

Sydney's most liveable suburbs: The urban living index



With Sydney's population set to reach 5 million next year, there are significant densification trends underway. Sydneysiders are increasingly embracing medium and high density housing, 7 in 10 either have lived in a unit/apartment or are currently living in one. Of Sydneysiders who have never lived in a high density setting, 50% would consider unit/apartment living and this rises to 63% for Generation Y.

"Over the last decade there has been a big swing in Sydney to more urban living generally in apartments. To gain a clearer understanding of urban living patterns and satisfaction [Urban Taskforce Australia](#) commissioned McCrindle, experts in researching demographic data to develop the Urban Living Index.", said Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson.

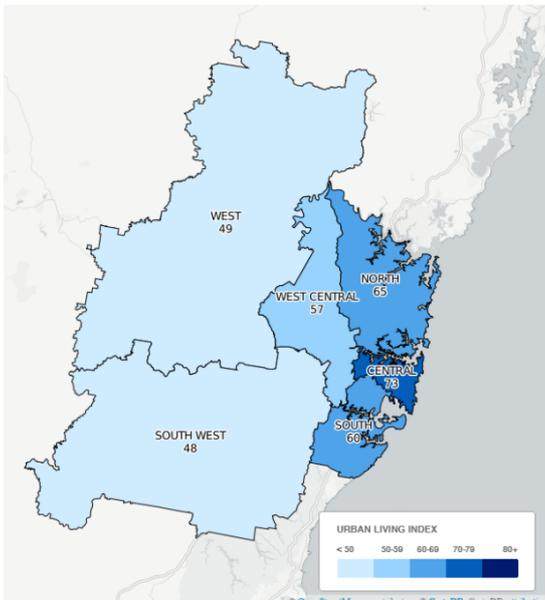
[Mark McCrindle](#), Principal of McCrindle Research says, "The challenge for Sydney's future

is to ensure that it responds to population growth yet maintains its world-beating lifestyle and that its liveability rises to match its increasing density, and that is why we have developed the Urban Living Index.”

[See the Urban Living Index website here, where you can download the full report.](#)

Measuring the liveability of areas across Sydney

The Urban Living Index is an ongoing measure of the liveability of suburbs in Sydney. This instrument considers the affordability, community, employability, amenity and accessibility of an area to determine how liveable it is.



The Planning Regions of Sydney

The NSW Planning Regions were developed by the NSW government to allow for cohesive and integrated planning under A Plan for Growing Sydney. Exploring the Index across the six regions assists in understanding how they are equipped to respond to a high density population and where there are opportunities for improvement in the quality of urban living.

Sydney’s most liveable suburbs

This analysis of Sydney’s 228 suburbs shows that Surry Hills and Crows Nest - Waverton are Sydney’s leaders with the top rated Index of 85. In the Central planning region after

Surry Hills was Marrickville with 83, in the North it was North Sydney - Lavender Bay with 82, West Central was Parramatta - Rosehill 80 followed by North Parramatta 75, South was Hurstville 76 followed by South Hurstville - Blakehurst 74, South West was Liverpool - Warwick Farm 66 followed by Cabramatta - Lansvale and West was Springwood - Winmalee 59 followed by Blaxland - Warrimoo - Lapstone 59. The results show a strong correlation between high density housing and urban liveability with seven of the top ten rated suburbs in the top twenty highest density suburbs in Sydney.

Suburb (SA2)	Index	Index Rank	Proportion of dwellings that are High Density	HD Rank
Crows Nest - Waverton	85	1	71%	11
Surry Hills	85	1	70%	14
Pymont - Ultimo	83	3	91%	3
Marrickville	83	3	40%	62
Potts Point - Woolloomooloo	82	5	92%	2
North Sydney - Lavender Bay	82	5	78%	5
Randwick	82	5	68%	17
Chatswood (East) - Artarmon	82	5	64%	25
Leichhardt - Annandale	82	5	25%	91
Neutral Bay - Kirribilli	81	10	76%	7
Hornsby - Waitara	81	10	53%	36
Newtown - Camperdown - Darlington	81	10	40%	63
Parramatta - Rosehill	80	13	82%	4
Darlinghurst	80	13	76%	6
Waterloo - Beaconsfield	80	13	75%	8
Manly - Fairlight	80	13	70%	15
Redfern - Chippendale	80	13	69%	16
Erskineville - Alexandria	80	13	56%	29
Double Bay - Bellevue Hill	79	19	71%	9
Bondi - Tamarama - Bronte	79	19	67%	18

Sentiment toward housing affordability

One of the key drivers of the growth in high density housing is Sydney’s housing affordability challenge. When Sydneysiders were asked if they had to start over and buy into the current property market, more than 3 in 5 (61%) of Sydneysiders would probably or

definitely be unable to do so. Sydneysiders are also not convinced that the affordability challenge will change with 51% saying that in three years' time their area will be less affordable than it is today, and only 11% saying it will be more affordable. This is even higher in the West planning region where 56% say it will be less affordable. It is also higher amongst Generation Y (56%) than Baby Boomers (47%). More than half of all Sydneysiders (59%) say that Sydney's housing affordability is a massive challenge for their children's generation with an additional 29% saying it is a significant challenge.

