

Geography Level 8

Chapter 4 — Changing nations

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Urbanisation where cities are booming: causes, patterns, impacts

More than half of all people on Earth now live in cities, and the share is still rising. This section looks at that process — **urbanisation** — through the study of one country, the **United States of America**. You will learn what urbanisation is and what causes it, how it is different from **urban growth**, the push and pull forces behind it, the rise of **megacities**, and its impacts on environments, economies and communities — on cities, and on the rural places people leave behind.

Curriculum map (for the teacher — audit and planning only, not student text). This section owns **VC2HG8K18** (Levels 7 and 8; strand Geographical Knowledge and Understanding; sub-strand Changing nations). **Draws on:** .E01 (causes, conceptualised as a process) · .E02 (positive and negative impacts on city environments and populations) · .E03 (rural impacts: outmigration, return migration, remittances, information flows) · .E04 (urbanisation as both result and driver of economic and social change) · .E05 (urban growth vs urbanisation; push–pull forces) · .E06 (big cities versus megacities, nationally: Australian capital-city growth; Los Angeles; the Boston–Washington corridor) · .E07 (environmental quality: carbon emissions, water consumption). **Case study:** the United States of America, the D12 default; Indonesia, China or India are equally compliant alternatives. **§2A:** none — this CD carries no First Nations content and nothing is excluded. **Standard sentence owned:** the achievement standard’s urbanisation sentence (Level 8). **Vocabulary notes:** *urbanisation*, *urban growth*, *megacity*, *push–pull factors*, *outmigration* and *reclassification* are defined at first use; *remittances* (ladder Yr9) belongs to the curriculum’s own elaboration text .E03 and is taught here as *money sent home* in student-facing prose. Cross-references: 4B (migration in depth), 4C (urban patterns), 4D (city management), 4E (concept capstone); graph and map work here is practice material for Chapters 5–6 (D11), not skills instruction.

Theory

1. What urbanisation is, and why it happens

Urbanisation is the rise in the *share* of a country’s population that lives in urban areas — cities, towns and the built-up areas around them. A country is urbanising when a growing slice of its people lives an urban life.

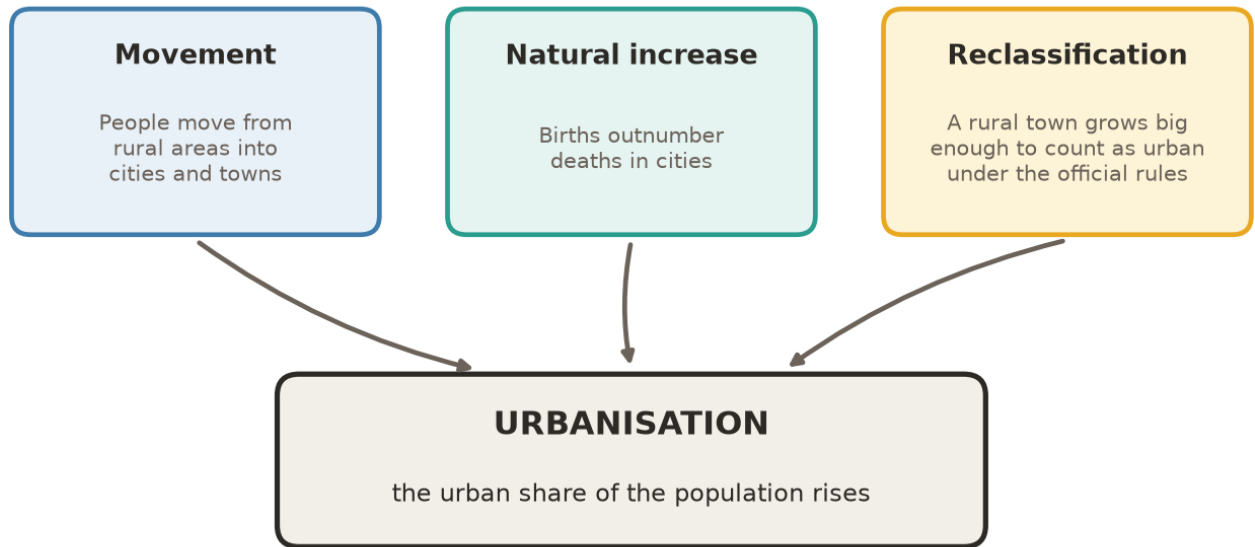
What counts as “urban”? *Urban* is not a word with one fixed world meaning. It is a rule-set term: each country’s statistical agency sets its own definition, and each definition is correct within that country’s system. In this section, *urban* is used in the sense given by the **United States Census Bureau** — densely settled, built-up areas and the developed territory around them. Australia’s statistician, the **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)**, uses its own rules (urban centres of about 1,000 people or more). Rules also change over time: the US changed its urban rules for the 2020 Census, which is why the long US time series below stops in 2010. Every figure in this section names whose rules it uses.

Urbanisation happens for three reasons (Figure 1):

1. **Rural-to-urban movement.** People move from the countryside into cities and towns (this is *internal migration* when it happens inside one country).
2. **Natural increase.** In most cities, births outnumber deaths, so the urban population grows even with no movement at all.
3. **Reclassification.** A rural town can grow until it meets the official rules for an urban area. Nobody has moved at all — the place has simply been re-labelled by the statistics.

Urbanisation: three causes, one result

Urbanisation means the share of a country's people living in urban areas goes up.



Only the first cause involves anyone moving: cities can grow their share of the population through births and through places being re-labelled.

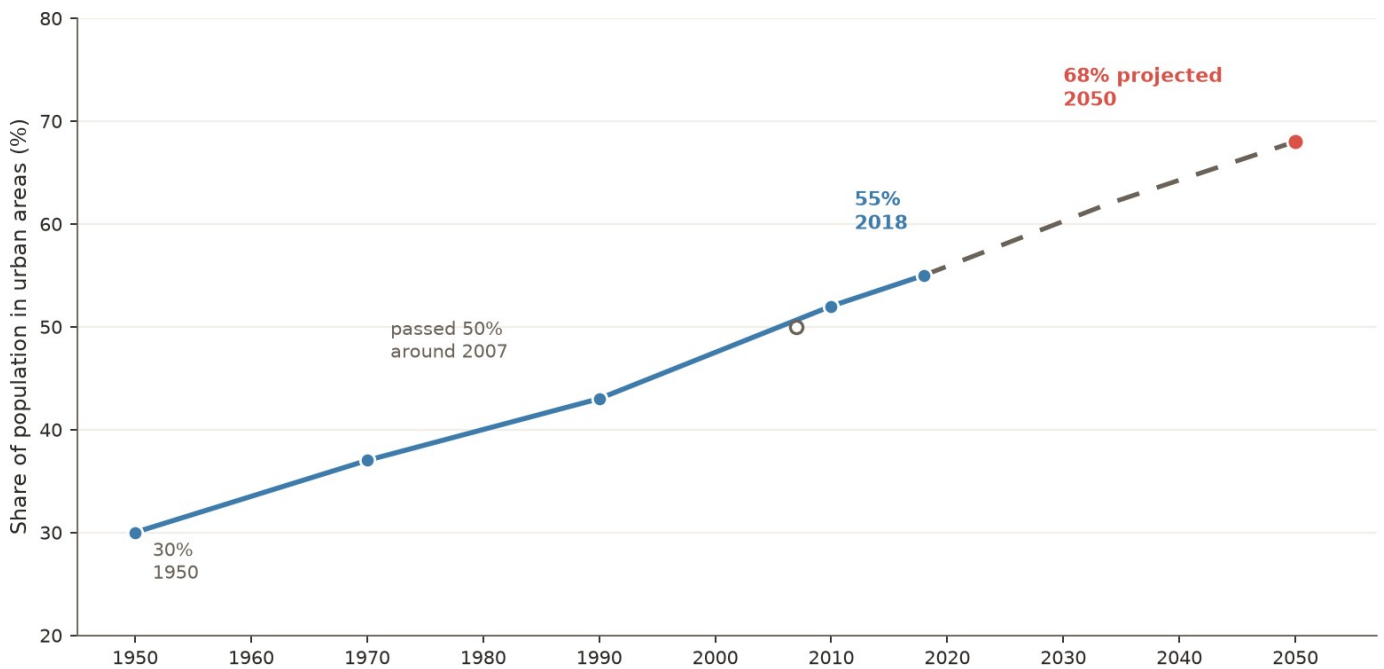
Flow diagram showing the three causes of urbanisation: rural-to-urban movement, natural increase, and reclassification of growing towns, all feeding into a rising urban share of the population.

Figure 1 — Urbanisation as a process: three causes feed one result. Note that only the first cause involves anyone moving.

The world pattern. Urbanisation is a global trend, but it is far from finished (Figure 2). In 1950 about 30% of the world's people lived in urban areas. Around 2007 the share passed 50% — for the first time in history, more people lived in urban areas than in rural ones. By 2018 the share was 55%, and the United Nations projects it will reach 68% by 2050 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects*; retrieved 25 August 2026).

The world is still urbanising

Share of the world's population living in urban areas, 1950-2050



Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects (retrieved 25 August 2026). Points before 2018 are rounded; 2018-2050 is the UN projection.

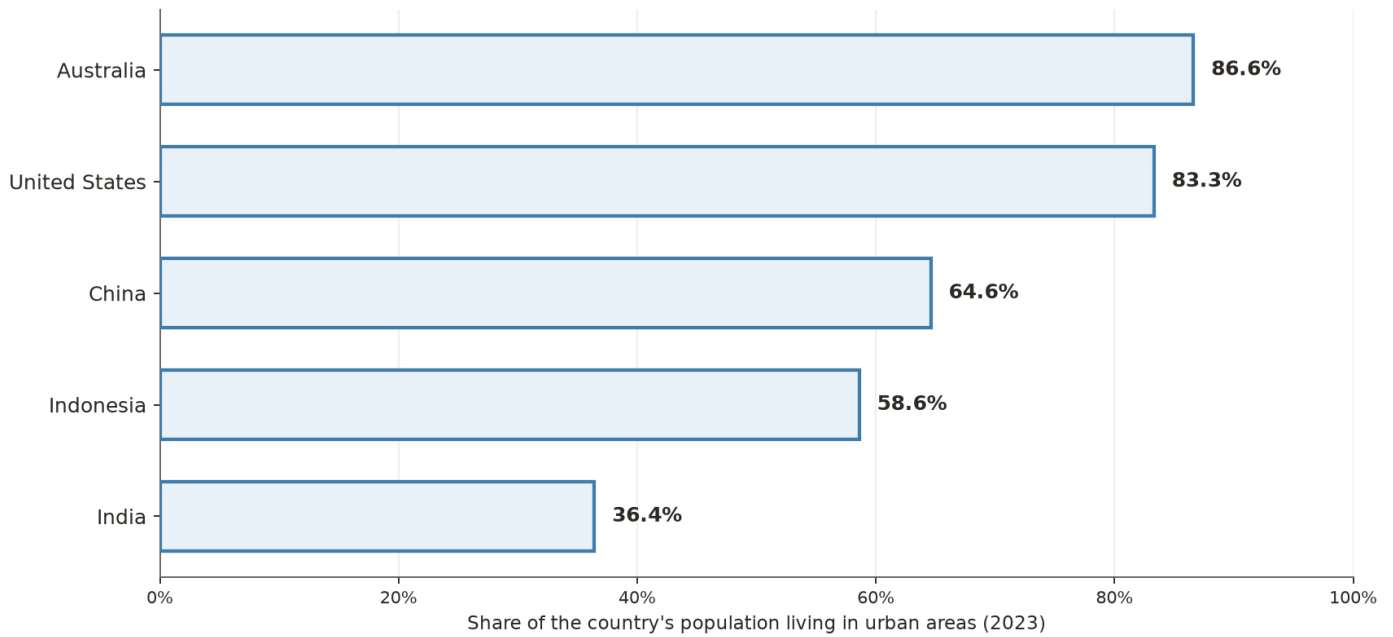
Line graph of the share of the world population living in urban areas, rising from about 30 per cent in 1950 to 55 per cent in 2018, with a dashed United Nations projection reaching 68 per cent by 2050.

Figure 2 — The world's urban share, 1950–2018, with the UN projection for 2050 (dashed). Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Different countries, different stages. Figure 3 compares five countries named in this book's curriculum. Australia and the United States are already highly urbanised (over 80%), so their urban share rises slowly now. China is urbanising fast — its share more than doubled in a few decades as factories and city jobs grew. India and Indonesia still have most of their people in rural areas, so the biggest urban changes of the next 30 years will happen in countries like these (UN DESA, 2023 estimates; retrieved 25 August 2026).

Different countries, different stages

Urban share of the population in five countries named in this book's curriculum



Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects, 2023 estimates (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Bar chart comparing the urban share of the population in five countries in 2023: Australia 86.6 per cent, United States 83.3 per cent, China 64.6 per cent, Indonesia 58.6 per cent and India 36.4 per cent.

Figure 3 — Urban share of the population, selected countries, 2023. Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects (retrieved 25 August 2026).

2. Urban growth is not urbanisation

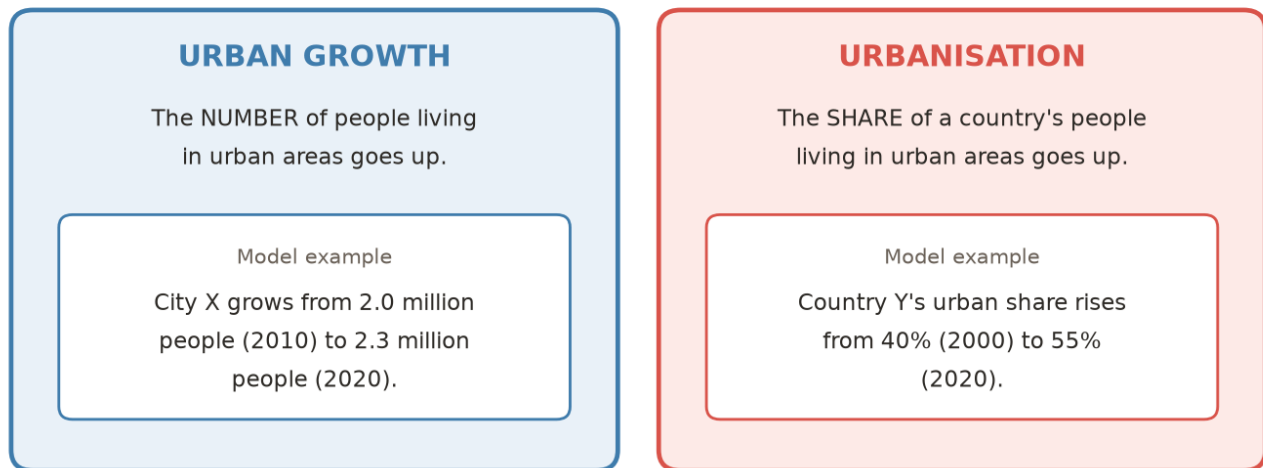
Two ideas that are easy to mix up:

- **Urban growth** = the *number* of people living in urban areas going up.
- **Urbanisation** = the *share* of a country's population living in urban areas going up.

Figure 4 sets them side by side with model examples.

Two ideas that are easy to mix up

Urban growth counts people. Urbanisation counts a share.



One can happen without the other: a country's cities can grow while its urban share stays still (if rural areas grow just as fast), and its urban share can rise even when cities grow only a little (if places are reclassified or people leave rural areas).

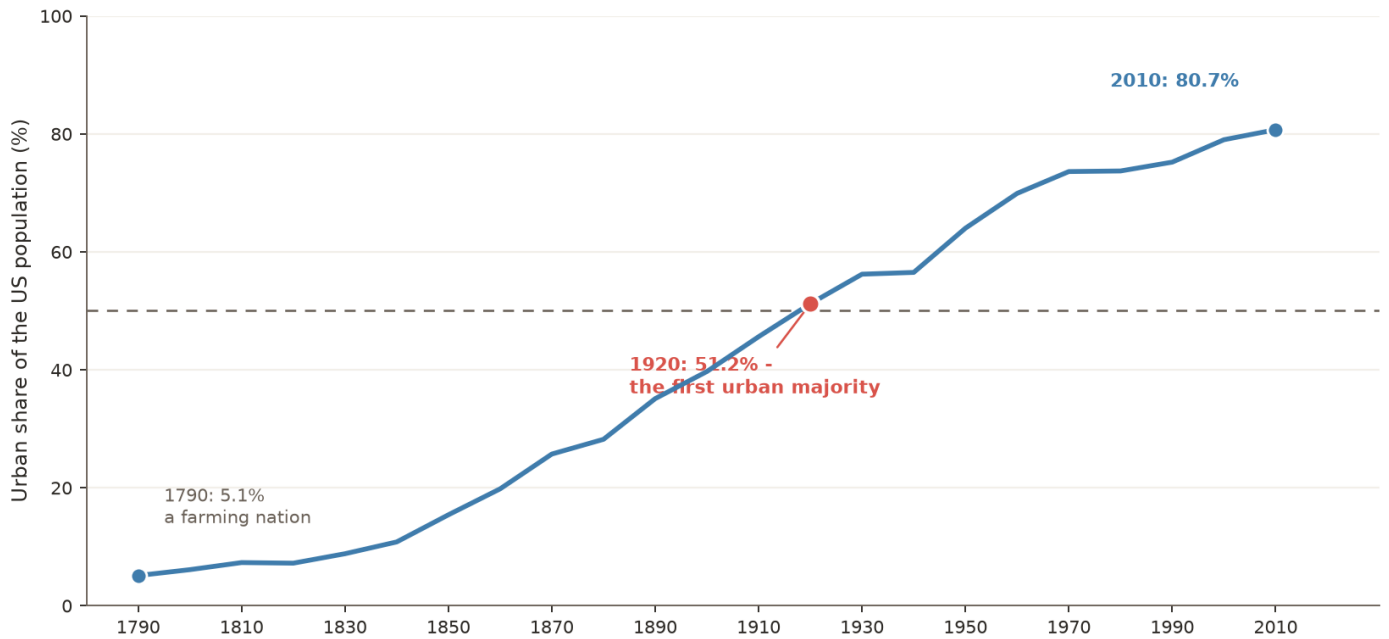
Comparison table defining urban growth as the number of urban people rising, and urbanisation as the urban share of the population rising, each with a model example and a note that one can happen without the other.

Figure 4 — Model text: urban growth vs urbanisation. A country can grow its cities without urbanising (if its rural areas grow just as fast), and it can urbanise slowly even when its cities grow only a little (if the share shifts through reclassification or faster rural out-movement).

Case study: the United States. The US is one of the best-documented urbanisation stories in the world, because a census has counted the population every ten years since 1790 (Figure 5). In the first census, only 5.1% of people lived in urban areas — the US was a farming nation. The share passed 50% at the **1920 census**, a famous milestone: for the first time, more Americans lived in urban than in rural places. By 2010 the share reached 80.7% (United States Census Bureau, decennial census urban and rural series; retrieved 25 August 2026). Notice two things on the graph: the fastest climbs come between 1860 and 1920 (the age of factories, railways and city jobs), and the line flattens after 1950, because there were few rural people left to move.

The urbanisation of the United States

Share of the US population living in urban areas at each ten-year census, 1790-2010



Source: US Census Bureau, decennial census urban-rural series (retrieved 25 August 2026). The series stops at 2010: the Census Bureau changed its definition of "urban" for the 2020 Census - a reminder that the word is defined by rules that can change.

Line graph of the United States urban share of the population at each census from 1790 to 2010, rising fast between 1860 and 1920, crossing 50 per cent in 1920, and flattening after 1950 to reach 80.7 per cent in 2010.

Figure 5 — US urban share of the population, 1790–2010, at each ten-year census. Source: US Census Bureau (retrieved 25 August 2026). The series stops at 2010 because the Census Bureau changed its definition of “urban” for the 2020 Census — a reminder that the word is defined by rules that can change.

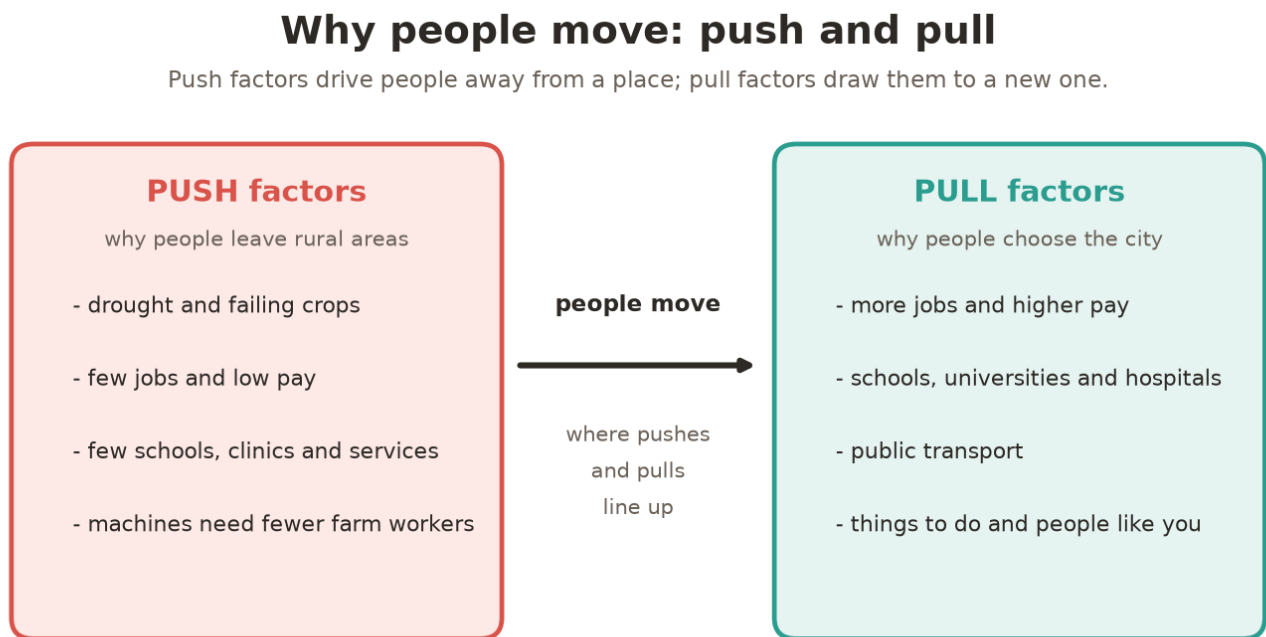
Demonstration 1 below walks through this graph step by step.

3. Push and pull: the forces behind the move

When people do move from rural areas to cities, geographers sort the reasons into **push–pull factors** (defined at first use):

- **Push factors** are the hard conditions that push people *away* from where they live: farm work drying up, drought, low pay, few services.
- **Pull factors** are the attractions that pull people *toward* a new place: more jobs, higher pay, schools, universities, hospitals, transport, things to do.

Figure 6 shows common examples of each side.



Real moves combine several pushes and several pulls at once - and what pulls one person (a big, busy city) can push another.

Diagram of push and pull factors in migration, with rural push factors such as drought, few jobs and few services on the left, urban pull factors such as more jobs, higher pay, schools and hospitals on the right, and an arrow of people moving between them.

Figure 6 — Push–pull factors. Real moves almost always combine several pushes and several pulls — and what pulls one person (a big, noisy city) can push another.

Most movement in urbanising countries is **internal migration** — inside one country, from villages and small towns to the big cities. **International migration** — between countries — also feeds city growth, and Section 4B takes that story further for Australia and China.

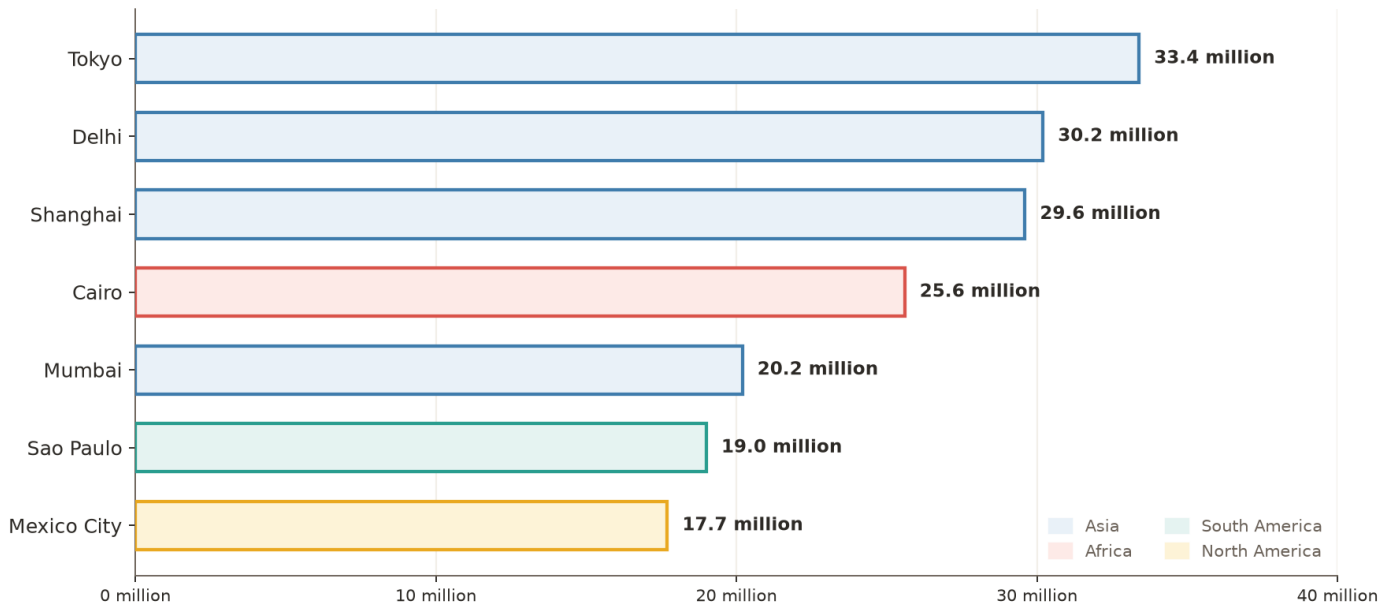
A famous US example of push factors at work is the **Dust Bowl** of the 1930s: years of drought and poor farming practice turned parts of the Great Plains into dust, crops failed, and hundreds of thousands of farm families left for cities — many heading to California in search of work. This was internal migration driven by both a strong push (land that could no longer support a family) and a pull (the hope of paid work in a new place).

4. Large cities, megacities and corridors

Cities come in very different sizes. The United Nations (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) defines a **megacity** as a built-up urban area with **10 million people or more** (retrieved 25 August 2026). Ten million is a set cut-off, not a natural boundary — nothing magical happens the moment a city passes it — but the label is useful for spotting the places where urban change is most extreme. In 2025 the UN counted 33 megacities worldwide.

The world's largest urban areas, 2025

Seven of the 33 megacities counted by the United Nations - all have 10 million people or more



Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects (retrieved 25 August 2026). Populations are whole built-up urban areas, not council boundaries.

Bar chart of the seven largest urban areas in the world by population in 2025: Tokyo 33.4 million, Delhi 30.2 million, Shanghai 29.6 million, Cairo 25.6 million, Mumbai 20.2 million, São Paulo 19.0 million and Mexico City 17.7 million.

Figure 7 — The seven largest urban areas in the world, 2025. Source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects (retrieved 25 August 2026). Four of the seven are in Asia; note that the list counts whole built-up urban areas, not council boundaries.

Los Angeles as a megacity. The *city* of Los Angeles had 3,898,747 people at the 2020 census (United States Census Bureau; retrieved 25 August 2026) — well short of 10 million. But the continuously built-up urban area around it — the **Los Angeles–Anaheim–Riverside** urban area — held **12,150,996** people, making it the second-largest urban area in the US (after New York–Newark, 19,426,449) and a megacity by the UN definition. Demonstration 2 unpacks this, including a model of how much water 12 million people need in one of the driest big regions on Earth.

Urban corridors. Sometimes the built-up edges of several large cities grow toward each other until they form one long strip of city-like development. The best-known US example is the **Boston–Washington corridor** (often nicknamed *BosWash*): a chain of large cities — Boston, Providence, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, DC — running along the north-east coast (Figure 8). It holds over 53 million people — about 15% of the US population — on less than 2% of the country's land (US Census Bureau population estimates; retrieved 25 August 2026).

The Boston-Washington corridor

A chain of large cities whose built-up edges run together into one long strip



Over 53 million people: about 15% of the US population on less than 2% of its land.

Schematic diagram: spacing and shape are simplified - it is a model, not a map.

Source: US Census Bureau population estimates (retrieved 25 August 2026).

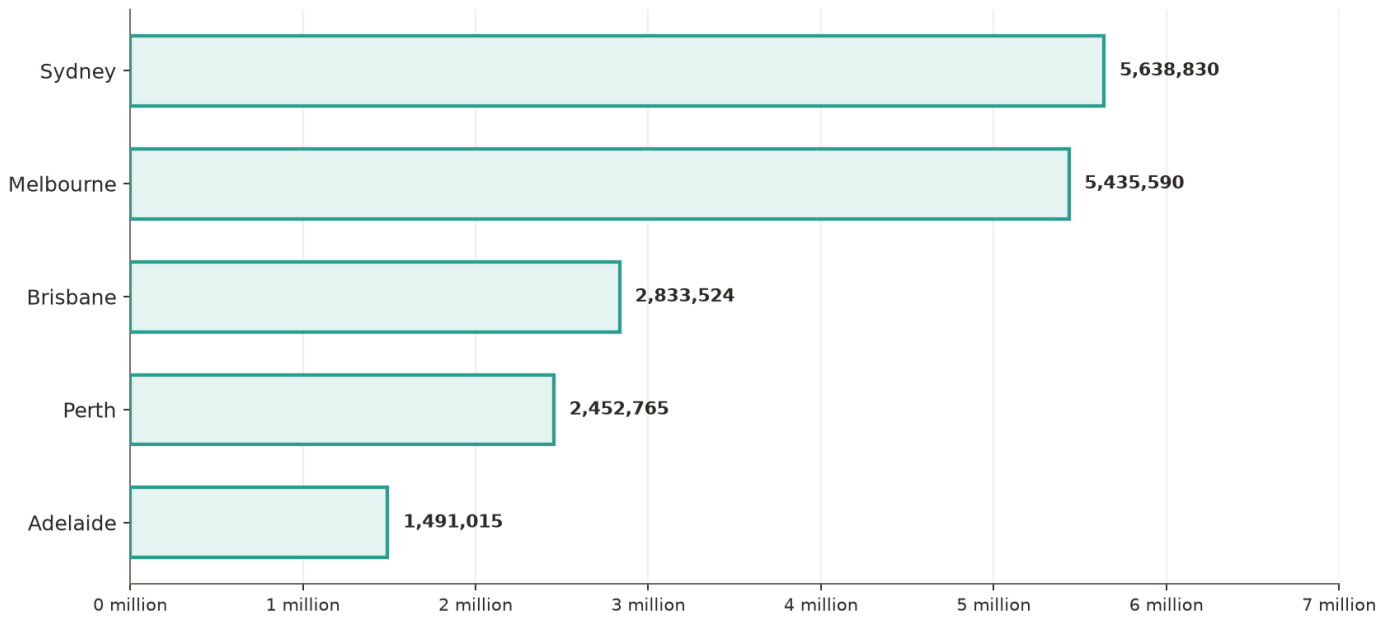
Schematic diagram of the Boston-Washington corridor in the United States, a chain of cities along the north-east coast running from Boston through Providence, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore to Washington DC, holding over 53 million people.

Figure 8 — The Boston–Washington corridor (schematic — spacing is simplified, not a map). One long strip of linked cities, from Boston to Washington, DC. Source: US Census Bureau (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Australia's large capital cities. E06 also asks about Australian capital-city growth. Australia is one of the world's most urbanised countries, and its population is concentrated in a handful of capital cities, all of which are still growing (Figure 9). At the June 2025 figures, Sydney and Melbourne had both passed 5 million people — up from 4,921,000 and 4,529,500 a decade earlier (Australian Bureau of Statistics, estimated resident population; retrieved 25 August 2026). Section 4C compares Australian urban patterns with the US in detail.

Australia's growing capital cities

Population of Australia's five largest capital cities, June 2025



In June 2015, Sydney had 4,921,000 people and Melbourne 4,529,500 - both passed 5 million within a decade. Source: ABS, estimated resident population (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Bar chart of the populations of Australia's five largest capital cities in June 2025: Sydney 5,638,830, Melbourne 5,435,590, Brisbane 2,833,524, Perth 2,452,765 and Adelaide 1,491,015.

Figure 9 — Australia's capital-city populations, June 2025. Source: ABS, estimated resident population (retrieved 25 August 2026).

5. Impacts on cities and on the environment

Urbanisation changes everything about the places it touches. Figure 10 sorts the main impacts into **environmental**, **economic** and **social** — and into positives and negatives, because the same process does both at once.

What urbanisation does to cities

The same process produces positives and negatives at once.

Impact on...	Positive	Negative
Environment	+ dense building uses less land per person + pipes, bins and public transport serve many people in a small area	- more emissions, waste and polluted stormwater runs off sealed ground - habitat is lost as land is built over
Economy	+ more jobs; businesses gain bigger markets + better services: hospitals, universities and transport	- housing can become expensive - jobs may not grow as fast as the population
Society	+ better access to schools, clinics, sport and the arts + people can find others who share their interests	- overcrowding and long trips to work - some areas carry crime and inequality

Model text: common impacts, sorted for study. Which side weighs more depends on how a city is planned, built and run.

Table of the environmental, economic and social impacts of urbanisation, split into positive impacts such as more jobs and better access to services, and negative impacts such as more emissions, expensive housing and overcrowding.

Figure 10 — Impacts of urbanisation on cities: environmental, economic and social, positive and negative. Same process, both sides.

The environment: emissions. Cities concentrate people, and people concentrate consumption. The UN's city agency, UN-Habitat, reports that cities consume about 78% of the world's energy and produce more than 60% of its greenhouse gas emissions (UN-Habitat; retrieved 25 August 2026). More people in one place means more electricity, more fuel, more waste and more polluted stormwater — unless the city is planned to run cleanly. This is one way urbanisation can *negatively* impact environmental quality (E07).

The environment: water. The same concentration raises water demand. Demonstration 2 works through a model for the Los Angeles urban area: at a rounded 300 litres per person per day, 12 million people need over 3.6 billion litres a day. Southern California is too dry to supply that locally, so Los Angeles imports water through long aqueducts — channels built to carry water hundreds of kilometres from mountains and rivers. Building cities in dry places works only with careful planning, and Section 4D returns to how Australian cities face the same problem. Urbanisation can also impact the environment *positively*: pipes, public transport and waste services reach many people in a small area, and dense building uses less land per person than spreading houses across the countryside.

