



Melbourne

Transforming Central Melbourne for a more Resilient Future

- **DURATION**

Ongoing

- **POPULATION 2024**

5.316.000 (Growth Rate 1,55%)

- **URA SCOPE**

ECOLOGY. Green Urbanism

SOCIETY. Staying Human

ECONOMY Urban Prosperity Beyond GDP

STRATEGY. Shared Vision

- **TOPICS**

CARBON NEUTRAL, RENEWABLE

ENERGY, URBAN FOREST, STORM

WATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS,

MOBILITY, CITY REVITALIZATION,

CONNECTIVITY, RENEWABLE ENERGY

AND STORAGE

- **MAIN ACTORS**

Climate Change and City Resilience

In the early 1980s, Melbourne faced a critical crossroads. Once a vibrant hub, the city had stagnated amid suburban sprawl. City leaders began to reflect on an essential question: what kind of city do we want to be? This introspection sparked a transformative journey, revitalizing Melbourne from a struggling urban centre into one of the world's most liveable and sustainable cities. This change was not instantaneous; it resulted from deliberate, incremental steps to address climate change, enhance social connections, and promote economic growth.

By 1985, it was evident that Melbourne's central area was faltering, with a car-dominated core that became largely desolate after 5 PM. In response, city leaders envisioned a "24-hour city" that celebrated community vibrancy. The focus was shifting from cars to people. Streets were redesigned to prioritize walking, cycling, and public transport, while public spaces emerged as vital community hubs. Simultaneously, the city aimed to increase its residential population, setting an ambitious target of adding 8,000 housing units in 15 years. Resilience became the guiding principle of this renaissance.

Leaders recognized the need to embrace Melbourne's unique character, enhance green spaces, and modernize infrastructure to combat climate change. Initiatives like the Urban Forest Strategy addressed declining tree canopies and rising heat, while the city as a Catchment program ensured water security. This shift from "grey to green" transformed roadways into pedestrian-friendly environments and integrated nature into urban life. Collaboration was key; public-private partnerships enabled these ambitious projects.

Data-driven approaches, such as the CLUE database and studies like "Places for People," provided insights and tracked progress. Melbourne's dedication to these efforts earned it the title of "world's most liveable city" seven times according to The Economist, showcasing its commitment to sustainability and resilience.

Ultimately, Melbourne's story is a powerful testament to the impact of intentional urban transformation in creating a better city for its inhabitants.





Impact

Melbourne has transformed into a global beacon of sustainability and liveability through consistent and visionary initiatives. These efforts have reshaped the city's identity, infrastructure, and environmental impact, creating a vibrant and people-centered urban hub.

Since 1985, downtown Melbourne's swelling has surged from 685 to 63,056, resulting in a lively, mixed-use urban centre that stimulates economic activity and culture.

Carbon Neutral Leadership: Certified carbon neutral since 2012, Melbourne has reduced council emissions by 79% over the last decade.

Pioneering Renewable Energy: The Melbourne Renewable Energy Project has enabled the city to run entirely on renewable energy, making significant events, like Melbourne Fashion Week, carbon neutral as well.

Urban Greening: With over 30,000 trees planted in the past decade and new biodiversity initiatives, Melbourne enhances wildlife habitats, air quality, and community well-being.

Water Resilience: Six stormwater harvesting systems now provide 23% of Melbourne's water needs, ensuring long-term sustainability for the city's green spaces.

Public Spaces Investment: Upgrades to public realms and conversion of underutilized infrastructure into open spaces have made the city more inviting and recreationally rich.

Sustainable Transportation: Expanding bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure has reduced car dependency and lowered emissions.

Circular Waste Systems: A centralized waste management system has streamlined processes, with over 1,900 tonnes of organic waste turned into compost since 2021.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborative efforts drive innovation and community benefits, revitalizing the city.

Melbourne's achievements represent a cultural shift towards sustainable urban living, balancing growth with resilience. Despite future challenges, the city's ongoing commitment to sustainability positions it well for adaptation and continued success. Melbourne exemplifies how urban environments can thrive as engines of innovation and sustainability, promoting a more liveable and equitable world.

The Challenge

In 1985, Melbourne was at a tipping point. The central city was failing as suburbanization reshaped the metropolitan area. With an increasing number of residents and businesses moving to sprawling suburbs, the once-thriving heart of the city faced economic stagnation, social isolation, and physical decline. Streets were car-dominated, pedestrian spaces were neglected, and the city functioned as an "8-to-5" hub, bustling during work hours but lifeless after dark.

The city's declining residential population compounded the problem. Few people called the downtown area home, leaving it devoid of vitality, culture, and the mixed-use vibrancy necessary for a thriving urban environment. Recognizing this, city leaders set an ambitious target: to add 8,000 new residential units within 15 years. However, this solution posed a new risk—rapid urban growth threatened to erase Melbourne's local character, its unique charm that differentiated it from other global cities.

Additionally, Melbourne's infrastructure was ill-equipped for the future. The city relied heavily on cars, lacked renewable energy systems, and faced growing challenges from climate change. Without bold action, Melbourne risked becoming a disconnected, unsustainable metropolis, losing its identity and potential.

Solution Proposed

Transforming Cities for a Sustainable Future: A Global Framework for Urban Renewal- This framework, rooted in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), outlines ten transformative to build resilience, sustainability, and liveability:

Local Character: Celebrate a city's identity to foster pride and cohesion. **Density and Mixed-Use:** Promote compact, vibrant neighbourhoods that optimize infrastructure and encourage walkability. **Streets for People:** Reclaim streets from cars, prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport to create dynamic, people-focused public spaces. **Connectivity:** Ensure equitable access to daily needs without relying on cars through robust transport networks and walkable design. **Grey to Green:** Transform roadways into open spaces, mitigating heat and enhancing biodiversity. **Urban Forests:** Expand tree canopies to combat urban heat and restore ecological balance. **Water Resilience:** Secure water resources with innovative systems. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Leverage collaboration to fund impactful projects. **Green Buildings:** Showcase sustainable design to inspire widespread adoption. **Renewable Energy:** Commit to clean energy and storage for a zero-net future.

By adopting these strategies, cities can evolve into global leaders, addressing climate change, fostering equity, and creating vibrant spaces for generations to come.

<https://thebayawards.com/>