathered this way are real data about how the place seems to its people — and they vary, for reasons that are themselves geographical:

- **Time in the place.** A resident of thirty years has a baseline — what the street *used* to be like — that a new arrival does not.

- **Health and needs.** A person with asthma feels air quality more sharply than a person without; a parent with a pram notices footpath litter and safe crossings.
- **What the day brings.** A recent news story about pollution, or one bad smell on the morning of the survey, can colour a rating.
- **What a person values.** One resident hears traffic as “the sound of a busy, convenient street”; another hears it as noise.

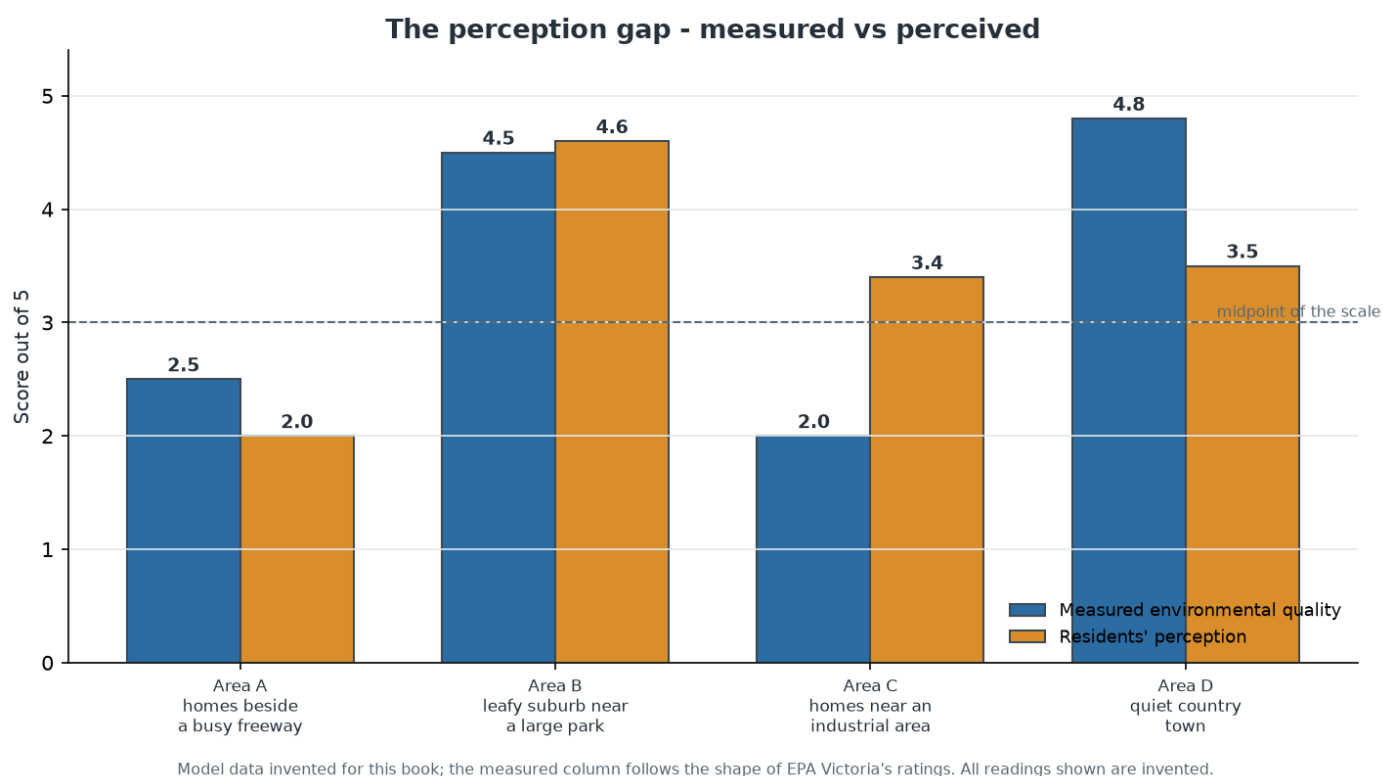
None of these makes a perception “wrong”. They explain why perceptions differ between people in the same street — which is what Section 5 uses them for.

5. Comparing perceptions with each other, and with measurement

Comparing is where the understanding happens. There are two comparisons to make.

Perception against perception (your own assessment against other people’s). Run the model survey in your class and in your local area, and the results will spread: different ratings from different people for the same place. The factors in Section 4 explain the spread — a classmate who has just moved, or who wheezes in smoky air, is not wrong; they are perceiving the same place through a different life.

Perception against measurement. The figure below is model data, invented for this book, but the pattern it shows is one real studies keep finding: measured environmental quality and perceived environmental quality do not always agree.



A paired bar chart of model data for four areas comparing measured environmental quality with residents' perception on a scale of 5: Area A, homes beside a busy freeway, measured 2.5 against perceived 2.0; Area B, leafy suburb near a large park, 4.5 against 4.6; Area C, homes near an industrial area, 2.0 against perceived 3.4; Area D, quiet country town, 4.8 against perceived 3.5; labelled as model data invented for this book

Read the gaps as findings, not errors:

- **Area A** — perception is *harsher* than measurement. Freeway noise, fumes at the clothesline and the look of the road are felt every day, while the particle monitor may read Fair most days.

- **Area C** — perception is *kinder* than measurement. Long-time residents may be used to the industrial backdrop, proud of the jobs it brings, and unaware of what the particles read; the instruments see what habit hides.
- **Areas B and D** show smaller gaps, and even the gap in Area D (measured 4.8 against perceived 3.5) asks a question: perhaps country residents compare their town to an ideal, not to a city.

When the two kinds of evidence disagree, the gap is itself the thing to explain. That leads to a genuine debate about which evidence should steer decisions.

Two positions, steelmanned — each side stated at its strongest. **Position A — decisions should follow the measured data.** Measurements can be checked by anyone, are the same for everyone, and catch harms people cannot see or have grown used to. Feelings differ from person to person, so decisions based on feelings alone would be unsteady. **Position B — decisions should follow people’s perceptions.** Liveability is about people’s experience of a place, so what people feel *is* the thing we care about. Perceptions also gather knowledge measurement misses — smells, night noise, the street that feels unsafe — and when people perceive harm, the stress is real even if instruments read Fair. **Evaluating.** The stronger position uses both. Measurement says what is happening in the environment; perception says what it means for people. Where the two agree, act with confidence. Where they disagree, investigate the gap: perhaps people need the measured picture explained (Area C), perhaps the instruments need to measure what people actually experience — night noise, smell events — rather than daily averages (Area A). Ignoring either side loses half the story.

Worked demonstration 1 — One number, two standards

Task. A monitoring station reports an annual average PM2.5 reading of 6 micrograms per cubic metre. Judge this reading against Australia’s national standard and against the WHO’s 2021 guideline.

Step 1 — Read the two limits from the standards figure. Australia’s annual PM2.5 standard is 8 micrograms per cubic metre; the WHO’s annual guideline is 5.

Step 2 — Compare the reading with each limit. 6 is below 8, so the air **meets** Australia’s standard. 6 is above 5, so the same air **misses** the WHO’s guideline.

Step 3 — Say what the difference means. The air has not changed; the judgement has. Australia’s standard is a national target set in law, weighing health against the cost and practicality of cleaning the air; the WHO’s guideline states the level its research links to the smallest health harm. So the honest report is not “the air is clean” or “the air is dirty” but: *the air meets the national standard but sits above the WHO’s health guideline* — clean by one measure, not yet by the stricter one.

That second question — *clean by whose measure?* — is the habit of mind this demonstration teaches. Every air-quality claim should carry its standard with it.

Worked demonstration 2 — When measurement and perception tell different stories

Task. Use the real fact below together with the model perception-gap figure, and explain how a measured reading and a perception can disagree about the same place.

The real fact. EPA Victoria’s monitoring stations at Brooklyn and Geelong South sit near older industrial areas, and particle readings at those stations run higher than at stations in leafy outer suburbs (EPA Victoria, *Annual Report 2024-25*). The measurement side of environmental quality genuinely varies across Melbourne.

Step 1 — Put the measured side down first. A home near the Brooklyn station and a home near a leafy-suburb station do not breathe the same air; the categories figure turns those different readings into different ratings (Poor against Good, say). Objective measures locate the harm.

Step 2 — Put the perceived side down next. Now look at model Area C: measured 2.0, perceived 3.4. Residents near industry may rate their area *better* than the numbers do — habit, pride, jobs, and thirty years of “it has always been

like this” all lift the perception. Model Area A runs the other way: beside a freeway, what the monitor averages as Fair across a day is felt as noise and fumes at every hour the family is home, so perception (2.0) runs harsher than measurement (2.5).

Step 3 — Draw the geographical conclusion. Neither column is “wrong”. The measured column says where the particles are; the perceived column says where the particles — and the noise, smell and look — *matter to people*. A planner who reads only the monitors will miss what residents feel; a planner who reads only the survey will miss harms habit hides. Good geography, and good decision-making, holds the two columns side by side and explains the gap.

Practice — scaffolded

- Q1.** In your own words, define **environmental quality**, **perception** and **liveability** as this section uses them.
- Q2.** Copy the six parts of environmental quality from the components figure. Under each, add one example from your own local area (for example, under “Clean water”, name a creek, river or beach near you, or write “none nearby”).
- Q3.** Classify each of these as an objective measure or a subjective measure: (a) the number of days last year that the PM2.5 standard was not met at the Footscray monitoring station; (b) a resident saying the creek “looks worse after rain”; (c) a decibel reading taken outside the school gate at lunchtime; (d) the class average rating for “the noise level in my street” from the model survey.
- Q4.** Use the air quality categories figure. Classify each PM2.5 reading (micrograms per cubic metre) and give the matching EPA advice: (a) 8; (b) 30; (c) 60; (d) 160.
- Q5.** Use the everyday sound levels chart. (a) Which of the six sounds sit above the comfort marker of about 70 dB(A)? (b) A neighbour plays music at about 90 dB(A) most evenings. Through which two pathways from Section 2 could this lower a resident’s perception of liveability? (c) Why is the marker described as “a guide, not a rule”?
- Q6.** These two draft survey questions break the design rules. For each, say which rule it breaks and rewrite it: (a) “Don’t you agree our street is too noisy?”; (b) “How good is the air and the water where you live?”
-

Practice — unscaffolded

- Q7.** Choose one feature: a busy road; a factory; a creek; a shopping strip. Using the pathways figure, explain how the *same* feature could raise one person’s perception of liveability and lower another’s. Name the pathway each person is feeling.
- Q8.** Australia’s annual PM2.5 standard is 8 micrograms per cubic metre; the WHO’s guideline is 5. (a) Give one health reason the WHO’s number is lower. (b) Give one economic or social reason a government might set its national standard higher than the WHO’s guideline. (c) In one sentence, say which number you would want used for your street, and why.
- Q9.** Rate your local area on the six rating questions of the model survey, then collect the same six ratings from one other person in your household or class. (a) Identify one aspect where your ratings agree and one where they differ. (b) Explain one difference using a factor from Section 4.
- Q10.** Use the perception-gap figure. Choose the area whose gap you find most concerning. Explain the gap using at least two ideas from this section, and say whether decisions about that area should follow the measurement, the perception, or both — with reasons.
-

Extended response

Q11. “If the instruments say the air is Fair, then the air is Fair — whatever people feel.”

Discuss this claim. In your response you should:

- use at least one measured example (a reading, a category, a standard) and at least one perceived example (a survey result or a perception from this section’s figures);
- explain, using the pathways, why people can feel the same air in different ways;
- refer to at least one of the model areas A to D, saying what its gap shows;
- draw a reasoned conclusion that states what evidence decisions about air quality should use, and why.

(6-8 sentences, or the equivalent in an organised paragraph plan.)

Teaching notes (for the teacher)

This section delivers VC2HG8K08 at Level 8, the band’s destination year, and draws on all three elaborations: .E01 (Section 3 and both worked demonstrations — EPA Victoria statistics: pollutants, monitoring stations at Alphington, Footscray, Brooklyn and Geelong South, air quality categories, and the Brooklyn/Geelong South industrial-area fact; plus the NEPM standards and WHO 2021 guidelines as the measurement layer), .E02 (Section 4, Q6, Q9 — the model perception survey and its design rules), .E03 (Section 5, Q9, Q10, Q11 — comparing others’ perceptions with one’s own assessment and with measured data). The First Nations disposition for this CD is *none*; every context is neutral.

Destination-year depth: the explain/consider verbs of the achievement standard are exercised in Section 2 (explaining influence as interconnection), worked demonstration 1 (considering the ways liveability is measured — standards as human decisions), Q8 (environmental, economic and social factors behind a standard) and Q11 (reasoned conclusion across measured and perceived evidence). Section 2A’s objective/subjective distinction is re-established, not assumed, in Section 1 so the section stands alone for a class arriving without the sibling Level 7 book. The survey method hands onward to 5B (VC2HG8S02), the local proposal to 2F (VC2HG8K11), and 2E (VC2HG8K10) reuses this section’s material as its environment lens.

Suggested sequence: define environmental quality and its six parts, and the two kinds of evidence (Section 1) → the four pathways and influence-as-interconnection (Section 2) → objective measurement: pollutants, categories, standards, noise (Section 3) → subjective measurement by survey and the factors that shape perception (Section 4) → the two comparisons and the steelmanned debate (Section 5) → worked demonstrations → practice.

Data honesty: real, cited material — EPA Victoria’s categories, pollutants and station names; the NEPM standards; the WHO 2021 guidelines; the Brooklyn/Geelong South industrial-area fact; standard acoustic reference levels. Model material, labelled as such in every caption — the survey sheet and the perception-gap comparison. Retrieval date for all sources: 25 August 2026.

Contested-terms handling: *liveability* carries Section 2A’s working definition; *environmental quality* is given a working definition at first use (the curriculum does not define it); the measurement-versus-perception debate is presented steelmanned on both sides, with the reasoning marked, not the conclusion.

Vocabulary gate: student-facing region (everything above these teaching notes, plus figure alt text and the figure text companions `diagrams/2c_*.txt`) checked at ceiling rank 8 (Year 8) with `vocab_gate_2c.py`; exemptions are the curriculum’s own words (content description, elaborations, achievement standard), subject terms defined at first use, and proper nouns. Result: CLEAN.

Glossary

Environmental quality — the condition of the natural surroundings of a place: how clean, healthy and pleasant they are (this section’s working definition). **Perception** — the way something seems to a person. **Pollutant** — a substance that pollutes the air, water or land. **Particle (PM2.5 / PM10)** — a tiny piece of solid or liquid matter in the air; PM2.5

particles are fine enough to be breathed deep into the lungs. **Monitoring station** — a site where instruments record environmental data such as air quality. **Survey** — a set of questions asked to a group of people to gather their views. **Objective measure** — a measure that is counted or recorded, so different checkers get the same answer. **Subjective measure** — a measure that reports people's perceptions, usually gathered by survey. **Standard** — an agreed limit; air meeting the standard is judged clean enough. **Guideline** — an advised level based on research, such as the WHO's health-based air guidelines. **Decibel (dB(A))** — the unit used to measure loudness of sound. **Liveability** — how good a place is to live in, judged by what the place offers the people who live there (Section 2A).

Sources (all retrieved 25 August 2026)

- National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure — Australia's national air standards for PM2.5 (annual 8, 24-hour 25 micrograms per cubic metre) and PM10 (annual 25, 24-hour 50).
- World Health Organization, *WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines* (2021) — PM2.5 (annual 5, 24-hour 15) and PM10 (annual 15, 24-hour 45) guidelines.
- EPA Victoria, "Air quality categories" — epa.vic.gov.au (ratings, PM2.5 bands, health advice).
- EPA Victoria, "How we measure air pollution" — epa.vic.gov.au (the six pollutants monitored; monitoring station names Alphington, Footscray, Brooklyn, Geelong South).
- EPA Victoria, *Annual Report 2024-25* — older industrial areas at Brooklyn and Geelong South and their effect on local particle readings.
- Everyday sound levels: standard reference levels used in acoustics; the about-70 dB(A) comfort marker is a general guide, not a regulatory number.
- Model data (perception survey sheet; measured-versus-perceived comparison): invented for this book; not real data.

Belonging: how ties to people and community shape how liveable a place feels

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Geography, Levels 7 and 8, strand *Geographical Knowledge and Understanding*, sub-strand *Place and liveability*. Content description: VC2HG8K09 (this book teaches the content description without its final clause, which is excluded under the book’s content policy — see Teaching notes). Elaborations drawn on: VC2HG8K09.E01 · VC2HG8K09.E02.

In this section

Section 2A sorted liveability measures into three families — environmental, economic and social. Section 2B took one economic-style question (services and facilities), and 2C took an environmental one. This section takes the **social** family: the ties between people, and the feeling of belonging to a place and its people, and how these shape the way a place *seems* to live in.

In this section you will learn:

- what **social connectedness** and **community identity** mean, and the ties that make them up;
- the pathways by which connection touches daily life — belonging, practical help, safety and trust, and joining in — and so shapes people’s **perceptions** of liveability;
- how to read real **ABS QuickStats** census data on how diverse a local area is, and on how many people live alone;
- what **social isolation** and **loneliness** look like in real Australian data, and what happens to a place when connection breaks down;
- how to **survey** people about how connected they feel in their place, and how connection and perceived liveability move together;
- how to weigh a genuine debate — is online connection real connection? — by putting each side in its strongest form.