More than half of all Sydneysiders (57%) state that the construction of units and apartments assists affordability. More than a third of Sydneysiders support the idea of allowing first home buyers to access their superannuation to buy a home (37%) and increasing unit/apartment construction (36%) while only 1 in 5 (22%) supports the tightening of bank lending rules as a solution to affordability.

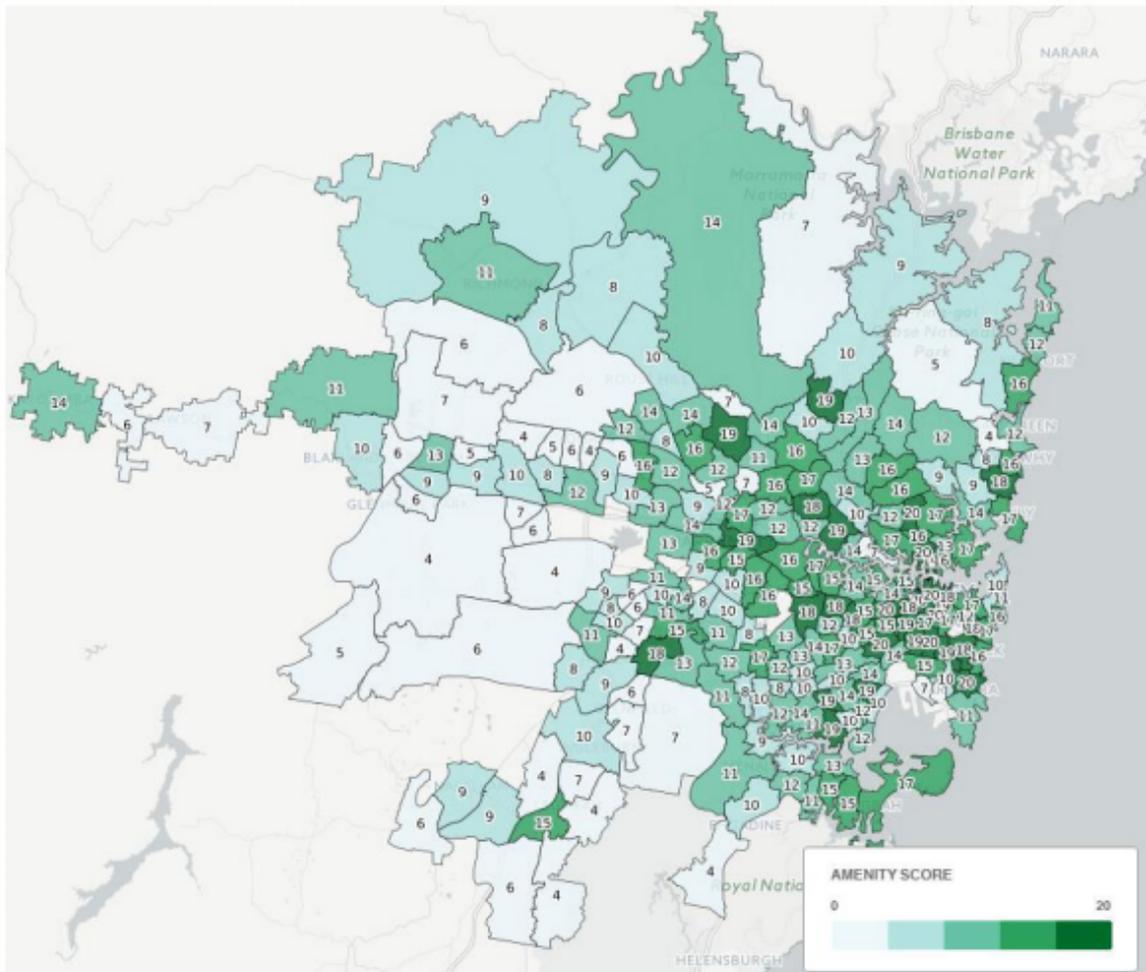
The most valuable assets of Sydneysiders

When it comes to housing, Sydneysiders prioritise the intangibles (location and community) above the tangibles (buildings and fittings) by a factor of 2 to 1. They also prioritise current liveability above long term price growth, also by a factor of 2 to 1 and value walkable communities above more mobile lifestyles by a factor of 6 to 1. Sydneysiders generally like their local community assets such as shops and cafes with more than half (52%) saying they totally love or really like them compared to just 6% who are indifferent to this amenity. Twice as many (32%) believe that amenities in their local community will increase over the next 3 years compared to those who think there will be a decrease (16%). Sydneysiders are also positive about the growing infrastructure, transport and accessibility of their local area, with 37% expecting it to increase over the next three years compared to 14% expecting a decrease.

The Urban Living Index report, interactive maps and further details on Sydney's six planning regions are all available at www.urbanlivingindex.com.

Measure	Description of measure
Amenity	
Educational attendance	The proportion of individuals in attendance at post-school educational institutions indicates high levels of drive and determinations, as well as the proximity of higher education institutions to an area.
Arts and Recreation	Arts and recreation businesses foster community engagement.
Restaurants and cafes	Restaurants and cafes are hubs for community activity and social interaction therefore fostering vibrant communities.
Shopping	The ability to shop locally creates greater social cohesion with more opportunities and time for local community connection.

The following map shows how the suburbs of Sydney scored in amenity, the darker the area, the higher the score.



For more information

If you found this article interesting, download our free [McCrimdle Insights Report](#) for more information on the trends shaping the future of Australia.

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