Two strong positions, one debate. Is urbanisation good or bad for the environment?

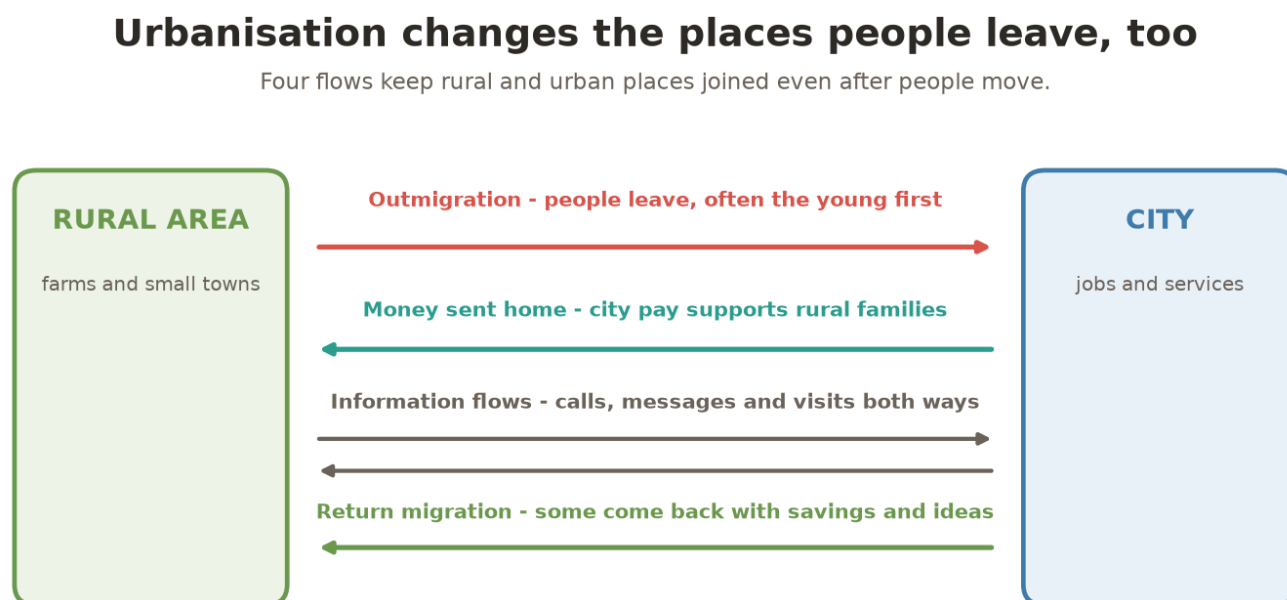
Position A — urbanisation hurts the environment. Most people now live in cities, and cities use about 78% of the world's energy and produce over 60% of greenhouse gas emissions (UN-Habitat, as above). Every new urban million adds demand for power, water, food and goods, and the waste has to go somewhere. On this view, more urban people means more pressure on the environment, full stop.

Position B — urbanisation can help the environment. Packing people close together is the *least* damaging way for them to live. Flats and terrace houses need less land and less heating than big detached houses on large blocks; short trips can be walked, cycled or taken by train instead of by car; one set of pipes and wires serves thousands. On this view, the problem is not cities but sprawl — and building *denser* cities is a climate solution.

Both positions can point to real evidence, and both rest on assumptions worth testing: Position A assumes each extra urban person adds the same load as the last, and Position B assumes the new city is built dense and runs on clean power. Before you decide between them, name each assumption and ask what evidence would test it.

6. Impacts on the rural places people leave

Urbanisation does not just change the destination — it changes the origin. Figure 11 shows the four flows that connect the two (E03).



The same flow can help and hurt: outmigration can drain a town of its youngest workers, yet the money and skills that flow back can keep the town alive.

Diagram of the flows between rural and urban areas: people moving from rural to urban as outmigration, some returning as return migration, money sent home from urban workers to rural families, and information, ideas and news flowing both ways.

Figure 11 — Flows between rural and urban places. Movement is only one of the four links — money and information keep travelling back.

- **Outmigration** — people leaving the rural area, usually the young adults first. Rural towns can shrink, age and lose services (the school closes when there are too few children; the bus stops running).
- **Return migration** — some people come back later, often with savings, skills and new ideas. A returnee might start a business that links the town to the city market.
- **Money sent home** — urban workers often send part of their pay back to family in the countryside (the curriculum's word for these payments is in .E03; the idea is simply income earned in the city and spent in the village). For many rural families this money pays for school fees, a tin roof, a motorbike or a shop.
- **Flows of information** — phone calls, messages, visits and social media carry ideas, fashions and news both ways, changing what people in rural areas want and expect.

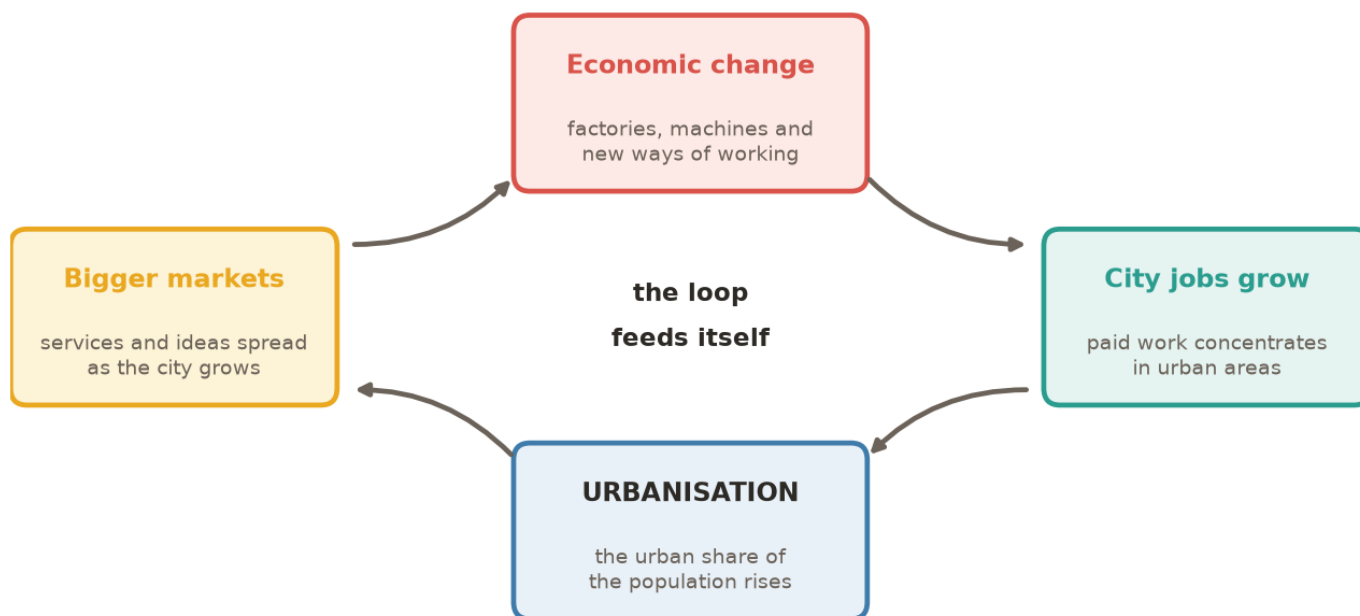
Evaluating these impacts means weighing both sides: outmigration can drain a town of its youngest workers *and* bring back money and skills that keep the town alive. The same flow helps and hurts, depending on who is asked.

7. Urbanisation: both cause and effect

One last idea ties the section together (E04). Urbanisation is a *consequence* of economic and social change — factories, machines and new farm methods changed where work was, and people followed the work. But once cities grow, they become a *cause* of further change: bigger markets attract more businesses, more businesses attract more workers, and city life changes families, jobs and culture. Figure 12 draws the loop.

Both cause and effect

Economic and social change drives urbanisation - and urbanisation drives further change.



In the US, the factory age fed the cities - and the cities fed the factory age.

Circular diagram showing urbanisation as both cause and effect of change: economic change creates city jobs, urbanisation grows the cities, larger markets and services attract more activity, and further economic and social change follows, feeding back to the start.

Figure 12 — The urbanisation loop: economic and social change drives urbanisation, and urbanisation drives further change. In the US, the factory age fed the cities, and the cities fed the factory age.

The US shows the loop clearly: between 1860 and 1920, factory industry grew in cities, which pulled in workers (Figure 5's steepest climb); the growing cities then offered bigger markets and more services, which pulled in more industry. The same loop is now running, at a faster pace, in countries earlier in their urban transition.

Worked examples

Demonstration 1 — Reading the US urbanisation timeline (scaffolded)

Use Figure 5 (the US urban share, 1790–2010) to answer these in order.

Step	Working	Comment
1. Find the crossover.	The line crosses 50% at the 1920 census (51.2%).	1920 is the first census at which more Americans lived in urban than rural places.
2. Read the rural share.	Rural share in 1920 = $100 - 51.2 =$	Urban and rural shares must add to

Step	Working	Comment
	48.8%.	100%.
3. Model the urban head-count, 1920.	Total US population $\approx$ 106 million; $106 \times 0.512 \approx$ 54 million urban.	A share becomes a head-count when you multiply by the total.
4. Model the urban head-count, 2010.	Total $\approx$ 309 million; $309 \times 0.807 \approx$ 249 million urban.	Same method, later census.
5. Compare.	The share rose by 29.5 percentage points ($51.2 \rightarrow 80.7$); the urban head-count grew roughly 4.6 times over.	The share and the head-count both rose — but for different reasons.
6. Conclude.	After 1950 the line flattens: with about four in five people already urban, there were few rural people left to move.	A fast process slows as it runs out of people to convert.

Data: US Census Bureau, decennial census series (retrieved 25 August 2026). Head-counts are rounded models, computed from the values shown.

Demonstration 2 — Is Los Angeles a megacity? (and how much water does it need?)

Step	Working	Comment
1. State the rule.	A megacity is a built-up urban area of 10 million or more people (UN definition).	Definitions decide answers — check the boundary first.
2. Test the city boundary.	City of Los Angeles, 2020 census: 3,898,747 .	Under 10 million — on this boundary, not a megacity.
3. Test the built-up area.	Los Angeles–Anaheim–Riverside urban area, 2020 census: 12,150,996 .	Over 10 million — the built-up area <i>is</i> a megacity.
4. Lesson.	“Los Angeles” can mean the council boundary (3.9 million) or the whole continuously built-up area (12.2 million). Boundary choice changes the answer.	Always ask: which boundary?
5. Model the water demand.	Assume 300 litres per person per day (a rounded model assumption). $12,150,996 \times 300 \approx$ 3.6 billion litres per day .	The assumption is stated, so the calculation can be checked and repeated with a different assumption.
6. Connect to place.	Southern California is dry — that demand cannot be met locally, so Los Angeles imports water through long aqueducts.	Urbanisation in dry regions reshapes the environment far beyond the city edge (E07).

Data: US Census Bureau, 2020 Census (retrieved 25 August 2026). The water figure is a model, not a measurement; the 300 litres assumption is stated so you can substitute another and recompute.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Define **urbanisation** and **urban growth** in your own words, then state one difference between them.

Q2. Use Figure 2 (the world’s urban share). (a) What share of the world’s people lived in urban areas in 2018? (b) What share does the UN project for 2050? (c) In roughly which year did the world’s urban share pass 50%?

- Q3.** Classify each factor as a **push** or a **pull** factor: (a) drought ruins crops; (b) more jobs in the city; (c) few hospitals in the rural town; (d) universities in the city.
- Q4.** Use Figure 7 (the seven largest urban areas). (a) Which is the largest, and what is its population? (b) How many of the seven are in Asia? (c) Which of the seven are outside Asia?
- Q5.** A town of 2 million people uses a rounded 200 litres of water per person per day (model assumption). How many litres does the town need per day? Give one reason a growing town might have to bring water in from far away.
- Q6.** Using Figure 11, name the four flows between rural and urban areas, and give one possible effect of each on the rural area.

Unscaffolded

- Q7.** “Urban growth and urbanisation are the same thing.” State whether this claim is correct, and justify your answer with a model example of your own.
- Q8.** Using Figure 5, explain why the US urban share rose fastest between 1860 and 1920. Link your answer to what was happening to work and industry in that period.
- Q9.** A country’s urban share can rise even if nobody moves house. Explain two ways this can happen.
- Q10.** “Moving to a city always improves a family’s living standards.” Give one reason to agree and one reason to disagree, drawing on Figure 10’s impact table. State what evidence would help you judge the claim.

Extended response

Q11. *Explain what drives urbanisation, and its impacts on environments, economies and communities, using the United States of America as your case study.*

Write a response of about two pages (you may present it as a written report, or as a narrated slide show or video). Your response must:

- define urbanisation, and distinguish it from urban growth;
- explain at least two causes of urbanisation, with reference to push–pull factors;
- use at least three pieces of evidence from the figures and data in this section (name the figure and the number you are using);
- explain at least one environmental, one economic and one social impact, covering both a positive and a negative side somewhere in your answer;
- finish with one strategy a city could use to reduce one negative impact, and the likely effect of that strategy.

A strong response names its sources, defines its terms at first use, and keeps the difference between a share and a head-count straight.

Answers

- Q1.** Urbanisation: the share of a country's population living in urban areas rises. Urban growth: the number of people living in urban areas rises. Difference: growth counts people, urbanisation counts a share — a country can have one without the other.
- Q2.** (a) 55%. (b) 68%. (c) Around 2007.
- Q3.** (a) push; (b) pull; (c) push; (d) pull.
- Q4.** (a) Tokyo, 33.4 million. (b) Four (Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, Mumbai). (c) Cairo (Africa), São Paulo (South America), Mexico City (North America).
- Q5.** $2,000,000 \times 200 = 400,000,000$ litres per day. A growing town may sit in a dry region, or its local rivers and groundwater may not refill fast enough for the extra demand, so water must be piped in from far away.
- Q6.** Outmigration (people leaving) — the town can shrink and age, and lose services. Return migration — returnees can bring savings, skills and new businesses. Money sent home — rural families gain income earned in the city. Flows of information — ideas and expectations change in both directions.
- Q7.** The claim is not correct. Model example: suppose a country's urban areas grow by 200,000 people in a decade, but its rural areas also grow by 200,000. There is urban growth (the urban number went up) but no urbanisation (the urban *share* is unchanged). Urbanisation needs the share to rise.
- Q8.** Between 1860 and 1920 the US urban share rose from 19.8% to 51.2%. This was the age of factory industry: mills, meatworks and rail yards concentrated in cities, and paid city work pulled people off farms, while new farm machines meant fewer farm workers were needed. Strong pulls and strong pushes together produced the fastest climb on the graph.
- Q9.** (1) Natural increase: if births outnumber deaths in cities, the urban share can rise without anyone moving. (2) Reclassification: a rural town that grows past the official threshold is re-labelled urban, shifting the share even though its residents never moved.
- Q10.** Agree: cities offer more jobs, higher pay and better access to schools and hospitals (Figure 10, economic and social positives). Disagree: housing can become expensive, and some urban areas carry overcrowding, long trips to work and pollution (Figure 10, negatives) — a family without secure work can be worse off in a city than on a farm. Evidence to judge the claim: data on urban incomes, rents and jobs for the family's skills in the city they would move to.
- Q11.** Extended response — see the fully-worked solution for a model plan.
-

Fully-worked solutions

- Q1.** Full definitions: urbanisation is a rise in the *share* of a country's population living in urban areas; urban growth is a rise in the *number* of people living in urban areas. The difference is share vs number: urban growth can happen without urbanisation if rural areas grow just as fast (the share stays still), and urbanisation can happen with little growth if reclassification or outmigration shifts the share.
- Q2.** Read Figure 2: the 2018 point sits at 55%; the dashed projection ends at 68% in 2050; the line crosses 50% just after 2000, at about 2007.
- Q3.** A push is a hard condition at the origin (drought, few services); a pull is an attraction at the destination (jobs, universities). Hence (a) push, (b) pull, (c) push, (d) pull.
- Q4.** From Figure 7: Tokyo tops the list at 33.4 million. The Asian urban areas shown are Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai and Mumbai — four. The rest: Cairo (Africa), São Paulo (South America) and Mexico City (North America).
- Q5.** $2,000,000 \times 200 = 400,000,000$ litres per day. Reason to import: demand outgrows what local rivers, dams and groundwater can supply — the same problem Los Angeles solves with long aqueducts (see Demonstration 2).

Q6. See Answer 6; a fuller version adds that these flows run at the same time, so the rural area is not simply “losing” — it is exchanging people for money, skills and ideas.

Q7. See Answer 7. The key reasoning step: growth is about the urban *number*, urbanisation about the urban *share*. Your model example only needs to hold the share steady while the number rises (or the reverse — urbanisation with slow growth, e.g. through reclassification).

Q8. See Answer 8. Credit the steps: read the graph (19.8% in 1860, 51.2% in 1920), then explain with both a pull (concentrated factory jobs) and a push (fewer farm workers needed), and note that the flattening after 1950 shows the process slowing as the rural pool shrank.

Q9. See Answer 9. Both mechanisms are in Figure 1: natural increase and reclassification are the two causes of urbanisation that need no movement at all.

Q10. See Answer 10. Credit one reason on each side drawn from Figure 10, and a named evidence test (e.g. income, rent and job data for the destination city). The claim’s weak word is *always* — one counted counter-example is enough to break it.

Q11. Model plan for the extended response: (1) Define urbanisation and urban growth, and separate them (Figures 4–5). (2) Causes: rural-to-urban movement, natural increase, reclassification (Figure 1); explain push–pull factors with the Dust Bowl out-movement as the US example (Figure 6). (3) Pattern evidence: the US urban share from 5.1% in 1790 to 80.7% in 2010, crossing 50% in 1920 (Figure 5); the Boston–Washington corridor and Los Angeles as a megacity (Figures 7–8). (4) Impacts: environmental — emissions and water demand, both negative (UN-Habitat energy and emissions figures; Demonstration 2’s water model) and positive (dense services use less land per person); economic — jobs, markets and services vs expensive housing; social — access to schools and hospitals vs overcrowding and long trips to work (Figure 10). (5) Rural side: outmigration, return migration, money sent home and information flows (Figure 11). (6) Close with one strategy — for example, planning denser building near train lines so trips shorten and emissions fall — and state its likely effect and one limit. Full marks require: terms defined, three named pieces of figure evidence, both sides of at least one impact, and a strategy with an effect.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

Five lessons of about 50–60 minutes; reorder freely — the figures carry the content, and the practice set is separable from the prose.

1. **What urbanisation is.** Open with Figure 2 (the world pattern) and the “urban is a rule-set term” box — definitions first, because half the section’s errors come from boundary confusion. Introduce the three causes (Figure 1). Set Q2 and Q3 as exit checks.
2. **Growth vs urbanisation; the US timeline.** Figures 4 and 5. Run Demonstration 1 in class as shared working. The 1920 crossover is the anchor fact. Set Q7–Q9.
3. **Push and pull.** Figure 6; work the Dust Bowl as the US case of strong push factors; distinguish internal from international migration (forward note to 4B, no content overlap). Set the scaffolded Q1 and Q6; collect one paragraph on a family’s imagined move, naming two pushes and two pulls.
4. **Megacities and corridors.** Figures 7–9. Run Demonstration 2 (the boundary lesson is the point: same city, two answers, depending on definition). Note the Australian capitals here for E06’s Australian clause; do not extend into settlement patterns (4C owns that).
5. **Impacts and the loop.** Figures 10–12; run the two-positions debate box with both positions read aloud and assumptions listed before any verdict is invited (marking on reasoning, not conclusion — CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 5 applies). Launch Q11 as the summative task.

Misconceptions to watch: city boundary = urban area (Demonstration 2 exists for this); urban growth = urbanisation (Figure 4); urbanisation = movement only (Figure 1 has two non-movement causes); “urban” has one world meaning (the definitional box); megacity status as a natural boundary rather than a set cut-off.

Differentiation. The scaffolded set is figure-reading with stated steps; the unscaffolded set asks students to build their own model examples (Q7, Q9) and to break a universal claim (Q10). Extension: have students rebuild Figure 5 with

the urban share of the state or city their school sits in, using ABS data (material for 5C/5D; no skills CD is owned here, D11).

Case-study note (D12). The United States of America is the recorded default for VC2HG8K18; Indonesia, China or India are equally compliant alternatives named by the CD. A swap is a change to TOC.md, not a classroom improvisation.

Data sources used in this section (all retrieved 25 August 2026). United States Census Bureau (decennial census urban–rural series; 2020 Census place and urban-area populations; population estimates); United Nations DESA, *World Urbanization Prospects* (world urban share; country urban shares; megacity definition, count and largest urban areas); Australian Bureau of Statistics (estimated resident population, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas); UN-Habitat (cities’ share of world energy use and greenhouse gas emissions). Every figure carries its own source line.

People on the move: migration to and within Australia and China, and city growth

Curriculum focus: VC2HG8K19 (Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Geography, Levels 7 and 8, VCAA). This section draws on elaborations VC2HG8K19.E01–.E07; .E03, .E04 and .E05 carry the priority *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia*.

Case studies, by house default: **Australia and China**.

In this section

- Migration means people changing where they usually live. Section 4A looked at why people move, using push and pull factors. This section reuses that push–pull machinery at a smaller scale, inside Australia and China, and asks what all that moving does to cities.
- Part 1 sets up the big idea and the main types of migration.
- Part 2 looks at how the reasons for moving change over time, in both countries.
- Part 3 follows the biggest internal migration in history: inland China to the coastal cities.
- Part 4 asks what migration does to the growth of major cities in both countries.
- Part 5 maps where migrant groups live in Australia.
- Part 6 looks at what migrant workers in China's cities face.
- Part 7 compares a resource region and a city in Australia.

Key words to learn: migration, migrant, internal migration, international migration, net overseas migration, natural increase, permanent migration, student migration, temporary labour migration, chain migration, circular migration, forced migration, refugee, hukou, floating population, remittances, left-behind children, chunyun, urbanisation, census.

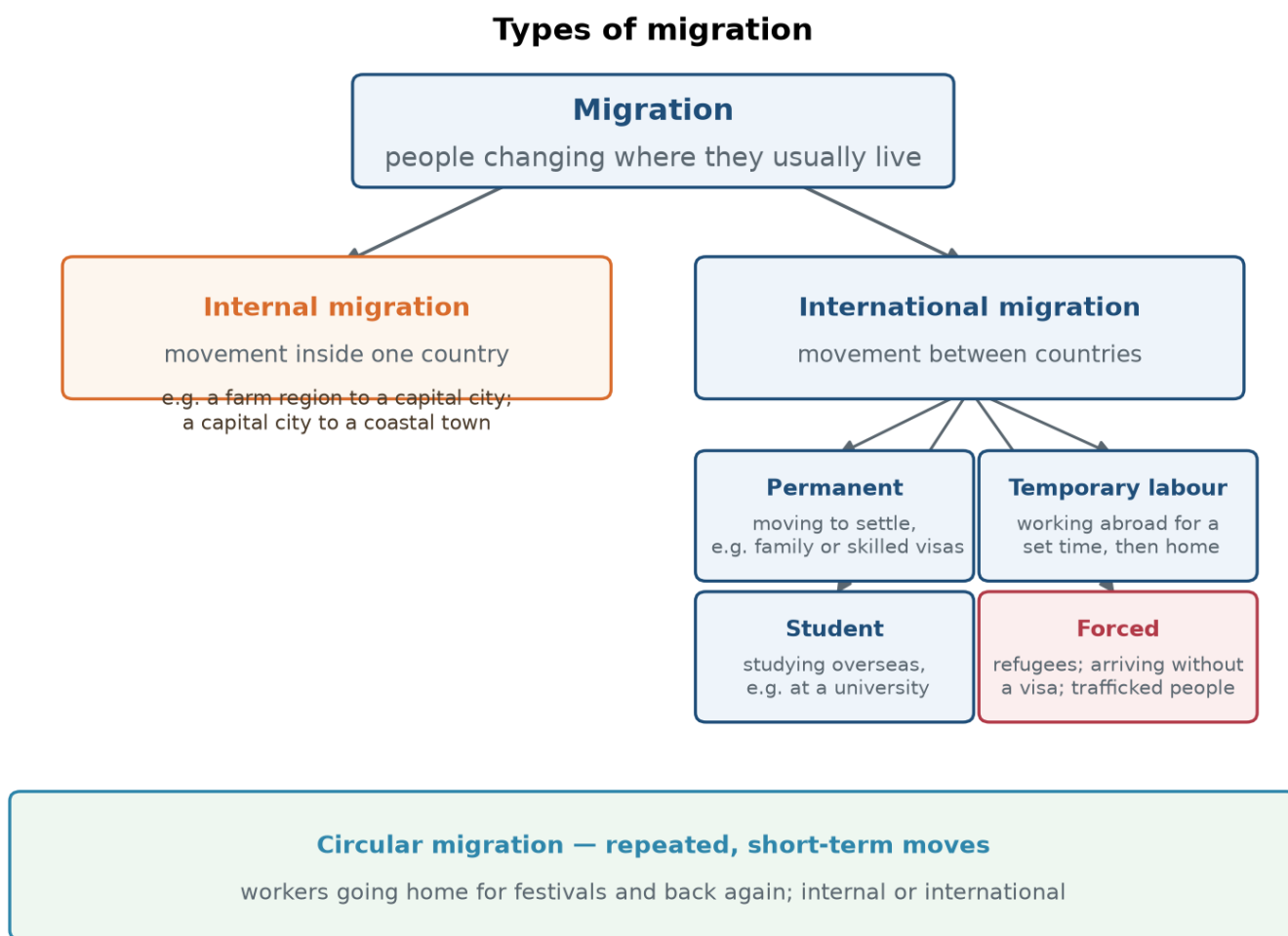
1. What is migration, and what types are there?

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another, with the intention of settling, for a time, in the new place. A **migrant** is a person making that move. In 4A you met push factors (things that drive people away from a place, such as no work or a war) and pull factors (things that draw people to a place, such as jobs, safety or family). The same push–pull machinery runs all the way through this section; here we use it at a smaller scale, inside two countries.

The first big split is where the move crosses a border or not:

- **Internal migration** — movement within one country, for example from a farm region to a capital city, or from one city to another.
- **International migration** — movement between countries, for example from India to Australia.

Within those two branches, geographers sort migration into types. Figure 1 shows the sorting used in this section.



Original classification diagram for this workbook. The types overlap in real life — one person's move can fit more than one type.

Figure 1. Types of migration. The curriculum's list (VC2HG8K19.E01) names permanent, temporary labour, student, forced and circular migration. Original model diagram for this workbook.

The types in full:

- **Permanent migration** — moving to settle for good, for example on a skilled or family visa.
- **Temporary labour migration** — moving to work for a set time, then going home.
- **Student migration** — moving to study, for example at a university in another city or country.
- **Forced migration** — people who have little or no choice. It includes **refugees**, people who arrive without a visa, and people who are trafficked.
- **Circular migration** — repeated, short-term moves, for example workers going home for a festival and returning to the city. It can be internal or international.

A word on the forced group, because the words matter. A **refugee**, as defined by the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention and explained by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), is a person who is outside their own country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and who cannot or will not go home. That is a legal definition with real rights attached: under the Convention, a refugee has a right to seek safety in another country.

The curriculum's elaboration (VC2HG8K19.E01) also uses the term *illegal migrants*. That term is contested, so here are both sides of it. Governments, including Australia's, use *illegal* or *unlawful* because entering or staying without a visa breaks the migration law, and they argue that naming the breach plainly keeps the migration system fair and trusted. The UN and most migration researchers prefer *irregular migration*, and they argue that *illegal* makes a person sound like a criminal when the breach is usually an administrative one, and that the label can hide the fact that some people arriving without papers — including children and people fleeing persecution — have a legal right to seek asylum. In this workbook you will see *irregular* in our own text, and *illegal* where we quote the curriculum. Both refer

to people moving outside a country’s migration laws. **Trafficked people** are the most vulnerable group named in the elaboration: people moved by force or deception so that they can be exploited for labour or sex work. Trafficking is a crime against the person, and a trafficked person is a victim, not a criminal.

Finally, keep one habit of mind: real people rarely fit one box. A student who stays on to work, then sends for family, has been a student migrant, a labour migrant and a permanent migrant in one life story.

2. Changing influences: why the reasons for moving change over time

VC2HG8K19.E02 asks you to explain *changing* influences on migration. Two ideas do heavy lifting here.

Chain migration is the process where one person’s move makes the next move easier. A worker settles, finds a job and a home, then a sibling, a cousin or a friend follows, using the first person’s contacts, money and knowledge. Chains form around family, employment, education or health — exactly the connections named in the elaboration. Over decades, chains build whole communities of people from the same birthplace in the same suburb.

Circular migration changes with the calendar and with technology. Cheap flights and high-speed trains make short return trips normal in a way they were not fifty years ago. The biggest circular movement on Earth happens in China every year at the Spring Festival: the **chunyun** travel rush, when hundreds of millions of trips are made, most of them by migrant workers going home to family and then back to the city.

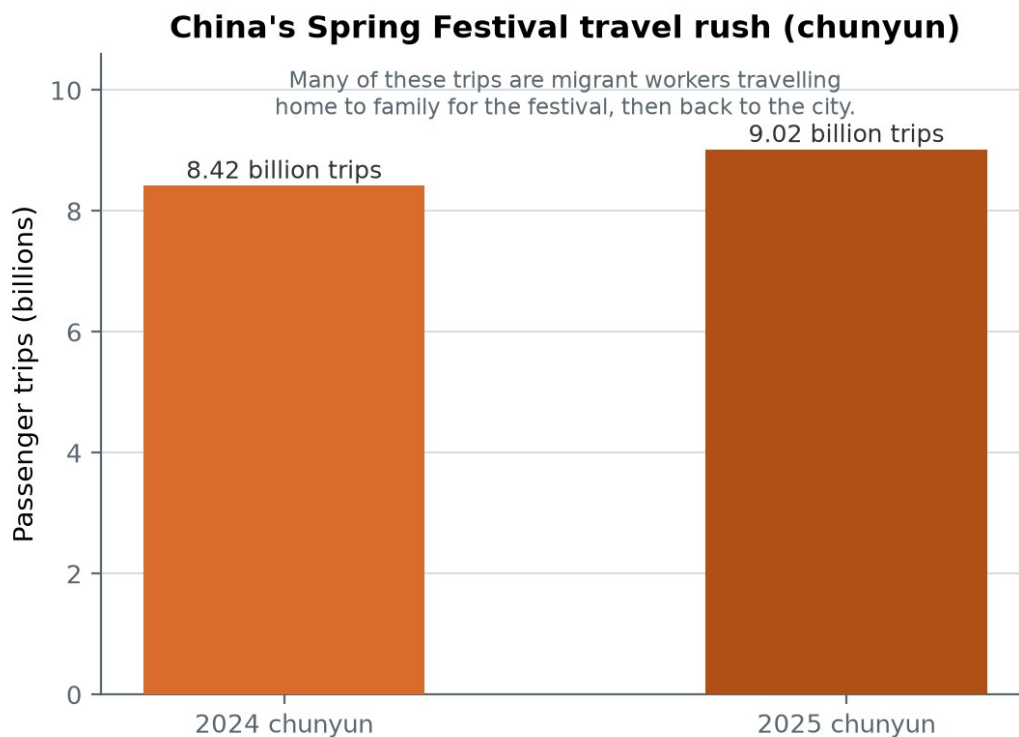


Figure 2. China’s Spring Festival travel rush (chunyun), inter-regional passenger trips. Source: Ministry of Transport, China, as reported by Xinhua, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Australia’s international migration also changes year by year with policy and world events. Figure 3 shows the most recent three financial years.

Net overseas migration to Australia

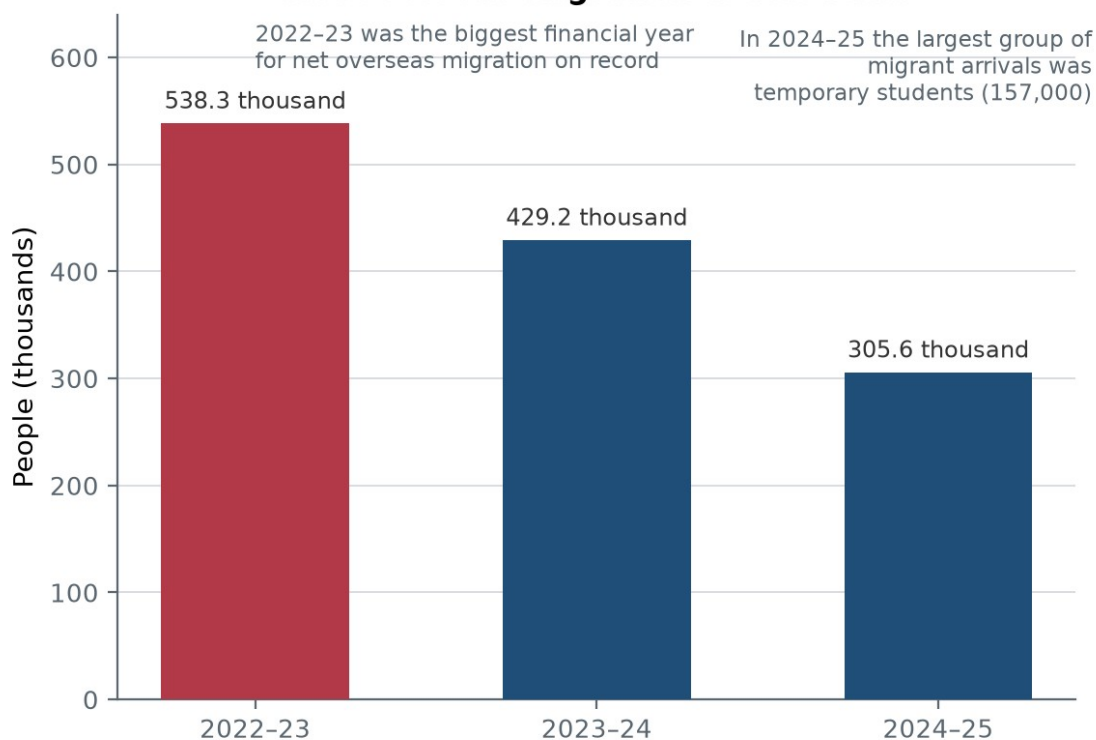


Figure 3. Net

overseas migration to Australia. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Overseas Migration, December 2025 release, retrieved 25 August 2026.