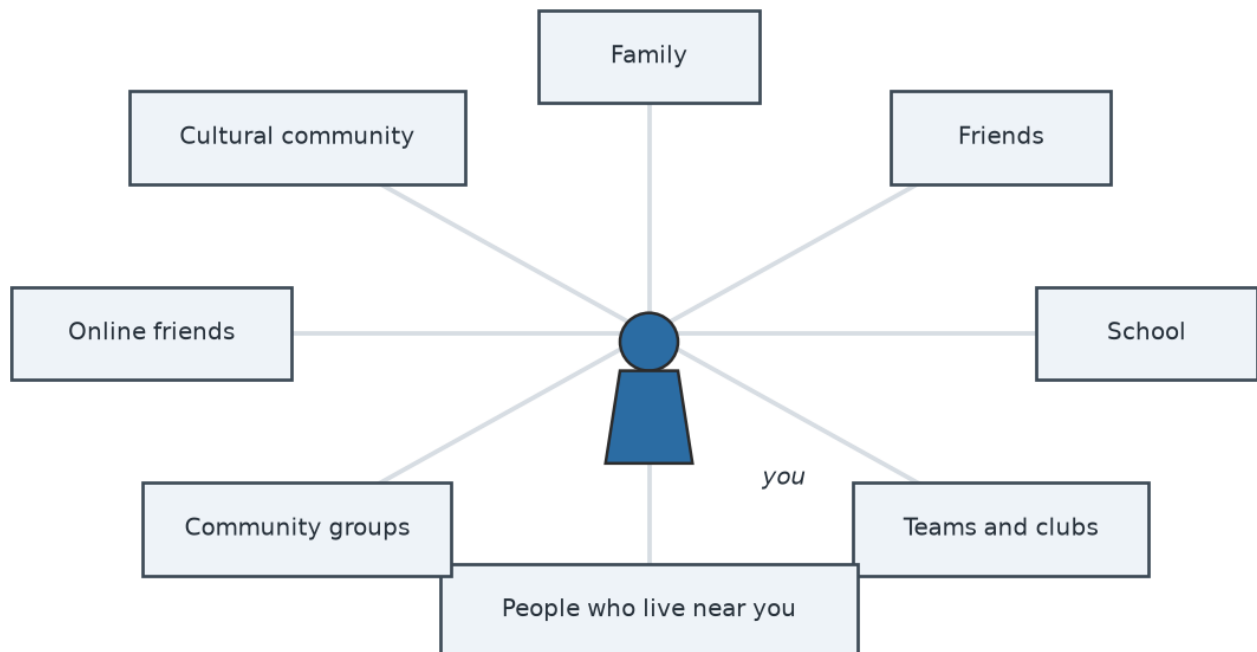
Key words to learn: social connectedness, community identity, perception, census, QuickStats, household, lone-person household, diversity, social isolation, loneliness, survey.

1. What are social connectedness and community identity?

Defining our terms. The curriculum does not define *social connectedness* or *community identity*, so this section uses working definitions. **Social connectedness is the ties a person has to the people around them — family, friends, neighbours, groups and community — and how strong those ties are.** **Community identity is the feeling of belonging to a place and its people — of being part of a “we” that includes your street, suburb or town.** Where we use another organisation’s figures, we say whose they are.

Think of the people around one person as a web.

The connections around a person



Model diagram. Social connectedness means having ties to the people around you. Community identity grows out of those ties.

Model concept web with a person at the centre, joined to eight kinds of ties: family; friends; school; teams and clubs; people who live near you; community groups; online friends; and cultural community

Model diagram. Social connectedness means having ties to the people around you. Community identity grows out of those ties.

Some ties are given (family, neighbours), some are chosen (friends, clubs). Some are strong (you would call them first in trouble), some are weak but still real (the shopkeeper who knows your order). Geographers care about all of them, because even weak ties make a street feel familiar and safe.

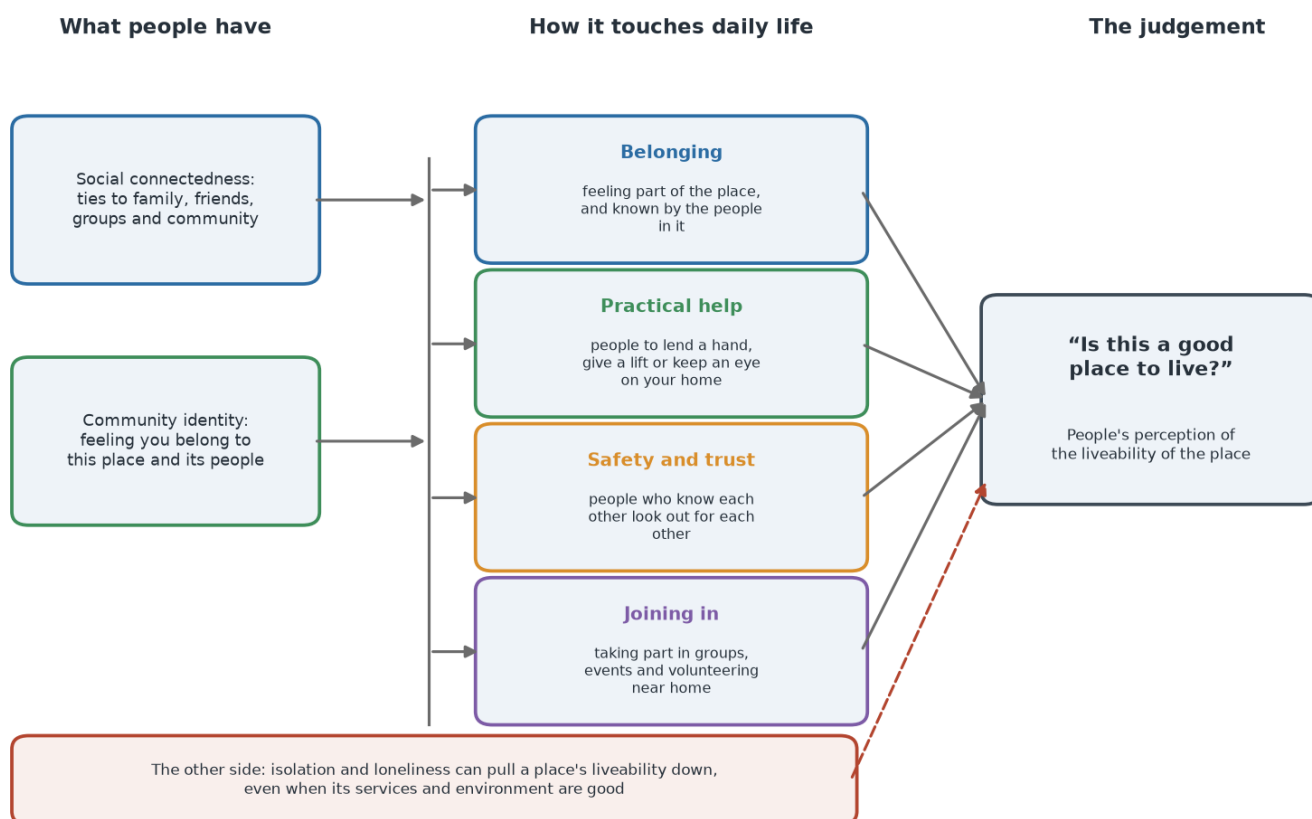
Community identity is what those ties add up to over time. A place gets its identity in part from its physical setting — but also from the people in it and what they do together: the local team's finals day, the market on Saturday, the group that looks after the park. People who have ties like these usually say they *belong*. Two people can live in identical houses in the same street, and the one with the ties will describe a more liveable place.

That last sentence is a claim, not a fact — and it is the claim this section tests. People differ: some rate a quiet, private life most highly, and feel no less satisfied with fewer ties. That variation is exactly why geographers **measure** connection and **ask** people, rather than assume.

2. How connection and identity touch people's perceptions of liveability

A **perception** is the way something seems to a person (Section 2A). This section's content description (VC2HG8K09) asks, in plain words, how the people around you change how good your place seems to live in.

The link works through four pathways.



Model pathways diagram with social connectedness and community identity at the left, four pathways in the middle (belonging; practical help; safety and trust; joining in), and the judgement "Is this a good place to live?" on the right, with a reverse arrow showing isolation and loneliness pulling the judgement down

Model diagram, invented for class discussion. It shows the pathways, not real places.

- **Belonging.** Being known and included makes a place feel like *yours*. A suburb can be identical on a map to the one next door, yet feel more liveable because people greet you, your team plays there, and your friends are close.
- **Practical help.** Connected people can get a hand: a lift to the station, a parcel taken in, a neighbour who keeps an eye on your home. A place where help is nearby *seems* easier to live in — because it is.
- **Safety and trust.** Streets where people know each other tend to feel safer, and people perceive safe places as more liveable. Trust is the feeling side of connection.
- **Joining in.** Groups, clubs, teams and volunteering give a place a social life. Joining in is both a cause and a sign of connection: people join where they feel they belong, and joining makes them belong more.

The pathways run in both directions. When connection breaks down — when people are **isolated** (short of contact with others) or **lonely** (feeling sad about being short of company) — the same four pathways pull the other way, and a place can feel less liveable even when its services and environment are good (Section 4).

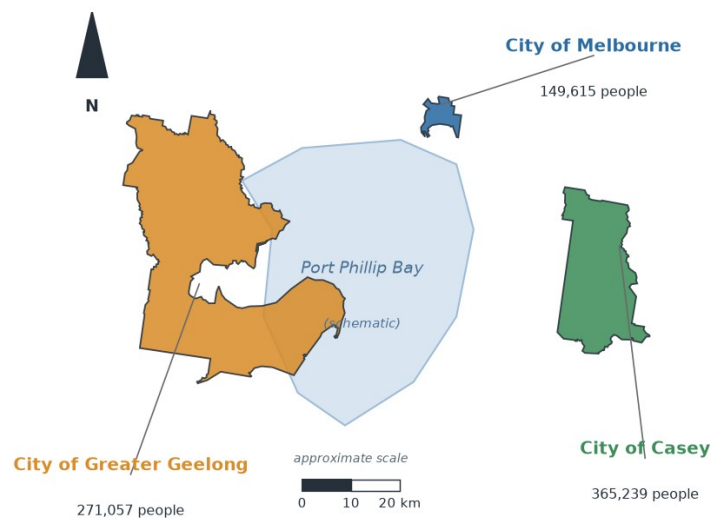
Because the pathways run through feelings, two people can stand in the same suburb and perceive its liveability in different ways: the new arrival with no ties yet, the parent whose whole family lives far away, the long-time resident whose club just closed. The place is one thing — perceptions of it are many.

3. Who lives here? Diversity and living alone, from ABS QuickStats

The first elaboration for this section (VC2HG8K09.E01) points to **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)** QuickStats and similar data for studying how **diverse** a local area's population is, and how many of its people live

alone. The **census** is the official count of every person and home in Australia, run by the ABS; the most recent one was in 2021. **QuickStats** is the ABS’s free summary page of census results for any area — a suburb, a council area, a state or the whole country.

This section uses three Victorian council areas, chosen to be different: an inner-city area, an outer growth area, and a regional city.



The three study areas of this section. Council boundaries: ABS ASGS 2021, simplified. Bay shape schematic. People counted on census night: ABS 2021 Census QuickStats, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Map of the three study council areas around Port Phillip Bay — City of Melbourne (149,615 people), City of Casey (365,239 people) and City of Greater Geelong (271,057 people) — with a north arrow and an approximate scale bar

The three study areas of this section. Council boundaries: ABS ASGS 2021, simplified. Bay shape schematic. People counted on census night: ABS 2021 Census QuickStats, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Reading a QuickStats page. Here is what one looks like, using the real 2021 values for the City of Casey, and — just as important — what a census can and cannot tell us about connection.

Reading ABS QuickStats — City of Casey, 2021 Census

Real values from the ABS QuickStats page, retrieved 25 August 2026

People and households

People counted on census night: 365,239. Median age: 34 years.

Household types (share of all households)

Family households 82.0% · lone-person households 15.6%
group households 2.4%

Language

45.0% of households use a language other than English at home.
Top non-English languages: Punjabi 4.6%, Sinhalese 3.5%,
Hazaraghi 3.2%, Mandarin 2.2%, Dari 2.0%

Birthplace

53.5% of people were born in Australia. Top overseas
birthplaces: India 8.9%, Sri Lanka 4.1%, Afghanistan 4.0%.
Both parents born overseas: 59.0%

What this CAN tell us

who lives here, where they
were born, the languages
spoken at home, and how
households are made up

What this CANNOT tell us

whether people feel lonely,
or connected to the people
around them — for that,
ask them with a survey

QuickStats is a free ABS summary of census results for any area — a suburb, a council area, a state or the whole country.

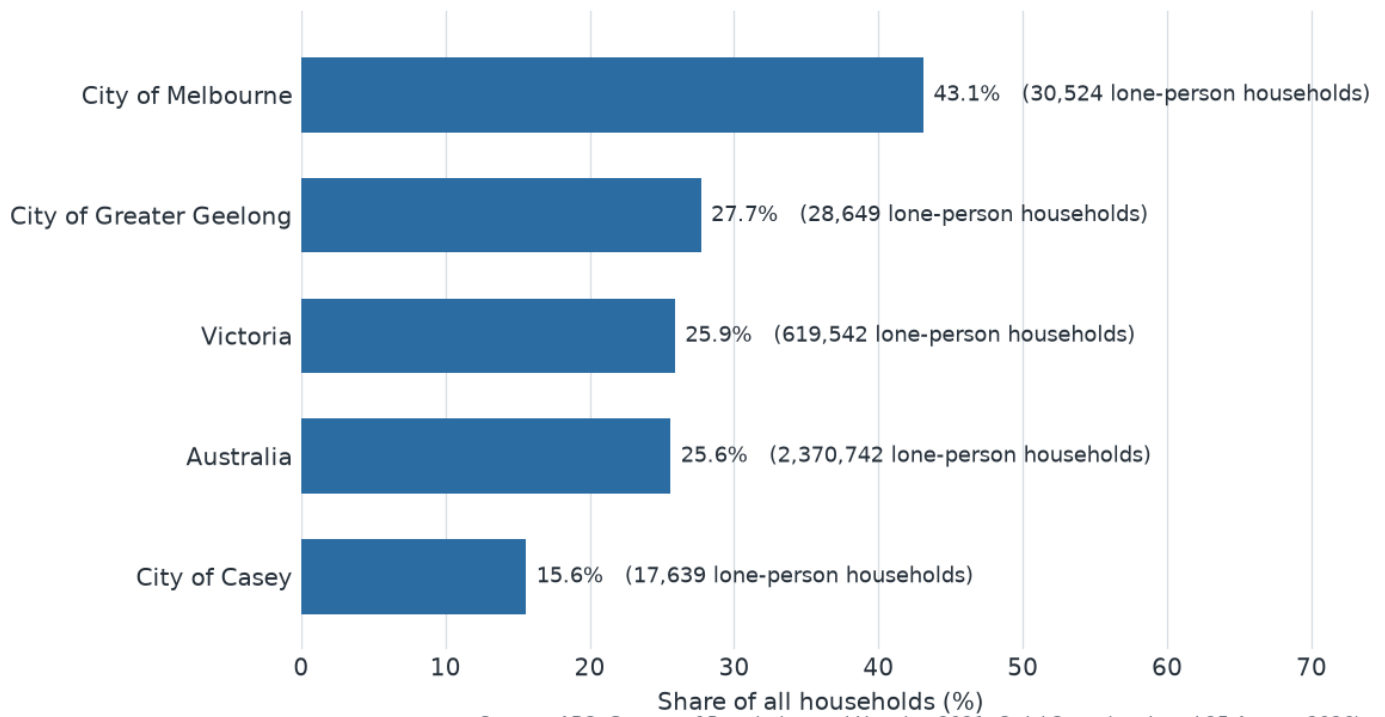
Worked ABS QuickStats card for the City of Casey, 2021 Census, showing people and households (365,239 people, median age 34), household types (family 82.0%, lone-person 15.6%, group 2.4%), language (45.0% use a language other than English at home; top languages Punjabi 4.6%, Sinhalese 3.5%, Hazaraghi 3.2%, Mandarin 2.2%, Dari 2.0%) and birthplace (53.5% born in Australia; top overseas birthplaces India 8.9%, Sri Lanka 4.1%, Afghanistan 4.0%; both parents born overseas 59.0%), with two boxes listing what the data can and cannot tell us

Real values from the ABS QuickStats page for the City of Casey, 2021 Census (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Notice the split in the last figure: the census counts **who is here and how households are made up**; it cannot count **how those people feel**. A census can tell you how many people live alone; it cannot tell you how many of them are lonely. For feelings, you ask — that is Section 5.

People living alone. A **lone-person household** is a home where one person lives by themselves. Because each such household holds exactly one person, the count of lone-person households *is* the count of people living alone.

People living alone, 2021 Census: lone-person households



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

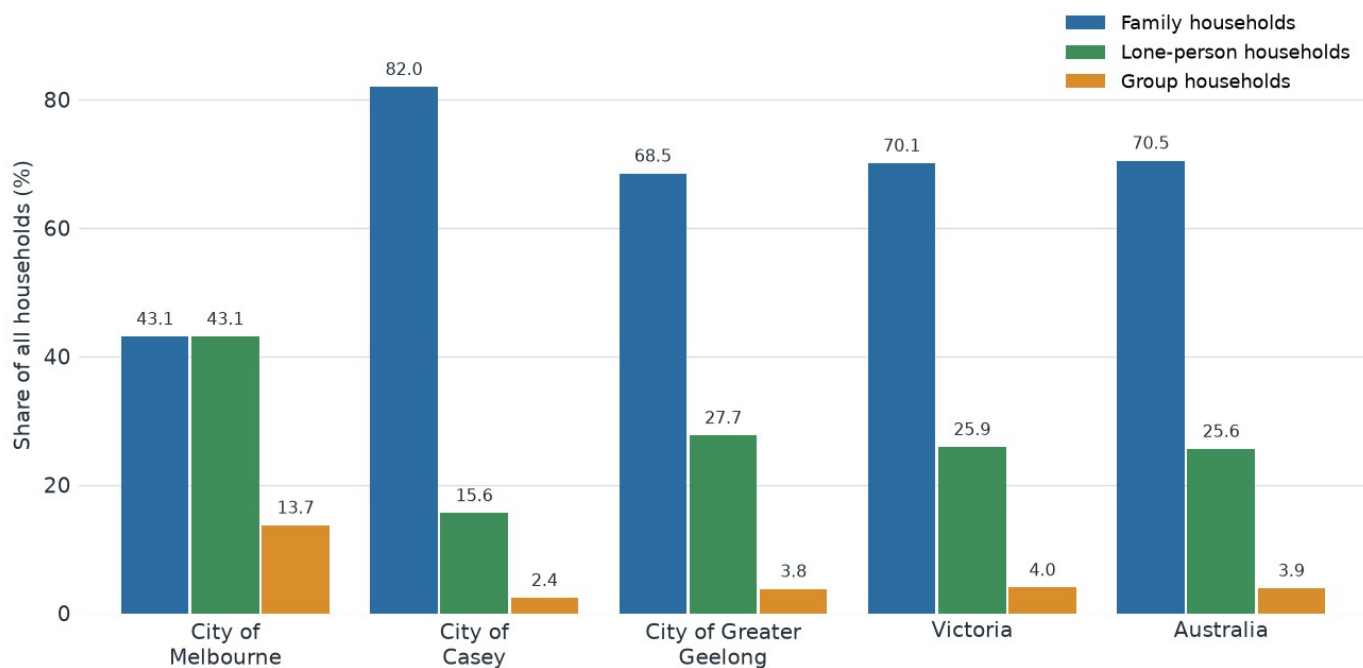
Bar chart of lone-person households as a share of all households, 2021 Census: City of Melbourne 43.1% (30,524 lone-person households); City of Greater Geelong 27.7% (28,649); Victoria 25.9% (619,542); Australia 25.6% (2,370,742); City of Casey 15.6% (17,639)

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

The pattern is the story. In the **City of Melbourne** — the inner city, with many flats — 43.1% of households are lone-person. In the **City of Casey** — an outer growth area of family homes — the share is 15.6%. **Greater Geelong**, a regional city, sits between at 27.7%. Living alone is not the same as being lonely, and for many people it is a choice they value. But a place where many people live alone has to work harder at the pathways of Section 2 — the meeting places, groups and events that turn residents into neighbours.

Household types together. The same pattern shows in the full household mix.

Household types in the five study areas, 2021 Census



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

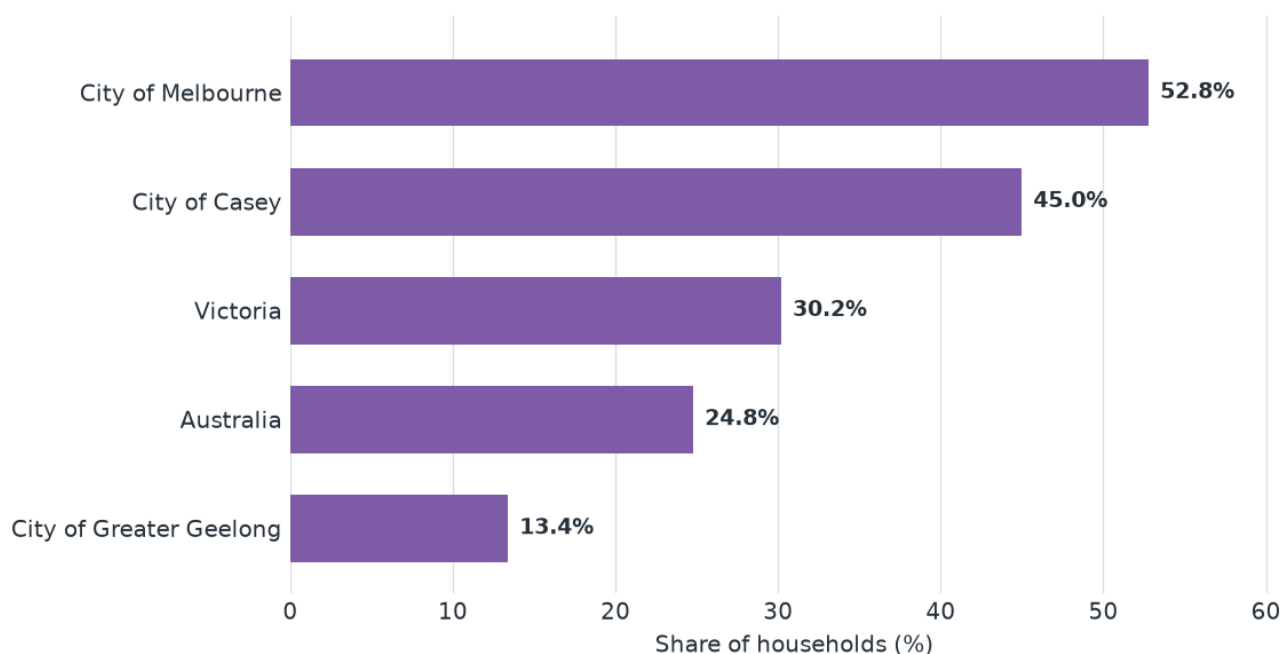
Grouped bar chart of household types as shares of all households, 2021 Census — family, lone-person and group households — for the City of Melbourne (43.1%, 43.1%, 13.7%), City of Casey (82.0%, 15.6%, 2.4%), City of Greater Geelong (68.5%, 27.7%, 3.8%), Victoria (70.1%, 25.9%, 4.0%) and Australia (70.5%, 25.6%, 3.9%)

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Casey is 82.0% family households — a place built around families. The inner city holds far more **group households** (13.7%, against Casey’s 2.4%): unrelated people sharing a home, such as students and young workers. Each household mix gives a place a different social shape — and a different starting point for connectedness.

Diversity. QuickStats also shows how varied a local population is — where people were born and the languages spoken at home.

Households using a language other than English at home, 2021 Census

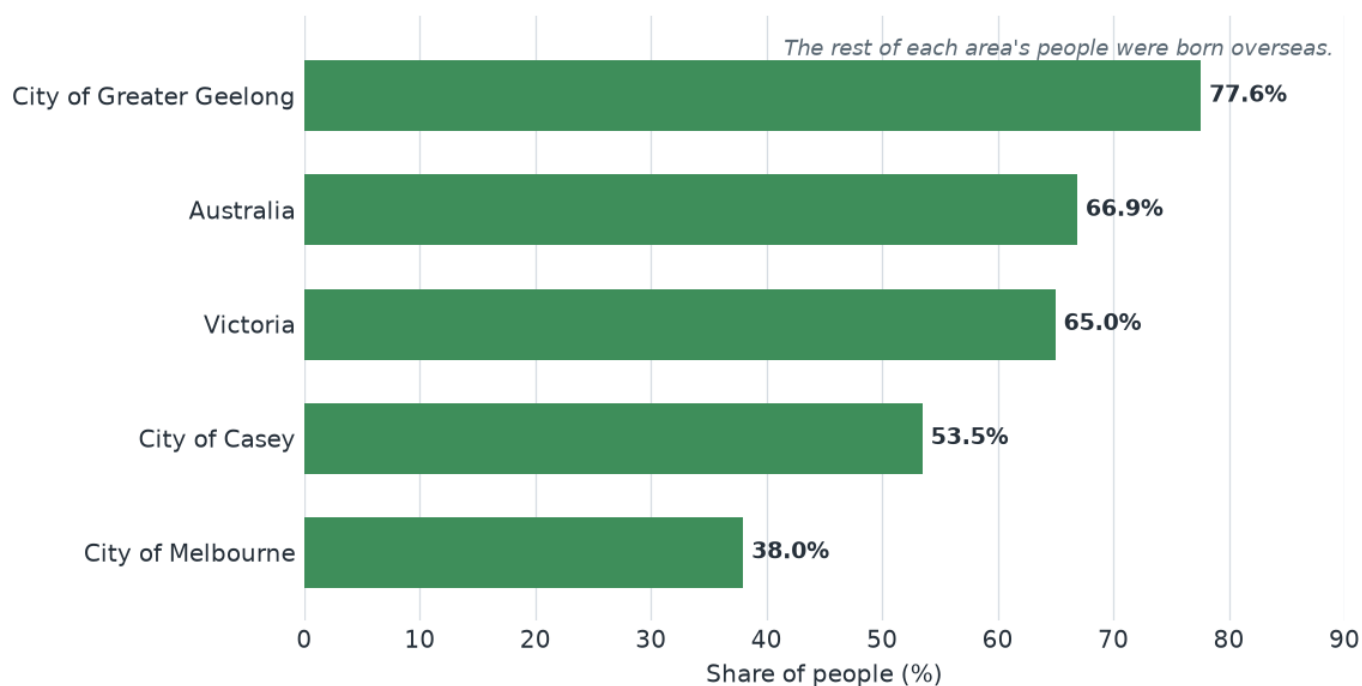


Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Bar chart of households using a language other than English at home, 2021 Census: City of Melbourne 52.8%; City of Casey 45.0%; Victoria 30.2%; Australia 24.8%; City of Greater Geelong 13.4%

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

People born in Australia, 2021 Census



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Bar chart of people born in Australia, 2021 Census: City of Greater Geelong 77.6%; Australia 66.9%; Victoria 65.0%; City of Casey 53.5%; City of Melbourne 38.0%. The rest of each area's people were born overseas

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Read the two charts together. In Casey, 45.0% of households use a language other than English at home, and only 53.5% of people were born in Australia — the top overseas birthplaces are India (8.9%), Sri Lanka (4.1%) and Afghanistan (4.0%). Casey is one of Melbourne's great settling-in areas: a large share of its people arrived from overseas within recent decades. Geelong, at 13.4% and 77.6%, is far less diverse; the inner city is the most diverse of all.

Diversity touches connectedness in two directions at once. A diverse area gains the clubs, festivals, food and faith communities that new residents build — strong raw material for community identity. At the same time, a newcomer far from their old ties is, by definition, starting their web from zero, and language can make the pathways of Section 2 harder to walk. That double edge is a reason geographers measure diversity rather than guess at it.

4. Connected or isolated? Participation, loneliness and a genuine debate

The census shows the shape of a population; the second elaboration (VC2HG8K09.E02) asks how connected or isolated the people in a place actually are, and what that does to their perceptions of liveability. Two kinds of real data put numbers on the two ends of the scale.

Joining in: volunteering. One measurable sign of connection is participation — people giving time to groups, clubs and causes.

Counting participation: volunteering in Victoria



When restrictions shut clubs and events, places lost a layer of their social connectedness almost at once.

Source: Volunteering Victoria, State of Volunteering in Victoria report (2020), volunteeringvictoria.org.au (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Three statistic tiles: 2.3 million Victorians volunteer — 42.1% of the community gives its time to groups, clubs and causes; 507.7 million+ hours donated to the community in 2019 — practical help that places run on; participation down 50.2% between April and June 2020 (early pandemic), with hours down 64.1%

Source: Volunteering Victoria, State of Volunteering in Victoria report (2020), volunteeringvictoria.org.au (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Nearly half of Victorians volunteered, and their hours are practical help that places run on — the same “practical help” pathway from Section 2, counted. Then watch what happened when the pandemic shut clubs and events: participation halved and hours fell by almost two-thirds in a single quarter. Places lost a layer of their connectedness almost at once, through no fault of their residents.

When connection breaks down: loneliness. At the other end of the scale, Australia’s welfare reporting tracks isolation and loneliness.

When connection breaks down: loneliness in Australia

45%

of Australians felt lonely at least some
of the time in the previous week —
April 2020, during the pandemic
lockdowns: almost half of the country

4.8%

of Australians said in August 2022 that
they never met socially with anyone —
more than double the share before the
pandemic

People aged 18-24 reported the highest levels of loneliness through the pandemic, and loneliness among 15-24 year olds has been rising since 2012. Social contact — in person and online together — has declined for decades.

Source: AIHW, Australia's welfare 2023: data insights, "Social isolation, loneliness and wellbeing" (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Two statistic tiles: 45% of Australians felt lonely at least some of the time in the previous week — April 2020, during the pandemic lockdowns, almost half of the country; 4.8% of Australians said in August 2022 that they never met socially with anyone — more than double the share before the pandemic. Note: people aged 18-24 reported the highest levels of loneliness through the pandemic, and loneliness among 15-24 year olds has been rising since 2012; social contact — in person and online together — has declined for decades

Source: AIHW, Australia's welfare 2023: data insights, "Social isolation, loneliness and wellbeing" (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Two numbers deserve a second look. In April 2020, in lockdown, almost half of Australians felt lonely at least some of the week. And by August 2022, 4.8% of Australians said they *never* met socially with anyone — more than double the share before the pandemic. Notice also who was most affected: people aged 18-24 reported the highest loneliness through the pandemic, and loneliness in the 15-24 group has been rising since 2012 — a trend that began before lockdowns and continued after them.

Loneliness and isolation are related but not the same. **Isolation** is counted from the outside — little contact with others. **Loneliness** is felt from the inside — the sadness of missing company. You can be isolated without feeling lonely, and lonely in a crowd. Both matter for liveability, because both sit on the pathways of Section 2.

A genuine debate: is online connection real connection? The AIHW data counts social contact *in person and online together* — and that combined contact has been declining for decades, even as online life grew. So the 15-24 group, the most online age group, also reports the most loneliness. Is online contact real connectedness, or a substitute that leaves identity thinner? Strong geography steelmans both sides before judging.

Steelman: is online connection real connection?

Position A — yes, it is connection

Keeps ties alive across distance — family,
friends and old neighbours stay close.

Counts as social contact: the AIHW
measures contact in person and online.

Helps people join in when distance, cost
or health make meeting hard.

Position B — it cannot replace local ties

Local ties are what make a PLACE feel
liveable — who can help you nearby.

Social contact — in person and online
together — has fallen for decades.

The age group most at home online
(18-24) reported the highest loneliness.

Testing it: ask people in one place how many nearby people they could
rely on, and whether online contact adds to or stands in for meeting
in person. The survey method of Section 2D can settle what feelings say.

Model positions written for this book. The strongest answer uses evidence from both sides and says what would settle it.

Steelman diagram with two cards — Position A, “yes, it is connection”: keeps ties alive across distance, counts as social contact in the AIHW’s measures, and helps people join in when distance, cost or health make meeting hard; Position B, “it cannot replace local ties”: local ties are what make a place feel liveable, combined in-person and online contact has fallen for decades, and the age group most at home online reported the highest loneliness — with a testing note below

Model positions written for this book. The strongest answer uses evidence from both sides and says what would settle it.

Two positions, steelmanned. Position A — online connection is real connection. It keeps ties alive across distance — family overseas, friends who move away, old neighbours. It counts as contact in the measures we have, and it lets people join in when distance, cost, disability or anxiety make meeting in person hard. For a newcomer without local ties, an online community can be the first thread of belonging. **Position B — it cannot replace local ties.** Liveability is about *place*, and the pathways of Section 2 — a lift, a watched house, a familiar face at the shops — need people nearby. Combined contact has fallen for decades while online time has risen, and the most online age group reports the most loneliness. If online contact were enough, those trends would not move together. **Testing it.** The debate can only be settled by asking: survey one place about nearby people they could rely on, and about whether online contact adds to or stands in for meeting in person. Feelings argue; the survey method of Section 5 measures.

5. Investigating connection in your place

The second half of VC2HG8K09.E02 is the investigation itself: how connected or isolated the people in *your* place actually are, and how that changes how liveable the place feels to them. As in Sections 2C and 5B, the tool is a **survey** — the same questions, the same scale, asked of a group, answers tallied and graphed.

The model survey. Connection is felt, so it must be asked about directly — carefully, and with privacy.

Social connection survey — my local area

MODEL form — adapt the questions to your own suburb or town

1. How well do you know the people who live near you?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Not at allA littleSomewhatWellVery well

2. How often do you talk with people who live near you?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NeverRarelySometimesOftenMost days

3. How often do you see friends or family who live nearby?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

RarelyA few times a yearMonthlyWeeklyMost days

4. Are you part of a local group, team or club?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NoNot yetSometimesYesYes, and I help out

5. If you needed help, is there someone nearby you could ask?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

NoNot sureProbablyYesYes, several people

6. "I feel I belong to this local area."

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly disagreeDisagreeNot sureAgreeStrongly agree

Record for each question: Who did you ask? How many people answered?

Keep the questions and the scale the same for everyone, so your results can be compared.

Some questions ask about feelings. People do not have to answer, and answers stay private.

Section 5B shows how to turn your answers into numbers and graphs.

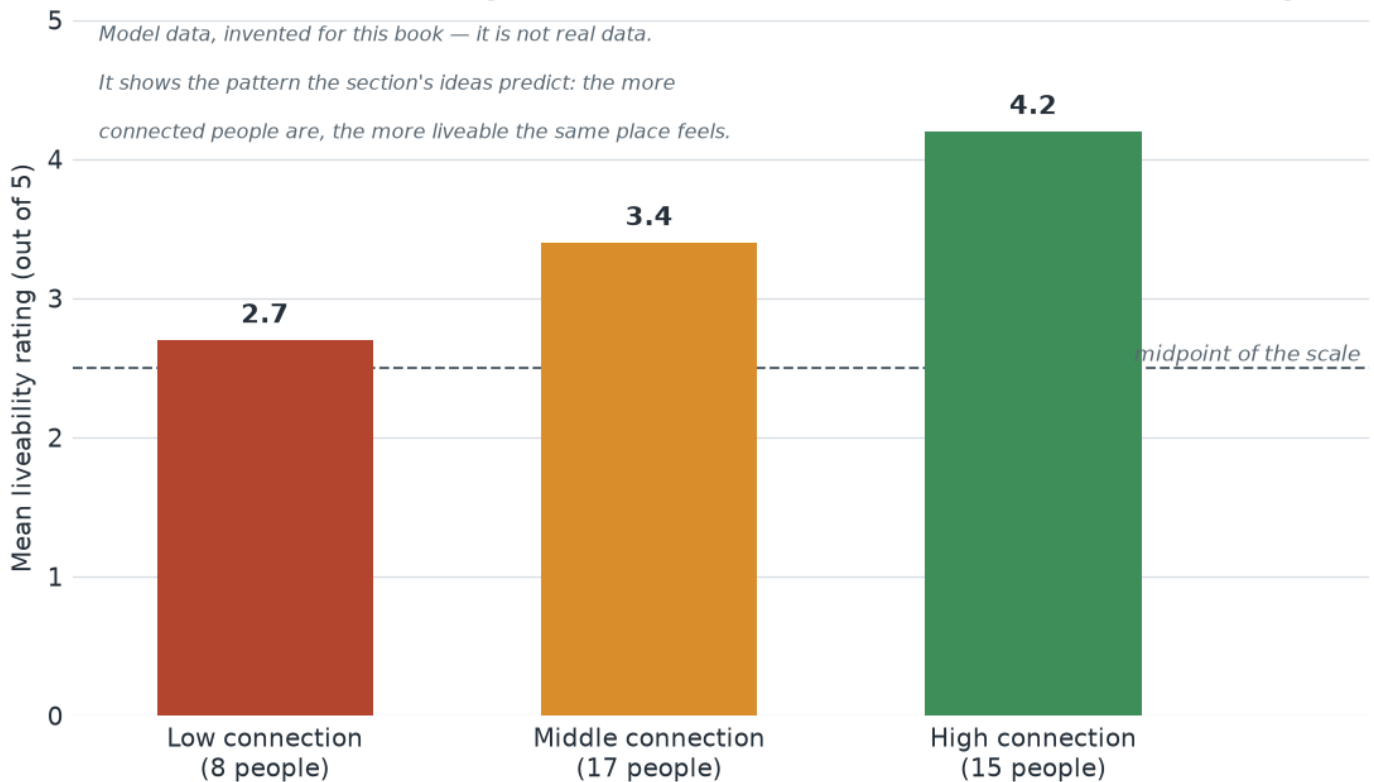
Model social connection survey form for a student's local area: six rating questions on five-point scales — knowing neighbours, talking with neighbours, seeing nearby friends or family, membership of a local group or club, someone nearby to ask for help, and "I feel I belong to this local area" — with notes on recording who was asked, keeping questions the same for everyone, keeping answers private, and graphing results

This survey is a model, written for this book. It is not real survey data; it shows the shape of a survey a class could run in any Victorian suburb or town.