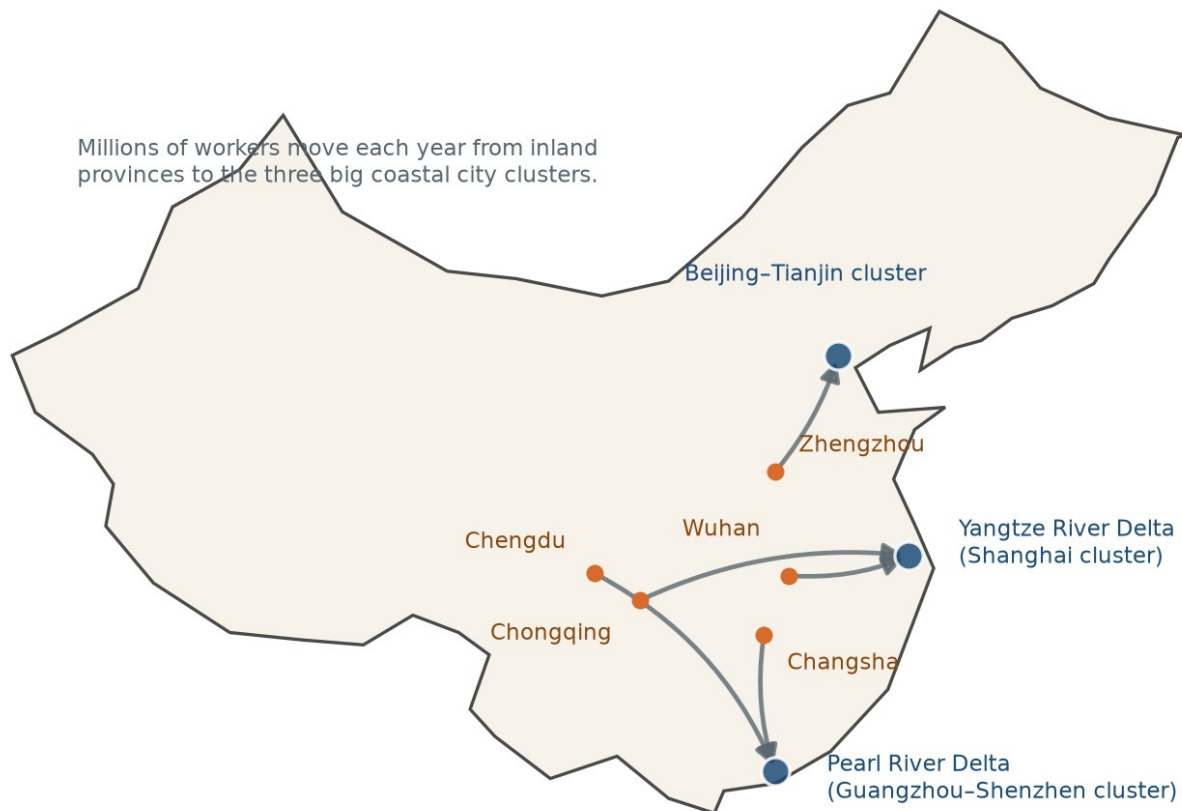
Net overseas migration is the difference between people arriving to live in Australia and people leaving. In 2024–25 the largest group of migrant arrivals was temporary students (157,000), ahead of skilled workers — a clear sign that education, not just jobs, now pulls people to Australia.

3. Inside China: the biggest internal migration in history

China's internal migration is the largest movement of people in history. To understand it, you need one Chinese word: **hukou**. The hukou is a household registration tied to one place — the village or city where your family is registered. Every person in China has one. For much of the period since 1949, the hukou controlled where people could live, work and get services.

From the 1980s, factories on the east coast needed workers, and farms no longer needed so many. The push–pull machinery did the rest: millions of people left inland villages for the coastal cities, even though their hukou stayed at home. China counts these movers as the **floating population** — people living away from their hukou place. At the 2020 census the floating population was 375.82 million, and a wider 492.76 million people were living separated from their hukou. That is more people than live in the United States, moving within one country.

China's internal migration: from inland to the eastern coast



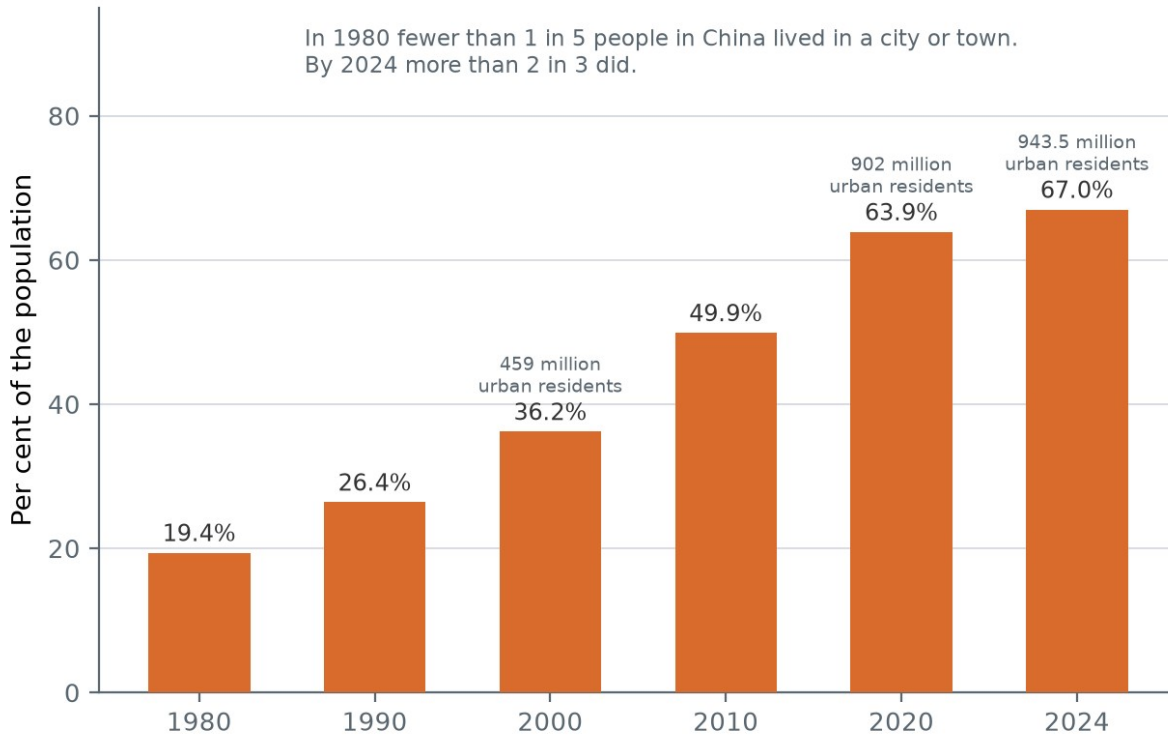
Schematic sketch: boundary simplified and city positions approximate; not a true map projection.

Figure 4. China's internal migration flows, from inland provinces to the eastern coastal city clusters. Schematic sketch drawn from primitives for this workbook: boundary simplified and city positions approximate; flow directions follow China's documented migration pattern. Source: pattern as described in National Bureau of Statistics of China, Seventh National Population Census communique, 2021, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Most of this movement is **temporary internal migration**: workers live in the city for months or years but plan to return home, and their families often stay behind. Some becomes **permanent internal migration** when a family finally settles and gains a city hukou.

The result shows up in China's **urbanisation** — the rise in the share of people living in towns and cities. In 1980 fewer than 1 in 5 people in China lived in an urban area; by 2024 more than 2 in 3 did. Most of that rise is not babies being born in cities. It is people moving.

China's urban share: most of the growth came from people moving



Figure

5. China's urban share, selected years. Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2020 census communique and 2024 statistical communique (February 2025), retrieved 25 August 2026.

No city shows the change better than Shenzhen. In 1980 it was a fishing town of about 30,000 people, chosen as China's first Special Economic Zone. At the 2020 census it held 17.56 million people — almost all of that growth is internal migration.

Shenzhen: the fastest-growing city on Earth

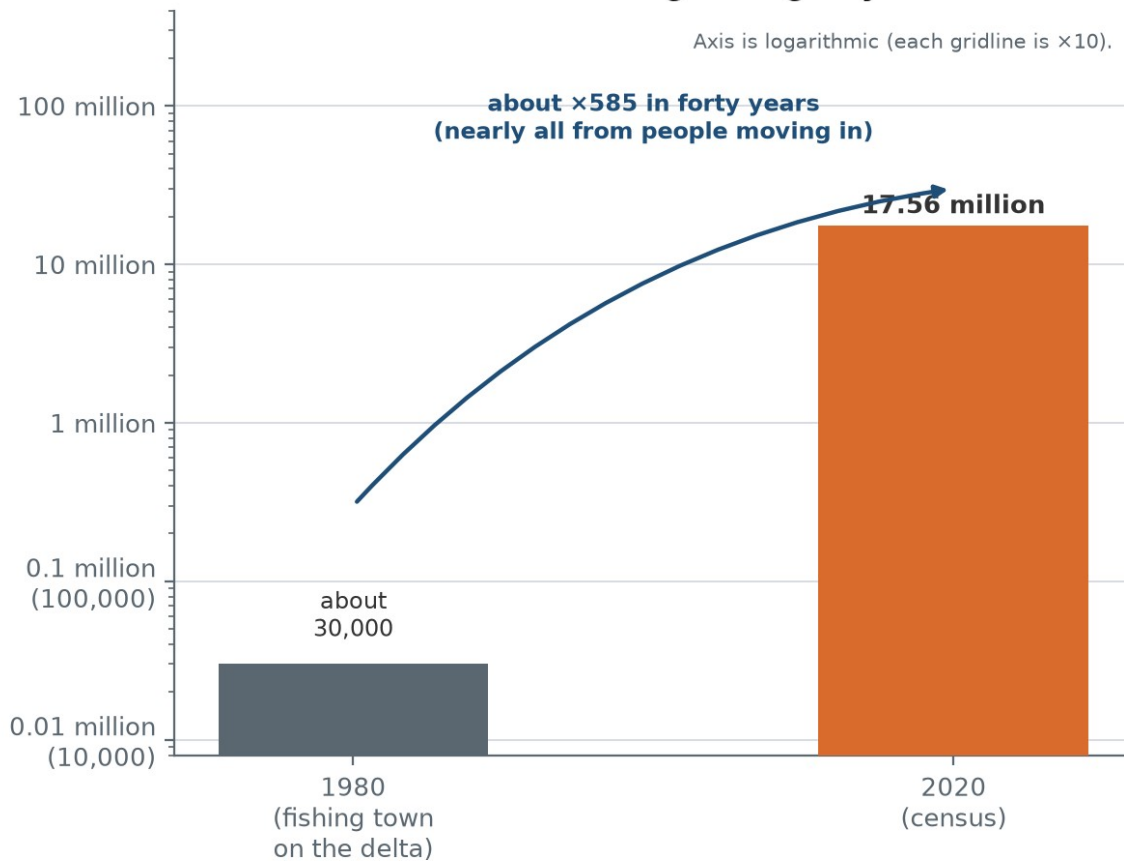
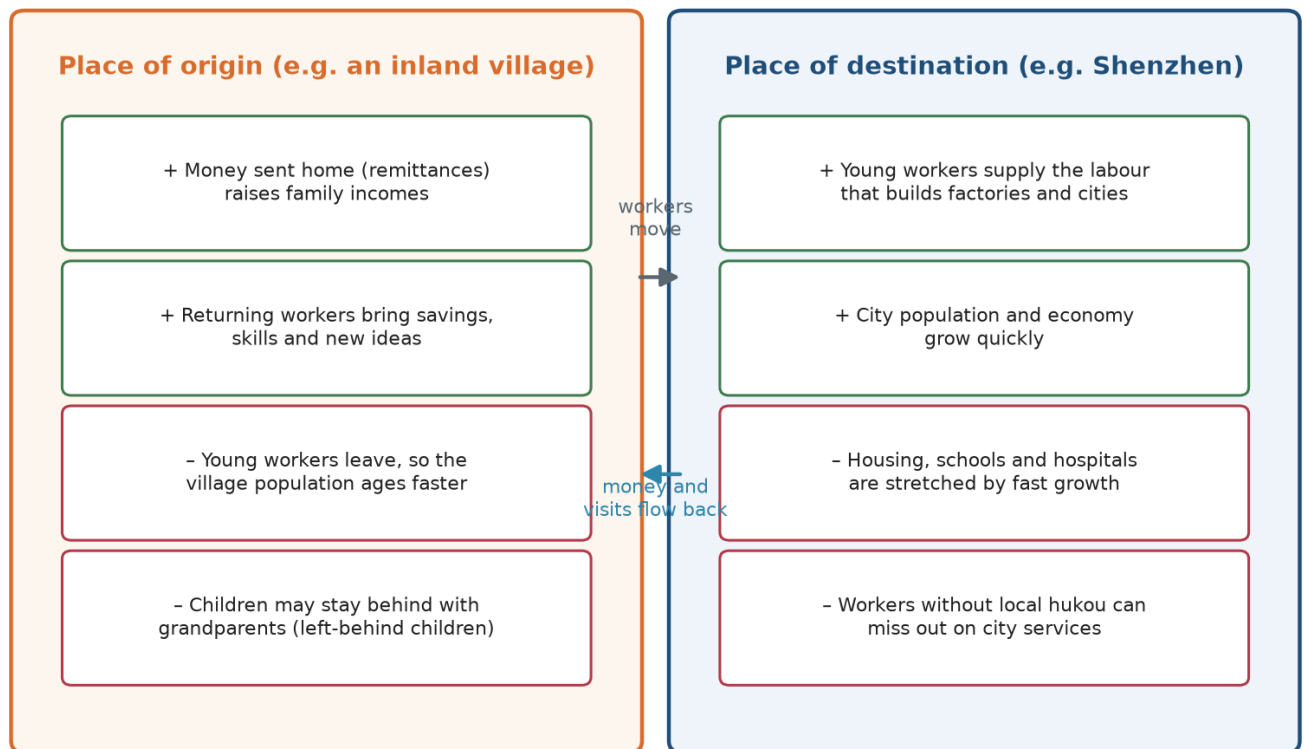


Figure 6.

Shenzhen's growth, 1980 to 2020. Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, Seventh National Population Census, 2021, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Every move has two ends, and each end feels the impacts in different ways. Figure 7 is the model you will use in the practice tasks.

Impacts of internal migration: origin and destination



Original model diagram. The same move helps and hurts each place at the same time — that is why impacts must be weighed, not just listed.

Figure 7. Impacts of internal migration at both ends of the move — origin and destination (VC2HG8K19.E03).
Original model diagram for this workbook.

Remittances — money workers send home — are the biggest gain for origin places. Migrant workers' wages, paid in the city and spent in the village, lift whole regions. The costs are human: villages lose their young adults, and many children grow up with one or both parents away. A 2016 State Council policy on **left-behind children** put the care of these children on the official agenda for the first time.

4. What migration does to the growth of major cities

VC2HG8K19.E04 asks how much internal and international migration each contribute to city growth in Australia and China. The headline answer is a contrast:

- **Australia's** big cities grow mainly by **international** migration.
- **China's** big cities grow mainly by **internal** migration.

Start with Australia. In 2024–25, Australia's eight capital cities together grew by 324,679 people (+1.8 per cent). Figure 8 splits that growth into its three parts.

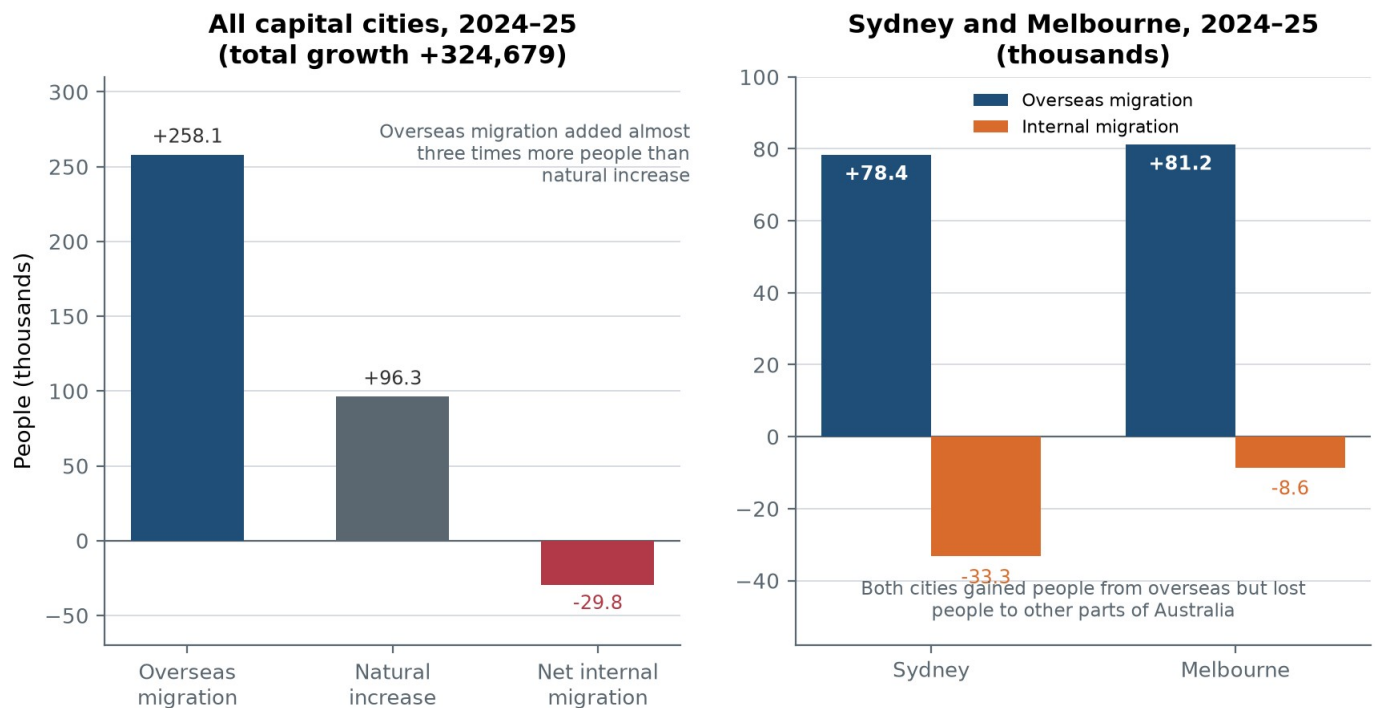


Figure 8. Components of Australia's capital city growth, 2024–25. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population, 2025* (released 31 March 2026), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Overseas migration added almost three times as many city people as **natural increase** (births minus deaths) did. And on balance, the capitals *lost* people to the rest of Australia: more people moved out of the capitals to regional towns than moved in. Only Brisbane (+11,077) and Perth (+8,211) gained through internal migration that year. Sydney is the clearest case: it gained 78,403 people from overseas but lost 33,282 to other parts of Australia, yet still grew overall.

Now China. Shenzhen's story (Figure 6) is the pattern: Chinese megacities — cities of 10 million or more people — are built by internal migrants. Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen all grew by tens of millions of people in forty years, and nearly all of it was Chinese citizens moving from inland provinces. International migration plays a tiny part in China's city growth: the 2020 census counted only 845,697 foreign nationals in the whole country — about one person in every 1,700.

So the same outcome (fast city growth) has opposite causes in the two countries: Australia's cities are filled from overseas; China's cities are filled from their own countryside.

5. Where migrant groups live in Australia

VC2HG8K19.E06 asks where Australia's migrant groups are located. At the 2021 Census, about three in every ten people counted in Australia were born overseas — roughly 7.5 million people. Figure 9 shows the five biggest overseas birthplaces.

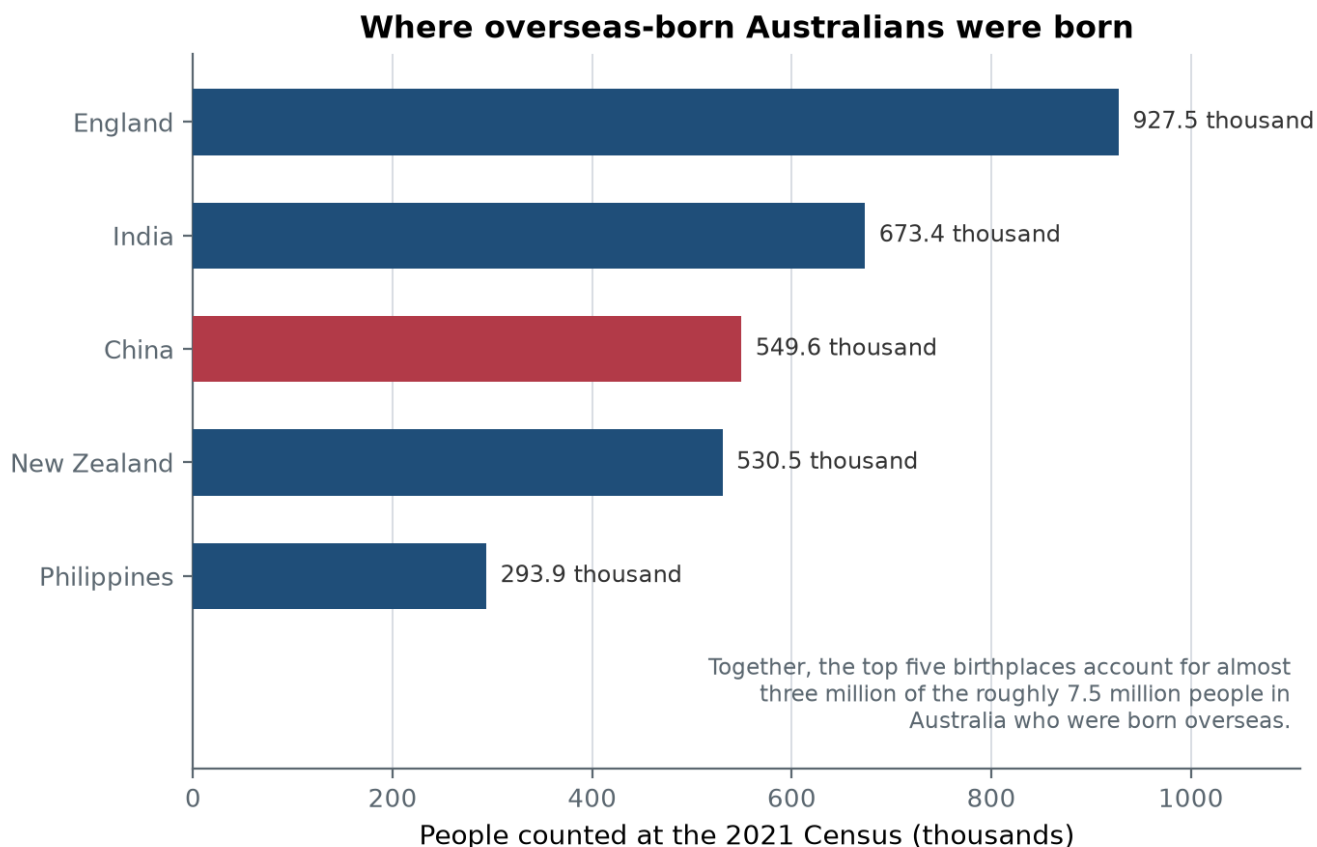


Figure 9. Australia's top five overseas birthplaces, 2021 Census. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census QuickStats (Australia), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Migrant groups are not spread evenly. They cluster in the big cities, and within cities they cluster in particular suburbs — the footprint of chain migration. Figure 10 compares the overseas-born share of the two biggest cities with the national figure.

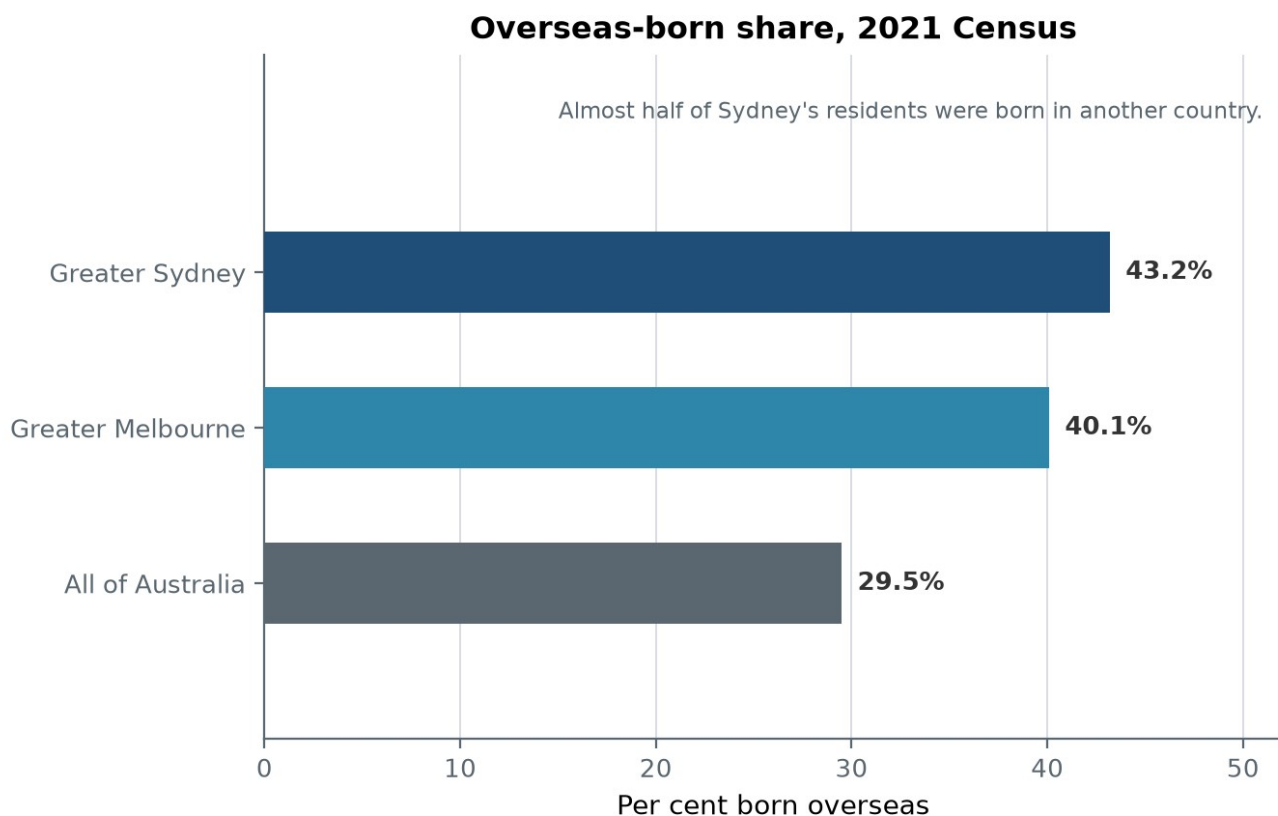


Figure 10. Overseas-born share, 2021 Census. Sydney and Melbourne values from ABS Census QuickStats (1GSYD,

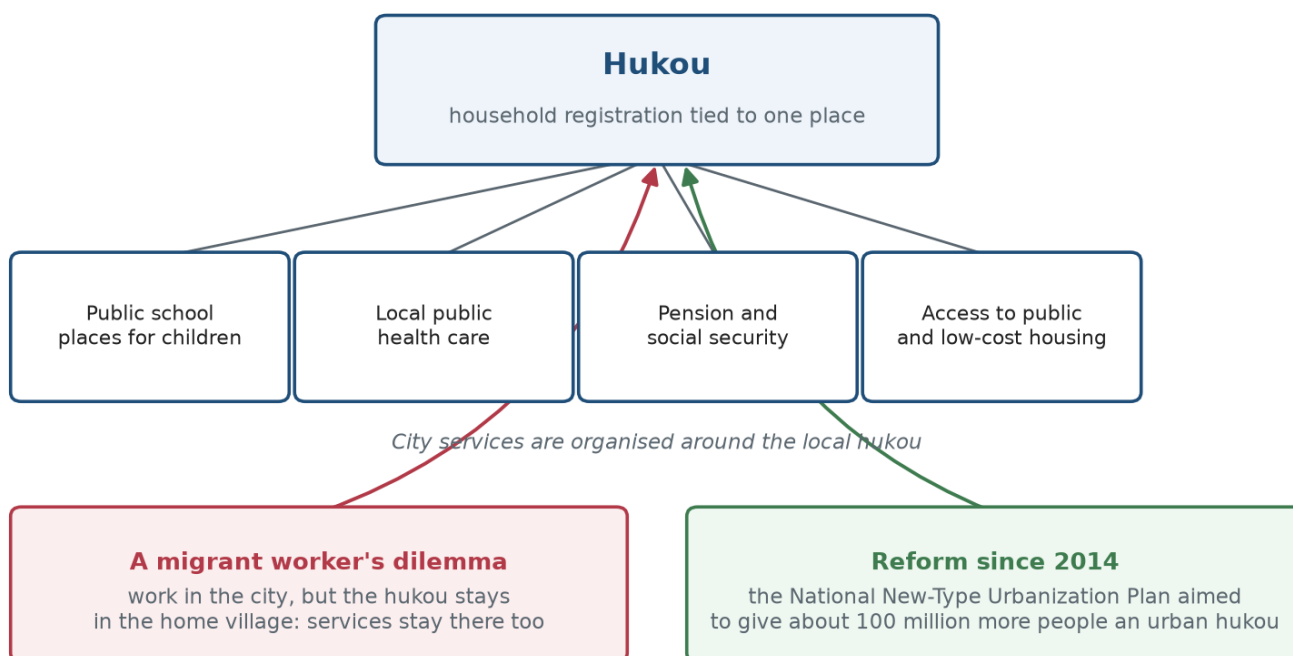
2GMEL); Australia value computed from QuickStats counts. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Inside Greater Sydney, the largest overseas birthplaces are China (238,316 people), India (187,810) and England (153,052), with Vietnam (93,778) and the Philippines (91,339) close behind. Greater Melbourne's top three are India (242,635), China (166,023) and England (132,912). Notice that India is number one in Melbourne but number two in Sydney: small historical differences in which chain started first keep showing up decades later, because new arrivals follow family and community to the same suburbs.

6. Migrant workers in China's cities: issues and reform

VC2HG8K19.E05 asks what makes life hard for migrant workers in China's cities. The issues mostly trace back to the hukou (Figure 11).

The hukou system: services follow the registration



Original model diagram. The hukou is an internal passport-like registration: every person has one, tied to a home place.

Figure 11. How the hukou ties city services to registration. Original model diagram for this workbook; the 2014 reform is the State Council's National New-Type Urbanization Plan (2014–2020), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Because services follow the hukou, a worker in Shenzhen with a village hukou can face:

- no local public school place for their children — the root of the left-behind children problem;
- full fees at city clinics, or long waits, for health care that locals get cheaply;
- no access to city pension, social security and low-cost housing;
- lower pay for the same work, and no say in local affairs.

That is a raw deal for people who build the cities' towers and run their factories. There is also a fairness question the other way: city governments argue that their schools and hospitals were planned and paid for around the registered population, and that opening them to tens of millions of new arrivals at once would collapse the services for everyone. Reform has moved in steps. The 2014 National New-Type Urbanization Plan aimed to register about 100 million more

people in towns and cities by 2020, and smaller cities have loosened their rules fastest, while the biggest cities (Beijing, Shanghai) still guard their hukou closely because of the pull they would otherwise feel.

The contrast with Australia is worth stating: an internal migrant in Australia — say, from Broken Hill to Sydney — keeps every right and service on arrival. No registration stands between them and a school place. That difference is why the hukou is the first word to learn for China.

7. Resource development, jobs and cities in Australia

VC2HG8K19.E07 asks you to compare what resource development does to jobs — in a resource region and in a city. Australia’s iron ore country, the Pilbara in Western Australia, makes the comparison sharp. At the 2021 Census, the Pilbara region (ABS region “WA – Outback (North)”) held 90,128 people, while Greater Perth, the nearest big city and the headquarters of the mining companies, held 2,116,647.

Where the jobs are: a resource region and its nearest big city

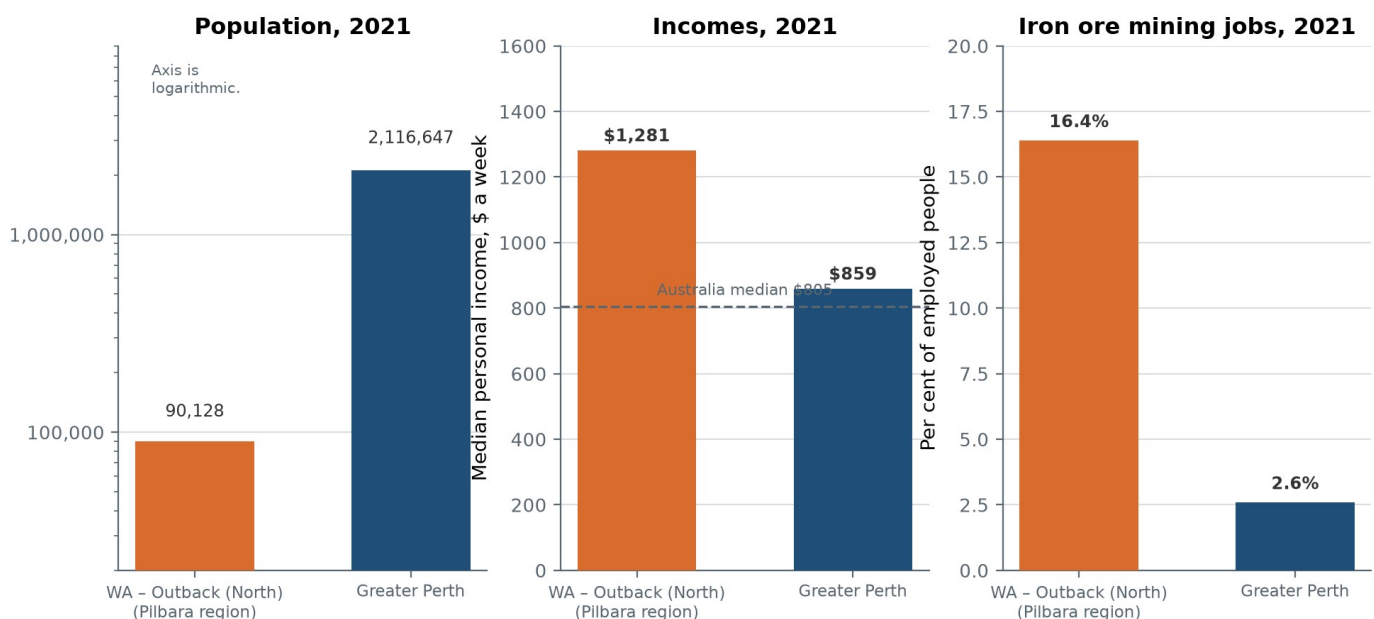


Figure 12. A resource region and its nearest big city, 2021 Census. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census QuickStats (WA – Outback (North), cat. 510; Greater Perth, cat. 5GPER; Australia, cat. AUS), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Read the three panels together:

- **Jobs.** In the Pilbara, iron ore mining directly employed 16.4 per cent of working people; in Perth, 2.6 per cent. The region specialises; the city diversifies (its biggest employer category is hospitals, at 4.4 per cent).
- **Incomes.** Pilbara workers earned a median of \$1,281 a week against Perth’s \$859 and Australia’s \$805. Resource work pays a premium, which is a pull factor with real numbers on it.
- **People.** The region is small (90,128) and young (median age 33, against 38 for Australia). Much of the workforce that mines the Pilbara does not live there: many are fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers who live in Perth and roster on to the region for shifts. So resource development grows employment in the region, but grows households — and houses, schools and services — in the city.