The design rules are the ones Section 2C used: one idea per question, a clear five-point scale, no names, and nobody has to answer questions about feelings. Question 6 is the identity question — belonging stated outright — while questions 1-5 measure the tied, practical, trust and joining-in pathways.

Reading model results. Suppose a class of 40 runs the survey, scores each respondent's connection (one point per scale step), and sorts people into low, middle and high connection groups. Then it graphs each group's mean answer to one extra question: "How liveable is this place to live in?", out of 5.

Perceived liveability and social connection — model class survey



Bar chart of model class survey results: mean liveability rating out of 5 by connection group — low connection 2.7 (8 people), middle connection 3.4 (17 people), high connection 4.2 (15 people) — with a dashed line at the midpoint of the scale (2.5)

Model data, invented for this book to show how survey answers become a graph. It is not real data.

Read the graph the way a geographer would. Same place, three perceptions: the high-connection group rates it 4.2 — clearly above the scale's midpoint — while the low-connection group rates the *same streets and services* 2.7, below the midpoint. The pattern is exactly the claim this section opened with: the more connected people are, the more liveable the same place feels. The low group's 2.7 is not a measurement of the streets; it is a measurement of what the streets feel like without ties in them.

Two cautions keep the reading honest. First, the pattern cannot say which came first — connection may lift perception, a place that feels good may pull people into connection, or both. Either way, connection and perceived liveability move together, and that is the influence VC2HG8K09 names. Second, a small class survey describes its respondents, not a whole suburb — Section 5B shows how sampling decides what a survey is allowed to claim.

Worked demonstration 1 — Counting people living alone from QuickStats

QuickStats gives lone-person households as a share *and* a count. Because a lone-person household holds exactly one person, the count of lone-person households is the count of people living alone. Let us turn the three study areas' counts into a comparison. *All values are real, from the 2021 Census QuickStats.*

Step 1 — Read the counts. People living alone: City of Melbourne 30,524; City of Greater Geelong 28,649; City of Casey 17,639.

Step 2 — Compare counts with populations. Casey has 365,239 people — more than double Melbourne's 149,615 — yet fewer than *half* as many people living alone (17,639 against 30,524). Counts alone would mislead; the shares (Section 3) are the fair comparison: 43.1% of Melbourne households are lone-person, against 15.6% in Casey and 27.7% in Geelong.

Step 3 — Turn shares into people. In Melbourne, about one person in five lives alone (30,524 of 149,615). In Geelong, about one in ten. In Casey, about one in twenty. Same country, same census night — three different social shapes.

Step 4 — Reason geographically. Why the gap? The inner city has flats, students, young workers and older residents whose children have left — households of one. Outer growth areas like Casey are built for families; regional Geelong mixes both. Then apply Section 2: a place where one in five lives alone needs more of the machinery of connection — libraries, community houses, clubs, events — than a place where one in twenty does. The census has not measured loneliness; it has measured where connection will be hardest work.

The geographic point. VC2HG8K09.E01 is not a data-reading exercise; it is a way of seeing the social shape of a place before you ever ask anyone a question.

Worked demonstration 2 — Reading the model survey results

Now the same reasoning with the survey side, the way VC2HG8K09.E02 invites. *The data is the model data of Section 5.*

Step 1 — Read the groups. Of 40 respondents, 8 scored low connection, 17 middle, 15 high. Their mean liveability ratings: 2.7, 3.4 and 4.2 out of 5.

Step 2 — Read the gap. High minus low is $4.2 - 2.7 = 1.5$ scale points — on a 5-point scale, that is a third of the whole scale of difference between the least and most connected respondents, looking at the same place.

Step 3 — Use the midpoint. The low-connection mean (2.7) sits just above the scale's midpoint of 2.5 — on average, that group is saying the place is only slightly better than “so-so”. The high-connection mean (4.2) says “good”. A planner who averaged all 40 answers would get 3.4 and miss both stories.

Step 4 — Link to the pathways. Give the gap a cause using Section 2: the low group likely scores low on practical help, trust and belonging — the pathways that make a place feel liveable. Then predict: if a local program doubled the low group's club participation (the “joining in” pathway), which way would their mean move, and what would that do to the suburb's overall perceived liveability?

The geographic point. A survey like this is how a feeling becomes evidence. The census (worked demonstration 1) shows where connection will be hard work; the survey shows whether it is — and how much the gap costs the place in perceived liveability.

Practice — scaffolded

Q1. In your own words, define **social connectedness** and **community identity** as this section uses them, and give one example of each from a place you know.

Q2. Copy four ties from the connections web figure. For each, say whether it is given or chosen, and whether you would call it strong or weak for most people.

Q3. Classify each of these as an objective measure or a subjective measure: (a) the number of lone-person households in the City of Casey in 2021; (b) a resident rating “I feel I belong to this local area”; (c) the hours Victorians donated to volunteering in 2019; (d) how lonely a resident felt last week.

Q4. Use the lone-person households chart. (a) Which area has the highest share, and which the lowest? (b) What is the gap between them, in percentage points? (c) Give one reason for the gap using housing or age.

Q5. Use the QuickStats card. (a) Name two things the census can tell us about Casey. (b) Name one thing it cannot tell us, and say which method would.

Q6. Use the volunteering tiles. (a) What happened to volunteering participation and hours between April and June 2020? (b) In one sentence, say what that meant for the connectedness of Victorian places.

Q7. Use the loneliness tiles. Explain in your own words (a) what the 45% figure measures and when, and (b) what the 4.8% figure measures and when. Then say which of the two is closer to *isolation* and which is closer to *loneliness*, with a reason.

Q8. These two draft survey questions are badly written. For each, say what is wrong and rewrite it: (a) “Don’t you agree that nobody talks to their neighbours anymore?” (b) “How often do you talk to your neighbours and join in local events?”

Practice — unscaffolded

Q9. Use the pathways figure. Explain how the *same* social feature of a place (choose one: a busy Saturday market; a large new housing estate with no community centre yet; a street where most people have lived for decades) could raise one person’s perception of liveability and lower another’s.

Q10. Design three survey questions to find out how socially connected people in your local area are. Follow the design rules shown in the model survey (one idea per question; clear rating scale; no leading; privacy). For one of your questions, show what a badly written version would look like.

Q11. Predict, before you look: would your local area’s lone-person share and language-other-than-English share sit closer to Casey’s, Melbourne’s or Geelong’s? Then check against the three charts in Section 3 and explain any surprise using housing, age or diversity.

Q12. Use the steelman figure. (a) Add one further point in favour of the side you disagree with — make it as strong as you can. (b) Say what evidence from the loneliness tiles each side would claim. (c) Describe the survey result that would settle the debate for your local area.

Extended response

Q13. “*A place with clean streets, good services and cheap housing is liveable — it makes no difference whether anyone knows their neighbours.*”

Do you agree? Write an evidence-based response of about 200 words (written or multimodal). The strongest responses will:

- state a clear position (agree, disagree, or agree with limits);
 - steelman the other side — give the best argument *against* your position before you answer it;
 - use at least **one real statistic** from this section (ABS, Volunteering Victoria or AIHW) and **at least two figures** as evidence;
 - refer to at least one group of people for whom the social side of liveability matters most (for example, new arrivals, people living alone, or young people);
 - refer to their sources.
-

Teaching notes (for the teacher)

This section delivers VC2HG8K09 and draws on two elaborations: .E01 (Section 3 and worked demonstration 1 — ABS QuickStats: the three study areas’ populations, household types, lone-person counts, languages and birthplaces) and .E02 (Sections 4-5, worked demonstration 2, Q10-Q12 — volunteering and loneliness data as the connected/isolated ends of the scale, the model survey, and the connection-versus-perception graph). **§2A disposition:** the content description’s final clause (cultural connectedness to Country and Place) is cut, and elaboration .E03 (cultural connectedness, sacred sites, dispossession) is excluded. The section teaches social connectedness and community identity in neutral context with non-First Nations examples; no task requires or assumes First Nations content, and no item draws on the excluded elaboration.

Suggested sequence: working definitions and the ties web (Section 1) → the four pathways to perceived liveability (Section 2) → census diversity and living alone with QuickStats (Section 3) → participation and loneliness data, and

the steelmanned online-connection debate (Section 4) → the model survey and its results (Section 5) → worked demonstrations → practice. Keep the joins explicit: the three liveability-measure families and the objective/subjective distinction come from 2A, the perception-and-survey machinery parallels 2C, and the survey *method* (question design, sampling, what a survey may claim) is handed onward to 5B (VC2HG8S02), as the local-improvement proposal is to 2F (VC2HG8K11) and choropleth mapping of census data to 5C (VC2HG8S03). Section 2E's concept capstone reuses this section's data as evidence.

Data sources (all retrieved 25 August 2026; full list under Sources): ABS 2021 Census QuickStats for the City of Melbourne, City of Casey, City of Greater Geelong, Victoria and Australia; Volunteering Victoria, State of Volunteering in Victoria (2020); AIHW, Australia's welfare 2023: data insights, "Social isolation, loneliness and wellbeing". Model material (connections web, pathways, survey form, class survey results, steelman positions) is invented for this book and labelled as such in every caption. The map's council boundaries are ABS ASGS 2021 LGA polygons, simplified; the bay is schematic and labelled so.

Contested-terms handling: *social connectedness* and *community identity* are given working definitions at first use (the curriculum does not define them), stated as working definitions; *loneliness* and *isolation* are distinguished (felt vs counted); the online-connection debate is presented steelmanned on both sides with the reasoning marked, not the conclusion, and a settleable test offered. Expect students to offer their own communities — cultural, religious, sporting, online — as examples of identity; all are welcome as examples within the section's neutral framing.

Vocabulary gate: student-facing region (including figure alt text and figure text companions diagrams/2d_*.txt) checked at ceiling rank 8 (Year 8) with `_vocab_gate_2D.py`; exemptions are the curriculum's own words (CD, elaborations, achievement standard), subject terms defined at first use, and proper nouns. Result: CLEAN.

Glossary

Social connectedness — the ties a person has to the people around them — family, friends, neighbours, groups and community — and how strong those ties are (this section's working definition). **Community identity** — the feeling of belonging to a place and its people; being part of a "we" that includes your street, suburb or town (this section's working definition). **Perception** — the way something seems to a person (Section 2A). **Liveability** — how good a place is to live in, judged by what the place offers the people who live there (Section 2A). **Census** — the official count of every person and home in Australia, run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics; the most recent one was in 2021. **QuickStats** — the ABS's free summary page of census results for any area. **Household** — a person, or group of people, living together in one home. **Lone-person household** — a home where one person lives by themselves. **Diversity** — the variety in a population: where people were born, the languages they speak, their ages and backgrounds. **Social isolation** — having little contact with other people; counted from the outside. **Loneliness** — the sad feeling of missing company; felt from the inside. **Survey** — a set of questions asked to a group of people to gather their views (Sections 2A, 2C). **Objective measure** — a measure that is counted or recorded, so different checkers get the same answer (Section 2A). **Subjective measure** — a measure that reports people's perceptions, usually gathered by survey (Section 2A).

Sources (all retrieved 25 August 2026)

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats for the City of Melbourne, the City of Casey, the City of Greater Geelong, Victoria and Australia — abs.gov.au.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, ASGS 2021 local government area boundaries (council polygons used in the study-areas map, simplified) — geo.abs.gov.au.
- Volunteering Victoria, *State of Volunteering in Victoria* report (2020) — volunteeringvictoria.org.au (2.3 million volunteers, 42.1%; 507.7 million+ hours in 2019; April-June 2020 declines of 50.2% and 64.1%).
- AIHW, *Australia's welfare 2023: data insights*, "Social isolation, loneliness and wellbeing" — aihw.gov.au (45% lonely at least some of the week, April 2020; 4.8% never met socially, August 2022; 18-24 highest loneliness; contact declining for decades).

- Model material (connections web, pathways diagram, social connection survey form, class survey results, steelman positions): invented for this book; not real data.

Evaluating liveability through three lenses: space, environment, interconnection

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Geography · Levels 7 and 8 · Strand: Geographical Knowledge and Understanding · Sub-strand: Place and liveability

Content description: **VC2HG8K10**.

Draws on: **VC2HG8K10.E01 · VC2HG8K10.E02 · VC2HG8K10.E03**.

Section 2E is the first of the three concept-application capstones of this book (2E, 3F, 4E). All of its evidence is drawn from Sections 2A–2D: liveability measures and perceptions (2A), accessibility (2B), environmental quality (2C) and social connectedness with its census data (2D). No new content is introduced here — the concepts are.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

1. **Recap the measures.** Begin from 2A's distinction between measurable liveability measures (services, air quality, crime rates, housing) and people's perceptions of a place. Hold up the three concept lenses and say: measures are the *what*; the concepts are the *ways of sorting and asking about it*.
 2. **Define the terms the section leans on** — liveability (re-established, not assumed), evaluate, space, environment, interconnection — using the definition boxes below. Do not assume any prior book's sequence.
 3. **Lens 1, space.** Work Demonstration 1 slowly: read the chart, compute the gaps, then ask *why does accessibility belong to space?* (E01). Collect answers before revealing the reasoning.
 4. **Lens 2, environment.** Work Demonstration 2: the EIU index makes environmental quality one of five scored parts (E02). Use the 2020 dip and the 2019–20 smoke event to show liveability is changeable, not fixed.
 5. **Lens 3, interconnection.** Work Demonstration 3 with the census travel data (E03). Stress the two-sided reading: flows connect people to jobs and services, but dependence on one flow (the car) weakens a place for non-drivers — young people, older people, people with particular needs (the same groups 2F asks students to plan for).
 6. **Assemble the evaluation.** Use the six-step model figure. Then run the scaffolded questions, the unscaffolded questions, and the capstone response task. Marking is on the reasoning steps (judgment, sourced evidence, reasoning, other side, limits, conclusion), not on which conclusion is reached.
-

Theory

Liveability, re-established. In Section 2A this book set out its working definition, and this section keeps it. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *liveability* but does not define it; this book therefore treats it as **how good a place is to live in**, judged two ways — by measurable measures (such as access to services, air quality and housing) and by people's own perceptions of the place. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with this one; every question in this section is answerable on this definition alone. Because one half of liveability is measurable and the other half reports people's experience, two people can weigh the same evidence in different ways and both be reasoning well. That is why the end of this section is an evaluation, not a fact.

The concept toolkit. Geography uses seven concepts to organise thinking about the world — place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. This section applies three of them, the three named by its content description: **space, environment and interconnection**. Each is defined at first use, exactly as used here:

- **Space** is about where things are, how far apart they are, and how that arrangement affects people. Its key question is: *where, and how far?*
- **Environment** is about the surroundings of a place and their condition — the air, water, land, climate and living things, and the built surroundings people have added. Its key question is: *what are the surroundings and conditions like?*
- **Interconnection** is about the links between places and people — the flows of people, goods, information and services that tie one place to others. Its key question is: *what connects this place to other places, and what moves along those links?*

No single concept captures a place. Each is a lens: a way of looking that shows some things and hides others. An evaluation of liveability sets the lenses over the same place in turn and weighs what each one shows.

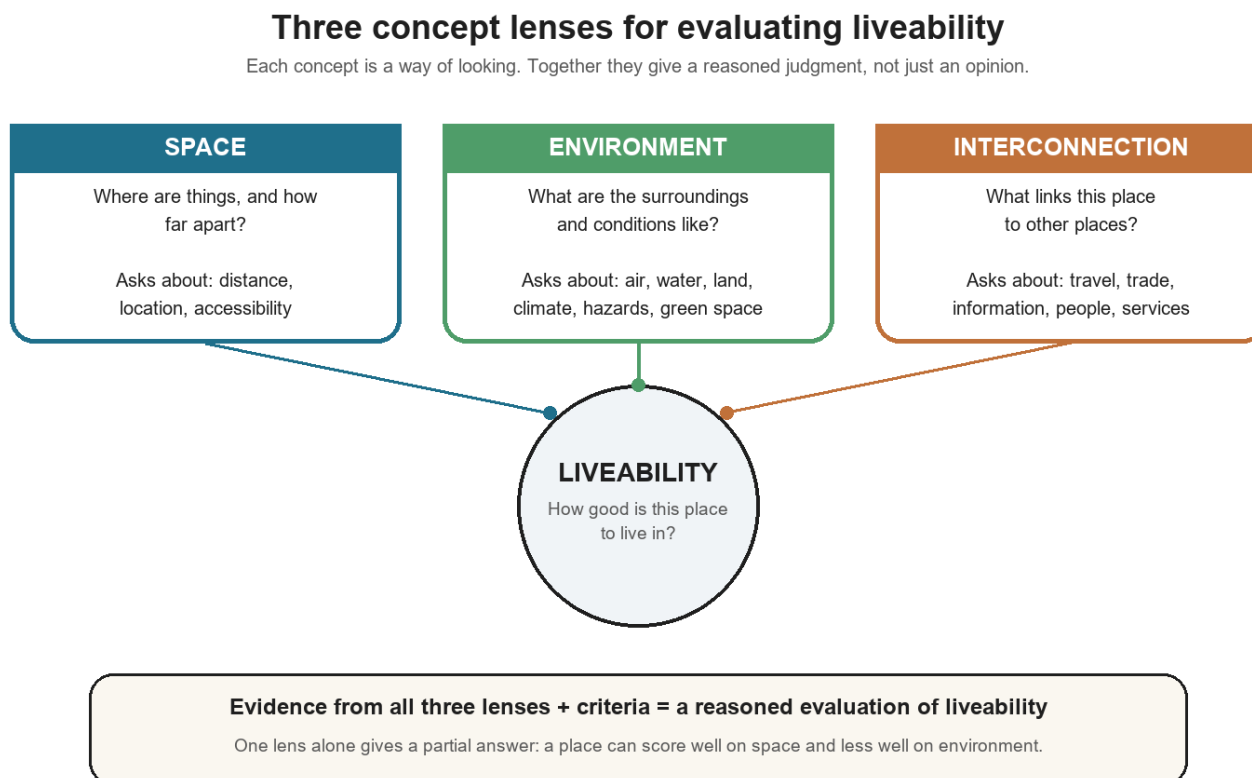


Diagram of three concept lenses — space, environment and interconnection — each aimed at the question ‘how good is this place to live in?’, with a reasoned evaluation as the result

What ‘evaluate’ means here. To evaluate a place is to make a reasoned judgment about it against criteria — not to describe it (say what it is like) and not to explain it (say why it is like that), but to *judge* how good it is to live in, with evidence and reasons. The criteria in this section are the three lenses. A strong evaluation names a judgment, backs it with sourced evidence, links the evidence to liveability, tests the other side, admits what the evidence misses, and only then concludes.

Lens 1 — Space: accessibility is a fact of space (VC2HG8K10.E01). Services and facilities — schools, hospitals, stations, shops, parks — sit at particular locations. People live at other locations. The gap between the two is not opinion; it is a fact about space. That is why **accessibility** — how easily people can reach the services and facilities they need — belongs to the space lens: change the locations, or move the people, and accessibility changes even if nothing else does. Section 2B showed that accessibility shapes how liveable a place feels; the space lens turns that into something measurable — distances, travel times, and the choices of transport available. A place whose daily needs sit close by scores well on this lens; a place whose needs sit 35 km away scores less well for anyone without a way to cross that space.

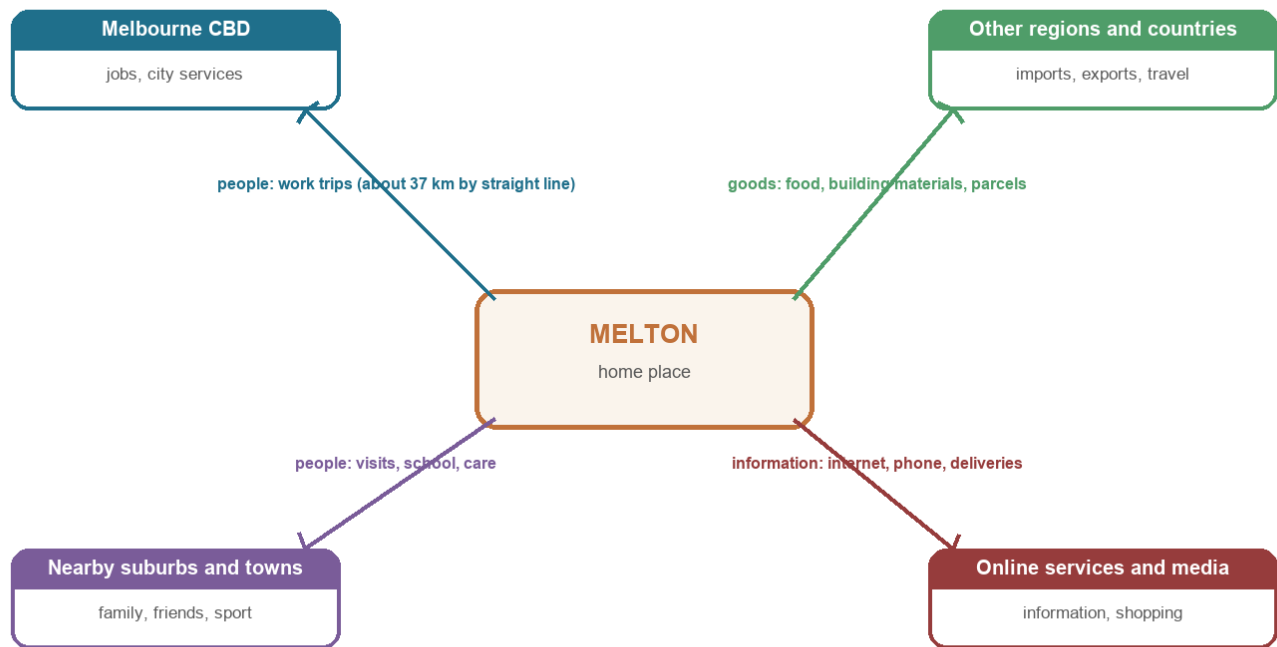
Lens 2 — Environment: the conditions around us (VC2HG8K10.E02). Section 2C showed that the quality of a place’s environment — its air, water, land, climate, open space and exposure to hazards — shapes both measured liveability and how liveable the place feels. Environmental quality matters because people live inside it every day: smoke in the air, heat in the street, a river to walk beside, a park within reach. On the environment lens, a place scores well when its surroundings support health and comfort, and less well when its surroundings harm them. Importantly, environmental quality can change quickly — a smoke event, a flood, a heatwave — so a place’s score on this lens can rise or fall within a single season.

Lens 3 — Interconnection: no place is an island (VC2HG8K10.E03). Section 2D showed that people’s ties — to family, friends, community and the wider world — are part of liveability. The interconnection lens asks what flows

link a place to other places: people moving to work and to each other, goods arriving and leaving, information travelling by phone and internet, services shared across distance. A well-connected place gives its people more of what they need than the place itself contains; a weakly connected place leaves people to manage with what is inside its borders. Interconnection can be judged from real flow data — the census asks employed people how they travel to work, which is a picture of one of the most important daily flows in any place.

Interconnection: flows into and out of a place

Example for an outer suburb of Melbourne (not a map; not to scale)



Every flow is an interconnection. More, and better, flows usually raise liveability - but flows can also bring cost, traffic and risk.

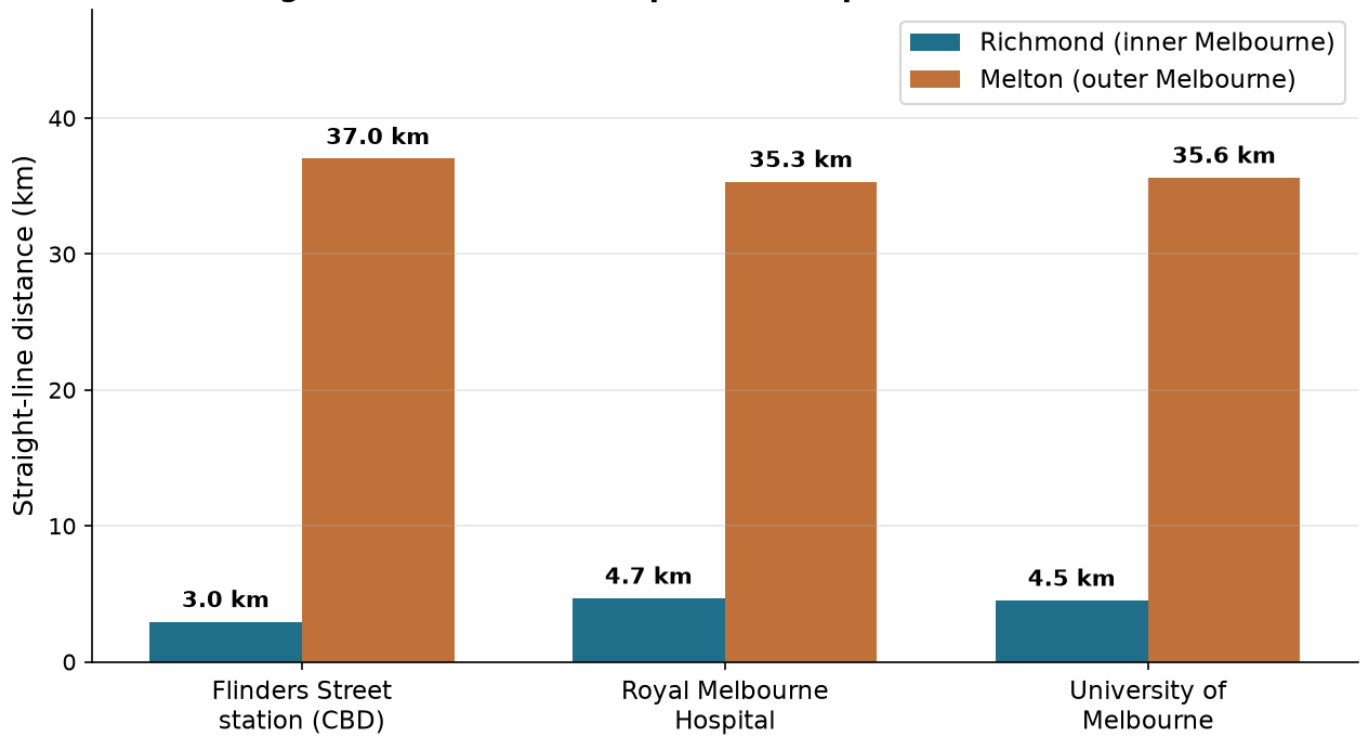
Schematic diagram of the flows that connect an outer Melbourne suburb to other places: people travelling to work, goods, visits, and information, with the home place at the centre

Worked demonstrations

Demonstration 1 — the space lens: Richmond and Melton

Richmond, an inner suburb of Melbourne in the City of Yarra, and Melton, an outer growth area on Melbourne’s western side, are both real Victorian places. The chart below shows straight-line distances from each place’s centre (taken at its railway station) to three services, computed from the places’ coordinates.

How far from home are key services? Straight-line distances computed from place-centre coordinates



Distances are approximate (coordinates rounded to about 0.001 of a degree).

Grouped bar chart of straight-line distances from Richmond and Melton to Flinders Street station, Royal Melbourne Hospital and the University of Melbourne; Richmond's distances are 3.0, 4.7 and 4.5 km, Melton's are 37.0, 35.3 and 35.6 km

Read through the space lens:

- From Richmond's centre, the city's main station is about 3.0 km away, the Royal Melbourne Hospital about 4.7 km and the University of Melbourne about 4.5 km. All three sit within a short trip.
- From Melton's centre the same services sit about 37.0 km, 35.3 km and 35.6 km away — roughly eight to twelve times farther.

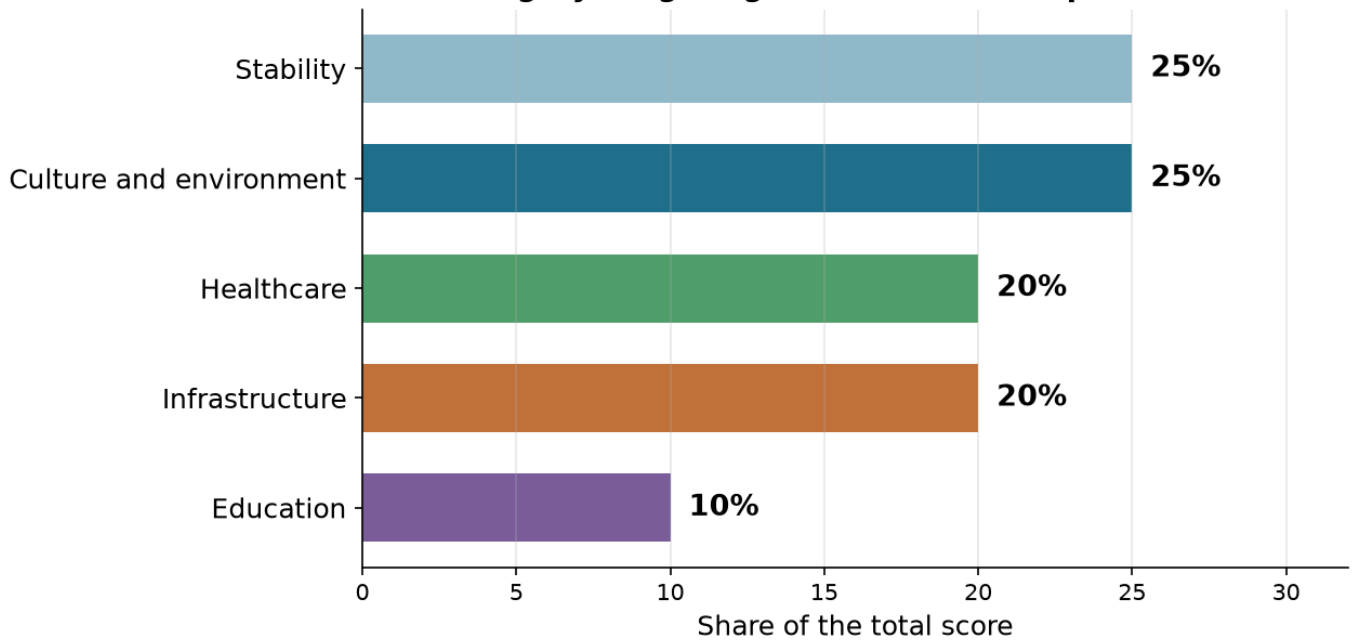
Reasoning to liveability: distance is not liveability by itself, but accessibility is a core part of it. A Melton resident without a car depends on trains, buses and the people around them to cross 35 km for the hospital, the university and the city's jobs; a Richmond resident has the same services within a bike ride. On the space lens, Richmond is the more liveable of the two for access to city services.

Two honest limits, named so the judgment is not oversold: straight-line distance is not travel time (a fast road or rail line can shrink the gap), and Melton is not a service desert — it has its own schools, shopping centre and sports grounds, which this lens does not measure. The space lens gives a strong, sourced, partial answer — exactly what one lens should give.

Demonstration 2 — the environment lens: Melbourne's liveability score card

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) publishes a Global Liveability Index that scores cities out of 100. The index weighs five categories, and one of them is the environment lens wearing a suit:

What the EIU Global Liveability Index measures Category weightings (how much each part counts)



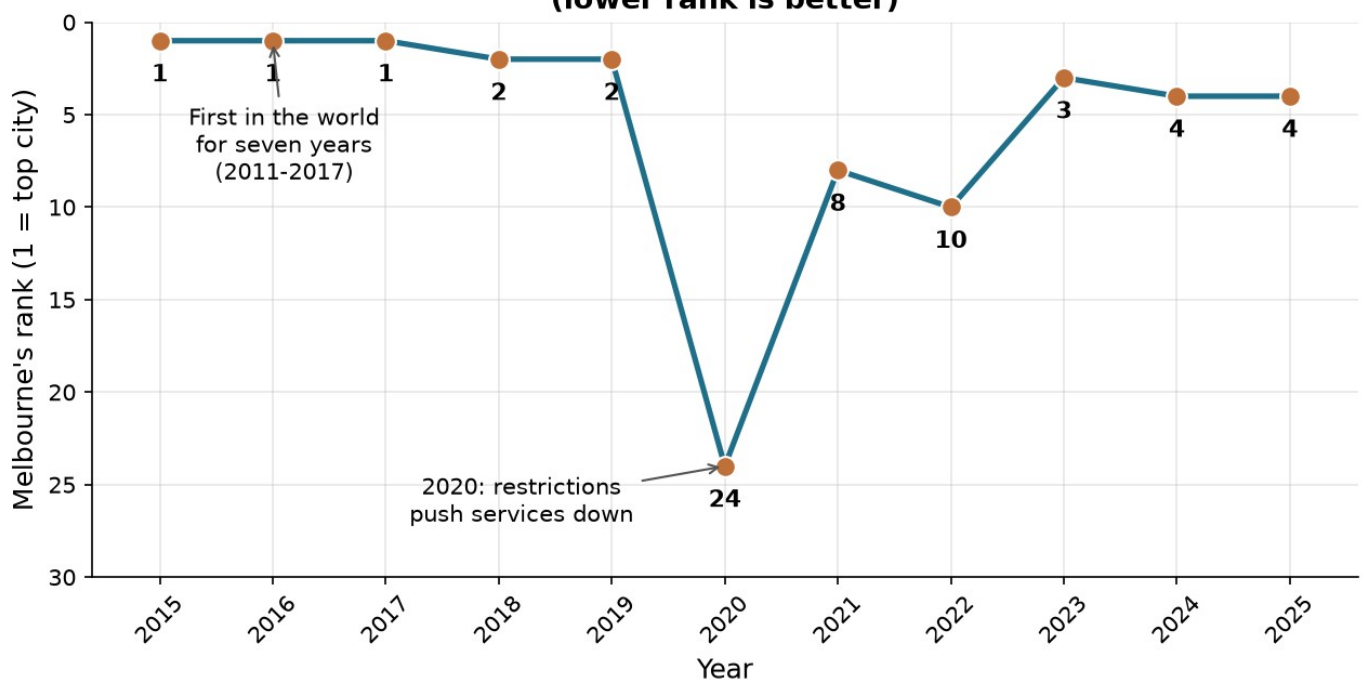
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Liveability Index weightings (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Bar chart of the EIU Global Liveability Index category weightings: stability 25 per cent, culture and environment 25 per cent, healthcare 20 per cent, infrastructure 20 per cent, education 10 per cent

Culture and environment carries 25 per cent of the total score — as much as stability and more than healthcare. That is the index-makers saying, in numbers, what Section 2C showed in words: environmental quality is a major part of how good a place is to live in.