Australia’s resources and energy sector supports around 300,000 jobs, and the money it earns funds public services in cities far from the mines. That is the E07 comparison in one line: the region supplies the jobs and the wage premium; the city supplies the homes, the headquarters and the spending.

Worked demonstration 1 — how much of Australia’s capital city growth came from overseas migration? (E04)

Task. In 2024–25, Australia’s capital cities grew by 324,679 people, and overseas migration added 258,100 of them. What share of capital city growth was overseas migration? Then test your answer against Sydney.

Step 1 — write the share as a fraction. Overseas migration $\div$ total growth = $258,100 \div 324,679$.

Step 2 — do the division. $258,100 \div 324,679 \approx 0.795$, which is **about 79.5 per cent**, or roughly four in every five new city residents.

Step 3 — interpret in one sentence. In 2024–25, international migration, not births and not internal moves, was by far the largest engine of growth in Australia’s capital cities.

Step 4 — test with Sydney. Sydney grew by 75,230 people, yet its net overseas migration was +78,403 — *more* than its total growth. That is possible because the parts must add up: total growth = overseas migration + natural increase + internal migration. Sydney’s internal migration was –33,282 (people leaving for other parts of Australia), so natural increase must have been about $75,230 - 78,403 + 33,282 \approx \mathbf{30,100}$. Sydney in 2024–25 was a city that the world filled faster than Australia emptied it.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population, 2025 (released 31 March 2026), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Worked demonstration 2 — how fast did Shenzhen grow? (E03, E04)

Task. Shenzhen had about 30,000 people in 1980 and 17,560,000 at the 2020 census. (a) How many times larger is that? (b) On average, how many people were added per year across those forty years?

Step 1 — the ratio. $17,560,000 \div 30,000 \approx \mathbf{585}$. Shenzhen in 2020 was about 585 times its 1980 size.

Step 2 — the average per year. Growth = $17,560,000 - 30,000 = 17,530,000$ people. Per year: $17,530,000 \div 40 \approx \mathbf{438,000}$ people a year, every year, for forty years.

Step 3 — make it mean something. 438,000 a year is more people than live in Hobart or Darwin today, arriving every single year for forty years. Almost none of it was natural increase or immigration from other countries: it was China’s internal migration, the floating population, building a city.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, Seventh National Population Census, 2021, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Practice — scaffolded

Q1 (Figure 1, E01). Sort these five stories into the types in Figure 1. One story may fit two types — say which, and why. (a) A Filipina nurse moves to Adelaide on a skilled visa, intending to stay for life. (b) A Sichuan farm worker spends ten months a year assembling phones in Shenzhen, then returns home. (c) A Year 12 student from Malaysia enrolls at a Melbourne university. (d) A family flees Syria after their home is shelled and is resettled in Sydney. (e) The same Sichuan worker as (b) travels home for chunyun each January and back in February.

Q2 (Figure 3, E01). (a) Read off net overseas migration for 2022–23 and 2024–25. (b) Describe the trend across the three years in one sentence. (c) Name the largest arrival group in 2024–25 and say which type from Figure 1 it belongs to.

Q3 (Figure 2, E02). (a) How many more passenger trips were made in the 2025 chunyun than in 2024? (b) Explain in two sentences why chunyun is evidence of circular migration, not permanent migration.

Q4 (Figure 5, E03). (a) Read the urban share for 1980 and 2024. (b) Calculate the change in percentage points. (c) The figure’s title says most of the growth came from people moving. Give one piece of evidence from this section that supports that claim.

Q5 (Figure 7, E03). Copy the table and place each impact in the correct column: origin place / destination place. (i) Money sent home lifts family incomes. (ii) Schools are stretched by fast growth. (iii) The village population ages faster. (iv) Factories gain young workers. (v) Children may grow up with a parent away. (vi) City housing demand rises quickly.

Q6 (Figures 9 and 10, E06). (a) Name Australia's top three overseas birthplaces in order. (b) Which birthplace is highlighted red in Figure 9, and why is it of special interest in *this* section? (c) Use Figure 10 to complete: "In Greater Sydney, about ____ in every ten residents were born overseas, compared with about ____ in every ten for all of Australia."

Practice — unscaffolded

Q7 (Figure 4, E02, E03). Using push and pull factors, explain why a worker in Zhengzhou in 2025 might move to the Yangtze River Delta, and why the same worker might still travel home for the Spring Festival.

Q8 (Figure 8, E04). Sydney's net overseas migration in 2024–25 (+78,403) was larger than its total population growth (+75,230). Explain, using the three components of growth, how both numbers can be true at once.

Q9 (Figure 11, E05). "The hukou is the reason migrant workers in China's cities face issues that internal migrants in Australia never face." Discuss this claim in a short paragraph, using at least two services from Figure 11 and one Australian contrast from Part 6.

Q10 (Figure 12, E07). Compare what resource development does to employment in the Pilbara region and in Greater Perth. Use all three panels of Figure 12 and the idea of fly-in, fly-out work in your answer.

Extended response

Q11 (E01, E03, E04, E06). *Australia's major cities are filled from overseas; China's major cities are filled from their own countryside.* Using this statement as your starting point, compare the contributions of international and internal migration to urban population growth in Australia and China.

Your response must:

- define internal and international migration and name at least three types from VC2HG8K19.E01 with an example of each;
- use Figure 8 (Australia) and Figures 5–6 (China) as evidence, quoting at least three numbers with their source;
- explain one impact on a place of origin and one impact on a place of destination in China (E03);
- refer to where migrant groups are located in Australia (E06);
- end with a judged conclusion: in one or two sentences, say which country's cities depend more on migration overall, and defend it.

Tip. The contrast is the answer's backbone: same outcome (fast city growth), opposite causes (overseas vs internal). Lead each paragraph with the comparison, not with a country.

Teaching notes (for the teacher)

- **Sequence.** This section is the Asia-priority heart of Chapter 4 and reuses the push–pull machinery from 4A at a finer scale, per the chapter plan. Parts 1–2 build the typology (E01, E02); Parts 3, 4 and 6 carry the China strand (E03, E04, E05); Parts 4, 5 and 7 carry the Australia strand (E04, E06, E07). The two worked demonstrations model the two calculations students most often fumble: a share of growth, and a ratio/rate of change.
- **Contested terms.** Two terms are handled explicitly at first use, per house rules on contested terms. (1) *Refugee* is defined via the UN 1951 Refugee Convention (UNHCR), with its legal content, before any example. (2) The curriculum's *illegal migrants* (E01) is flagged as contested: the state's view (naming the breach keeps the system fair and lawful) and the UN/researcher view (*irregular* avoids criminalising people

whose breach is administrative and whose right to seek asylum may be legal) are both steelmanned. The workbook's own prose uses *irregular*; the curriculum's term is quoted where the curriculum is quoted. *Trafficked people* is defined as victims of a crime.

- **Data and sources.** Every real-world number carries a source line with retrieval date 25 August 2026. Australian figures are ABS (Overseas Migration December 2025 release; Regional Population 2025 released 31 March 2026; 2021 Census QuickStats). Chinese figures are the National Bureau of Statistics (2020 census commune; 2024 statistical commune; Ministry of Transport chunyun figures via Xinhua). All maps and model diagrams are original, drawn from primitives in this build's `src/` scripts; the China sketch map is labelled schematic in its caption.
 - **Scope.** Consistent with house content policy Rule 1, this section contains no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content; the migration story told here is the two-country comparison the content descriptor prescribes. The legal disclaimer (Rule 2) is injected by the assembler and is not part of section text.
 - **Answers to selected items.** WD1: ≈ 79.5 per cent; Sydney implied natural increase $\approx +30,100$ (Melbourne $\approx +32,400$ by the same arithmetic). WD2: (a) ≈ 585 times; (b) $\approx 438,000$ people a year. Q3(a): 0.60 billion (600 million) more trips. Q4(b): $67.0 - 19.4 = 47.6$ percentage points. Q6(a): England, India, China; (c) 4 and 3.
 - **Differentiation.** Q1 and Q5 are sorting tasks suitable for pairing; Q8 is the stretch of the scaffolded set (negative components); Q9 and Q11 require judged writing and suit the achievement-standard "explain and compare" verbs.
-

Glossary

- **census** — an official count of every person in a country, usually with details such as birthplace and work.
- **chain migration** — the process where one migrant's move makes it easier for family and friends to follow to the same place.
- **chunyun** — China's Spring Festival travel rush, the largest movement of people on Earth each year.
- **circular migration** — repeated, short-term moves between two places, such as home and a work city.
- **floating population** — in China, people living away from the place where their hukou is registered.
- **forced migration** — movement where people have little or no choice, including refugees, people arriving without a visa, and trafficked people.
- **hukou** — China's household registration, tied to one place, which has long controlled access to local services.
- **internal migration** — movement within one country.
- **international migration** — movement between countries.
- **left-behind children** — children in China who stay in the home village, often with grandparents, while one or both parents work in a city.
- **megacity** — a city with 10 million or more people (the UN definition).
- **migrant** — a person who changes where they usually live.
- **migration** — the movement of people from one place to another with the intention of settling, for a time, in the new place.
- **natural increase** — population growth from births minus deaths.
- **net overseas migration** — the difference between people arriving to live in a country and people leaving it.
- **permanent migration** — moving to settle for good.
- **push factor / pull factor** — a condition that drives people away from a place / draws them to a place.
- **refugee** — as defined by the UN 1951 Refugee Convention: a person outside their own country owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- **remittances** — money migrants send home to family in the place of origin.
- **student migration** — moving to study, for example at a university.
- **temporary labour migration** — moving to work for a set time, then returning home.
- **trafficked people** — people moved by force or deception to be exploited; victims of a crime.

- **urbanisation** — the rise in the share of a population living in towns and cities.

Two city nations: comparing urban patterns in Australia and the USA

Australia and the **United States** are both **highly urbanised** countries — in each of them, more than four in every five people live in an urban area, and that has been true for a very long time. Yet the two countries hold their urban populations in very different shapes. Australia packs most of its people into a handful of coastal capital cities, while the United States spreads its city people across many more cities, including big inland ones. This section compares **where** the cities of each country are, **how concentrated** their urban populations are, **why** the two patterns differ, and **what follows** from Australia's high urban concentration.

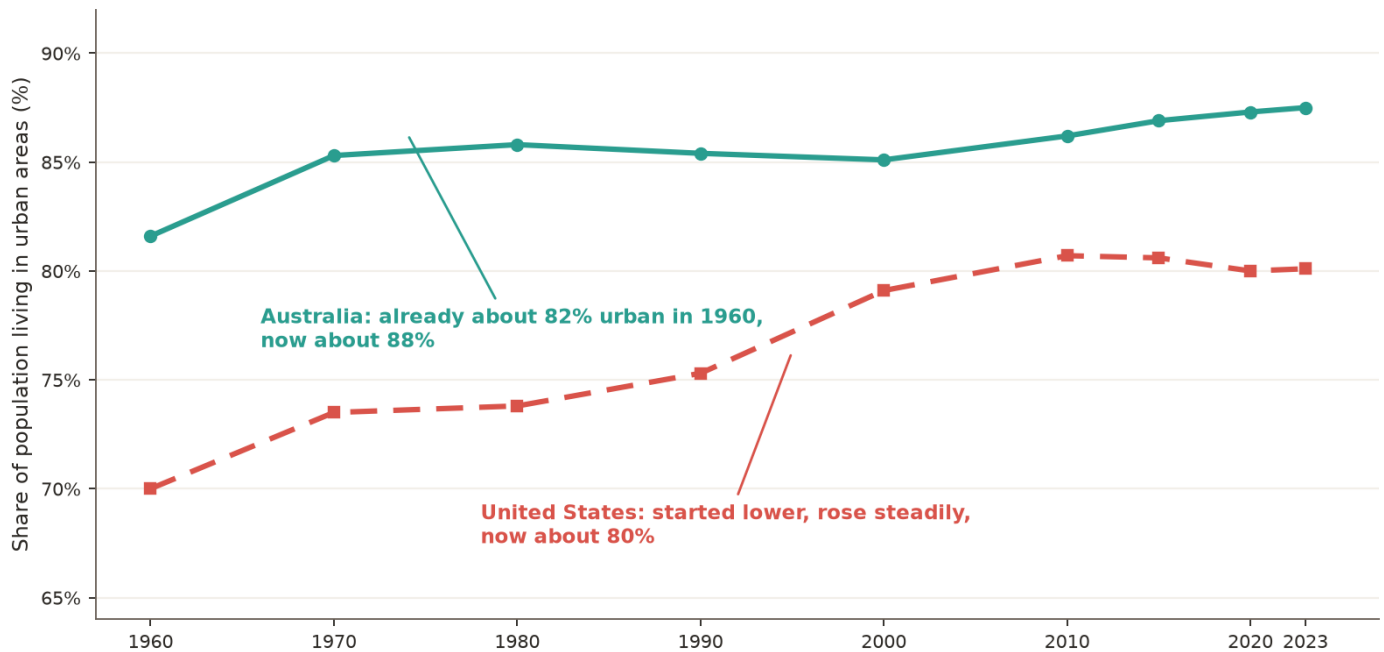
Curriculum map (for the teacher — audit and planning only, not student text). This section owns **VC2HG8K20** (Levels 7 and 8; strand Geographical Knowledge and Understanding; sub-strand Changing nations). **Draws on:** .E01 (mapping where urban settlements sit in Australia and the USA; similarities and differences in their distribution) · .E02 (why Australia concentrates: European-settlement history, migration, export orientation, state-government centralisation, environmental limits, transport-network shape) · .E03 (differences in concentration and size distribution between the two countries, and evaluating their causes) · .E04 (consequences of Australia's high urban concentration, in four domains). **Case study:** Australia–United States of America, the D12 default; no alternative is needed. **§2A:** none — this CD carries no First Nations content and nothing is excluded. **Standard sentence owned:** the achievement standard's data-interpretation sentence (Level 8), exercised here on two-country urban data. **Vocabulary notes:** *urban concentration*, *size distribution*, *built-up area* and *radial/grid network* are defined at first use; *concentration*, *colonisation*, *migration*, *export orientation* and *centralisation* are the curriculum's own elaboration words and are taught with plain rewordings alongside; *incorporated place* appears once, defined, as the US Census Bureau's named rule. Cross-references: 4A (the urbanisation process and the “what counts as urban?” rules), 4B (migration in depth), 4D (responses to the consequences named here), 4E (concept capstone); the map and chart work here is practice material for Chapters 5–6 (D11), not skills instruction.

Theory

1. Two highly urbanised countries

A country is **highly urbanised** when a very large share of its people already lives in urban areas. By that test, both of this section's countries qualify, and have for decades (Figure 1). In 2023, the World Bank's figures put **87.5%** of Australians and **80.1%** of Americans in urban areas. Section 4A quotes slightly different 2023 values from the United Nations; different agencies draw the urban rules in slightly different ways, and the small gap between their numbers is a good reminder to always check *whose* rules a chart is using. The story is the same in both datasets: both countries were already highly urbanised in 1960, and neither has changed much since.

Both countries are highly urbanised - and have been for a long time



Small differences from the 2023 values in Section 4A come from different agency datasets; the story is the same.

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (United Nations urban definitions), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Line chart showing the share of population living in urban areas from 1960 to 2023, with Australia around 82 to 88 percent and the United States rising from 70 to about 80 percent

Figure 1 — Both countries are highly urbanised, and have been for a long time. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (United Nations urban definitions), retrieved 25 August 2026.

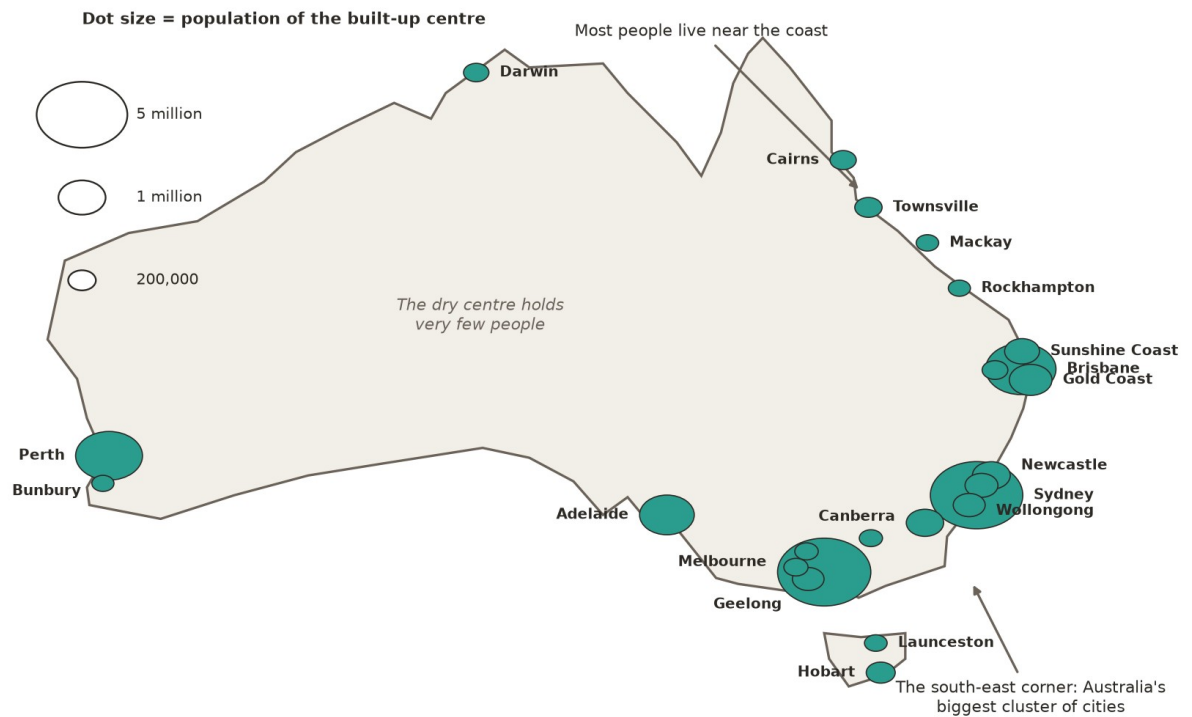
Because the two countries count “urban” in different ways, every comparison in this section names its basis (as 4A’s definition box explains):

- **Australia** counts people in **built-up areas**. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) builds **Significant Urban Areas** around urban centres of 10,000 or more people — the whole built-up patch, not the council lines around it.
- **The United States** has two counts. Its 2020 Census rules call an area urban from 2,000 housing units or 5,000 people up. But the familiar US *city* numbers — the ones used for named cities in this section — count only people inside official **city boundaries** (the US Census Bureau’s term is the *incorporated place*, a city’s legal boundary). A US city’s built-up area is nearly always larger than its boundary, so US city-boundary numbers *understate* the urban population. Where this section compares the two countries’ city counts, it says so.

2. Where the cities are

Distribution means the way something is spread across space. Figures 2 and 3 represent the location of the largest urban settlements in each country (E01).

Where Australians live: urban centres by population, June 2025

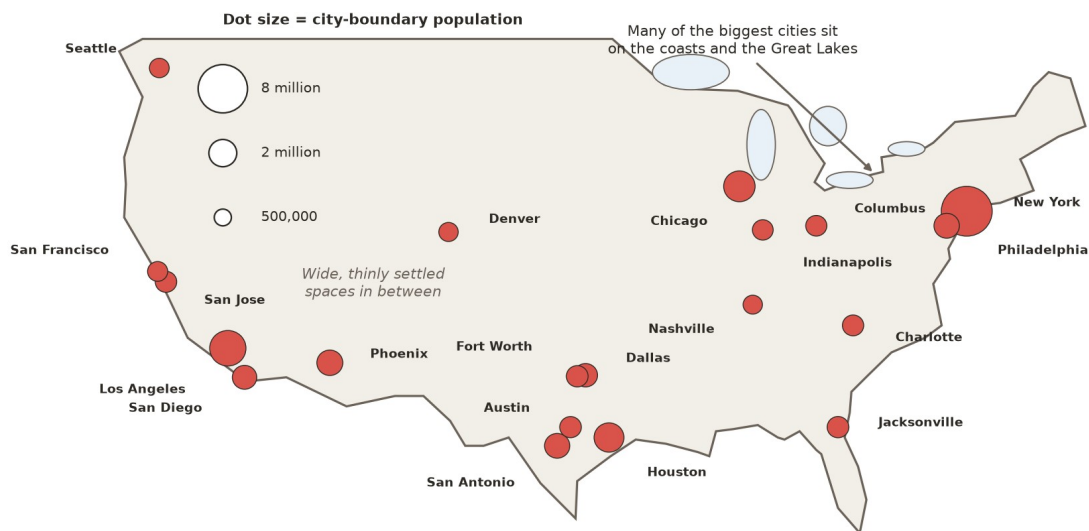


Coastline is simplified (schematic). Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population 2024-25 (cat. no. 3218.0), estimated resident population at 30 June 2025 (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Map of Australia with dots sized by population showing urban centres clustered along the coast, especially the south-east, and an almost empty dry centre

Figure 2 — Where Australians live: urban centres by population, June 2025. Source: ABS, Regional Population 2024–25 (cat. no. 3218.0), estimated resident population at 30 June 2025, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Where Americans live: the 20 largest cities by population, July 2025



City-boundary (incorporated place) populations - the built-up areas around them are larger. Coastline is simplified (schematic). Source: US Census Bureau vintage 2025 population estimates (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Map of the United States with dots sized by population showing the 20 largest cities on the coasts, the Great Lakes and spread across the inland south and west

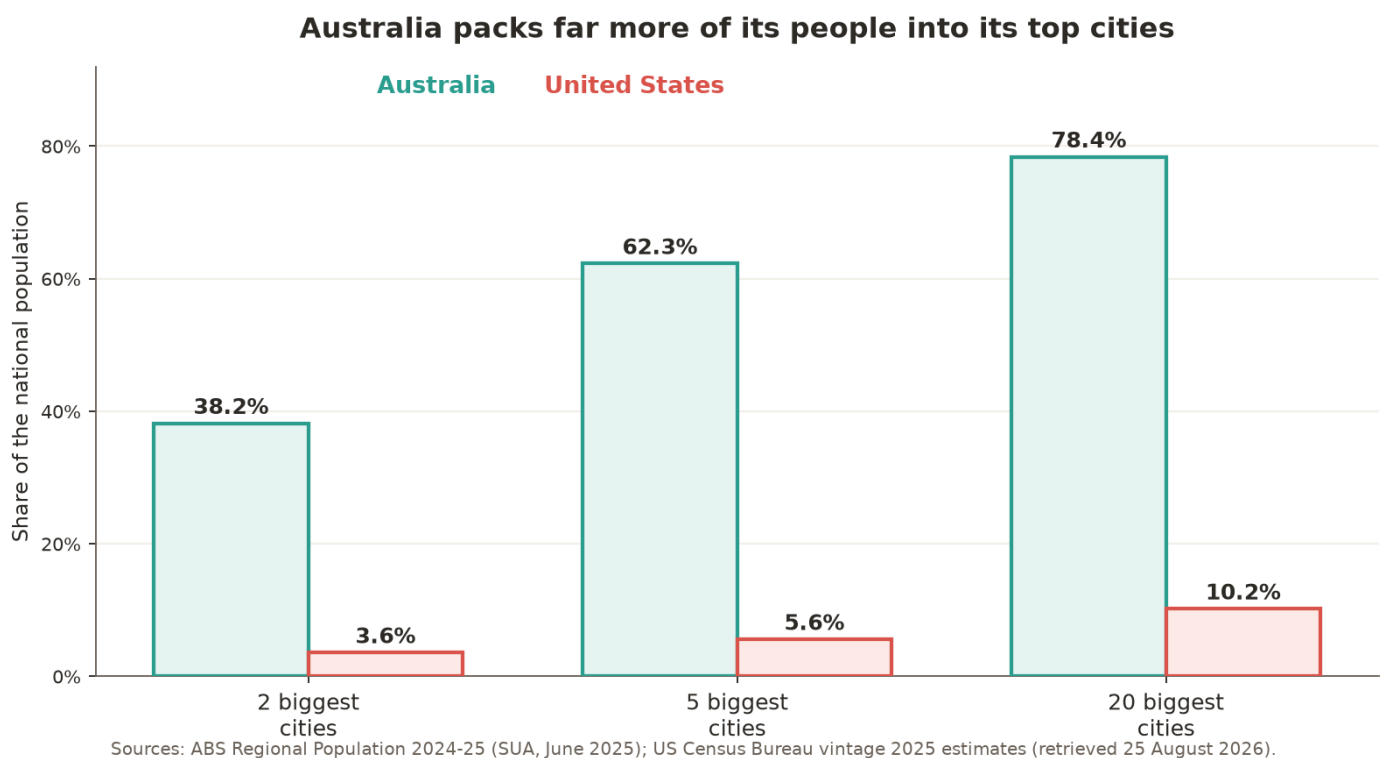
Figure 3 — Where Americans live: the 20 largest cities by population, July 2025. Source: US Census Bureau vintage 2025 population estimates, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Similarities. In both countries, most of the biggest cities sit near a coast or a large body of water. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide face the sea; so do New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Diego and Seattle, and Chicago sits on the Great Lakes. The reason is the same in both countries: ports and waterways were the cheapest way to move people and goods, so coastal landing points grew into the biggest cities.

Differences. Australia’s urban population forms a thin **coastal rim** with an almost empty centre: the dry inland holds very few people, and the single biggest cluster of cities — Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Newcastle, Wollongong, Geelong — sits in the south-east corner. The United States also has coastal cities, but it *also* has many large inland cities: Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Phoenix and Denver all sit far from the sea. America’s inland is better watered and was crossed early by rail, so its urban settlement spread across the whole map, not just the edge.

3. How concentrated? The size ladder of urban settlements

Urban concentration means a large share of a country’s people packed into a small number of cities. The **size distribution** — how the total urban population is shared between big and small cities — is where the two countries contrast most sharply (Figure 4).



Australia counts whole built-up areas (ABS); the USA counts city boundaries, which are smaller - so the US gap is even bigger than this chart shows.

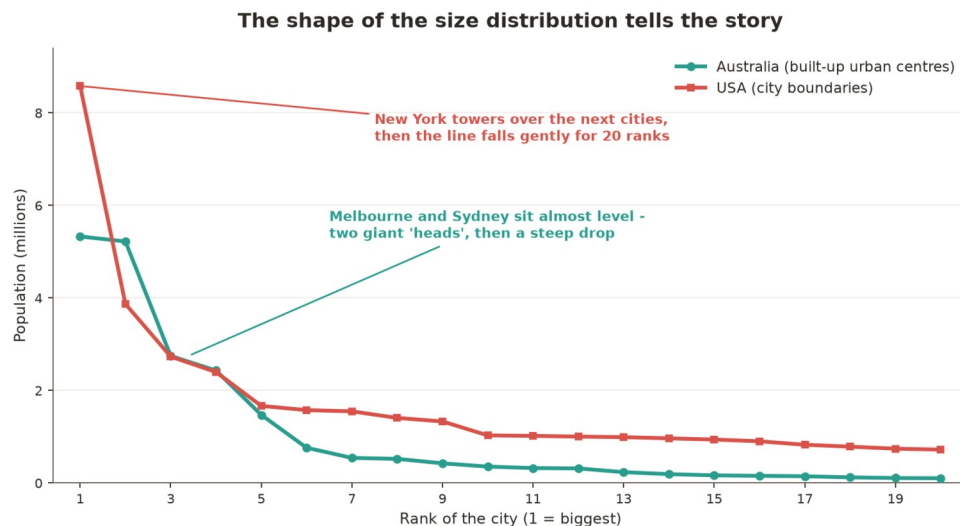
Grouped bar chart comparing the share of the national population living in the 2, 5 and 20 biggest cities: Australia 38.2, 62.3 and 78.4 percent against United States 3.6, 5.6 and 10.2 percent

Figure 4 — Australia packs far more of its people into its top cities. Sources: ABS Regional Population 2024–25 (SUA, June 2025); US Census Bureau vintage 2025 estimates, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Australia’s two biggest built-up areas, Melbourne and Sydney, together hold **38.2%** of all Australians; its five biggest hold **62.3%**; its top twenty hold **78.4%** — most of the urban population. The same counts for the United States, on city-boundary numbers, are **3.6%**, **5.6%** and **10.2%**. Even allowing for the US boundary basis understating its cities, the gap is enormous: Australia’s urban population is concentrated in a few great cities, while America’s is spread across a long list of middling-to-large cities.

The **rank-size curve** (Figure 5) shows the same contrast as a shape. A rank-size curve lines cities up from biggest (rank 1) to smallest and plots each one’s population. Australia’s curve has two giant, almost level “heads” — Melbourne 5.33 million, Sydney 5.22 million — then falls off a cliff: rank 3 Brisbane is only half of Sydney, and by rank 6 the numbers are under a million. The United States curve starts from a single tall peak — New York 8.58

million, more than double rank 2 Los Angeles — but then falls *gently* through twenty cities that are all still large. America has a long bench of big cities; Australia has a few giants and a steep drop.



Australia counts built-up areas and the USA counts city boundaries, yet the shapes still contrast sharply. Sources: ABS Regional Population 2024–25; US Census Bureau vintage 2025 estimates (retrieved 25 August 2026).

Rank-size line chart for both countries showing Australia with two near-equal heads of about 5 million then a steep drop, and the United States with one tall peak of 8.6 million then a gentle decline through twenty large cities

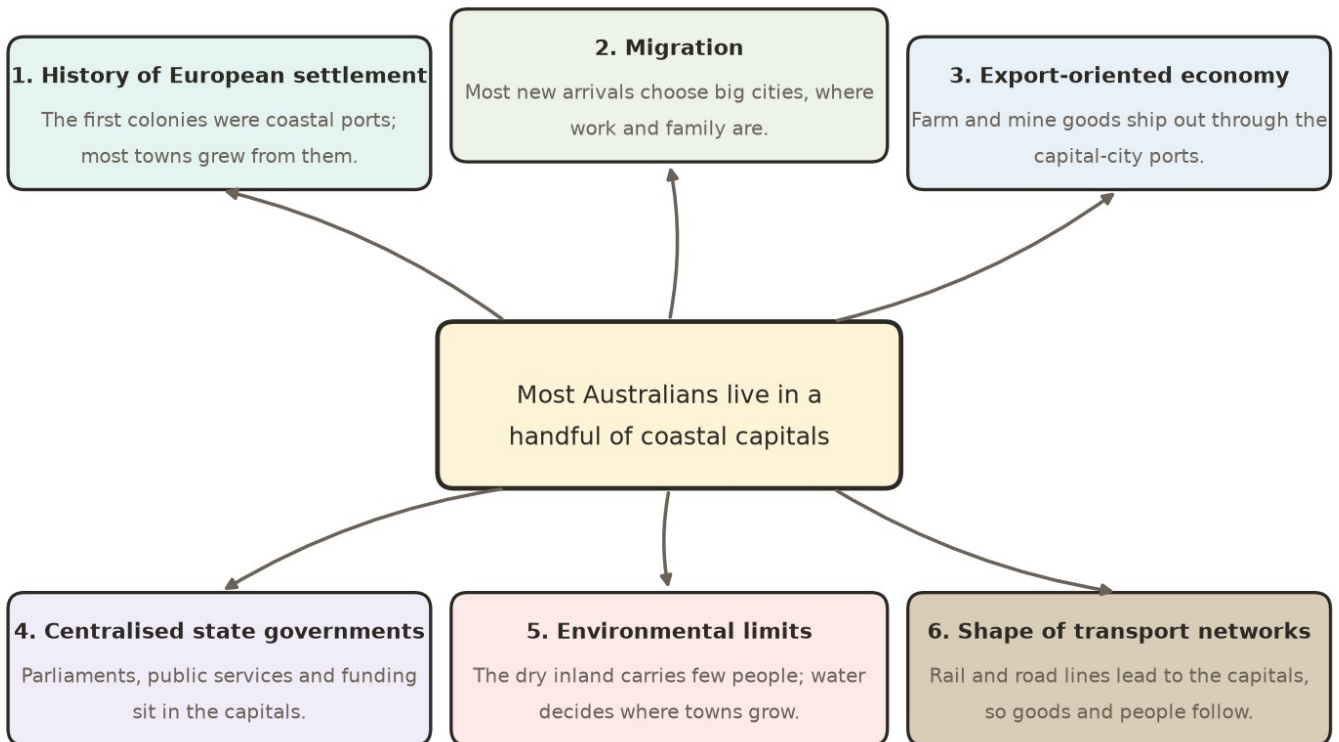
Figure 5 — The shape of the size distribution tells the story. Sources: ABS Regional Population 2024–25; US Census Bureau vintage 2025 estimates, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Concentration also shows *within* Australia (Figure 8 shows these shares; part 4 returns to them as evidence for centralisation). In five of the seven states and territories, **most** of the state's people live in the capital city: Perth holds 79.7% of Western Australia's people, Adelaide 78.0% of South Australia's, Melbourne 76.3% of Victoria's, Sydney 65.3% of New South Wales', Darwin 59.6% of the Northern Territory's. Only Brisbane (49.6%) and Hobart (44.1%) hold less than half of their state.

4. Why Australia concentrates, and why the United States does not

The causes of Australia's urban concentration are the six named by the curriculum (Figure 6). Each one also helps explain the *difference* between the two countries (E03), so each cause below is compared across the pair.

Why is Australia's population so concentrated?