Now watch what happens to a top city's score when conditions change. Melbourne sat first in the world for seven straight years (2011–2017), then moved as the world and its own conditions moved:

Melbourne in the EIU Global Liveability Index, 2015-2025 (lower rank is better)



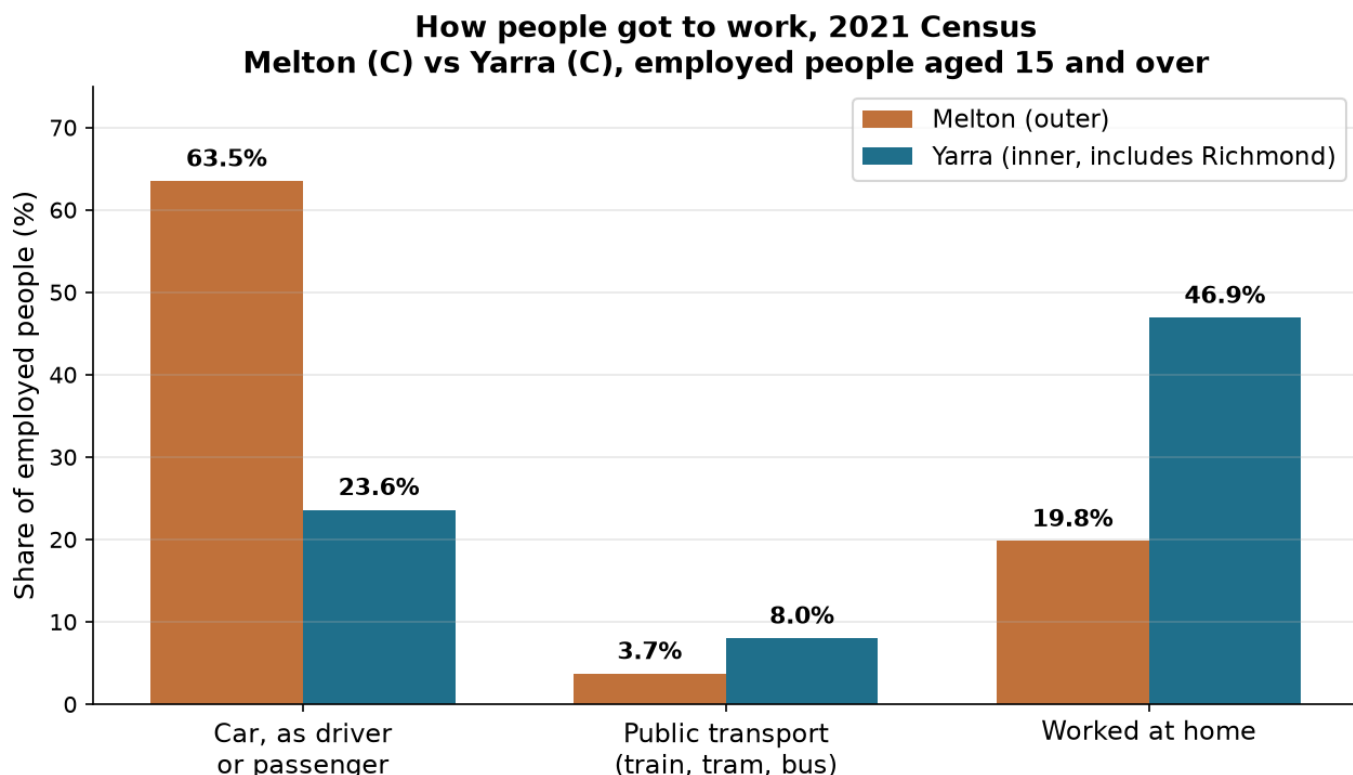
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Liveability Index ranks (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Line chart of Melbourne's rank in the EIU Global Liveability Index from 2015 to 2025, from rank 1 in 2015-2017 to rank 2 in 2018-2019, rank 24 in 2020, recovering to ranks 8 and 10 in 2021-2022 and 3-4 in 2023-2025

In 2020 Melbourne fell to rank 24. In 2019–20, Melbourne’s air had also been hit by bushfire smoke from beyond the city: for days in January 2020 the smoke made Melbourne’s air among the worst of any big city in the world, an environmental-quality shock that no resident could miss. And through 2020–2021 pandemic restrictions closed or limited the very services — healthcare, culture, schooling — that the index scores. Read through the environment lens (and, for the services, the interconnection lens), Melbourne’s liveability visibly changed in both directions within a few years. The lesson is the one the achievement standard asks you to use: liveability is measured, it is perceived, and it is changed — by people and by events.

Demonstration 3 — the interconnection lens: the journey-to-work flows

The census asks employed people how they travelled to work. That single question is a map of one of a place’s strongest daily flows. Here are the 2021 answers for Melton (C) and Yarra (C), the two local government areas of Demonstration 1.



Source: ABS, Census 2021 QuickStats (retrieved 2026-08-25). Taken during pandemic restrictions, so home-working was high.

Grouped bar chart of 2021 census journey-to-work shares for Melton and Yarra: car as driver or passenger 63.5 per cent in Melton versus 23.6 per cent in Yarra; public transport 3.7 versus 8.0 per cent; worked at home 19.8 versus 46.9 per cent

Census snapshot, 2021: Melton (C) vs Yarra (C)

Two Victorian local government areas, one inner and one outer

Measure	Melton (outer)	Yarra (inner)
People (population)	178,960	90,114
Median age (years)	33	34
Median weekly household income	\$1,887	\$2,270
Average motor vehicles per dwelling	2.1	1.2
Average people per household	3.1	2.0
Separate houses (share of occupied dwellings)	91.0%	12.5%
Flats or apartments (share of occupied dwellings)	0.7%	49.0%

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, QuickStats (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Table of 2021 census figures for Melton (C) and Yarra (C): population, median age, median weekly household income, motor vehicles per dwelling, people per household, and the share of dwellings that are separate houses or flats

Read through the interconnection lens:

- In Melton, 63.5 per cent of employed people travelled to work by car (as driver or passenger) and 3.7 per cent by public transport. Melton's main connection to the city's jobs runs through the car.
- In Yarra, only 23.6 per cent travelled by car; 8.0 per cent used public transport, 6.5 per cent walked and 4.0 per cent rode a bicycle. Yarra's people reach work through several different flows.

Reasoning to liveability: many connections of different kinds make a place more liveable for more of its people. In Yarra, a 14-year-old, an 80-year-old and a person who cannot drive all have a way to reach the city; in Melton, the same three people depend on whoever owns a car. Note the vehicles-per-dwelling figure — 2.1 in Melton, 1.2 in Yarra — and see how the flows and the housing pattern fit together. The same lens cuts the other way for car-owning Melton families: their flow works well, their homes are larger and cheaper than Yarra's, and on *their* weighing the place scores highly. One flow pattern, two honest readings — which is exactly what evaluating is.

One limit, stated plainly: the 2021 census was taken while pandemic restrictions were in place, so “worked at home” (19.8 per cent in Melton, 46.9 per cent in Yarra) is higher than a normal year. The car-versus-public-transport gap between the two areas is not created by the pandemic; the exact shares are from one unusual year. A good evaluator says so when quoting the numbers.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Use the distance chart from Demonstration 1. (a) How far is Melton's centre from Flinders Street station, in a straight line? (b) How much farther is that than Richmond's centre? (c) Which concept lens are you using when you compare these distances?

Q2. Complete this sentence in your own words, then check it against the definition box: “Accessibility belongs to the space lens because...”

Q3. Use the EIU weightings chart. (a) Which two categories each carry 25 per cent of the score? (b) Which of the five categories is the environment lens part of? (c) In one sentence: why does the index give the environment a quarter of the score?

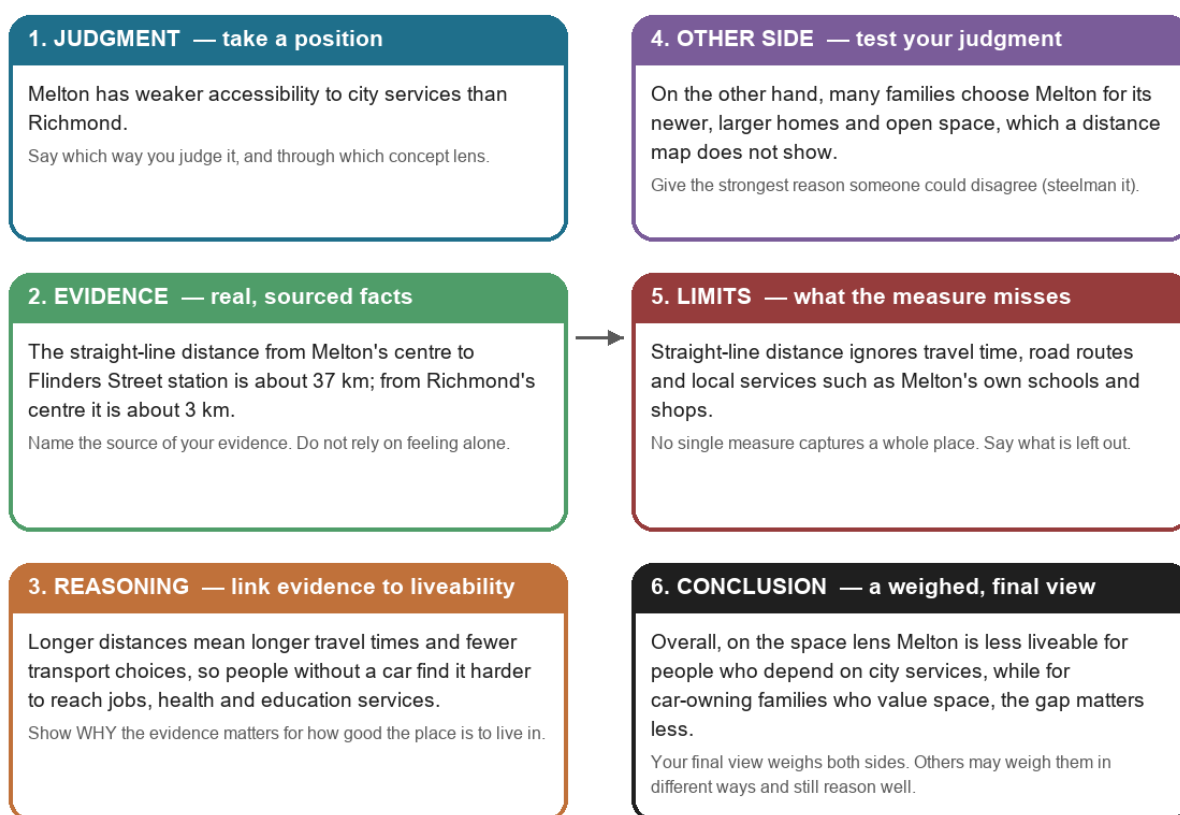
Q4. Give one example, from Demonstration 2 or from Section 2C, of environmental quality raising or lowering how good a place is to live in. Name the lens you are using.

Q5. Use the journey-to-work chart. (a) What share of Melton's employed people travelled to work by car, as driver or passenger? (b) What is the same share for Yarra? (c) Give one reason a person who cannot drive might find Melton harder to live in than Yarra.

Q6. Copy the first two steps of the six-step model below into your notes and fill them in for your own local area: a judgment through one lens, and one piece of evidence you could source for it (an observation, a distance you can check, a census or council figure).

Building an evaluative statement: a model to follow

Worked example, Melbourne's inner and outer suburbs (Section 2E, space lens)



Six-step model for building an evaluative statement: judgment, evidence, reasoning, other side, limits, conclusion, with a worked example comparing Melton and Richmond on the space lens

Unscaffolded

Q7. Using only the space lens and the evidence in this section, evaluate which of Richmond and Melton is the more liveable place. Three or four sentences: judgment, evidence, reasoning, one limit.

Q8. Melbourne's EIU rank moved from 1 (2017) to 24 (2020) and back to 3 (2023). Explain how liveability can change in both directions within a few years, referring to at least one of the three concepts.

Q9. Strong interconnection can raise a place's liveability for some people and lower it for others. Argue both sides for one flow into or out of Melton shown in the flows diagram, giving each side its strongest form.

Q10. Apply the three lenses to where you live. For each lens, give one piece of evidence — something you can observe, measure or source — and one honest limit of that evidence.

Evidence-based response task (capstone)

This task reaches the band's achievement standard, stated at the end of Level 8: explaining liveability and thinking about how people measure it and change it.

Task. Evaluate the liveability of **one named Australian place** (a suburb, town or city — it may be your own) through the three concept lenses: **space**, **environment** and **interconnection**. Write 300–400 words, or make an equivalent multimodal piece (a short video, a poster, a narrated slide deck).

Your response must:

1. state a judgment for each of the three lenses;
2. back each judgment with at least one piece of **sourced** evidence — a measurement, a census or council figure, a dated event, or a checked local observation;
3. give the strongest reason someone could disagree with one of your judgments;
4. name one limit of your evidence;
5. end with an overall, weighed conclusion.

List your sources at the end with the date you checked them.

How it is marked. Marks are awarded for the reasoning steps above — sourced evidence, concept-linked reasoning, the tested other side, the named limit, the weighed conclusion — not for which conclusion you reach. Two students may judge the same place in different ways and both earn full marks, if both reason well from defined terms and stated evidence.

Answers

- Q1.** (a) About 37.0 km. (b) About 34 km farther (37.0 km minus 3.0 km). (c) Space — distance and accessibility are facts about where things are.
- Q2.** Sample: “...services and facilities sit at locations, and accessibility is about the distance and travel between where people live and where those services are — both of which are facts about arrangement in space, not about feelings.”
- Q3.** (a) Stability and culture and environment. (b) Culture and environment. (c) Sample: because people live inside their surroundings every day, so air, climate and open space are a large part of how good a place is to live in.
- Q4.** Any sourced pair of example and effect. Sample: bushfire smoke over Melbourne in January 2020 lowered air quality for days, making the city less pleasant and less healthy to live in — environment lens.
- Q5.** (a) 63.5 per cent. (b) 23.6 per cent. (c) Sample: with few public-transport options and services 35 km away, a non-driver in Melton depends on car owners to reach work, health and study.
- Q6.** Check for: a judgment naming one lens, plus one evidence item that could be sourced (a checked distance, an observed condition, a quoted figure), not just a feeling.
- Q7.** Check for the four moves: judgment (Richmond more liveable on this lens), evidence (the 3–5 km versus 35–37 km distances), reasoning (longer distances mean weaker access, especially for non-drivers), and a limit (straight-line distance ignores travel time and Melton’s own local services).
- Q8.** Liveability is measured and perceived, and both move with conditions. Sample: pandemic restrictions changed the services and flows the index scores (healthcare, culture, schooling — interconnection and environment lenses), and events such as the 2019–20 bushfire smoke changed environmental quality; when conditions improved, the rank recovered.
- Q9.** Both sides, each at its strongest. Sample: the car flow gives Melton families cheap, flexible access to city jobs (raises liveability for car owners); the same car dependence leaves non-drivers — young people, older people, people with particular needs — with few ways to reach work and services (lowers it for them).
- Q10.** Check for three lenses, each with one piece of evidence that can be sourced and one honest limit; for example, distance to the nearest station (space), air or open-space quality on a noted day (environment), and how people in the area reach work or family (interconnection).
- Capstone.** Mark against the five required moves with the marking note above: sourced evidence per lens, concept-linked reasoning, the strongest disagreeing view, a named limit, and a weighed conclusion. The conclusion reached is not marked.
-

Sources for this section

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2021*, QuickStats for Melton (C) (LGA24650) and Yarra (C) (LGA27350) — population, age, income, dwellings and method of travel to work. Retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Economist Intelligence Unit, *Global Liveability Index* — category weightings and city ranks, as summarised in “Global Liveability Index rankings”. Retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Straight-line distances computed by the authors with the haversine formula from rounded place-centre coordinates (about 0.001 of a degree), so distances are approximate; the computation is reproduced in `src/gen_2e_accessibility_distances.py`.
- Bushfire smoke over Melbourne, January 2020: widely reported air-quality event; used here as a dated environmental-quality example only.

Improving liveability close to home

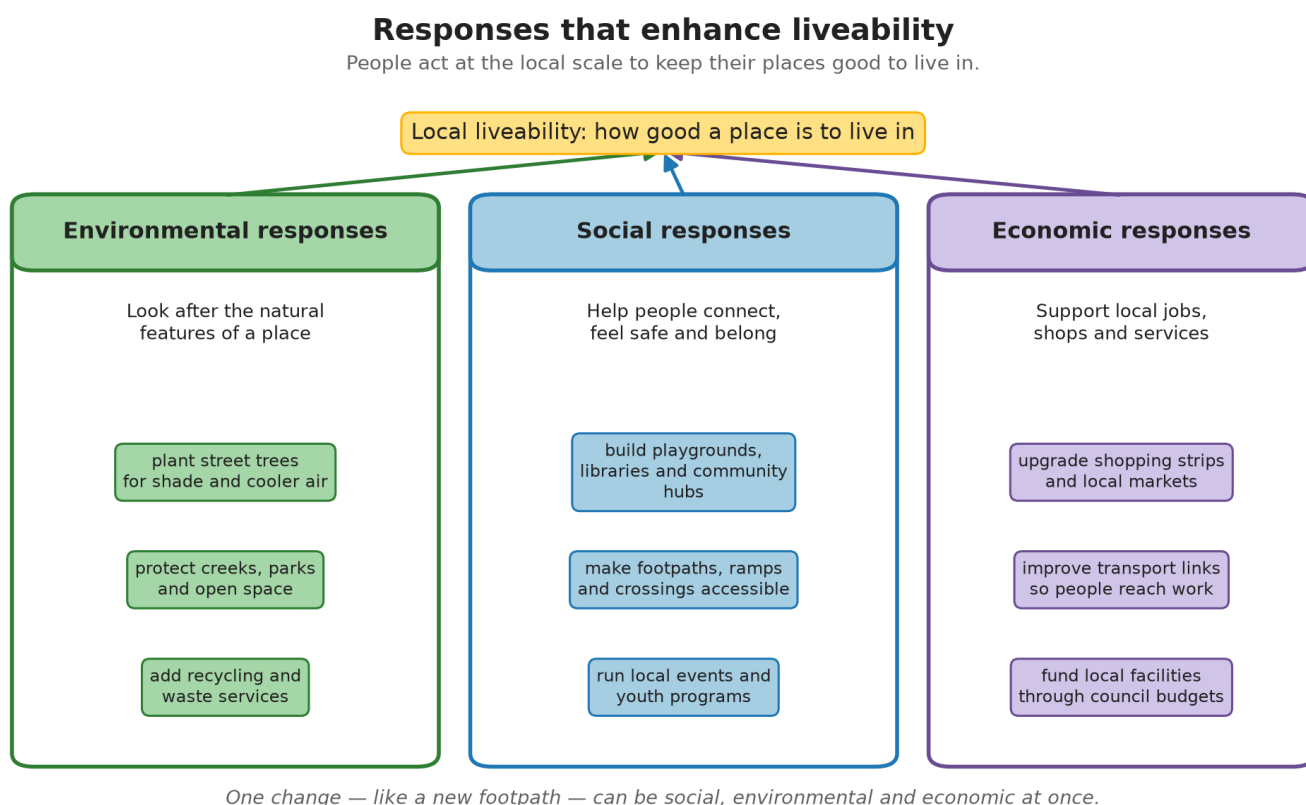
Owns: VC2HG8K11

Draws on: .E01 (whole) · .E02* (trimmed per §2A)

.E01 — studied through a real local government plan (Demonstration 1).

.E02* — the closing response task; one diverse group is cut per §2A (*the retained groups are ample for a genuine proposal*).

Liveability is how good a place is to live in for the people who live there. In this section you study **responses** — the things people and governments do to make a place better to live in — and you work at the **local scale**: your street, your park, your shopping strip. By the end, you will use what you observe in the field to develop your own specific proposal to improve one aspect of the liveability of your place, with the needs of your community’s diverse groups in mind.



Three columns of local liveability responses — environmental, social and economic — with three examples under each, all feeding into local liveability: how good a place is to live in

Figure 1 — Responses that enhance liveability fall into three groups: environmental, social and economic. The same three words appear in the Level 8 achievement standard, which asks students to explain responses or strategies with those three kinds of factors in mind. Sorting a response into these three factors is the skill this section builds.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

1. **Open with the question.** Put Figure 1 up and ask: *name one thing that would make your street better to live in*. Sort student answers live into environmental / social / economic and let the three-factor frame do the organising work for the whole section.
2. **Fix the scale.** Use Figure 2 to place this section at the local scale. Make the point that a response always happens at *some* scale, and that the local scale is the one students can observe and measure themselves.

3. **Study a real local government plan (E01).** Work through Demonstration 1 with the City of Melbourne Transport Strategy 2030 (Figure 3). It is the curriculum's own example type — a traffic-flow plan — and every figure on the tile set is dated and can be checked at its source.
4. **Connect plans to people.** Use Figures 5 and 6 to ask, of each response, *who does this help?* The retained diverse groups for student proposals are **young people, older people, and people with particular needs** — keep proposals on these three groups.
5. **Fieldwork.** Run the five-stage cycle in Figure 8 at any nearby street, park or shopping strip; the observation guide is Figure 9 and the recording method pairs with 5B. The task set is generic to any Victorian locality by design.
6. **From issue to proposal.** Demonstration 2 models turning one observed issue into a proposal using the scaffold in Figure 10.
7. **Practise.** Scaffolded questions first, then the on-your-own set; the on-your-own set requires the three-factor explanation language of the achievement standard.
8. **Assess with the response task.** The closing task is the VC2HG8K11 .E02* outcome: a specific, evidence-based proposal for their own place, considering the three retained groups. It pairs forward with 6B (strategies for action) and 6C (referenced communication).

Scope note: this section teaches the neutral remainder of VC2HG8K11 only. Do not extend the diverse-groups list beyond the retained groups, and do not assume prior study of any other section — every term is re-established here.

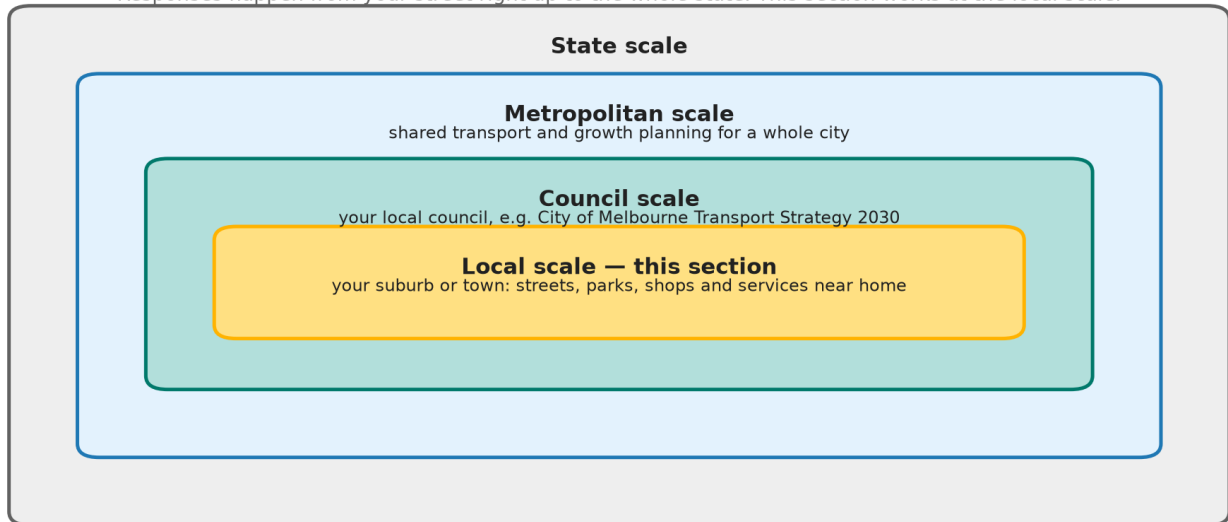
Theory

Responses come in three kinds. An **environmental response** looks after the natural features of a place — trees, creeks, parks, clean air. A **social response** helps people connect, feel safe and feel they belong — playgrounds, libraries, accessible footpaths, local events. An **economic response** supports local jobs, shops and services — better shopping strips, transport links to work, council funding for local facilities. Most real responses mix all three (Figure 1).

Responses happen at a scale. A **scale** in geography is the size of the area a decision or change covers (Figure 2). The Victorian Government plans at the state scale; a **council** — also called **local government** — plans at the council scale; and the local scale is your own suburb or town. This section sits at the local scale, because that is the scale the content description names and the scale you can study in the field yourself.

At what scale can liveability be enhanced?

Responses happen from your street right up to the whole state. This section works at the local scale.



The smaller the scale, the closer the response is to the people it affects.

At the local scale you can see and measure liveability yourself:

footpaths and ramps

shade trees

shops and services

parks and play areas

public transport stops

safe crossings

Scale framing follows the Victorian Curriculum Geography concepts (place, space, scale).

Nested panels from state scale down to local scale, with the local scale — your suburb or town: streets, parks, shops and services near home — highlighted as the focus of this section

Figure 2 — The smaller the scale, the closer the response is to the people it affects.

A real local government plan. The curriculum's first example for this content is a plan a local government has made to make its area more liveable; a traffic-flow plan is one named kind. The City of Melbourne's **Transport Strategy 2030** is exactly that kind of plan: a ten-year plan to change how people move around the inner city so that the city is better to live in.

Worked example: City of Melbourne Transport Strategy 2030

A 10-year council plan to make the city easier and safer to move around in.



The plan still keeps access for essential car trips — for people with a disability, trade, service and emergency vehicles — while giving more space to walking, cycling and greenery.

Source: City of Melbourne, Transport Strategy 2030 (melbourne.vic.gov.au), retrieved 2026-08-25.

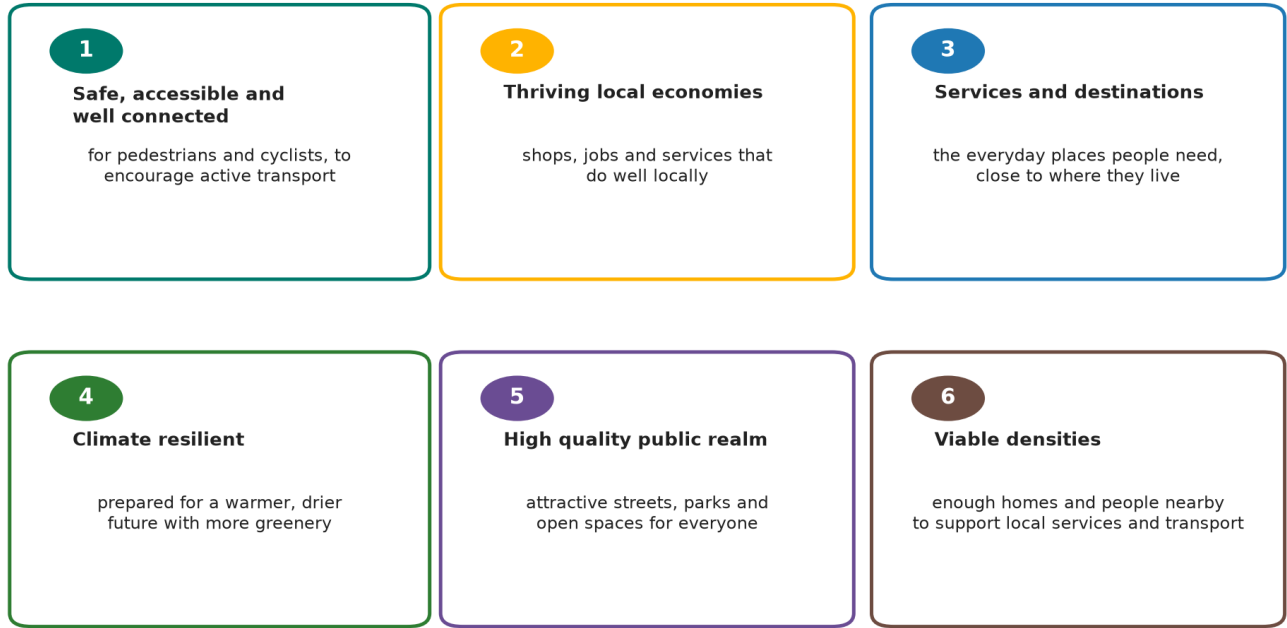
Six fact tiles from the City of Melbourne Transport Strategy 2030: more than 50 km of protected bike lanes plus a further 40 km; 40 km/h speed limits; road and parking space equal to more than six Melbourne Cricket Grounds given back to people; \$870 million in economic benefits; and Little Streets becoming pedestrian-priority shared zones

Figure 3 — Six key commitments from the Transport Strategy 2030. Every one of them is a response you can sort into environmental, social and economic factors, and every one names or implies a group of people it helps.

Planning for the whole neighbourhood. At the metropolitan scale, the Victorian Government's **Plan Melbourne 2017–2050** includes Direction 5: *Create a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods*. A **20-minute neighbourhood** is one that lets people meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home. Plan Melbourne lists six **hallmarks** — the plan's own word for the features a 20-minute neighbourhood must have (Figure 4).

Six hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood

A 20-minute neighbourhood lets people meet most daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home.



Source: Victorian Government (Department of Transport and Planning), 20-minute neighbourhoods, Plan Melbourne 2017–2050 Direction 5, retrieved 2026-08-25.

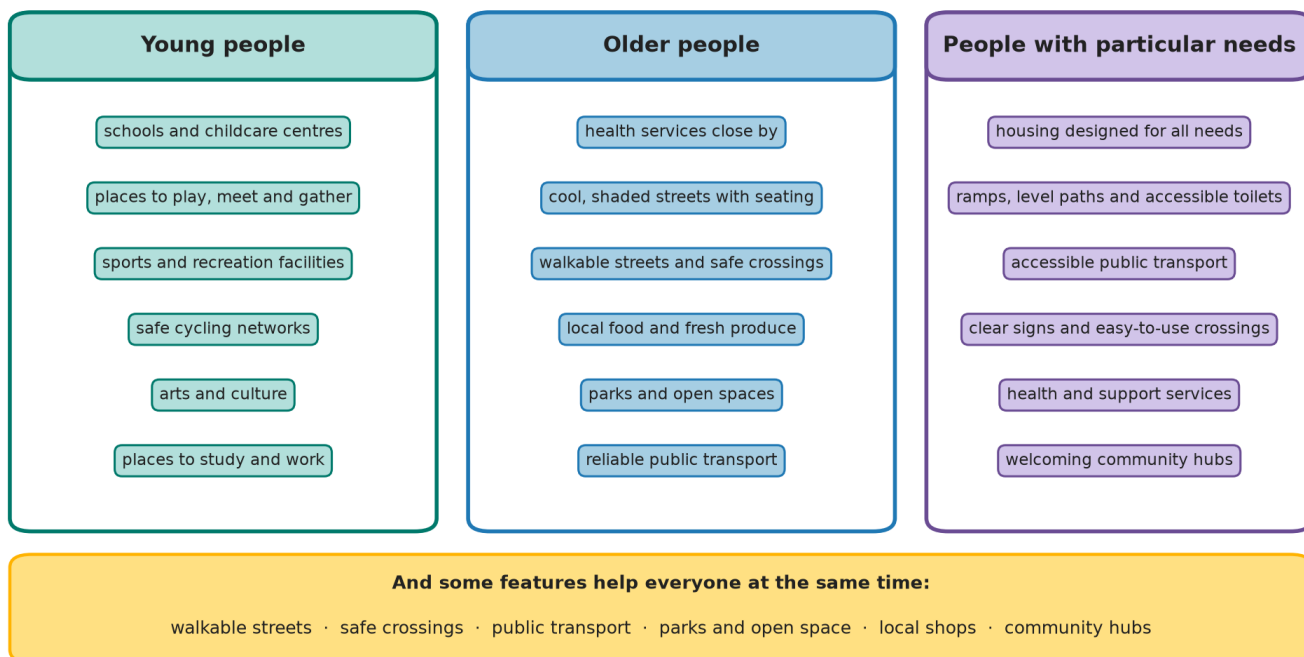
The six hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood from Plan Melbourne Direction 5: safe, accessible and well connected; thriving local economies; services and destinations; climate resilient; high quality public realm; viable densities, each with a plain-language gloss

Figure 4 — The six hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood, with each hallmark restated in everyday language.

A 20-minute neighbourhood needs many local features working together: childcare, schools, health services, parks and open space, places to play, meet and gather, streets that are good for walking, safe cycling networks, shops and a mix of housing (Figure 5). Each feature can be matched to the diverse groups it helps.

Who do the features of a liveable neighbourhood help?

An inclusive 20-minute neighbourhood is designed for many different people at once.



Features list: Victorian Government, 20-minute neighbourhoods, Plan Melbourne 2017–2050, retrieved 2026-08-25.

Features of a liveable neighbourhood — such as parks, safe crossings, shops, health services, public transport and places to meet — matched to three diverse community groups, with a band noting that many features help everyone

Figure 5 — Local features matched to the three diverse groups this section works with. Notice how often one feature helps all three — and everyone else besides.

Responses for diverse groups. The same street can be easy for one person and hard for another. The curriculum names three diverse groups whose needs a proposal should take into account: **young people**, **elderly people** (older people), and **people with particular needs** — for example, people with a disability or with mobility, sensory or learning needs (Figure 6).

Designing for everyone: three diverse community groups

The same street can be easy for one person and hard for another. Good responses consider all three groups.

Young people	Older people	People with particular needs
What can make liveability hard? Safe places to play and meet; a way to get around without a car; things to do.	What can make liveability hard? Easy travel if driving is hard; places to rest; services and health care nearby; feeling safe.	What can make liveability hard? Buildings, footpaths and transport without barriers; clear information; safe, calm crossings.
Responses that help Playgrounds, parks and skate areas; safe bike lanes and crossings; youth programs and libraries.	Responses that help Seats and shade trees; repaired footpaths and longer crossing times; nearby health services.	Responses that help Ramps and level paths; accessible toilets and parking; access plans co-designed with people.

People with particular needs include people with a disability or mobility, sensory or learning needs.

Three panels for young people, older people and people with particular needs; each panel lists what can make liveability hard for that group and the local responses that help

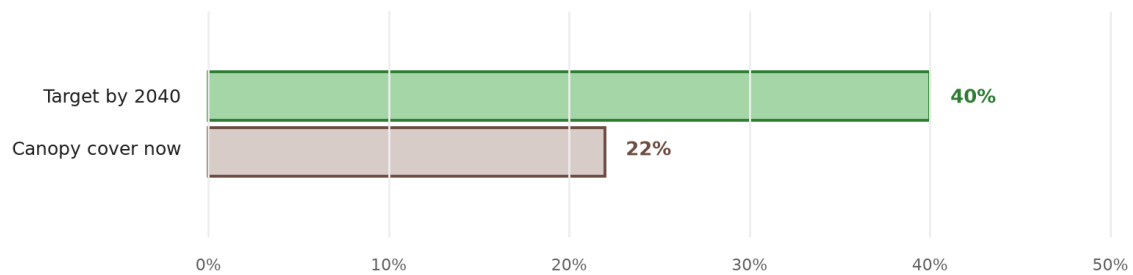
Figure 6 — Needs and responses for the three diverse groups. Good local planning asks of every change: *who finds this easy, and who finds it hard?*

Local governments plan for diverse groups in their own documents too. The City of Melbourne's **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2024**, approved by the council on 15 September 2020, sets out how the city will remove the obstacles that stop people with a disability taking part fully in city life — in streets and buildings, in information, and in community life. The plan was developed together with the City of Melbourne's Disability Advisory Committee, a group that includes people with a disability: people with particular needs helped design the responses that affect them. That is a strong model for your own proposal — ask the people a change affects.

An environmental response: greening the city. The City of Melbourne's **Urban Forest Strategy** aims to nearly double the city's **canopy cover** — the share of the ground shaded by tree leaves above it — from 22 per cent to 40 per cent by 2040 (Figure 7). More trees mean more shade and cooler streets, and the strategy also aims to reduce the **heat-island effect**, the way built-up city areas hold more heat than the open country around them, and to keep many different kinds of trees so the urban forest stays healthy.