Six causes from the Victorian Curriculum elaboration (VC2HG8K20.E02).

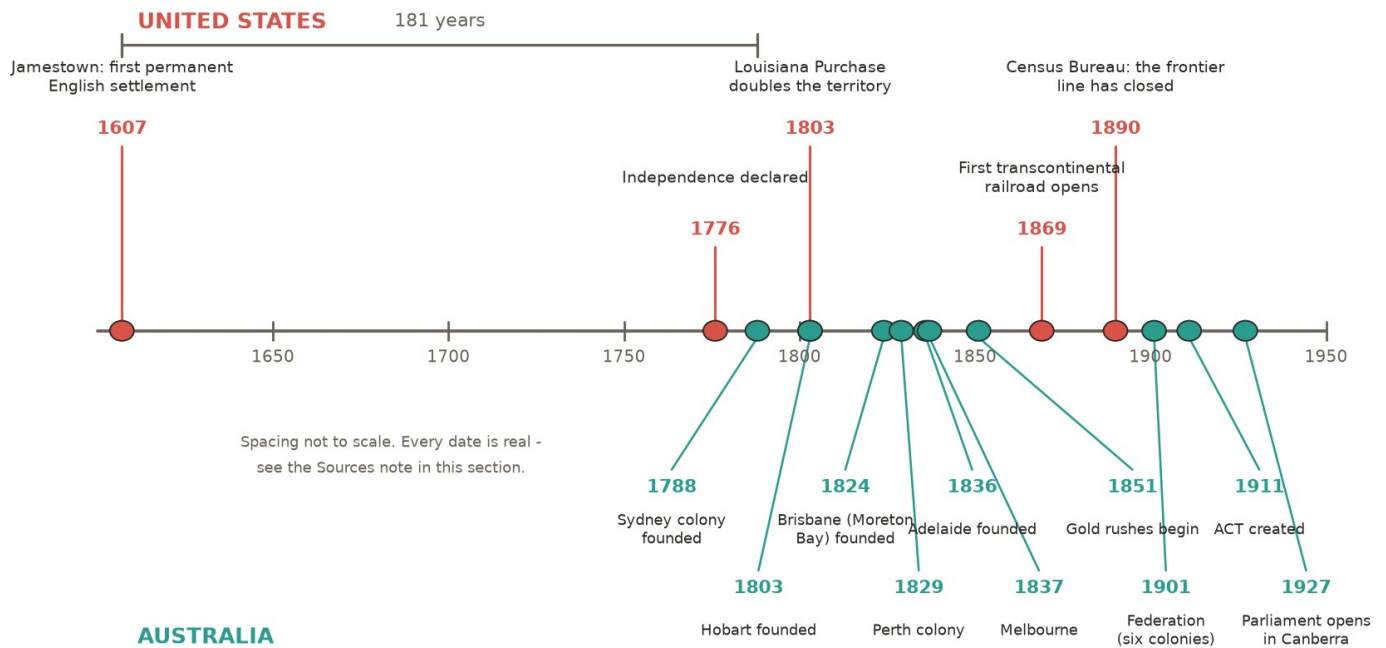
How each cause works is unpacked in the Theory, parts 3 and 4.

Causes web with a centre box reading most Australians live in a handful of coastal capitals and six cause boxes: history of European settlement, migration, export-oriented economy, centralised state governments, environmental limits, shape of transport networks

Figure 6 — The six causes of Australia's urban concentration, from elaboration .E02.

1. History of European settlement. The United States had a **181-year head start** (Figure 7). English colonisation of what is now the USA began at Jamestown in 1607; by 1788, when the Sydney colony was founded, the American colonies had already declared independence, and by 1890 the US Census Bureau reported that the settled areas had filled the map. Australia's European settlement is shorter, began later, and began as a chain of coastal ports — Sydney 1788, Hobart 1803, Brisbane 1824, Perth 1829, Adelaide 1836, Melbourne 1837. Most Australian towns grew from those ports or from the gold rushes that fed them, so the colonial map — coastal capitals — is still today's map.

European settlement: the USA had a 181-year head start



Two-lane timeline from 1600 to 1950 showing United States events from Jamestown 1607 to the frontier closing in 1890 above the line, and Australian events from Sydney 1788 to Parliament opening in Canberra 1927 below, with a bracket marking the 181-year head start

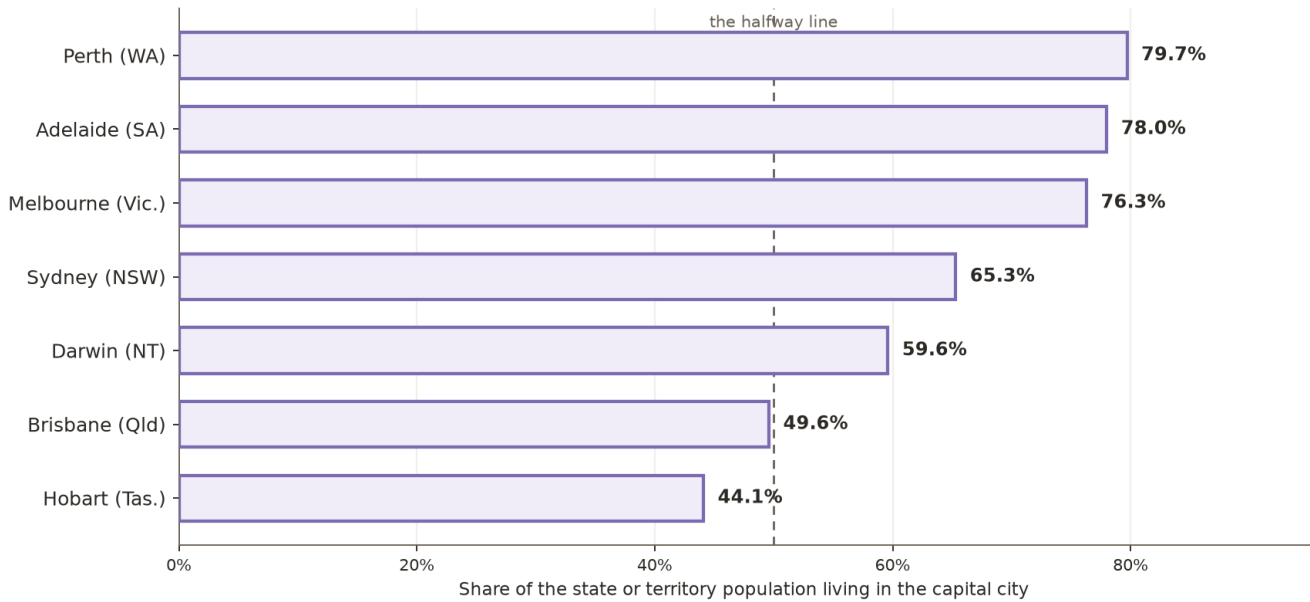
Figure 7 — The USA had a 181-year head start. Dates: Wikipedia articles on Jamestown, US independence, the Louisiana Purchase, the first transcontinental railroad and the Turner thesis; and the Parliamentary Education Office for Federation, the ACT and Parliament House dates; all retrieved 25 August 2026.

2. Migration. New arrivals settle where work, services and family already are — in both countries that means the big cities. Australia's migration intake is large relative to its population, and nearly all of it lands in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, which tightens the concentration with every wave (4B treats migration in depth).

3. Export orientation of the economy. Australia has always earned its keep by selling farm and mine products overseas. Rail and road lines were built to carry wool, wheat and ore **out** through the capital-city ports, so the ports grew as the ends of the lines. The United States exported too, but its huge home market meant its cities also grew by trading with *each other*, which fed inland cities as well as ports.

4. Centralisation of state governments. Parliaments, public services and funding sit in the capitals, so jobs and people follow them. Australia has only **six states** (plus two territories), so each capital gathers up a whole state's business — Figure 8 shows the result. The United States has **fifty states**, so the same centralising force is split fifty ways and no single state capital dominates the nation. (Both countries, notably, built a separate planned national capital — Canberra and Washington, D.C.)

In five of the seven states and territories, most people live in the capital



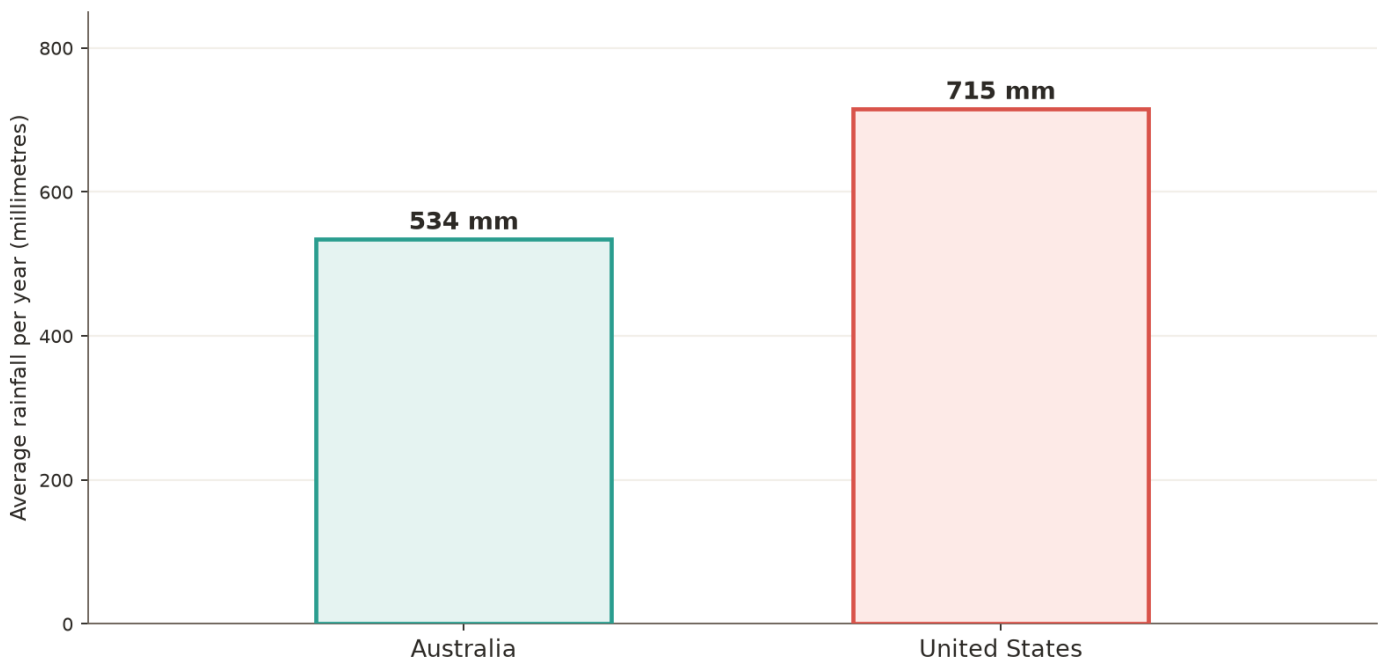
In the ACT, Canberra holds almost everyone. Sources: ABS estimated resident population, Greater Capital Cities (June 2025) and states (Dec 2025), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Horizontal bar chart showing the share of each state or territory population living in its capital city: Perth 79.7, Adelaide 78.0, Melbourne 76.3, Sydney 65.3, Darwin 59.6, Brisbane 49.6, Hobart 44.1 percent, with a dashed halfway line

Figure 8 — In five of the seven states and territories, most people live in the capital. Sources: ABS estimated resident population, Greater Capital Cities (June 2025) and states and territories (December 2025), retrieved 25 August 2026.

5. Environmental constraints. Australia is a drier country to settle (Figure 9): its average rainfall is **534 mm** a year against **715 mm** for the United States, and the national average hides a vast desert interior. Water decides where towns can grow, and in Australia that means the coastal rim. The American inland, by contrast, is watered by great rivers and plains, so its cities could march inland.

Australia is a drier country to settle



The national average hides a dry inland: much of interior Australia is desert with very low rainfall, so the inland carries few towns.

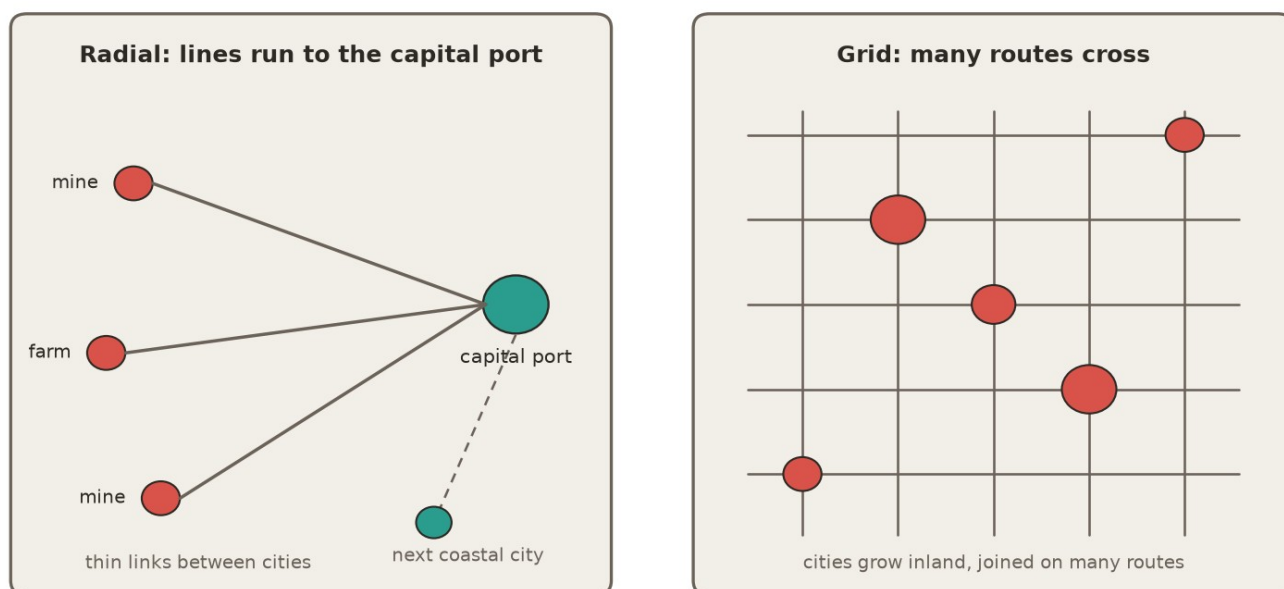
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (2022), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Bar chart comparing average annual rainfall: Australia 534 millimetres, United States 715 millimetres

Figure 9 — Australia is a drier country to settle. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (2022), retrieved 25 August 2026.

6. Shape of transport networks. Australia's networks are **radial**: lines run from the inland mines and farms to the capital ports, and the links *between* cities are thin (Figure 10). People and business therefore gather at the hubs. The United States built a **grid**: many routes cross and connect inland cities to each other, so cities can grow away from the coast and still stay joined up.

Two network shapes: radial versus grid



Model diagrams - shapes simplified on purpose; they show an idea, not a map.
Australia's real networks grew to carry exports through the capital ports (E02, E03).

Two schematic model diagrams: a radial network with lines from inland mines and farms running to one capital port and a thin dashed link to the next coastal city, and a grid network with many crossing routes and cities growing inland

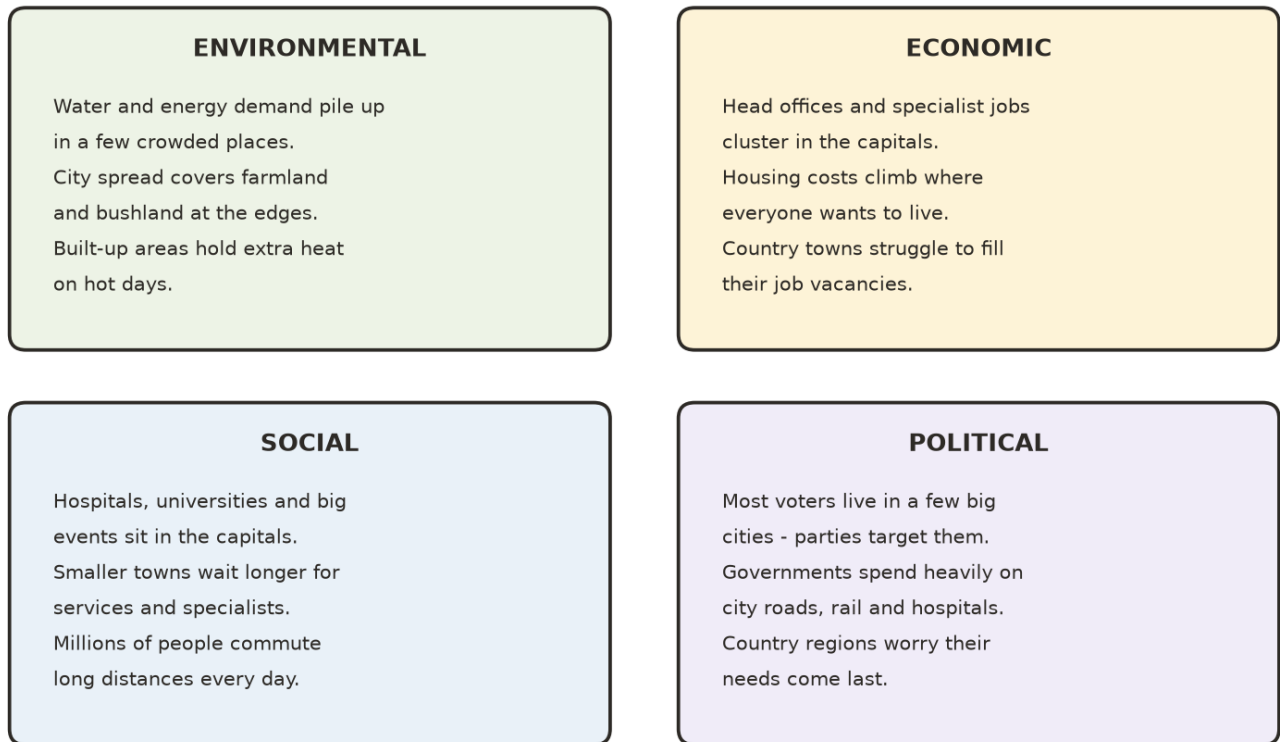
Figure 10 — Two network shapes: radial versus grid (model diagrams, not maps).

Evaluating the causes (E03). No single cause is enough on its own. Dry inland, short colonial history, few states, export lines and radial networks *together* concentrate Australia's people in a few coastal capitals; the United States differs on every one of those points — longer settlement, wetter inland, fifty states, a huge home market, a grid — and its urban population is spread in consequence. That is what evaluating the causes means: matching each difference in the pattern to a difference in the causes.

5. What follows from Australia's high urban concentration

Consequences are the outcomes a pattern produces. Australia's concentration brings consequences in four domains (Figure 11); these are consequences of *concentration*, not simply of being urban — the United States, with its spread-out pattern, feels several of the same pressures more weakly or in different places.

What follows from so much concentration?



Four domains from the Victorian Curriculum elaboration (VC2HG8K20.E04).

Each consequence is argued with evidence in Theory part 5.

Grid of four panels labelled environmental, economic, social and political, each listing three short consequences of Australia's high urban concentration

Figure 11 — The four consequence domains of elaboration .E04.

- **Environmental.** Water and energy demand pile up in a few crowded places; city spread covers farmland and bushland at the edges; and built-up areas hold extra heat on hot days, which matters in the hotter of the two countries.
- **Economic.** Head offices and specialist jobs cluster in the capitals, which makes the capitals productive — but housing costs climb where everyone wants to live, and country towns struggle to fill their job vacancies.
- **Social.** Hospitals, universities and big events sit in the capitals, while smaller towns wait longer for services and specialists; millions of capital-city residents commute long distances every day.
- **Political.** Most voters live in a few big cities, so parties and policies target them; governments spend heavily on city roads, rail and hospitals; and country regions worry that their needs come last.

These consequences — and the responses Australia tries — are the entry point for Section 4D.

Worked examples

Demonstration 1 — Computing a concentration share from the data table (scaffolded)

Question. Using the ABS Significant Urban Area populations (June 2025), show that Australia's five biggest urban centres hold about 62.3% of the national population. Then repeat the count for the United States' five biggest cities (July 2025 estimates).

Method. A share is a part divided by the whole, times 100. The part is the sum of the top five populations; the whole is the national population.

Step 1 — the Australian part. Add the top five SUA populations: 5,328,274 (Melbourne) + 5,219,674 (Sydney) = 10,547,948; + 2,745,086 (Brisbane) = 13,293,034; + 2,430,757 (Perth) = 15,723,791; + 1,470,938 (Adelaide) = 17,194,729.

Step 2 — the Australian share. The total SUA population is 27,613,654, so the share is $17,194,729 \div 27,613,654 = 0.6227$, or **62.3%** (to 1 decimal place). This is the top-5 bar in Figure 4.

Step 3 — the United States part. Add the top five city-boundary populations: 8,584,629 (New York) + 3,869,089 (Los Angeles) = 12,453,718; + 2,731,585 (Chicago) = 15,185,303; + 2,397,315 (Houston) = 17,582,618; + 1,665,481 (Phoenix) = **19,248,099**.

Step 4 — the United States share. The US resident population is 341,784,857, so the share is $19,248,099 \div 341,784,857 = 0.0563$, or **5.6%**.

Read-off. On like-for-like counting, five cities hold 62.3% of Australians and 5.6% of Americans. (The US figure uses city boundaries, so its built-up share is higher — but nowhere near Australia's.)

Demonstration 2 — Reading the rank-size curves (scaffolded)

Question. Figure 5 plots both countries' rank-size curves. (a) Compute the ratio of rank 1 to rank 2 for each country. (b) Describe what the two ratios and the two shapes say about each country's size distribution.

Step 1 — Australia's ratio. $5,328,274 \div 5,219,674 \approx 1.02$. The top two are almost equal — twin heads.

Step 2 — the United States ratio. $8,584,629 \div 3,869,089 \approx 2.2$. New York is more than double Los Angeles — a single tall peak.

Step 3 — describe the shapes. After its twin heads, Australia's curve drops fast: rank 3 Brisbane (2.75 million) is about half of Sydney, and rank 6 (Gold Coast, 0.76 million) is about one-seventh of Melbourne. The United States curve falls gently: rank 20 Nashville (0.72 million) is still a large city, and twelve US cities pass one million.

Read-off. Australia's distribution is *top-heavy*: a few giant cities hold most of the urban population (high concentration). The United States' is *broad*: many cities of similar size share the urban population (low concentration). Note the basis labels: Australia counts built-up areas, the USA counts city boundaries — the shapes differ so strongly that the difference in definitions does not change the conclusion.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

1. Using Figure 1: (a) which country had the higher urban share in 1960, and by about how much? (b) What were the two shares in 2023?
2. Using Figure 2: (a) name the three Australian urban centres with more than 2 million people. (b) Describe where Australia's urban centres sit in relation to the coast.
3. Using Figure 3: (a) name the city on the map that sits on the Great Lakes. (b) Name two cities on the Atlantic (east) coast. (c) Name three large US cities that sit far inland.
4. Using Figure 4: (a) what share of Australians lives in the two biggest urban centres?
(b) About how many times larger is Australia's top-5 share (62.3%) than the United States' top-5 share (5.6%)?
5. Using the state-capital shares in part 3: (a) name two capitals that hold more than three-quarters of their state or territory. (b) Name the two capitals that hold less than half.
6. Using Figure 7: (a) how many years separate Jamestown (1607) from the Sydney colony (1788)? (b) Which of the two countries' European settlement began earlier, and what is one result of that head start named in this section?

Un scaffolded

7. Represent and compare: using Figures 2 and 3, identify two similarities and two differences in where the urban settlements of Australia and the United States sit (E01).
8. Examine two reasons why Australia's cities are so concentrated, and explain how each one packs people into the coastal capitals (E02).
9. Evaluate: the United States is less concentrated than Australia. Explain this difference using **two** of: environmental limits, how long European colonisation has run, how many states there are, the shape of transport networks (E03).

10. Discuss two consequences of Australia's high urban concentration, one social and one economic, naming who gains and who loses in each (E04).

Extended response

11. "Australia and the USA are both highly urbanised, but Australia's urban population is far more concentrated." Write a response of about 200–250 words that (a) uses evidence from at least **two** figures in this section to compare the two countries' urban patterns, and (b) explains **two** causes of Australia's higher concentration. Refer to the basis of each count (built-up area or city boundary) where it matters.

Answers

1.
 - (a) Australia, by about 12 percentage points (81.6% vs 70.0%). (b) Australia 87.5%; United States 80.1%.
2.
 - (a) Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane. (b) Almost all sit near the coast; the dry centre holds very few people; the biggest cluster is the south-east corner.
3.
 - (a) Chicago (Lake Michigan). (b) Any two of New York, Philadelphia, Jacksonville.
 - (b) Any three of Phoenix, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Houston, Denver, Nashville.
4.
 - (a) 38.2%. (b) About 11 times ($62.3 \div 5.6 \approx 11.1$).
5.
 - (a) Any two of Perth (79.7%), Adelaide (78.0%), Melbourne (76.3%). (b) Brisbane (49.6%) and Hobart (44.1%).
6.
 - (a) 181 years. (b) The USA's began earlier; a result: by the time Australia's colonies were founded, the American map was already filling in, so the US spread its cities inland while Australia's stayed coastal (or: the US had time to build a joined-up grid).
7. Similarities: both countries' biggest cities cluster near coasts or large water bodies; both have port origins for their largest cities. Differences: Australia's centre is almost empty while the USA has many large inland cities; Australia's cities cluster close together in the south-east, while US cities are spread across the whole map.
8. Any two causes from Figure 6 with a working explanation, e.g. export orientation: lines built to carry farm and mine goods out through the capital ports made the ports grow as the ends of the lines; centralisation: parliaments, services and funding sit in the capitals, so jobs and people follow.
9. Any two evaluated causes, e.g. environment: Australia's dry interior (534 mm average, desert centre) keeps towns on the coast, while the watered US inland let cities spread; number of states: six Australian states each funnel business to one capital, while fifty US states split the same force fifty ways.
10. Social: hospitals, universities and events concentrate in the capitals — city residents gain access, smaller towns lose (wait longer for services). Economic: head offices and specialist jobs cluster in the capitals — capitals gain productivity and jobs, but housing costs climb there and country towns lose workers.
11. Answers should combine: a like-for-like pattern comparison with figure evidence (e.g. Fig 4 top-5 shares 62.3% vs 5.6%; Fig 5 rank-size shapes; Figs 2–3 coastal rim vs spread), a named basis (built-up areas vs city boundaries), and two causes from the .E02/.E03 list with the Australia–USA contrast stated for each.

Fully-worked solutions

Q4(b), fully worked. Australia's top-5 share is 62.3%; the United States' is 5.6%. To compare as a ratio: $62.3 \div 5.6 = 11.1$. So Australia's top five urban centres hold about **11 times** the national share that the US top five cities do — on like-for-like counting.

Q6(a), fully worked. $1788 - 1607 = 181$ years. (Figure 7's bracket shows this head start.)

Q9, model paragraph (environment + transport). Australia's average rainfall is 534 mm a year and its interior is desert, so towns need the coastal rim; the United States averages 715 mm and has a watered inland, so its cities could spread (Figure 9). On top of that, Australia's transport lines are radial — built to carry exports to the capital ports — so people and business gather at the hubs; the United States built a crossing grid that joins inland cities to each other, letting them grow (Figure 10). Two different environments and two different network shapes, therefore two different levels of concentration.

Q11, model plan. Paragraph 1 (pattern): both countries >80% urban since 1960 (Fig 1), but Australia's top 5 built-up areas hold 62.3% of the nation against 5.6% in US city-boundary counts (Fig 4), and Australia's rank-size curve has twin 5-million heads then a cliff, while the US curve falls gently through twelve million-plus cities (Fig 5); name the basis (SUA built-up areas vs incorporated-place boundaries). Paragraph 2 (causes): cause 1 — shorter European settlement begun as coastal ports (Fig 7) versus the USA's 181-year head start and inland fill; cause 2 — six states

centralising to one capital each (Fig 8) versus fifty US states (or: dry interior, Fig 9; radial vs grid networks, Fig 10). Close by linking the concentrated pattern to one consequence (4D's territory).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

Lesson 1 — Two highly urbanised countries (pattern, E01). Hook: project Figures 2 and 3 side by side and ask “what is the same, what is different?” Establish the definition bases early (built-up areas vs city boundaries) and the 4A cross-reference for the word *urban*. Students annotate a blank copy of each map with the similarities and differences from Q7. Plenary: Figure 1 — both countries highly urbanised for decades; check the cross-agency note against 4A's UN numbers and turn the small difference into a source-literacy point (whose rules? whose dataset?).

Lesson 2 — Concentration and causes (E02, E03). Demonstration 1 as a live worked example on the data table, then students repeat the top-2 and top-20 shares in pairs. Figure 5 rank-size reading with Demonstration 2. Build the Figure 6 causes web on the board one cause at a time, pairing each with its Australia–USA contrast (Figures 7–10). Emphasise the evaluating move: difference in pattern ↔ difference in cause.

Lesson 3 — Consequences and the extended response (E04). Sort the Figure 11 cards into the four domains; discuss who gains and who loses (Q10). Draft Q11 in class with the model plan from the solutions; peer-mark against the three criteria (pattern evidence, basis named, two causes with contrasts).

Misconceptions to watch: (1) *Highly urbanised* is not the same as *highly concentrated* — the USA is the first and not the second; Figure 4 is the corrective. (2) City-boundary vs built-up-area counts: students will treat US city numbers as the whole urban population; rehearse “the US counts the legal boundary, Australia counts the built-up patch”. (3) Single-cause thinking: the causes in Figure 6 work together; require at least two in any explanation. (4) “Australia's inland is empty because nobody tried” — the environmental constraint (Figure 9) is the corrective.

Differentiation. Support: provide the sums for Demonstration 1 pre-started and a sentence-starter sheet for Q9 (“Australia differs because ..., so its cities ...”). Extension: have students compute the top-20 shares from the raw SUA and city lists (78.4% vs 10.2%) and defend whether the definitional gap could ever reverse the conclusion.

Case-study note (D12). Australia–United States of America is the default pairing for this CD and is used throughout; the comparison is compliant as written and no substitution is required.

Data sources used in this section (all retrieved 25 August 2026). World Bank, World Development Indicators: SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS (urban share of population, 1960–2023, UN definitions) and AG.LND.PRCP.MM (average annual precipitation, 2022). Australian Bureau of Statistics: Regional Population 2024–25, cat. no. 3218.0, data cube 32180DS0004 (Significant Urban Areas, ERP at 30 June 2025) and estimated resident population, Greater Capital Cities and states/territories (June and December 2025). US Census Bureau: vintage 2025 population estimates (July 2025) and the 2020 Census urban-area criteria. Historical dates: Parliamentary Education Office (Federation, ACT, Parliament House) and Wikipedia (Jamestown, independence, Louisiana Purchase, transcontinental railroad, 1890 census bulletin).

Keeping Australian cities liveable, green and climate-ready

Curriculum trace (teacher-facing).

Section 4D owns VC2HG8K21 (Levels 7-8 band; this is the single-year Level 8 book), strand “Geographical Knowledge and Understanding”, sub-strand “Changing nations”.

Elaborations drawn on:

- VC2HG8K21.E01 (Step 2, Practice on-your-own 1). Sustainability CCP LIVE.
- VC2HG8K21.E02 (Step 3, Worked demonstration 1). Sustainability CCP LIVE.
- VC2HG8K21.E03 (Steps 5-6). Sustainability CCP LIVE.
- VC2HG8K21.E04 (Step 6: spatial = growth boundary, interconnection = SRL, urban greening = canopy actions). Sustainability CCP LIVE.
- VC2HG8K21.E05 (Step 7, Worked demonstration 2). Sustainability CCP LIVE.
- VC2HG8K21.E06 (final response task). Sustainability CCP LIVE.

Chapter arc (per TOC): 4C’s consequences of population change (environmental, economic, social, political) are this section’s entry point; 4D closes the chapter’s process → movement → patterns → responses arc. Strategy-evaluation tasks are authored to the achievement standard’s full depth: students explain responses by weighing environmental, economic and social factors, then draw reasoned conclusions.

Contested terms (per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`): **liveability**, **environmental sustainability** and **decentralisation** are defined at first use with an attributed source; the decentralisation debate (E05) is steelmanned — both sides stated in their strongest form (figure 12, Worked demonstration 2) — and the response task is marked on the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion reached.

Rule 1 (First Nations content excluded): this section contains no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content; Canberra’s story is told from 1908 onwards only.

Figures: data figures are computed from the values shown in their source lines; concept figures (three paths, adaptation menu, street cross-sections, steelman cards, SRL ring) are original model drawings labelled as models.

Sources (real, named, dated; retrieval date 2026-08-25):

- [S1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0): capital-city ERP 30 June 2025, growth over 2024-25, and the five fastest-growing SA2s.
- [S2] Australian Bureau of Statistics, National, state and territory population (latest release): Australia ERP 30 June 2023 (26,659,922), 2024 (27,194,286), 2025 (27,611,026).
- [S3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Projections, Australia, 2022 (base) - 2071 (cat. 3222.0): medium series 34,162,704 (2047) and 39,185,129 (2071); low 34,343,015 and high 45,888,867 (2071); Melbourne projected to overtake Sydney 2032-2046; capitals’ share 67% (2022) rising to 68% by 2032.
- [S4] Wikipedia, “Melbourne”: urban growth boundary and green wedges; 2008 planning review; sprawl continuing on the outer fringe.
- [S5] Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: 20-minute neighbourhoods; Cooling and greening Melbourne; Fishermans Bend; Action 12 (protect and enhance canopy trees); Action 13 (minimum open-space standards in established areas).
- [S6] Wikipedia, “Suburban Rail Loop”: SRL East Cheltenham-Box Hill, 26 km, 6 stations, opens 2035; SRL North Box Hill-Airport, 34 km, 7 stations, opens 2043; combined 60 km and 13 stations; cost \$30.7-57.6 billion; joins eight rail lines and three university campuses.
- [S7] Wikipedia, “Canberra”: site chosen 1908; Griffin contest decided 1912; named 1913; Parliament moved 1927; NCDC 1957; Woden, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin stages; ACT self-government 4 March 1989. Population per [S1]: 484,630 at June 2025.
- [S8] Wikipedia, “Penrith, New South Wales”: 48.9 °C on 4 January 2020; hotter than coastal Sydney (no sea breezes, limited greenery, ranges trap warmth).