An environmental response: greening the city

The City of Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy aims to nearly double street-tree canopy cover.



More canopy = more shade, cooler streets and healthier ecosystems

Strategy also aims to reduce the urban heat-island effect and keep tree species diverse.

Source: City of Melbourne, Urban Forest Strategy (melbourne.vic.gov.au), retrieved 2026-08-25.

Bar chart comparing Melbourne's present 22 per cent tree canopy cover with the 40 per cent target by 2040, noting more canopy means more shade, cooler streets and healthier ecosystems

Figure 7 — The canopy-cover target of the Urban Forest Strategy. Planting street trees reads as an environmental response, but cooler streets with more shade also help older people walk safely on hot days and give young people comfortable places to play — one response, three kinds of benefit.

Worked demonstrations

Demonstration 1 — Reading a local government plan (E01)

Task. Take three commitments from the Transport Strategy 2030 (Figure 3). For each, name the factor (environmental, social, economic) and the people it helps.

Commitment from the plan	Factor(s)	Who it helps
Create more than 50 km of protected bicycle lanes, with a further 40 km worked on with the Victorian Government.	Social (safe movement) and environmental (more trips by bike, fewer by car).	Workers and students who ride; young people who can travel without a car; everyone who breathes the air.
Introduce 40 km/h speed limits in the inner city with the Victorian Government.	Social (safety).	People on foot and on bikes — including young people and older people, who are least protected in a crash.
Turn 'Little Streets' into pedestrian-priority shared zones.	Social (safe, pleasant streets) and economic (more space for trading).	Shoppers, workers and nearby businesses; people with particular needs who need calm, roomy footpaths.

Reasoning shown. Each row does three things: it quotes the plan exactly, it sorts the response into the three factors, and it names *who* benefits. That third step is what makes a plan a liveability plan rather than just a works list — and it is the move the achievement standard rewards. Notice also what the plan keeps: access for essential car trips, “especially for people with a disability, trade, service and emergency vehicles”. A liveability response does not pretend cars do not matter; it balances the street so that more kinds of people can use it.

Demonstration 2 — From an issue to a proposal (toward E02*)

Task. Use the Urban Forest Strategy (Figure 7) to model the move from *issue* to *response*, on the Figure 10 scaffold.

Scaffold row	Model answer
Aspect of liveability	Shade and cool on hot days — an environmental-quality aspect of liveability.
The place	A named shopping strip in the City of Melbourne (the strategy covers the municipality; your proposal will name one exact site).
The issue	Only 22 per cent of the city is shaded by tree canopy today, and unshaded streets get hot enough to make walking unpleasant or unsafe on high-heat days.
Who it affects	Older people, who feel heat stress first and need resting places; young people, who walk or ride to school; people with particular needs, who may not be able to hurry to shade.
Proposed response	Plant more street trees along the strip, with seats in the new shade, working toward the strategy's 40 per cent by 2040 target.
Expected impact	Environmental: cooler street with more shade, and less heat-island effect. Social: more people able to walk, rest and meet on hot days. Economic: a more comfortable strip brings more customers to local shops.

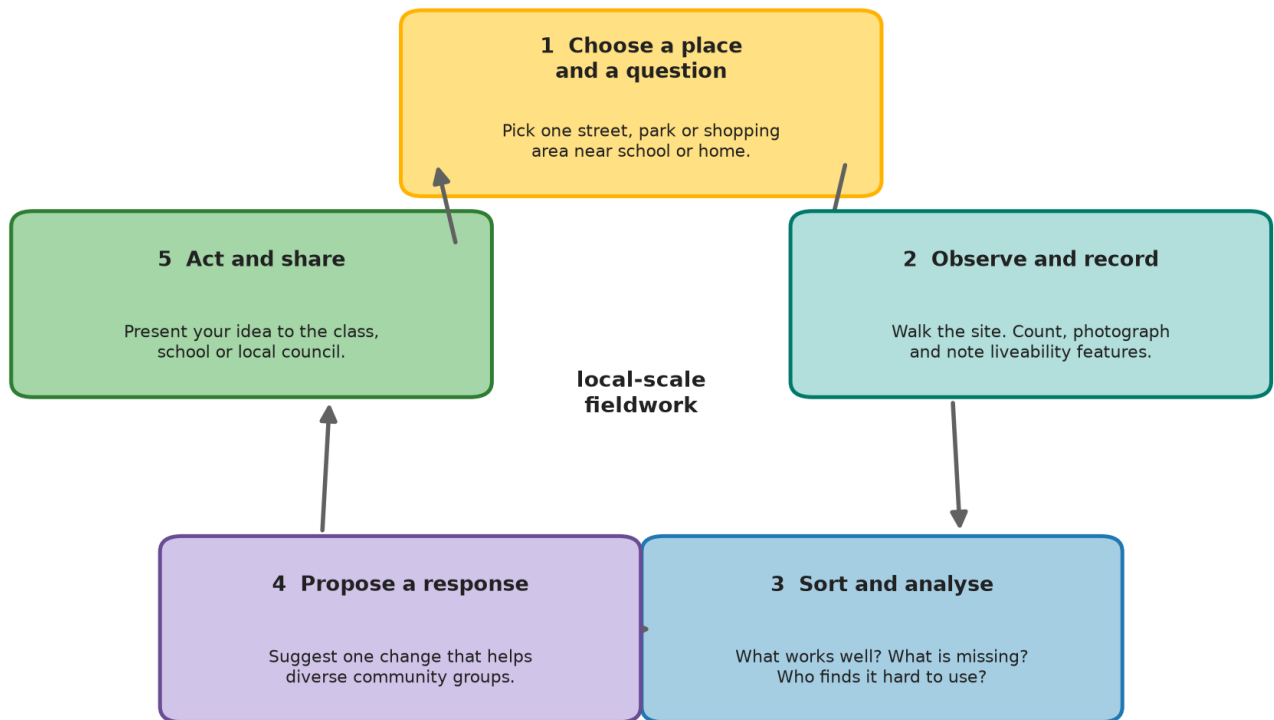
Reasoning shown. The proposal is *specific* (one strip, trees plus seats), *evidence-based* (22 per cent now, 40 per cent target), and *group-aware* (it names all three diverse groups). It also says who would do it — the council, under a strategy it already has. That is the standard your closing task is judged against.

Fieldwork — your local liveability investigation

This section's fieldwork is designed to run in **any Victorian town or suburb**: choose one street, park or shopping area near your school or home and study it directly. The method skills pair with 5B; the reporting skills pair with 6C.

Your local liveability investigation

Follow these five stages to study and improve liveability in your own place.



Fieldwork tasks are designed to be run in any Victorian town or suburb with local observation.

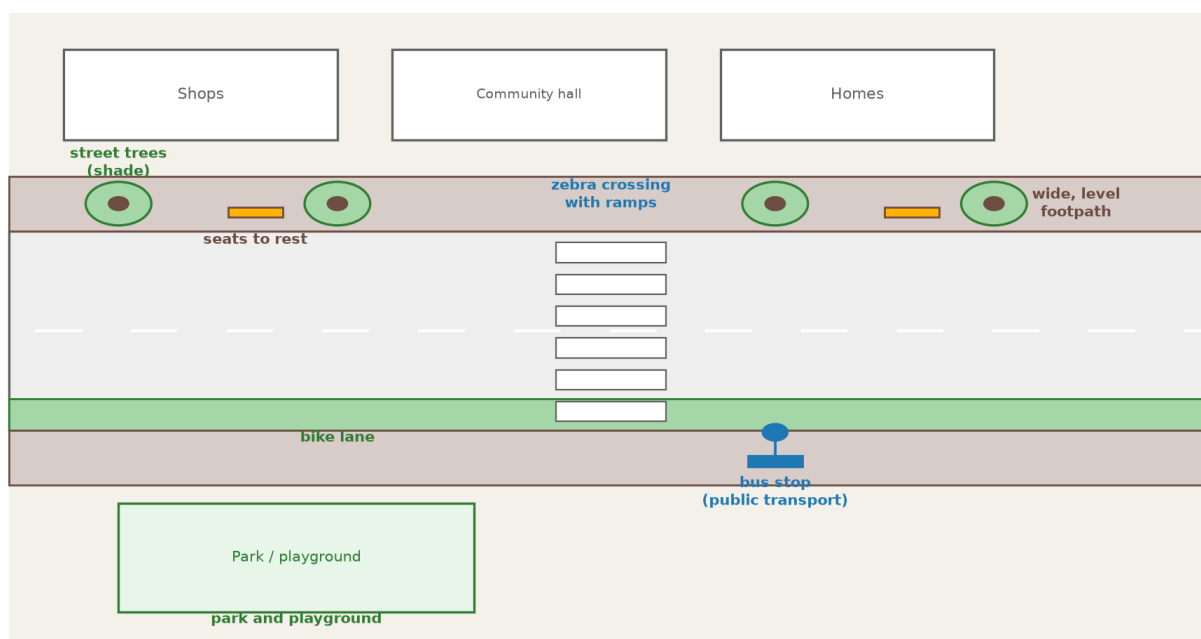
A five-stage circular fieldwork cycle: choose a place and a question; observe and record; sort and analyse; propose a response; act and share, around the words local-scale fieldwork

Figure 8 — The five-stage local liveability investigation used in this section.

Stage 2 guide — what to observe and count. Walk your site slowly, once in each direction, and record the features in Figure 9. Count what can be counted (trees, seats, ramps, crossings), and note what cannot (shade at midday, places to rest, obstacles in the path).

A liveable local street — what to look for

Plan (bird's-eye) view of a model street. These are the features you can observe and count.



In the field you can count features like these and judge who they help and who they leave out.

Model street drawn for this book; it does not show a real place.

Plan view of a model liveable street showing wide level footpaths, street trees for shade, seats to rest, a zebra crossing with ramps, a bike lane, a bus stop, a park and playground, and nearby shops and services

Figure 9 — A model liveable street in plan view. It is a model, not a real place — your site will have some of these features and miss others, and the missing ones are your issues.

Example record (method only — you collect your own). One class studying a 200-metre shopping strip recorded: 9 street trees, all on one side; 4 seats, none in shade; 2 ramps at the crossing, none at three shop doorsteps; 1 bus stop with no seat or shade; 3 broken footpath sections. From that record they read three issues at once: shade is one-sided, resting places are scarce, and access is patchy for people who use wheels. Count first, judge second — the judgement must point back at the count.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Figure 1 sorts responses into environmental, social and economic. Sort these three local responses the same way, and for each add one group of people it helps: (a) planting street trees along a shopping strip; (b) running a free weekend youth program at the library; (c) council funding to refresh a local market.

Q2. Figure 2 shows four scales. (a) At which scale does this section work? (b) The Transport Strategy 2030 is a plan at which scale? (c) Give one example of a response at the state scale.

Q3. Figure 4 lists the six hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood. Which hallmark is each local feature doing most of the work for? (a) repaired, level footpaths with ramps at every crossing; (b) a grocer, a pharmacy and a library all within ten minutes' walk; (c) enough homes nearby to keep the shops and the bus route busy.

Q4. Figure 3 summarises the Transport Strategy 2030. (a) How many kilometres of protected bicycle lanes will the city create, and how many more will it work on with the Victorian Government? (b) Which commitment in Figure 3 most directly helps people with a disability, and what does the plan keep for them?

Q5. Figure 6 matches needs to responses for three diverse groups. Name the group each response most directly helps: (a) longer crossing times at busy intersections; (b) safe bike lanes and places to play; (c) level footpaths and accessible public toilets.

Q6. Figure 7 shows Melbourne’s canopy cover now and the target for 2040. (a) Read both values. (b) How many percentage points of extra shade is the strategy aiming to add? (c) Name one diverse group that gains from streets with more shade, and say why.

On your own

Q7. Figure 1 says one change — like a new footpath — can be social, environmental and economic at once. Explain how, for a new shaded footpath linking a school to a shopping strip.

Q8. Choose **two** of the three diverse groups in Figure 6. For each, pick one feature from Figure 5 or Figure 9 and explain why that feature matters to that group’s liveability.

Q9. The Transport Strategy 2030 reduces through traffic yet keeps access for essential car trips, “especially for people with a disability, trade, service and emergency vehicles”. Explain why keeping that access is part of enhancing liveability, not a failure to do so.

Q10. “Planting more street trees is only an environmental response.” Use Figure 7 and the three factors from Figure 1 to explain whether you agree, referring to at least two diverse groups.

Response task — your liveability proposal

This task is the outcome in VC2HG8K11.E02: a specific proposal of your own to improve one aspect of the liveability of your place, with the needs of the community’s diverse groups in mind — young people, older people, people with particular needs.*

Using your fieldwork record from Figure 8 and the scaffold in Figure 10, develop a proposal to improve **one aspect** of liveability in a local place you observed.

Scaffold: planning your liveability proposal

Answer each part to build a clear, evidence-based proposal.

Aspect of liveability	Which feature are you trying to improve? e.g. shade, footpaths, safe crossings, parks, transport.
The place	Name your exact site: the street, park or shopping area you studied in the field.
The issue	What is the problem, and what is your evidence from observation or data?
Who it affects	Which diverse groups are helped — young people, older people, people with particular needs?
Your proposed response	One specific, realistic change. Say who would do it (council, school, community).
Expected impact	How will this make the place more liveable? Name environmental, social or economic benefits.

Tip: a strong proposal is specific — 'add three shaded seats and a ramp at the bus stop on Main Street'

A six-row planning scaffold: aspect of liveability; the place; the issue; who it affects — young people, older people, people with particular needs; your proposed response; expected impact, each with a guiding question

Figure 10 — Answer every row. A proposal that misses a row is an opinion; a proposal that fills every row with evidence is geography.

1. **Name one aspect** of liveability you are improving (for example: shade, safe crossings, resting places, access for wheels, things for young people to do).
2. **Name your exact place** — the street, park or shopping area you studied.
3. **State the issue with your evidence** from observation: your counts and notes, not your feelings.
4. **Say who it affects**, across the three diverse groups — young people, older people, people with particular needs.
5. **Propose one specific, realistic response**, and say who would carry it out (council, school, community group).
6. **Explain the expected impact** using the three factors: environmental, social, economic.

Present your proposal as a one-page written submission **or** a multimodal piece (poster, slide deck or a two-minute video) as if to your local council. Close with a source line for any plan or data you referred to, the way this section does — for example, the City of Melbourne sources listed at the end of this section.

Check before you submit: specific (one change, one site) · evidence-based (counts and notes) · group-aware (all three diverse groups considered) · three-factor impact explained · sources referenced.

Answers

Q1. (a) Environmental (shade, cooler air, greener street); helps everyone, especially older people and young people on hot days. (b) Social (connection, belonging); helps young people. (c) Economic (local jobs and trade); helps local traders and workers — and as a social benefit, a good market is also a meeting place.

Q2. (a) The local scale. (b) The council scale. (c) Any state-scale response, e.g. the Victorian Government's Plan Melbourne 2017–2050, or state funding for a rail line or a recycling program.

Q3. (a) Hallmark 1 — safe, accessible and well connected. (b) Hallmark 3 — services and destinations (also Hallmark 2, thriving local economies). (c) Hallmark 6 — enough homes and people nearby to support local services and transport.

Q4. (a) More than 50 km created by the city, plus a further 40 km with the Victorian Government. (b) The pedestrian-priority shared zones and the wider footpath space help people with a disability; the plan also keeps access for essential car trips, especially for people with a disability, trade, service and emergency vehicles.

Q5. (a) Older people (and anyone who moves slowly). (b) Young people. (c) People with particular needs.

Q6. (a) 22 per cent now; 40 per cent by 2040. (b) 18 percentage points. (c) e.g. older people — heat stress hits older bodies first, so streets with more shade keep them able to walk, shop and meet in summer.

Q7. Social: students and families can walk and meet safely; environmental: less car use and more shade if trees line it; economic: easier access brings more customers to the shops. The explanation must touch all three factors with a reason for each.

Q8. Answers will vary. A strong answer names the group, names one real feature, and gives a *why* — e.g. seats in shade (Figure 9) matter to older people because resting points make longer walks possible; a skate area or playground matters to young people because it gives them somewhere to be and somewhere to meet.

Q9. Liveability is for everyone, including people who cannot walk or cycle — some people with a disability, carers, tradespeople, and emergency services rely on cars. A response that removed essential car access would lower liveability for exactly the group the plan names first. Enhancing liveability means balancing the street, not banning one mode of transport.

Q10. Disagree. Environmental: shade, cooler air, less heat-island effect, habitat for birds and insects. Social: calmer streets with more shade are easier for older people, young people and people with particular needs to use. Economic: comfortable streets bring more people to local shops, as the Transport Strategy's boost to retail and hospitality also shows. One response, three factors.

Response task. Assess against the checklist: specific · evidence-based · group-aware (young people, older people, people with particular needs) · three-factor impact · sources referenced. A model submission reads like Demonstration 2 with the student's own field data in place of the model data.

Sources (all retrieved 2026-08-25)

- Victorian Government (Department of Transport and Planning), *20-minute neighbourhoods* and *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*, planning.vic.gov.au — definition of the 20-minute neighbourhood, Direction 5, the six hallmarks and the inclusive-neighbourhood features (Figures 4 and 5).
- City of Melbourne, *Transport Strategy 2030*, melbourne.vic.gov.au — the 50 km + 40 km protected bicycle lanes, 40 km/h speed limits, 'Little Streets' shared zones, an area of repurposed road and parking space equal to more than six Melbourne Cricket Grounds, essential car access, and the \$870 million and \$5.7 billion figures (Figure 3).
- City of Melbourne, *Urban Forest Strategy*, melbourne.vic.gov.au — canopy cover 22 per cent to 40 per cent by 2040, heat-island reduction and tree diversity (Figure 7).
- City of Melbourne, *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2024*, melbourne.vic.gov.au — approved by Council on 15 September 2020; developed with the Disability Advisory Committee.

Figures 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 are original concept diagrams drawn for this book; Figures 3, 4 and 7 are drawn from the lists and values in the sources above. No publisher map or text is reproduced.