- [S9] Wikipedia, “Climate change in Australia”: average temperature more than 1.5 °C above the early-20th-century baseline; warming about twice as fast over the past 50 years; summer 2013-14 brought Adelaide 13 days and Melbourne six days at or above 40 °C; rainfall heavier and more infrequent; a 1.1 m sea-rise scenario puts 247,600 Australian houses at risk (Australian Government report cited in the article).
- [S10] Wikipedia, “Climate of Australia” (Bureau of Meteorology data): national record 50.7 °C (Oodnadatta 2 Jan 1960, equalled at Onslow 13 Jan 2022); the January 1939 heatwave strongest in the south-east; the 2013 “Angry Summer”; mean annual rainfall 419 mm.
- [S11] Wikipedia, “2019-20 Australian bushfire season”: more than 24 million hectares burned; 11,774 fires in NSW; Sydney’s air quality reached 11 times the hazardous level.
- [S12] National Housing Accord target of 1.2 million new homes by 2029, as reported in Wikipedia, “Gentle density” (citing CEDA).
- [S13] City of Melbourne: about 480 hectares of parks and green spaces.

We are learning to:

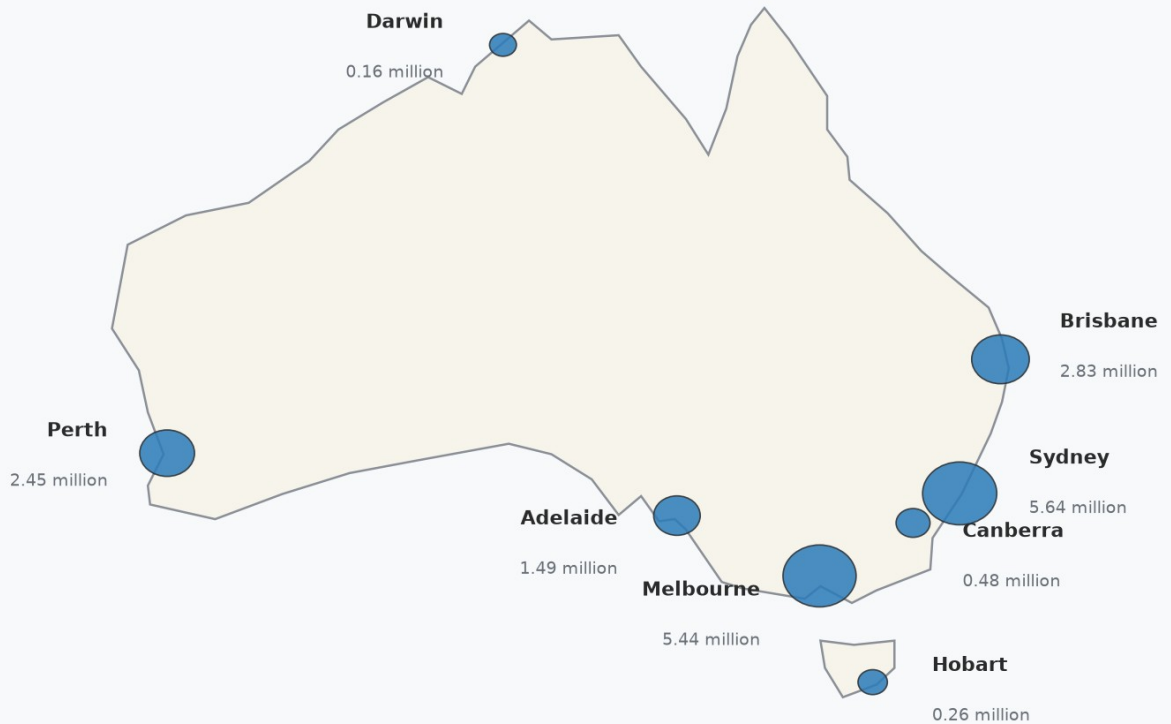
- read what Australia’s eight capital cities look like today, and what forecasts say about their size later this century
- examine one government strategy for managing a growing city (Plan Melbourne and the Suburban Rail Loop), and what it means for liveability (how good a place is to live in) and sustainability (using what we need today without spoiling what people after us will need)
- see where climate change is expected to hit Australia’s cities hardest, and how cities can adapt
- spot the geographical concepts in a strategy: where things go (spatial), how places link (interconnection), and urban greening
- hear the strongest case each way in the debate about spreading Australia’s city population more evenly, with Canberra as the example
- build our own evidence-based response about balancing city growth

New ideas

Step 1 — A nation of cities. In 4C we saw that when a place’s population changes, the place changes — for better and for worse. Now we bring that thinking to cities. Most Australians are city people: in June 2025, 18,750,888 people lived in the eight capital cities — about 68 in every 100 Australians.

Geographers and planners often ask: how good is a city to live in? The word for that is **liveability**. It is the mix of things that make a place good to live in — housing, safety, services, transport, the environment and a feeling of community. Groups that compare world cities, such as the Economist Intelligence Unit with its Global Liveability Index, use the same idea: they score cities on how easy and pleasant they are to live in.

Australia's eight capital cities, June 2025



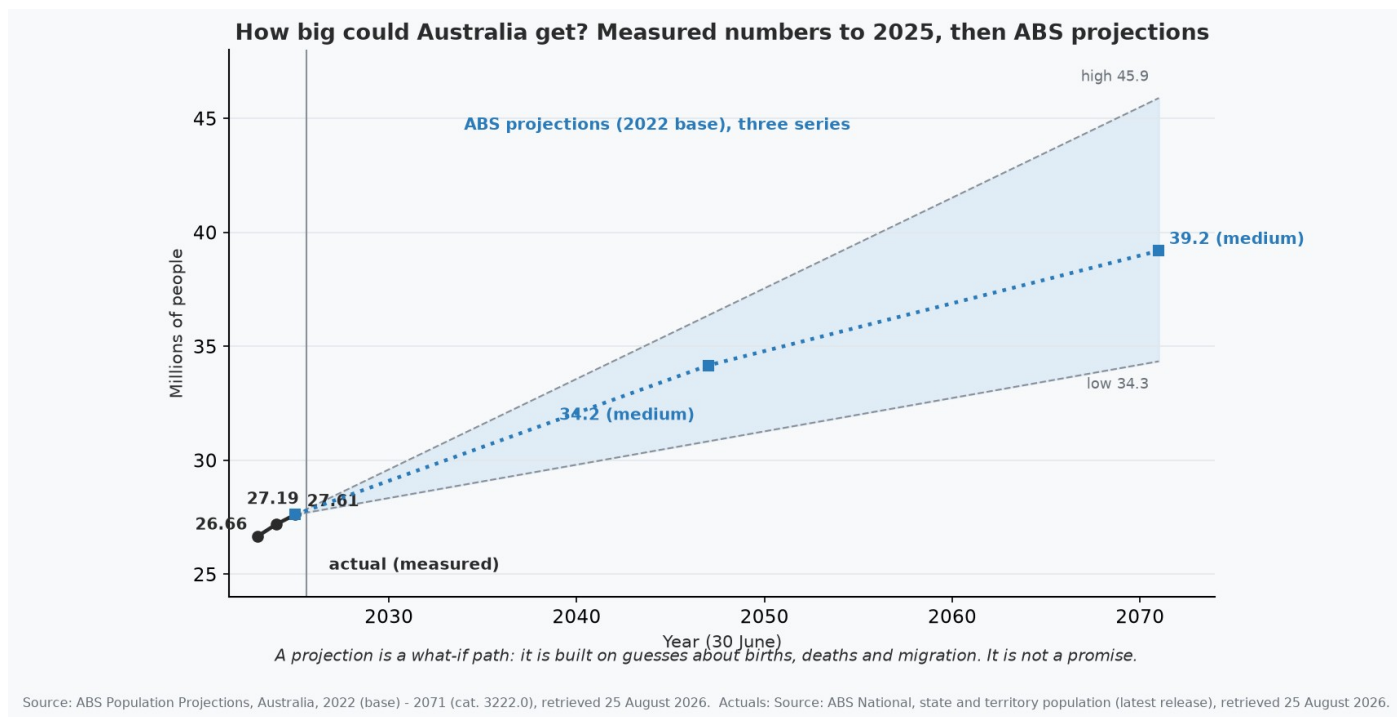
18,750,888 people lived in the eight capital cities in June 2025 - about 68 in every 100 Australians.

Source: ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026. Australia total: Source: ABS National, state and territory population (latest release), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Map of Australia showing the eight capital cities as circles sized by population, from Sydney at 5.64 million down to Darwin at 0.16 million, with the note that 18,750,888 people — about 68 in every 100 Australians — lived in the capital cities in June 2025.

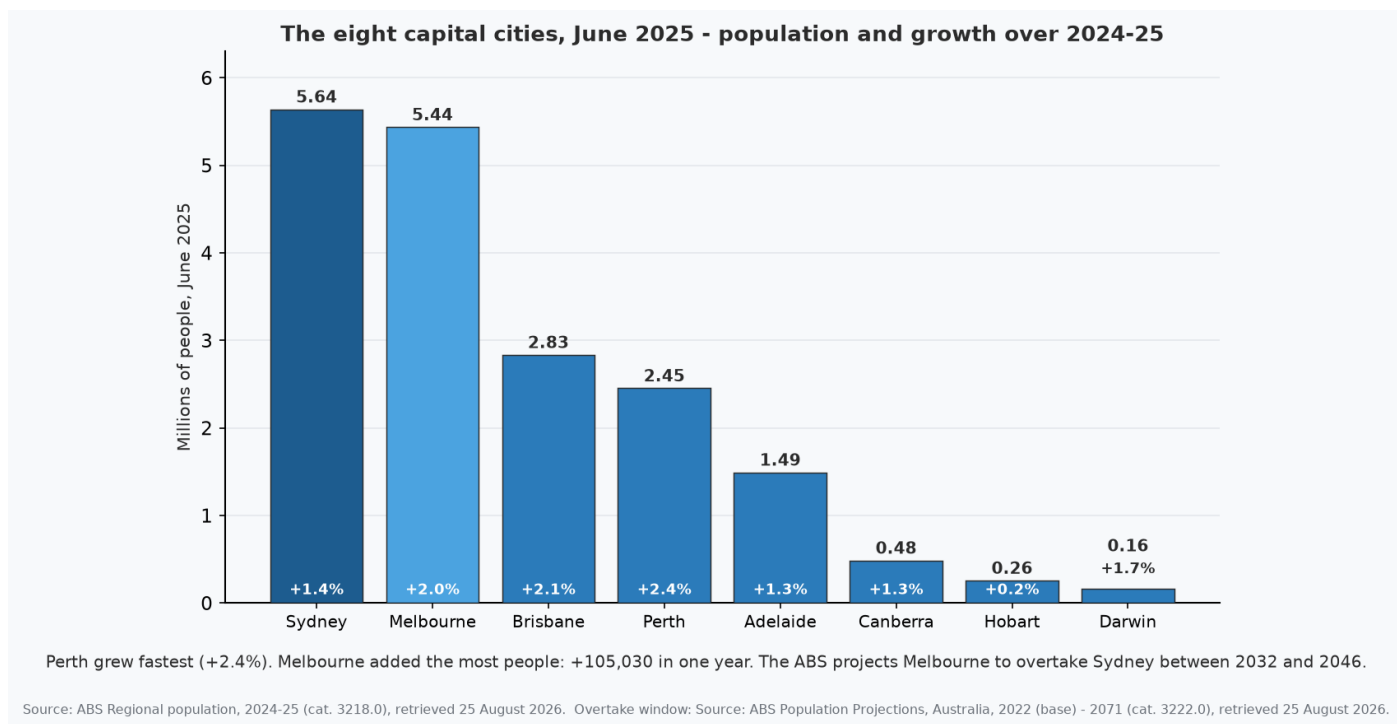
Check: which two cities hold the most people? (Sydney, then Melbourne — and the gap between them is only about 200,000.)

Step 2 — How big will the cities get? Population **forecasts** (also called **projections**) are what-if paths. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) builds them from guesses about births, deaths and **migration** (people moving in and out). They are not promises.



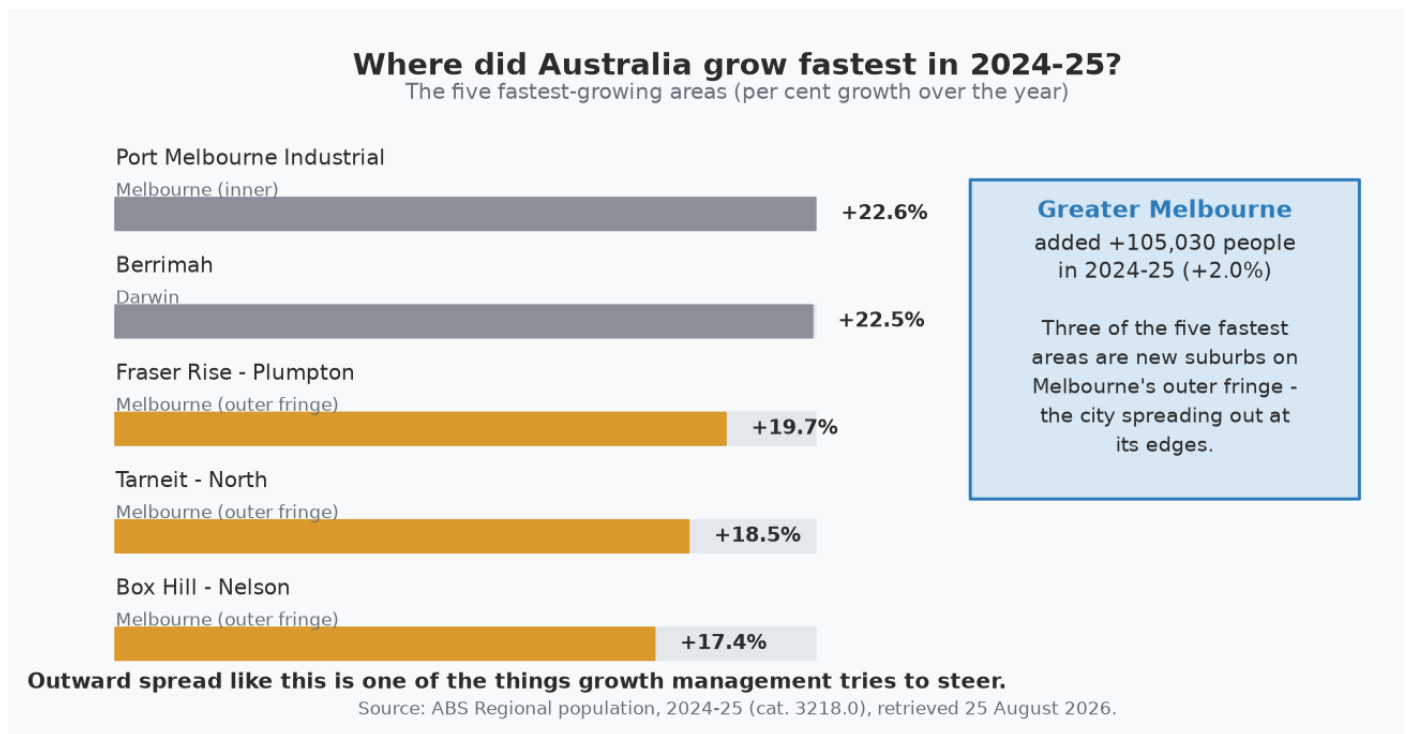
Line graph of Australia's population: measured values of 26.66 million (2023), 27.19 million (2024) and 27.61 million (2025), then three ABS projection paths to 2071 — low 34.3 million, medium 39.2 million and high 45.9 million.

The ABS also projects each city. On the medium path, **Melbourne is projected to overtake Sydney as Australia's biggest city between 2032 and 2046**, and the share of Australians living in capital cities is projected to rise from 67 in every 100 (2022) to 68 by 2032.



Column graph of the eight capital cities at June 2025: Sydney 5.64 million and Melbourne 5.44 million tower over Brisbane 2.83, Perth 2.45, Adelaide 1.49, Canberra 0.48, Hobart 0.26 and Darwin 0.16 million, with each city's growth rate for 2024-25 shown.

And where did growth actually land in 2024-25? Much of it landed on the **fringe** — the new outer suburbs.

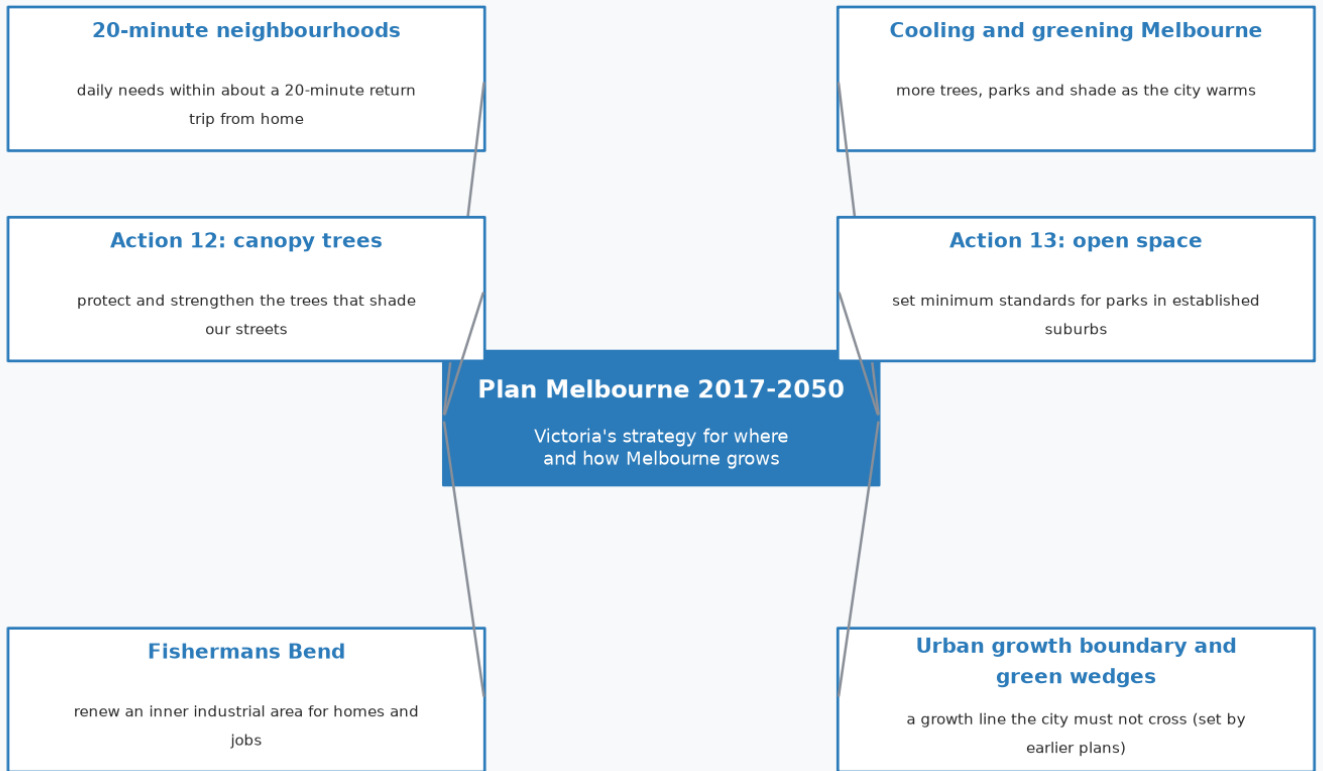


Bar list of Australia's five fastest-growing areas in 2024-25: Port Melbourne Industrial +22.6 per cent, Berrimah (Darwin) +22.5, then three of Melbourne's outer-fringe suburbs — Fraser Rise - Plumpton +19.7, Tarneit - North +18.5 and Box Hill - Nelson +17.4 — beside a panel noting Greater Melbourne added +105,030 people.

Think: if a city keeps spreading outward, what would that mean for (a) how easy it is to live well there, and (b) the farmland and bushland at its edge? Hold those thoughts — Step 4 comes back to them.

Step 3 — One plan for a growing city. Governments do not just watch growth; they try to manage it. A **strategy** is a plan made for a purpose. Victoria's strategy for its biggest city is **Plan Melbourne 2017-2050**.

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 - Victoria's plan for a growing city



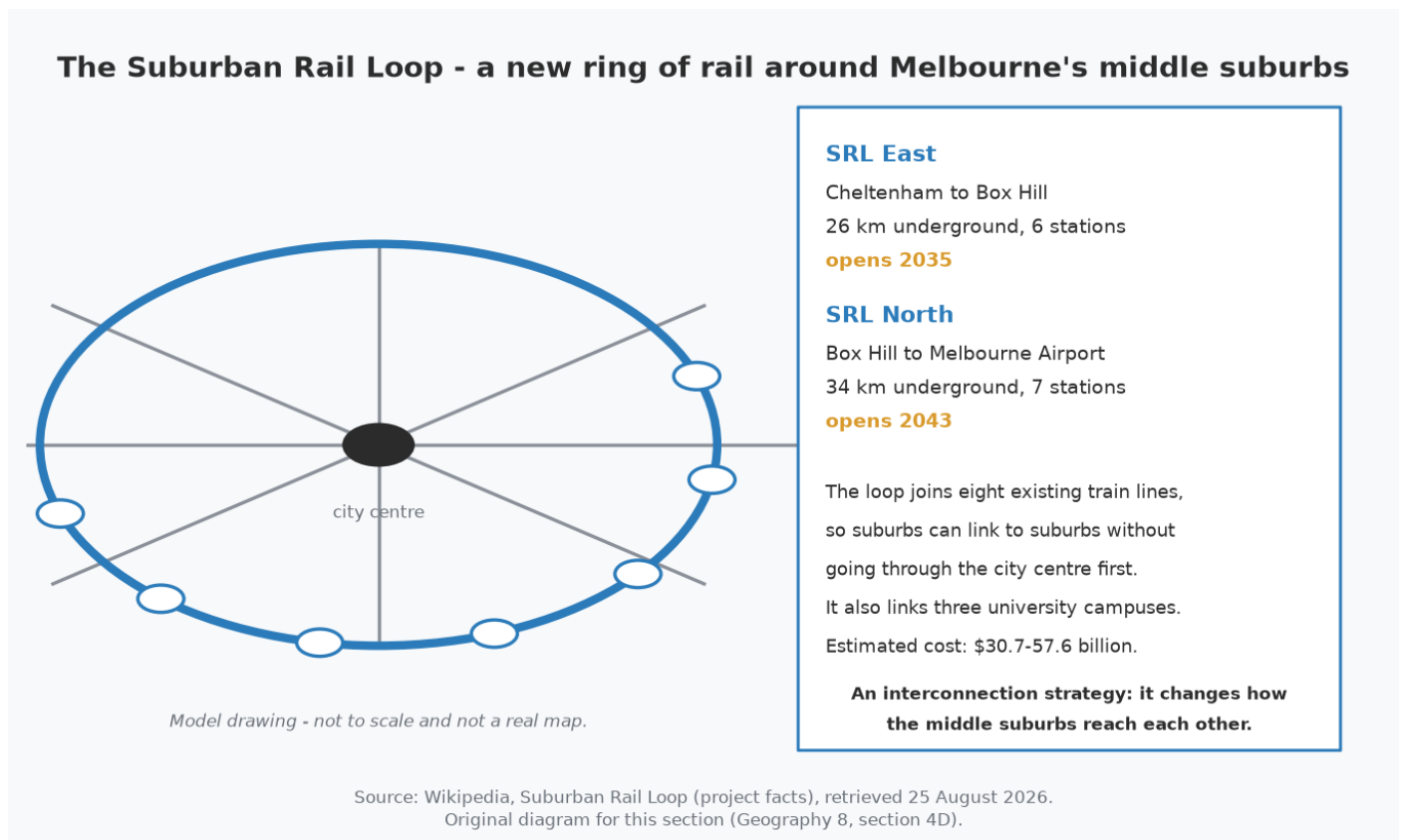
The same plan also supports new rail links - see the Suburban Rail Loop figure.

Source: Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 pages, retrieved 25 August 2026.
Original diagram for this section (Geography 8, section 4D).

Web diagram with Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 at the centre and six linked parts: 20-minute neighbourhoods, Cooling and greening Melbourne, Action 12 on canopy trees, Action 13 on open space, Fishermans Bend, and the urban growth boundary with green wedges.

Two ideas in the plan are worth naming. The **urban growth boundary** is a line around the city that outward growth must not cross; outside it, **green wedges** — land kept for farming, parks and bush — protect the countryside from being swallowed. At the national level too, governments have agreed on a target of 1.2 million new homes by 2029 [S12], so where and how those homes are built is a live question.

A second big move sits inside the same thinking: the **Suburban Rail Loop**.

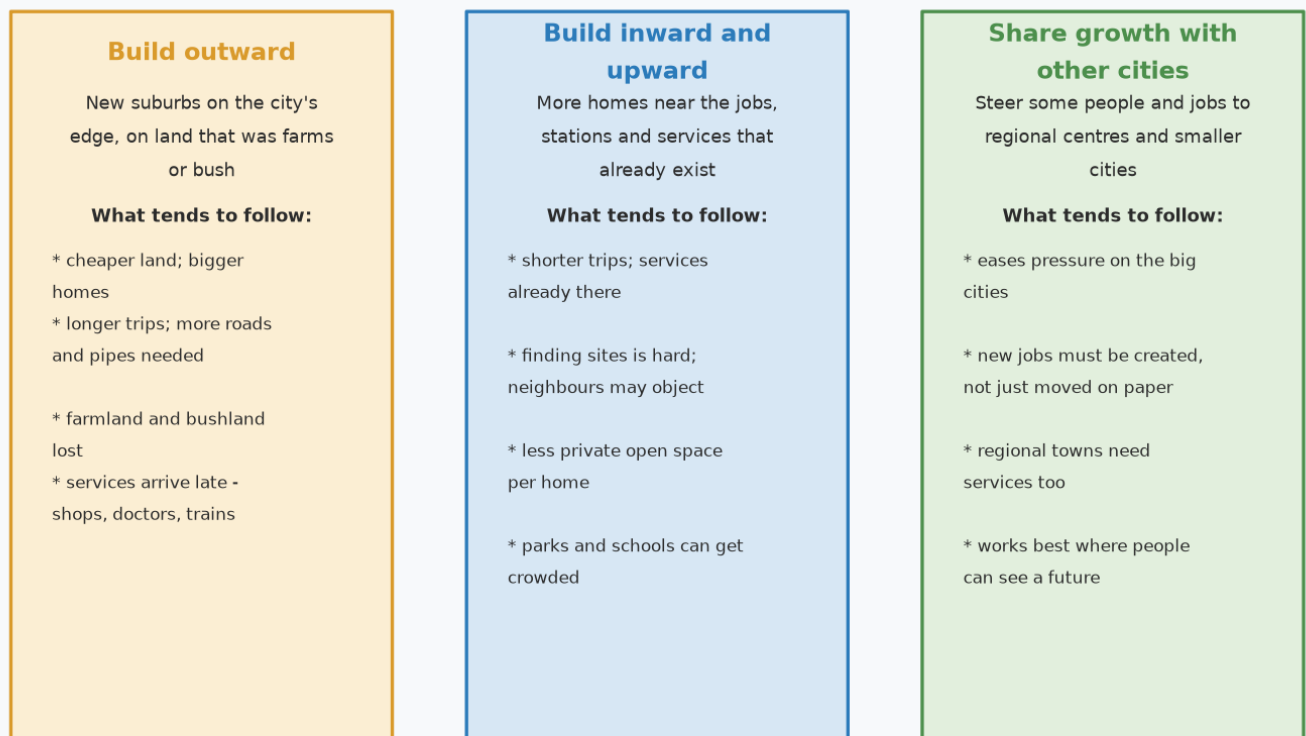


Schematic ring of rail around a city centre with radiating lines, beside a panel listing SRL East (Cheltenham to Box Hill, 26 km, 6 stations, opens 2035) and SRL North (Box Hill to Melbourne Airport, 34 km, 7 stations, opens 2043), noting the loop joins eight existing train lines and three university campuses at a cost of \$30.7-57.6 billion.

The loop is about **interconnection** — the geographical concept that places are linked, and that changing the links changes how places work. Today, most trips in the middle suburbs must go through the city centre first; the loop would let suburb link to suburb directly.

Step 4 — Three paths for a growing city. Every strategy for growth is some mix of three paths. Each path has trade-offs — things gained and things given up.

Three paths for a growing city - each one has trade-offs



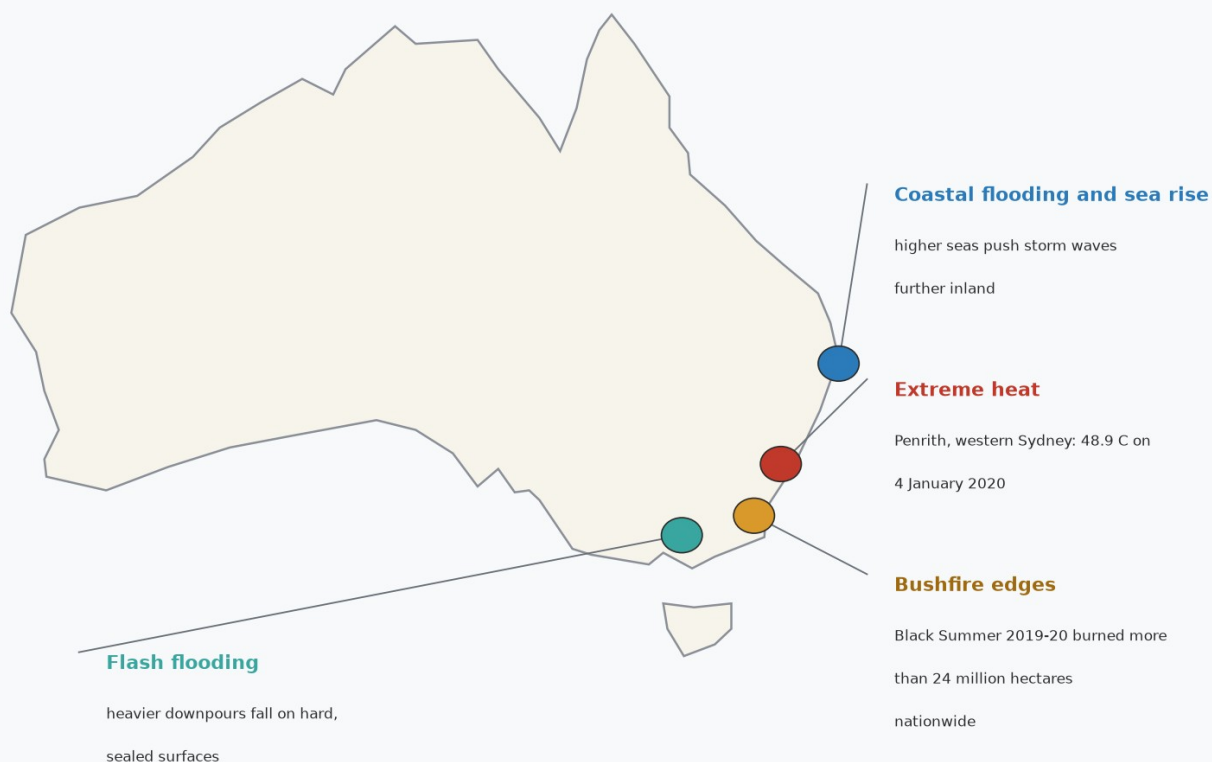
Model diagram. Real plans usually mix all three paths at once.
Original diagram for this section (Geography 8, section 4D).

Three-panel model diagram: Build outward (new fringe suburbs), Build inward and upward (homes near existing jobs and services), and Share growth with other cities (steer people and jobs to regional centres), each listing what tends to follow.

Check: which path is Plan Melbourne mostly using? (A mix: the growth boundary limits “outward”, Fishermans Bend and 20-minute neighbourhoods push “inward”, and the rail loop reshapes where growth can work well.)

Step 5 — Climate change comes to the city. A changing climate does not hit every city the same way. Australia has already warmed more than 1.5 °C above its early-20th-century baseline [S9]; the national record is 50.7 °C [S10]; and the 2019-20 Black Summer fires burned more than 24 million hectares — a **hectare** is an area the size of a football oval and a bit more [S11].

Where is climate change forecast to hit Australia's cities hardest?



Cities on the coast face sea rise; cities in the west and inland face heat; cities near forest face fire; everywhere, downpours get heavier.

Sources: Wikipedia, Penrith, New South Wales (48.9 °C record); Wikipedia, 2019-20 Australian bushfire season; Wikipedia, Climate change in Australia (rainfall and sea rise). Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Map of south-eastern and eastern Australia with four labelled markers: extreme heat at western Sydney (Penrith reached 48.9 °C on 4 January 2020), bushfire edges near Canberra (Black Summer burned more than 24 million hectares nationwide), coastal flooding and sea rise at Brisbane, and flash flooding at Melbourne.

Western Sydney is a heat hotspot: Penrith, away from the sea breezes, hit 48.9 °C on 4 January 2020 — hotter than the coast [S8]. In the summer of 2013-14, Adelaide had 13 days at 40 °C or above and Melbourne six [S9]. And if the sea rises about 1.1 metres, one Australian Government report put 247,600 houses at risk [S9].

Step 6 — Adapting: the city fights back. To **adapt** means to change how a place works so it can cope safely with a changed climate. Here is the menu cities are already using.

The adaptation menu - matching city problems to city responses

The impact	What a city can do	A real example
More extreme heat	plant street trees; shade plays and bus stops; cool roofs; open cool spaces in heatwaves	Melbourne: Cooling and greening Melbourne; Action 12 protects canopy trees
Heavier downpours and flash floods	bigger drains; surfaces that soak up water; warnings; keep homes out of the flood path	Victoria's plans set standards for open space that can also hold storm water (Action 13)
Rising seas and storm waves	plan building heights and set-backs; protect, or move things back from the edge over time	coastal councils review where new homes may be built
Bushfire at the city edge	keep cleared buffers between homes and forest; build to fire standards; warnings and plans	Black Summer 2019-20 pushed fire right up to city edges

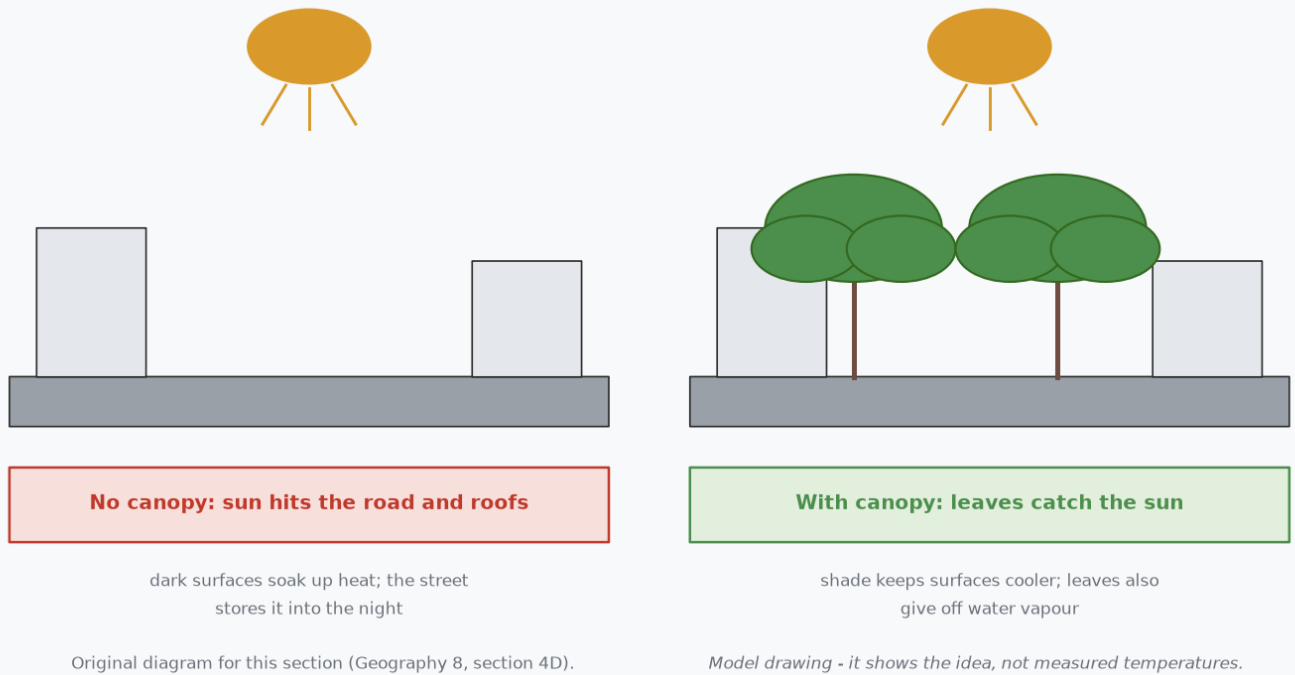
Adapting means changing how a place works to live safely with a changed climate.

Model table. Real examples drawn from Plan Melbourne actions and Black Summer reporting.

Three-column model table matching four impacts (more extreme heat; heavier downpours and flash floods; rising seas and storm waves; bushfire at the city edge) to responses (street trees and shade; soak-up surfaces and bigger drains; set-backs from the coast; cleared buffers and fire standards) with a real example for each.

One response is a good example of the geographical concepts at work: **urban greening** — planting trees, parks and green roofs to cool and shade a city. It is *spatial* (where the trees go matters), it is about *interconnection* (trees cool the street, the street cools the suburb), and it is environmental. Melbourne's inner city already has about 480 hectares of parks and green spaces [S13], and Plan Melbourne's Action 12 protects the canopy — the layer of leaves and branches above a street.

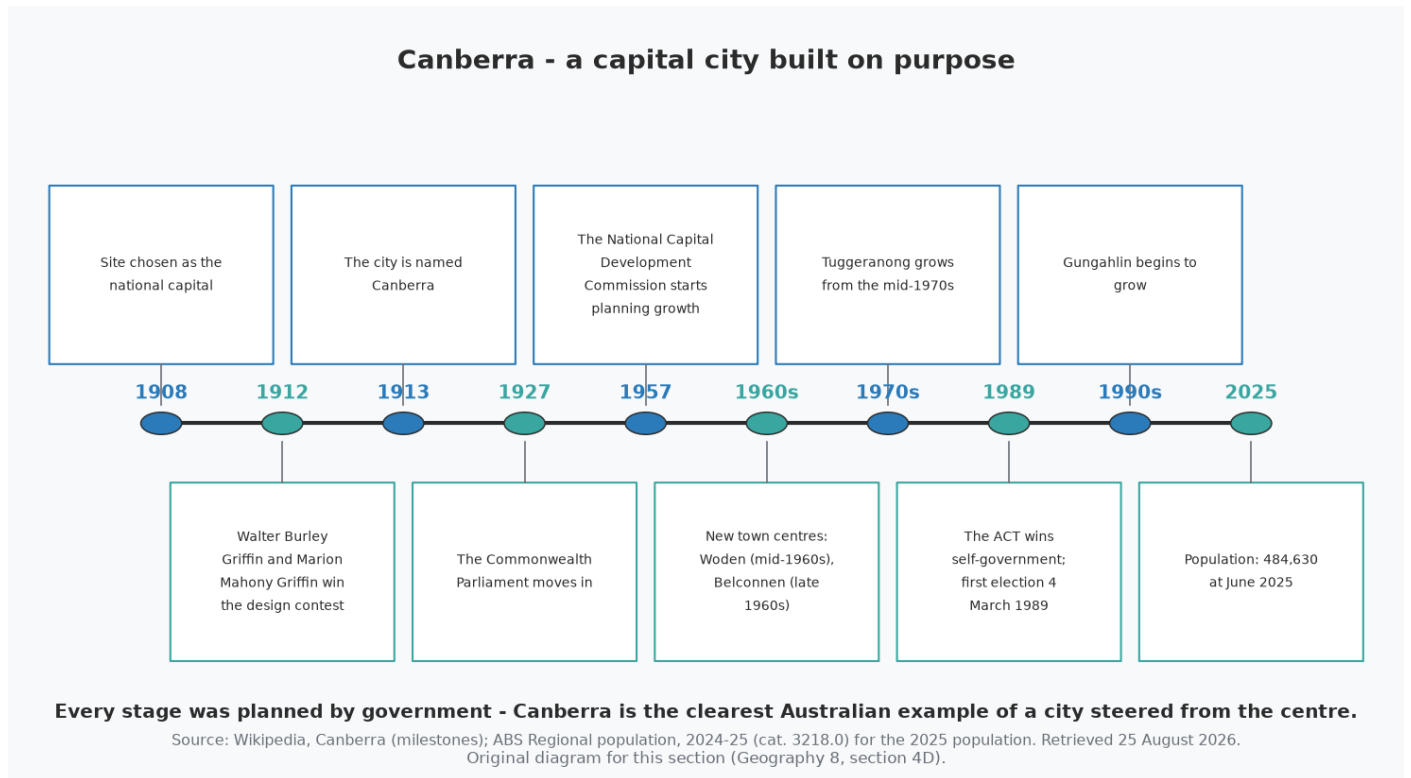
Two versions of the same street - an urban greening idea



Model cross-sections of the same street twice: without trees, sun hits the road and roofs and heat is stored into the night; with a tree canopy, leaves catch the sun and shade keeps surfaces cooler.

Step 7 — Canberra and the big question. Australia's population is not spread evenly: about 68 in every 100 of us live in a capital city. Should governments try to spread city growth more evenly? The policy word is **decentralisation** — in Australian policy debates since the 1970s, it means moving people and jobs out of the biggest cities towards smaller cities and regional centres. Experts and politicians disagree about whether it works, so it is a contested term: we define it, hear both sides in their strongest form, and judge the reasoning.

No Australian city shows what planned spreading can do better than **Canberra** — a capital built on purpose.



Timeline of Canberra from 1908 (site chosen as the national capital) through the 1912 design contest won by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, naming in 1913, Parliament moving in 1927, the 1957 development commission, the Woden, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin town centres, ACT self-government in 1989, to a 2025 population of 484,630.

Here are the strongest cases each way — a **steelman** is when you state the other side's view in its strongest, fairest form before you judge it.

Should Australia spread its city population more evenly? The strongest case each way

FOR: spread people and jobs

- * Big-city traffic jams, long commutes and high housing prices are eased when growth is shared.

- * Regional centres gain people, customers and services - liveability improves outside the capitals.

- * Spreading growth spreads risk: fewer people sit in one city's flood, fire or heat zone.

- * Canberra shows planning can work: a purpose-built city now holds 484,630 people (June 2025).

AGAINST: keep growth where it is

- * Jobs follow jobs: firms cluster where workers, suppliers and customers already are, so forced moves can leave people without work.

- * New roads, pipes, schools and hospitals in small centres cost a lot per person.

- * People move for opportunity. A policy works only if real jobs and services come first.

- * Low-density spreading can swallow farmland and bushland - the very thing it claims to fix.

Before you pick a side: define your terms. Say what evidence would change your mind. Test each side with the same questions.

Both sides are stated in their strongest form on purpose - that is called steelmanning.

Model cards. Population figure: ABS Regional population, 2024-25 (cat. 3218.0), retrieved 25 August 2026.

Two steelman cards. FOR spreading people and jobs: eases big-city traffic, commutes and housing prices; improves liveability in regional centres; spreads flood, fire and heat risk; and Canberra proves planning can work. AGAINST: jobs follow jobs, so forced moves can leave people without work; services in small centres cost a lot per person; people move for opportunity, so jobs must come first; and low-density spreading can swallow the farmland it claims to protect.

Step 8 — Your turn to weigh in. Geographers do not just collect the two sides; they test them with the same questions: *What is the evidence? Who gains and who loses? What would change my mind?* Worked demonstration 2 shows how. Then the final task asks you to generate your own strategy.

Worked demonstrations

We try together — Worked demonstration 1 (E02: examine one strategy and its effects)

Task: examine Plan Melbourne's "Cooling and greening Melbourne" (with Action 12) as a strategy for managing the city's projected growth. Identify what it means for sustainability — in environmental, economic and social terms — and for liveability.

1. **Name the strategy and the growth it answers.** Melbourne added +105,030 people in 2024-25 [S1] and is projected to overtake Sydney between 2032 and 2046 [S3]. More people and more heatwaves at once (Melbourne had six days at 40 °C or above in one summer [S9]) is the problem the strategy answers.
2. **Environmental factor.** Trees shade surfaces and give off water vapour, cooling streets; parks can also hold storm water when downpours get heavier. A greener city copes better with a hotter climate.
3. **Economic factor.** Cooler streets cut the cost of heat: less damage to roads and rails, less money spent cooling buildings. But planting and watering a canopy costs money up front.
4. **Social factor and liveability.** Shaded streets and parks make a city more pleasant and safer to live in — higher liveability — and cool public spaces protect people who cannot cool their homes well.

5. **One strength, one limit.** Strength: it tackles heat and flooding where people actually live. Limit: trees take years to grow, so the strategy works slowly while growth and heat arrive fast.

That five-step shape — name, three factors, liveability, strength and limit — is the shape of a full strategy answer at Level 8.

We try together — Worked demonstration 2 (E05: steelman the decentralisation debate with Canberra)

Task: build the strongest case each way, then test both sides with the same questions.

1. **Strongest FOR.** Big-city traffic, long trips to work and high housing prices ease when growth is shared; regional centres gain customers and services; risk is spread (fewer people in one city's fire or flood zone); and Canberra — 484,630 people at June 2025 [S1] — proves a planned city can thrive.
2. **Strongest AGAINST.** Jobs follow jobs, so moving people without jobs leaves them stranded; new roads, pipes, schools and hospitals in small centres cost a lot per person; and low-density spreading can swallow the farmland and bushland it claims to protect.
3. **Same questions to both sides.** What is the evidence? (FOR points to Canberra's long-run success; AGAINST points to the cost of services per person — both are checkable, not just opinions.) Who gains and who loses? (Fringe-city renters gain if pressure eases; regional towns lose if jobs do not arrive.) What would change my mind? (For example: solid evidence that regional jobs grew *before* the people, not after.)

Notice the marking rule: a good answer is not the side you pick. A good answer defines decentralisation, steelmans both sides, and weighs evidence with the same questions.

Practice questions — with help

Use the figures from the New ideas steps.

1. Look at the capitals map (Step 1). About how many Australians in every 100 live in a capital city? Name the two biggest cities.
2. Look at the projections graph (Step 2). (a) What is the medium path for 2071? (b) What are the low and high paths? (c) In one sentence, why is a projection “not a promise”?
3. Look at the city column graph and the fastest-areas graph (Step 2).
(a) Which city grew fastest in per cent? (b) Which city added the most people? (c) Three of the five fastest areas sit where?
4. Look at the Plan Melbourne web and the rail loop (Step 3). (a) What does the urban growth boundary protect? (b) In one sentence, how is the rail loop an interconnection strategy?
5. Look at the climate impacts map (Step 5). Match each city to its main risk and give the evidence: western Sydney; Melbourne; Brisbane.
6. Look at the adaptation menu and the street trees (Step 6). Pick one response and say how it helps both liveability and the environment.

Practice questions — on your own

1. (E01) Melbourne added +105,030 people in a year, and three of Australia's five fastest-growing areas are on its outer fringe. In three or four sentences, discuss what that outward spread means for the city's environmental sustainability and its liveability. Name one gain and one cost.
2. Choose one of the three paths (Step 4 figure). Give it one strength and one limit, with a reason for each.
3. (E05) Use two dated facts from the Canberra timeline as evidence to answer: what does Canberra's story show a government *can* do about where people live?
4. Add one new point to each steelman card — a point not already on the cards. Then say which side you find stronger *so far*, and what single piece of evidence would change your mind.

Show what you know — evidence-based response

Your strategy for a balanced Australia (E06). Australia's capital cities are forecast to keep growing this century, and most of us already live in one. Write a response of about one page (or make a poster or slides) that puts forward **your** strategy for sharing Australia's city growth more evenly. Canberra must appear as your example.

Your response must:

1. name your strategy in one clear sentence (for example: a form of decentralisation, stronger regional cities, a growth boundary, a rail link — or a mix);
2. use at least **three pieces of evidence** from this section's figures, naming each source ([S1] to [S13]) as you use it;
3. say what your strategy means for **liveability**, for **environmental sustainability**, and for **adapting to climate change**;
4. include the strongest argument against your strategy (steelman it in its strongest form), and your reasoned answer to it;
5. close with one sentence beginning "I would change my mind if...".

Words we use

- **liveability** — how good a place is to live in: the mix of housing, safety, services, transport, environment and community; the idea behind city comparisons such as the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index
- **environmental sustainability** — using what we need today without spoiling what people after us will need; the framing comes from the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)
- **forecast / projection** — a what-if path about the future, built on guesses about births, deaths and migration; not a promise
- **migration** — people moving from one place to live in another
- **strategy** — a plan made for a purpose
- **urban growth boundary** — a line around a city that outward growth must not cross; **green wedges** — land kept for farming, parks and bush outside it
- **interconnection** — the geographical concept that places are linked, so changing the links changes how places work; **spatial** — about where things are located
- **urban greening** — planting trees, parks and green roofs to cool and shade a city; **canopy** — the layer of leaves and branches above a street
- **adapt / adaptation** — changing how a place works so it can cope safely with a changed climate
- **decentralisation** — in Australian policy debates, moving people and jobs out of the biggest cities towards smaller cities and regional centres
- **fringe** — the new outer edge of a city, where suburbs meet farmland and bush
- **hectare** — an area of 100 m by 100 m, a little bigger than a football oval
- **steelman** — stating another side's view in its strongest, fairest form before judging it

Answers (teacher-facing)

With help: 1. About 68 in every 100. Sydney (5.64 million) and Melbourne (5.44 million). 2. (a) 39.2 million. (b) Low 34.3 million; high 45.9 million. (c) It is built on guesses about births, deaths and migration; if those guesses change, the path changes. 3. (a) Perth (+2.4%). (b) Melbourne (+105,030). (c) On Melbourne's outer fringe (Fraser Rise - Plumpton, Tarneit - North, Box Hill - Nelson). 4. (a) Farmland, parks and bush outside the city, from being swallowed by outward growth. (b) It links eight existing rail lines so middle suburbs reach each other without going through the city centre first. 5. Western Sydney: extreme heat (Penrith 48.9 °C on 4 Jan 2020). Melbourne: flash flooding from heavier downpours on sealed surfaces. Brisbane: coastal flooding and sea rise pushing storm waves inland. 6. Accept any matched pair with a true reason, e.g. street trees: shade and water vapour cool the street (environment) and shaded, pleasant streets are nicer and safer to live in (liveability).

On your own: 1. Must name one gain (e.g. cheaper land and bigger homes on the fringe) and one cost (e.g. farmland/bushland lost, longer trips, services arriving late), and tie at least one point to sustainability or liveability explicitly. 2. Accept any path with a reasoned strength and limit; check the pair are genuine trade-offs, not the same idea twice. 3. Must use two dated facts (e.g. 1908 site choice; 1957 NCDC; the planned town centres of the 1960s-90s) to argue that government can choose where and when a city grows — Canberra reached 484,630 people by planning, not by accident. 4. Check the two added points are genuinely new and genuinely strong for their side; the “change my mind” evidence must be checkable in principle.

Response task: see the marking note under Fully-worked solutions.

Fully-worked solutions (teacher-facing)

WD1 model shape: strategy named (Cooling and greening Melbourne + Action 12) → growth evidence (+105,030 in 2024-25 [S1]; overtake window 2032-2046 [S3]; six 40 °C days in summer 2013-14 [S9]) → environmental (cooling, storm-water holding) → economic (cuts heat damage and cooling costs; canopy has up-front costs) → social/liveability (pleasant, safer streets; cool refuge) → strength (acts where people live) + limit (slow against fast growth). Standard depth: environmental, economic and social factors all present.

WD2 model shape: FOR steelman (traffic/trips/prices ease; regional liveability rises; risk spread; Canberra 484,630 [S1]) → AGAINST steelman (jobs cluster; service cost per person; opportunity drives movement; low-density spread swallows farmland) → same three test questions applied to both sides → conclusion weighed on evidence, not preference.

Response task marking note (per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`): mark on the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion. Award credit for: a defined strategy; three sourced evidence points used accurately; all three of liveability, environmental sustainability and climate adaptation addressed; a fair steelmanned counter-argument with a reasoned reply; and a genuine falsifiability sentence (“I would change my mind if...”). A well-reasoned case FOR decentralisation and a well-reasoned case AGAINST both earn full marks.

All figures in `src/gen_4d.py`; data values as listed under Sources.

Urbanisation and its impacts through five lenses: space, place, interconnection, change, sustainability

Geography 8 · Chapter 4 — Changing nations · Section 4E

Curriculum focus: VC2HG8K22 (Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Geography, Levels 7 and 8, VCAA).

This section draws on **VC2HG8K22.E01** and **VC2HG8K22.E02** for MCQ and coverage linking.

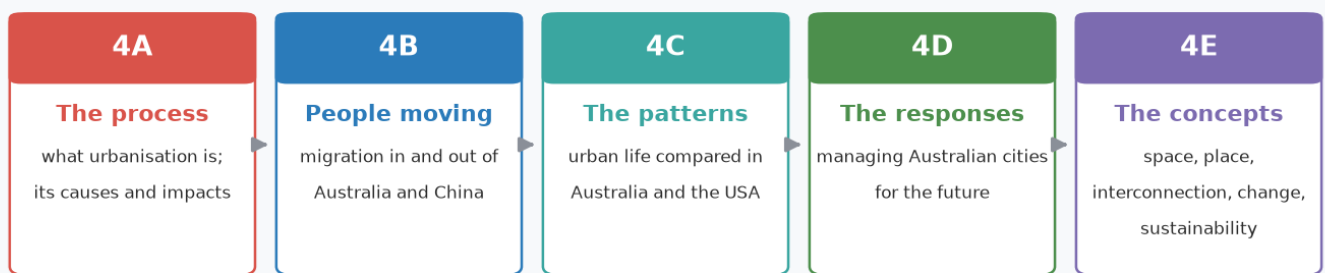
Theory

Start with what you know

In this chapter you have already met the process itself (4A: what urbanisation is, its causes and its impacts), the people moving (4B: migration in and out of Australia and China), the patterns (4C: urban life compared in Australia and the USA) and the responses (4D: managing Australian cities). This section joins those pieces together. It asks the bigger question a geographer asks at the end of any topic: *how do the concepts of my subject make sense of all this?*

Chapter 4 so far: from process to concepts

Each section built one piece; this section puts the pieces through the five concept lenses.



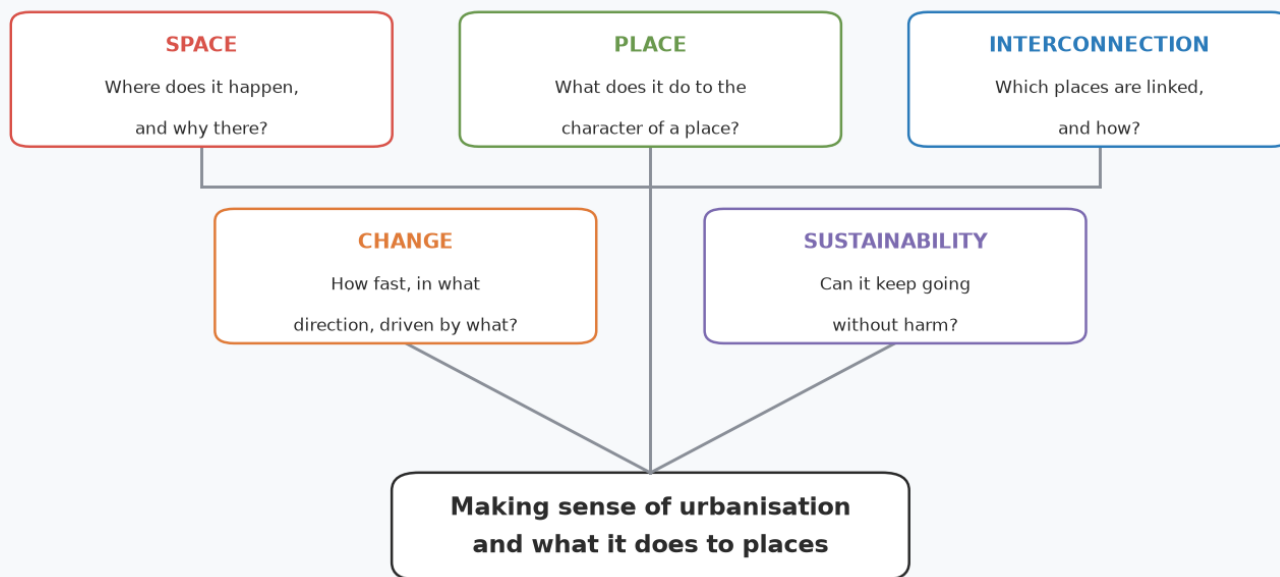
4E applies the five geographical concepts named in VC2HG8K22 to the material of 4A-4D.

A flow chart of Chapter 4's five sections: 4A the process, 4B people moving, 4C the patterns, 4D the responses and 4E the concepts, with an arrow through them and a note that 4E applies the five geographical concepts named in VC2HG8K22 to the material of 4A to 4D

This is the third section in this book where the concepts are pulled together into one toolkit (2E used them on liveability; 3F used interconnection and change on environmental phenomena). Here the full toolkit — the five concepts named in VC2HG8K22 — is applied to urbanisation and what it does to places.

Five concept lenses for urbanisation

Each concept asks its own question of the same process.



The five concepts named in VC2HG8K22. They work best together, not one at a time.

A concept map with a centre box reading “Making sense of urbanisation and what it does to places” joined to five lens boxes - SPACE, PLACE, INTERCONNECTION, CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY - each holding its own guiding question, with a note that the five concepts work best together

Each lens asks its own question of the same process. Work through them one at a time, then put them back together at the end.

Defining the terms first

urbanisation — the rise in the *share* of a country’s people who live in urban areas. This is the definition the measuring agencies fix for their statistics (the ABS in Australia, the UN for world figures), and it is the one this section uses. Other meanings exist in everyday talk; this is the one used here. Note what it is not: urbanisation is about the share, not the head-count. A city can grow by 100,000 people while urbanisation stays flat, if the countryside grows just as fast.

urban growth — a rise in the number of people living in a city or town. 4A introduced both terms; this section keeps them separate.

rural–urban migration — people moving from the countryside into towns and cities. When the move is inside one country it is a kind of **internal migration** (4B).

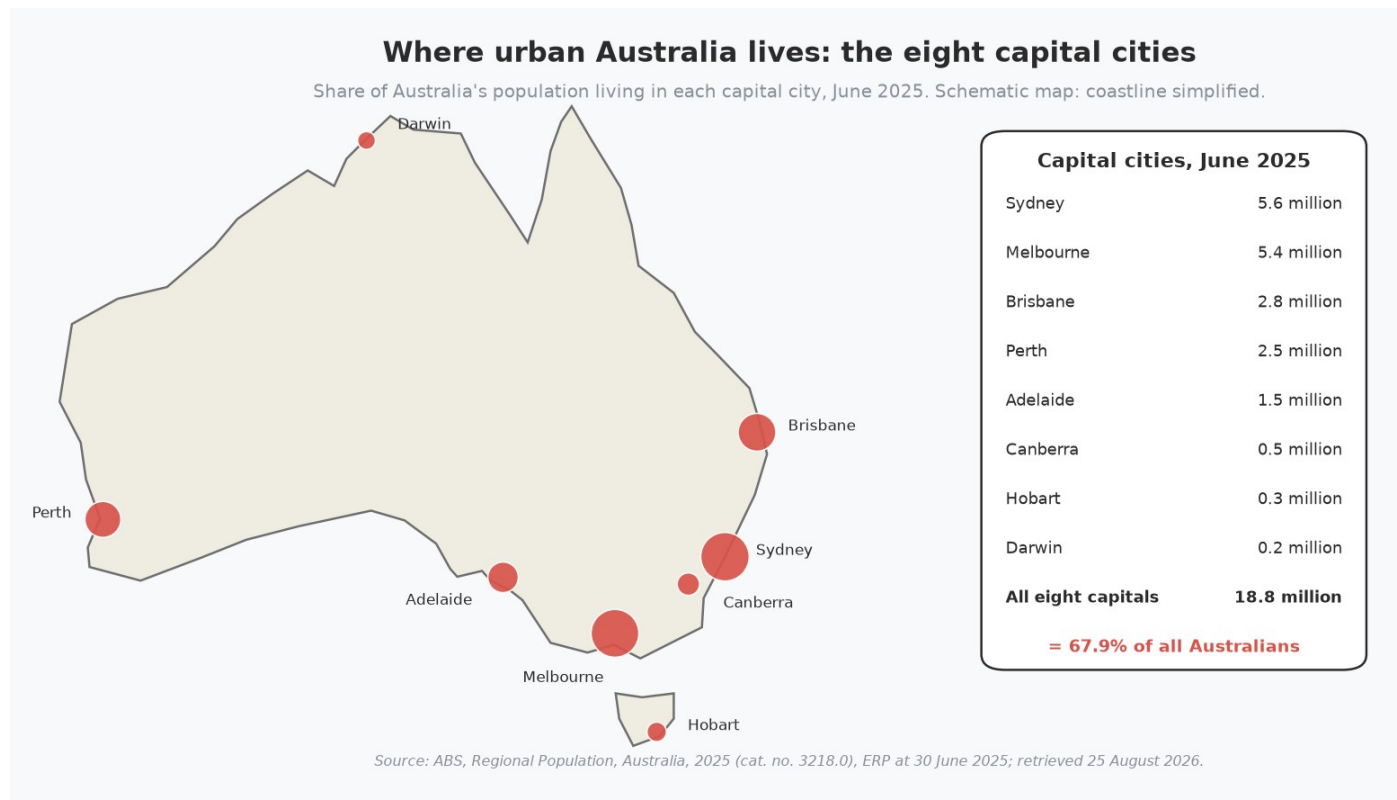
overseas migration — moves across a country’s borders (called external migration in 4B).

push–pull factors — the things that push people out of one place (few jobs, small schools, drought) and pull them towards another (work, study, family, community). From 4A.

sustainability (the concept) — the idea that something should be able to keep going without using up or harming the things it depends on.

1. The space lens: where urban Australia lives

Space asks *where* something happens, and *why there*. The map below answers the first question for Australia.

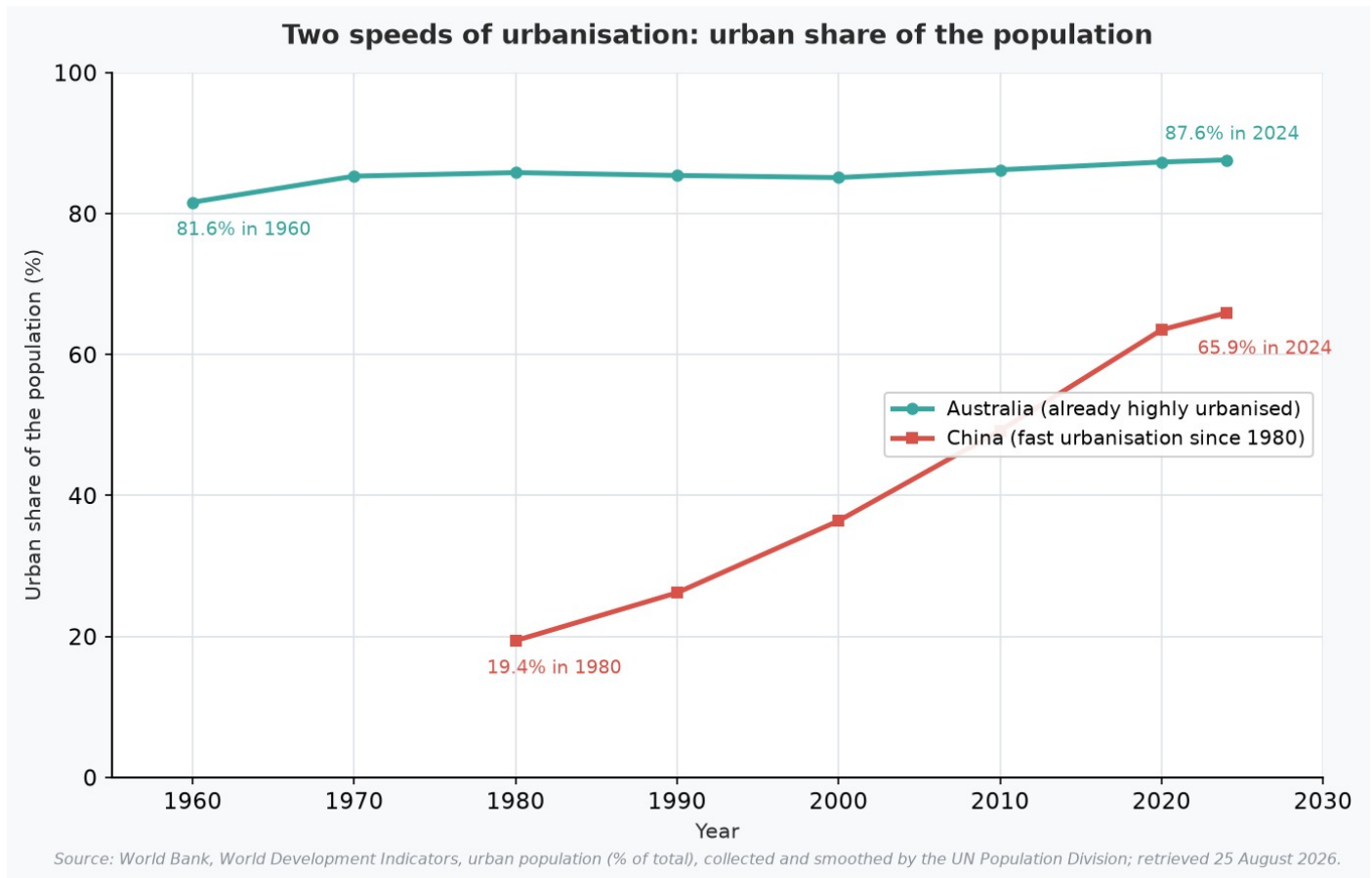


A schematic map of Australia with a sized dot for each of the eight capital cities and a side table of their populations at June 2025 - Sydney 5.6 million down to Darwin 0.2 million - totalling 18.8 million, equal to 67.9% of all Australians, sourced to ABS cat. no. 3218.0

Nearly seven in ten Australians live in just eight cities. That is the space fact of Australian urbanisation, and 4A and 4C explained why it looks like this: the capitals are coastal, close to the jobs, ports and services that first made them grow, and Australia's urban share was already very high a century ago. The space lens also notices what the map makes you feel: the population is not spread across the continent, it is gathered into a few coastal points. Whether that gathering is a problem is this band's key question, and we steelman it in section 6 below.

2. The change lens: two speeds of urbanisation

Change asks *how fast, in what direction, and driven by what*. The graph below puts Australia and China side by side.



A line graph of the urban share of the population: Australia rising slowly from 81.6% in 1960 to 87.6% in 2024, and China rising fast from 19.4% in 1980 to 65.9% in 2024, sourced to the World Bank's World Development Indicators

Australia's line is almost flat: 81.6% in 1960, 87.6% in 2024. Australian urbanisation is an old story that is nearly finished — the change now is slow. China's line is one of the fastest changes in human history: 19.4% in 1980 to 65.9% in 2024, a rise of 46.5 percentage points in 44 years.

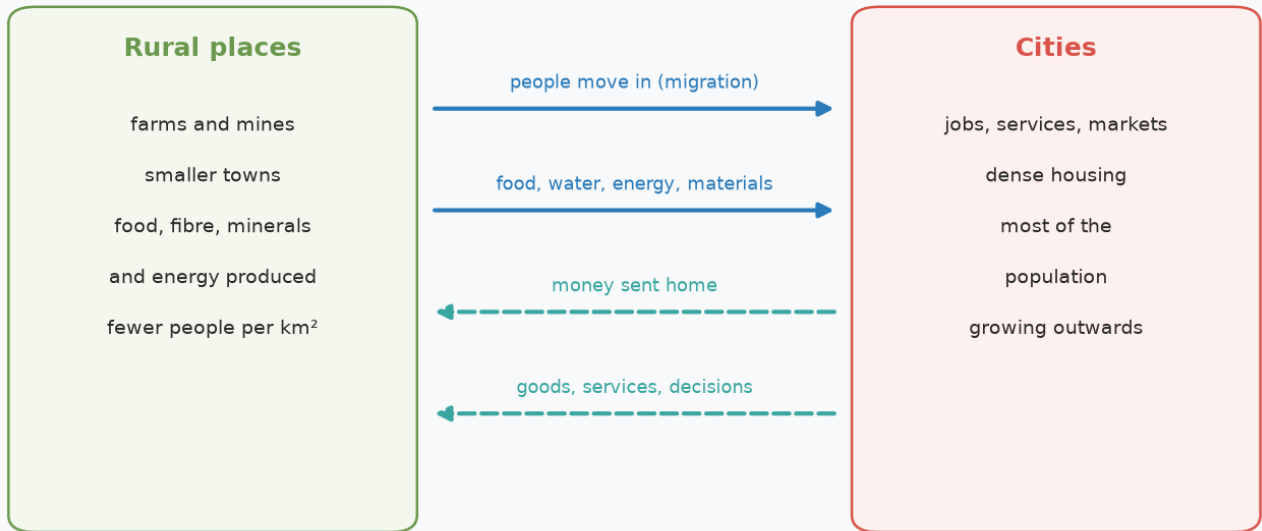
The change lens also works with head-counts, and here is a piece of working worth doing once. In 1980 China's total population was about 981 million, so 19.4% of that is about **190 million** urban dwellers. In 2024 the total was about 1,409 million, so 65.9% is about **929 million**. That is about **738 million more urban dwellers** in a single lifetime — more people than now live in all of Europe. Same concept (change), two very different answers: slow and nearly done in Australia; fast and enormous in China. And the “driven by what” part is where 4A's push-pull factors and 4B's migration come back: China's change was driven by factories, jobs and the opening of cities such as Shenzhen to rural workers.

3. The interconnection lens: urbanisation is a spatial process

VC2HG8K22.E01 asks why we call urbanisation a *spatial* process, and has us trace the interconnections between its parts. The model below is the answer in one picture.

Urbanisation is a spatial process

Its parts do not sit in one spot. They are linked across space, so a change in one place reaches another.

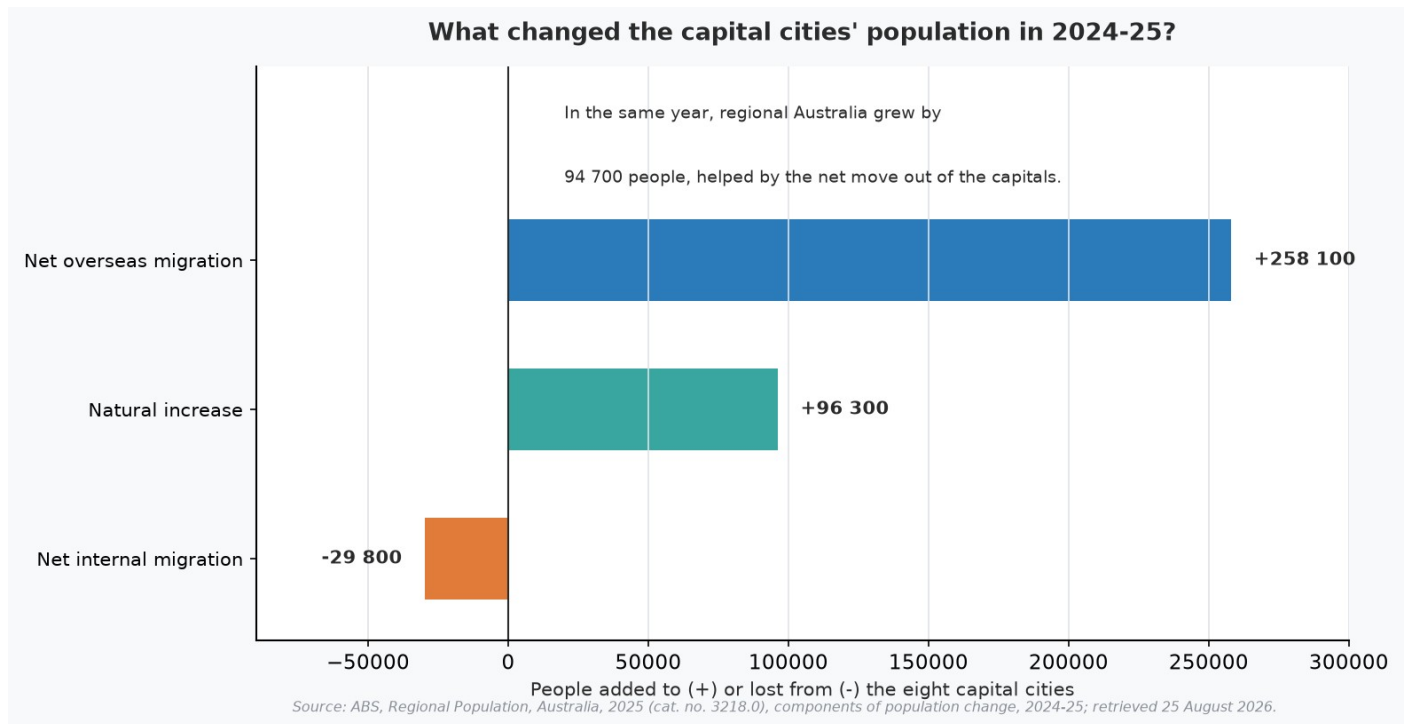


Model: the components of urbanisation (movement, city growth, rural change) are interconnections across space.

A model of urbanisation as a spatial process: a rural places panel and a cities panel joined by four flows - people move in (migration), food water energy and materials go to the city, money sent home goes back, and goods services and decisions go back - with a note that the components of urbanisation are interconnections across space

None of the parts of urbanisation sits in one spot. The people, the food, the water, the money and the decisions all move *between* places, so a change in one place reaches another. That is what “spatial process” means.

The numbers make the interconnections visible. The chart below breaks down what changed the population of Australia’s eight capitals in 2024-25.



A bar chart of the components of capital-city population change in 2024-25: net overseas migration +258 100, natural increase +96 300, net internal migration -29 800, with a note that in the same year regional Australia grew by 94 700 people, helped by the net move out of the capitals, sourced to ABS cat. no. 3218.0

Read the bars as flows between places. The biggest addition, +258,100, is **overseas migration**: Australia's cities are connected to the world, and most of that flow lands in the capitals. The negative bar, -29,800, is **net internal migration**: on balance, more people left the capitals for other Australian places than arrived from them — and in the same year regional Australia grew by 94,700. The minus on one side and the growth on the other are the *same flow* seen from its two ends. That is interconnection doing its work: you cannot understand a city's numbers without the places it is joined to.

4. The place lens (with interconnection): one flow changes two places

VC2HG8K22.E02 asks what rural–urban migration does at both ends of the move — the places people leave, and the ones they arrive in. The model below keeps both places in view at once.

One flow, two places changed: rural-urban migration

Every migration flow changes the place people leave and the place they move to.

people move from country to city



The place people leave

Economic

money sent home raises incomes;
fewer workers for farms and local shops

Social

young adults leave; some children and elderly
relatives stay behind; schools may shrink

Environmental

less pressure on farmland nearby,
but empty houses can leave land untended

The place people move to

Economic

a bigger workforce builds the city and its
industries; wages can stay low for some jobs

Social

population grows fast; housing, transport and
services struggle to keep up

Environmental

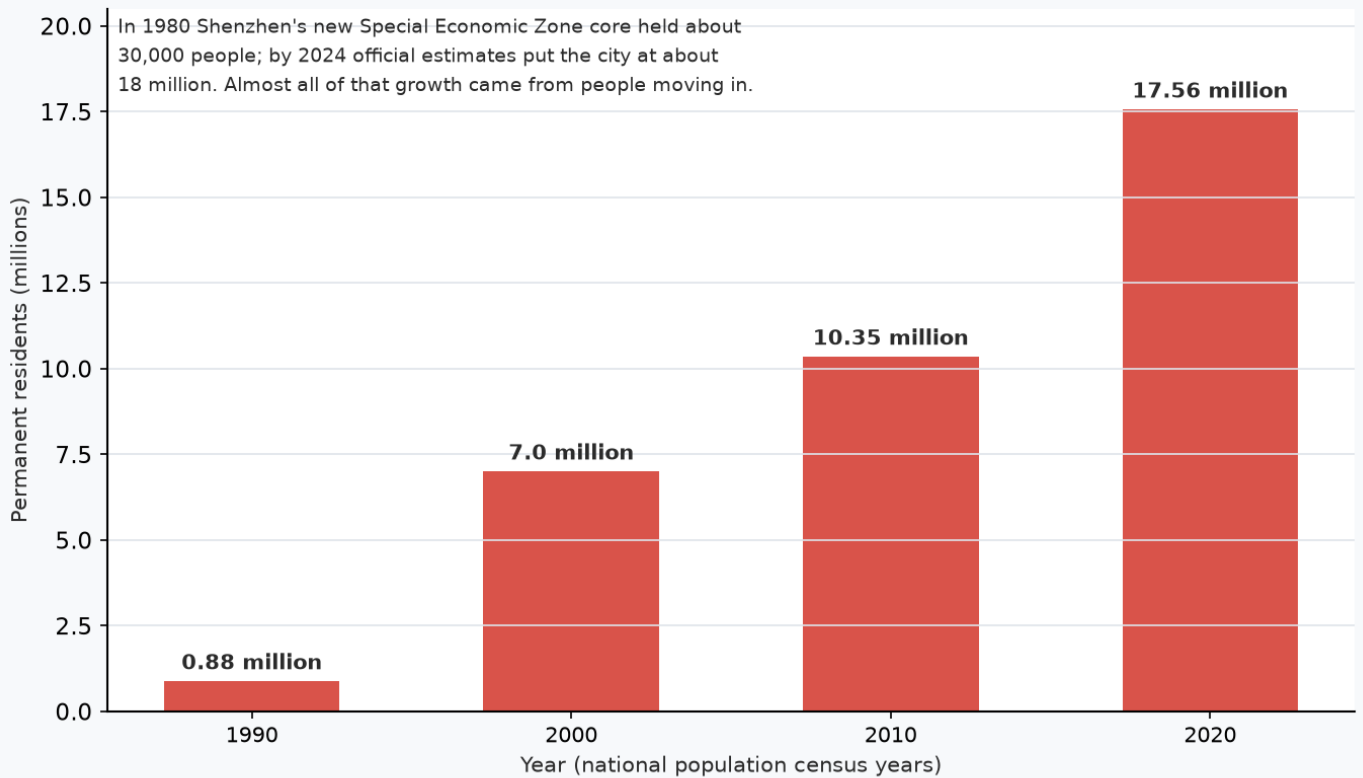
farmland and bushland become suburbs;
more waste, traffic and heat

Model, with typical effects. Real impacts differ by place: they are what the evidence in each case shows.

A model of rural-urban migration as one flow changing two places: the place people leave (money sent home raises incomes but fewer workers remain, schools may shrink, some land is untended) and the place people move to (a bigger workforce builds the city, housing and services struggle, farmland becomes suburbs), each split into economic, social and environmental rows

Shenzhen, China. No city shows the two-places story better. In 1980 the new Special Economic Zone core held about 30,000 people. By the 2020 census the city held 17.56 million permanent residents, and by 2024 about 18 million. Almost all of that growth was people moving in.

Shenzhen: one city's share of the fastest urbanisation on record



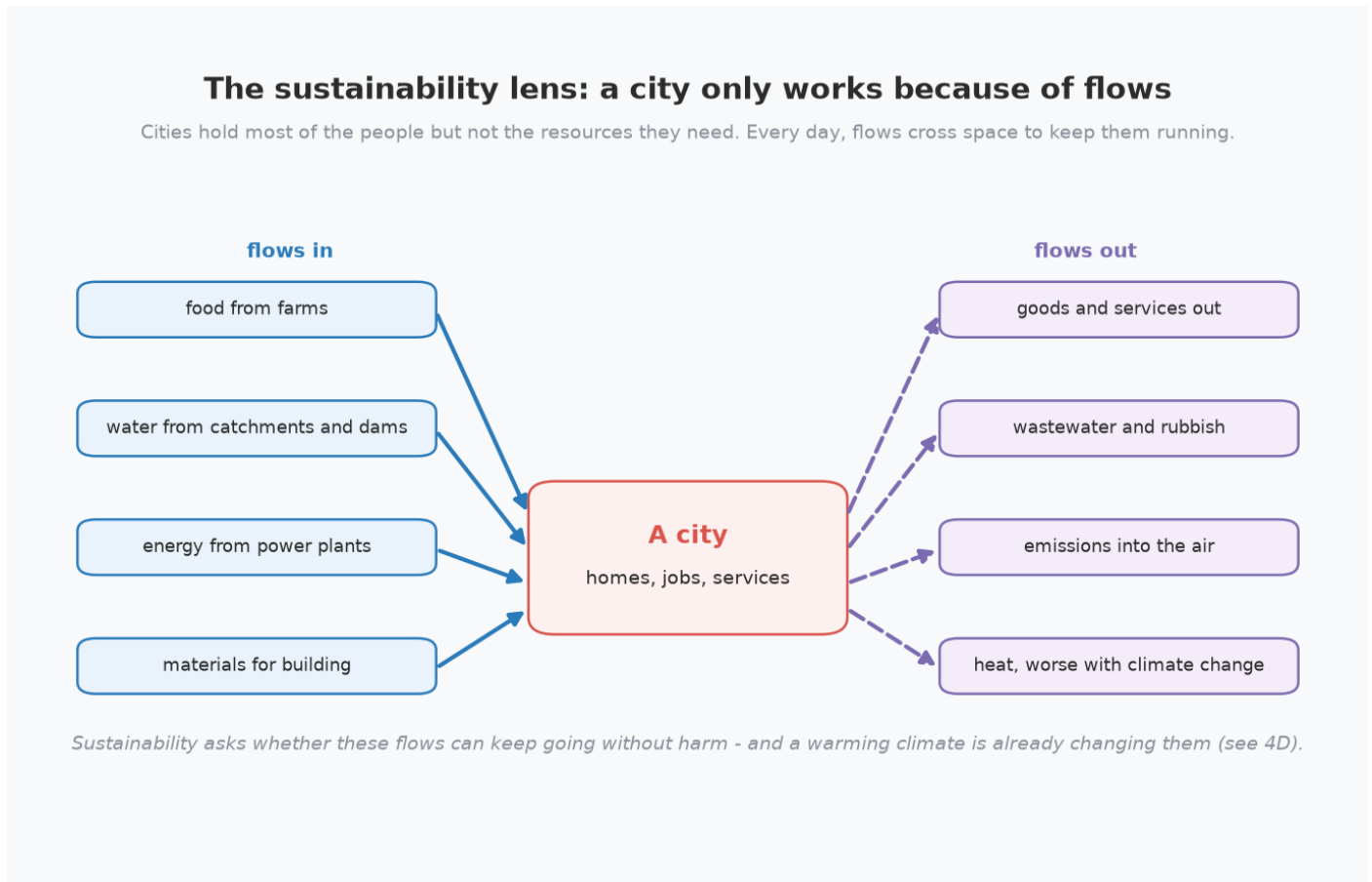
A bar chart of Shenzhen's permanent residents at census years: 0.88 million in 1990, 7.0 million in 2000, 10.35 million in 2010 and 17.56 million in 2020, with a note that the 1980 Special Economic Zone core held about 30,000 people and that almost all growth came from people moving in, sourced to the national population censuses of China

The place people moved **to** changed character completely: fishing villages and rice fields became a city of towers, ports and factories in forty years (place), with work for millions but also pressure on housing, traffic and heat (the impacts rows of the model). The places people **left** changed too: villages across China lost most of their working-age adults for much of the year, grandparents raised children while parents worked away, and money sent home raised village incomes. One flow, two places changed — exactly the sentence in E02.

Australia. The same thinking works with Australian flows. The capitals' net internal loss of 29,800 people in 2024-25 means regional towns gained workers, customers and, in some places, pressure on housing; and the small towns that young adults leave lose the numbers that keep a school, a footy team or a clinic viable. 4B showed the same two-places logic for overseas migration linking Australia and China with other countries.

5. The sustainability lens: a city only works because of flows

Sustainability asks *can this keep going without harm?* The model below is the question in one picture.



A model of a city kept running by flows: food from farms, water from catchments and dams, energy from power plants and building materials flow in; goods and services, wastewater and rubbish, emissions and heat flow out, with a note that sustainability asks whether these flows can keep going without harm and that a warming climate is already changing them (see 4D)

A city holds most of the people but grows almost none of the food, catches none of the water and mines none of the energy it uses every day. It runs on flows, so its sustainability is really a question about the places at the other end of those flows — farms, catchments, power regions — which is interconnection again. E01 names this link directly — sustainability and urban settlement are connected. The last outflow, heat, is where climate change bites: 4D showed how Australian cities are adapting — shade, water-sensitive design, heat plans — because a city that cannot stay liveable in a warmer climate is not sustainable. Sustainability is the lens that asks whether the whole system, city and connected places together, can keep going.

6. A contested question, steelmanned both ways

This band's key question for Chapter 4 is: *Is Australia's population too concentrated in its cities?* It is a genuinely contested question, so this section states each side in its strongest form and lets you evaluate.

A contested question, steelmanned both ways

Is Australia's population too concentrated in its cities?

(One of the curriculum's own key questions for this band.) Each side below is stated in its strongest form.

YES, it is too concentrated

Pressure lands on one place at once:

housing, traffic, water, heat.

A flood or heatwave in a big city

reaches millions in a single event.

Country towns lose young adults,

so services shrink and ages rise.

Spreading growth would share both

risk and opportunity more evenly.

NO, concentration has real benefits

Dense cities can share trains, pipes

and wires, using less land per person

than low-density sprawl does.

Cities gather jobs, universities and

hospitals where most people are.

People move to cities chasing work

and community - that is their choice,

not a mistake to be corrected.

Evaluate with the concepts, not with gut feel: where (space), what it does
to places (place), which places are linked (interconnection), how fast
(change), and at what cost (sustainability).

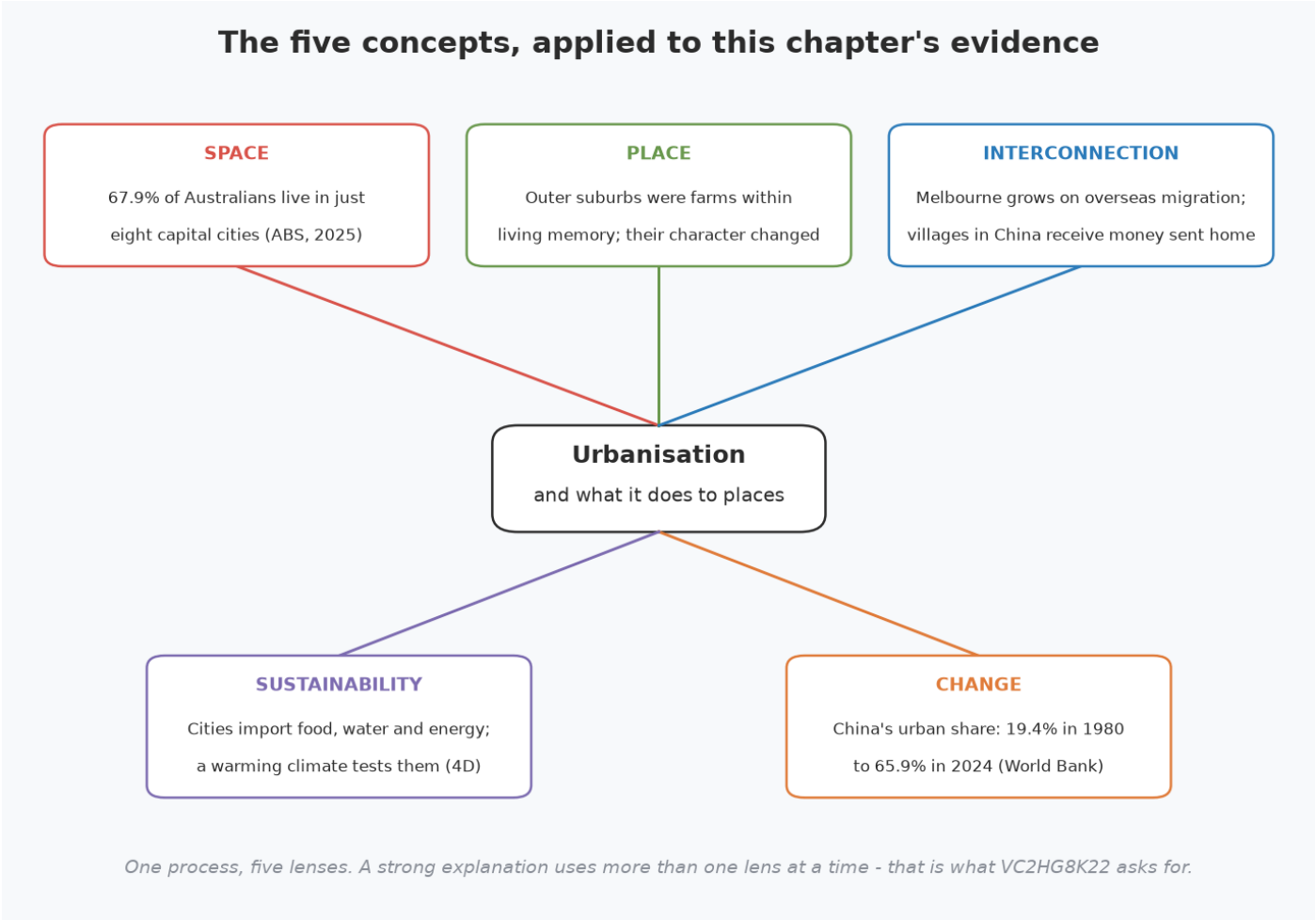
Two cards stating each side of “Is Australia’s population too concentrated in its cities?” in its strongest form - YES: pressure lands on one place at once, one flood or heatwave reaches millions, country towns lose young adults, spreading growth would share risk and opportunity; NO: dense cities share trains pipes and wires using less land per person, cities gather jobs universities and hospitals where most people are, and people move by choice - with a strip saying to evaluate with the five concepts, not with gut feel

Notice that both sides use real evidence from this chapter: the 67.9% map and the -29,800 internal flow support the YES side’s story of pressure and of towns losing young adults; the sustainability lens (dense cities using less land and fewer pipes per person) and the change lens (people moving towards work by choice) support the NO side. That is what steelmanning means — each side gets its strongest evidence, not a weak version that is easy to knock down.

The mark in this section is **not** for which side you land on. It is for the reasoning: which concepts you used, and how honestly you handled the evidence on the other side.

7. The concepts come together

Lay the five lenses over this chapter’s evidence and the question behind VC2HG8K22 is answered:



A concept web joining a centre box “Urbanisation and what it does to places” to five boxes - SPACE (67.9% of Australians live in just eight capital cities), PLACE (outer suburbs were farms within living memory), INTERCONNECTION (Melbourne grows on overseas migration; villages in China receive money sent home), CHANGE (China’s urban share 19.4% in 1980 to 65.9% in 2024) and SUSTAINABILITY (cities import food water and energy; a warming climate tests them) - with a note that a strong explanation uses more than one lens at a time

One process, five lenses. The space lens says *where* (eight coastal capitals, and the coastlines of China). The change lens says *how fast* (nearly flat in Australia, record-fast in China). The interconnection lens says *what joins it all* (migration flows, money sent home, food and water). The place lens says *what it feels like* (villages, outer suburbs, a city rebuilt in forty years). The sustainability lens says *what it must not break*. A strong explanation uses more than one lens at a time — that is what VC2HG8K22 asks for, and it is the habit this whole book is building towards.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Take Melbourne’s 2024-25 growth and run it through all five lenses.

Lens	Question the lens asks	What the evidence shows
Space	Where is the growth landing, and why there?	Melbourne (5.4 million at June 2025) sits on the coast where jobs, ports and services cluster; its +105,030 was the largest gain of any capital.
Place	What does the growth do to the	Outer growth suburbs were farm



Lens	Question the lens asks	What the evidence shows
	character of places?	land and market gardens within living memory; new estates change what those places are like.
Interconnection	Which places are joined by the growth?	Most of the gain came from overseas migration (capitals' net overseas migration +258,100), while the capitals together lost 29,800 people to other Australian places — Melbourne is joined to the world and to regional towns at once.
Change	How fast, and driven by what?	+105,030 on a base of 5.4 million is close to 2% in one year — fast for a city this size — and driven mostly by migration and jobs, not natural increase.
Sustainability	Can it keep going without harm?	The city runs on flows of food, water and energy; the heat and water responses from 4D are what keep that growth sustainable.

Conclusion: no single lens finishes the job. The five answers *together* are what “understanding urbanisation through the concepts” means.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Sort the Shenzhen impacts into the two places, then name the concepts at work.

Six impact cards have been shuffled. Put each under “the place people leave” or “the place people move to”, and tag it economic, social or environmental:

- **A.** Young workers send money home, so village incomes rise.
- **B.** Rice fields on the city edge become factories and suburbs.
- **C.** Villages lose most of their working-age adults; some village schools shrink.
- **D.** A workforce of newcomers builds towers, roads and a port in a few decades.
- **E.** Traffic, waste and heat rise as the built area spreads.
- **F.** Older relatives stay behind, cared for from a distance.

Working: A, C and F happen where the workers *left* (A is economic — money sent home; C and F are social). B, D and E happen where they *moved to* (D economic; B and E environmental).

Place left	Place moved to
A (economic), C (social), F (social)	D (economic), B (environmental), E (environmental)

Concepts at work: interconnection (the flow of workers and money joins village and city); change (30,000 to about 18 million in forty-four years is a rate as well as a fact); place (both ends of the flow are different places than they were). **Conclusion:** that is VC2HG8K22.E02 in one worked picture — one flow, two places changed.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. In your own words, write the working definitions this section gives for: (a) urbanisation; (b) urban growth; (c) rural–urban migration. Then explain in one sentence why a city can grow while urbanisation stays flat.

Q2. Using the concentration map: (a) name the two largest capitals by population at June 2025; (b) what share of all Australians lives in the eight capitals; (c) which lens is the map answering, and give one reason (from 4A or 4C) why the capitals are where they are.

Q3. Using the two-curves graph: (a) read off Australia's urban share in 1960 and 2024; (b) read off China's urban share in 1980 and 2024; (c) by how many percentage points did China's share rise over 1980-2024? (d) explain why "urbanisation", not just "urban growth", is the right word for China's change.

Q4. Using the growth-components chart: (a) which component added the most people to the capitals in 2024-25? (b) say in plain words what the minus on net internal migration (-29,800) means; (c) how much did regional Australia grow in the same year? (d) which two bars are the *same flow* seen from its two ends?

Q5. Using the Shenzhen chart: (a) read off the city's permanent residents in 1990 and 2020; (b) about how many people lived in the 1980 Special Economic Zone core? (c) where did almost all of Shenzhen's growth come from? (d) in the two-places model, is Shenzhen the place people leave or the place they move to?

Q6. Match each statement to the lens (space, place, interconnection, change, sustainability) that best asks about it: (a) Hobart grew by 542 people in 2024-25 while Melbourne grew by 105,030 — why the difference, and why there? (b) A new outer suburb feels nothing like the market gardens it replaced. (c) Village incomes in China rise when workers in Shenzhen send money home. (d) Australia's urban share moved only from 81.6% to 87.6% across 64 years. (e) Can the city's water, food and power keep up without harm?

Unscaffolded

Q7. Using the spatial-process model and what 4A taught, explain why urbanisation is called a *spatial* process. Name at least three of the flows in the model and say what would happen to a city if one of them stopped for a month.

Q8. Choose one flow of people: rural–urban migration in China, internal migration in Australia, or overseas migration to Australia. Using the two-places model, describe two impacts on the place people leave and two impacts on the place they move to, tagging each impact economic, social or environmental.

Q9. "Australia's population is too concentrated in its cities." Put this claim in its strongest form using at least one figure from this section; put the opposing view in its strongest form using at least one other figure; then evaluate the two views using at least two concepts. Marks are for the quality of the reasoning, not for which side you land on.

Q10. A classmate says: "Urbanisation is only about change — the other four concepts add nothing." Use two pieces of evidence from this section to show what the change lens alone would miss, and name the lens or lenses that catch it.

Extended response — evidence-based written task

Q11. Explain how the five geographical concepts — space, place, interconnection, change, sustainability — help you make sense of urbanisation and what it does to places.

Write about one page. Your response must:

- use at least **one Australian** piece of evidence and **one Chinese** piece of evidence from this section (for example, the 67.9% map, the 2024-25 components, the two curves, Shenzhen);
- apply at least **four** of the five concepts by name, each doing real work in a sentence;
- name one impact on a place people leave and one impact on a place people move to (E02);
- refer to at least one source from the source list at the end of this section;
- close with one sentence saying what the concepts have in common when they are applied to urbanisation.

Success checklist: terms defined; concepts named and used (not just listed); evidence cited with its source; both places of a migration flow covered; a closing sentence that ties the lenses together.

Answers

Q1. (a) The rise in the share of a country's people living in urban areas. (b) A rise in the number of people living in a city or town. (c) People moving from the countryside into towns and cities. A city can grow while urbanisation stays flat if the countryside grows just as fast — the share does not move. **Q2.** (a) Sydney (5.6 million) and Melbourne (5.4 million). (b) 67.9%. (c) Space; any one of: coastal ports and trade first made them grow; jobs and services cluster there; Australia's urban pattern was set early. **Q3.** (a) 81.6% and 87.6%. (b) 19.4% and 65.9%. (c) 46.5 percentage points. (d) Because the *share* of China's people living in urban areas rose — the countryside did not keep pace — which is what urbanisation measures. **Q4.** (a) Net overseas migration (+258,100). (b) More people left the capitals for other Australian places than arrived from them. (c) +94,700. (d) The -29,800 internal bar for the capitals and the +94,700 regional gain — the same move of people, seen from each end. **Q5.** (a) 0.88 million and 17.56 million. (b) About 30,000. (c) People moving in (migration). (d) The place people move to. **Q6.** (a) Space. (b) Place. (c) Interconnection. (d) Change. (e) Sustainability. **Q7–Q10.** See fully-worked solutions for what a good answer contains. **Q11.** Marked against the success checklist.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model answer: Urbanisation is spatial because its parts sit in different places and are joined by flows. (1) People move from rural places to cities (migration); (2) food, water, energy and materials flow into the city from farms, catchments and mines; (3) money sent home, goods, services and decisions flow back out. If the food flow stopped for a month, the city would not feed itself — supermarkets hold days of stock, not harvests — so a “city” story is really a city-plus-connected-places story. A good answer names three real flows and traces one stoppage to a concrete effect.

Q8. Model answer (China): Place left: (1) economic — money sent home raises village incomes; (2) social — villages lose working-age adults and some schools shrink. Place moved to: (3) economic — a large new workforce builds the city and its industries; (4) environmental — farmland becomes suburbs and traffic, waste and heat rise. Any four impacts correctly placed and tagged, with the flow named, earns full marks. The same shape works for Australia: a regional town loses young adults (place left, social) while a capital gains workers and housing pressure (place moved to, economic/environmental).

Q9. Model answer structure: Strongest YES: 67.9% of Australians live in eight cities, so one heatwave or flood in a capital reaches millions at once, and the -29,800 internal flow means some country towns keep losing the young adults their services need — spreading growth would share both risk and opportunity. Strongest NO: dense cities share trains, pipes and wires and use less land per person than sprawl; and the growth is mostly people choosing work and community, which is not a mistake to be corrected. Evaluation with two concepts (for example sustainability: compare the land-and-pipes saving of density against the risk of pressure in one place; and place: what concentration does to the character of both city and country town). Marks are for both sides at full strength and for honest use of the evidence — not for the landing.

Q10. Model answer: The change lens gives rates and drivers (China +46.5 percentage points in 44 years; Melbourne +105,030 in a year) but nothing about *where* or *what it does to places*. Evidence 1: the 67.9% map — that growth lands in eight coastal points is a space fact the change lens cannot see. Evidence 2: money sent home to Chinese villages, or the capitals' -29,800 internal flow — one flow changing two places is interconnection (and place), and it explains impacts the change lens misses entirely. A good answer names what change catches (speed, direction, drivers) and exactly what it misses (where, which places, at what cost).

Q11. Model structure: Paragraph 1 defines urbanisation (share, not head-count) and names the five lenses. Paragraph 2 (space + change): 67.9% of Australians in eight coastal capitals (space), against China's urban share racing from 19.4% to 65.9% while Australia's crept 81.6% to 87.6% (change), sourced to the ABS and the World Bank. Paragraph 3 (interconnection + place): the capitals' 2024-25 growth came mostly from overseas migration while regions gained 94,700 — one flow, two places changed; Shenzhen's villages sent workers and received money sent home (E02), and outer suburbs that were farms within living memory are new estates (place). Paragraph 4 (sustainability): cities run on flows of food, water and energy, and 4D's heat and water responses are what adapting looks like. Closing sentence: the five lenses are one toolkit — each asks a different question of the same process, and only together do they turn facts about cities into an understanding of what urbanisation does to places.

Sources used in this section

- VCAA, *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0*, Geography, Levels 7 and 8 — VC2HG8K22 and elaborations, via the VCAA export of 2026-07-29.
 - Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population, Australia, 2025* (cat. no. 3218.0, released 31 March 2026, reference period 2024-25; estimated resident population at 30 June 2025 and components of population change), retrieved 2026-08-25.
 - World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, urban population (% of total population), indicator SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS (collected and smoothed by the UN Population Division), and total population SP.POP.TOTL, retrieved 2026-08-25.
 - National population censuses of China (Shenzhen permanent residents, 1990-2020); Shenzhen’s city statistics bureau estimates; the 1980 Special Economic Zone core figure (about 30,000) as widely reported; retrieved 2026-08-25.
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Teaching sequence (teacher note — not student-facing)

1. **Hook and lenses (1 lesson).** Open on the two-curves graph: “same process, two speeds — what word measures the difference?” (share, not head-count). Define the boxed terms; use the five-lenses map to hand students the toolkit; Q1–Q3.
2. **Space, change, interconnection (1 lesson).** The concentration map and the growth-components chart; the spatial-process model; Worked example 1; Q4–Q6. Make the “same flow, two ends” reading of the -29,800/+94,700 pair explicit — it is the interconnection idea in numbers.
3. **Two places, sustainability, the contest (1–2 lessons).** The two-places model and Shenzhen; Worked example 2; the city-flows model with the 4D adaptation cross-reference; the steelman figure as discussion (Q7–Q10). Keep Q9’s steelman as paired work: each side must state the other’s case before evaluating.
4. **Pulling it all together (1 lesson).** The concept web; Q11 as the assessed written response (this is the achievement standard’s work on explaining with geographical concepts, made visible for VC2HG8K22).

Links: the concept-capstone chain is 2E → 3F → 4E; 4E is the third capstone and applies the full five-concept toolkit to Chapter 4’s own material (4A process, 4B migration, 4C patterns, 4D responses). 6A returns to concept-organised conclusions. The skills CDs are *not* taught here — this section supplies the knowledge the skills sections draw on.

§2A: no exclusions apply to VC2HG8K22; no First Nations material is used or required. **Coverage keys:** VC2HG8K22.E01, VC2HG8K22.E02.