

UNSW Cities Institute

We bring a spatial understanding of human conditions together with world class research around enabling city systems to transition at pace to respond to complex legacies of settlement, marginalisation and neglect in the Asia Pacific region.



UNSW
Cities Institute



UNSW
SYDNEY

Mass movement of people to cities is irreversible, particularly in the Asia Pacific, home to most of the world's megacities and more than half of the world's population, all of which are consistently being shaped and re shaped by rapid socioeconomic and demographic shifts.

Asia Pacific's cities will be a central feature in global efforts to respond to our most urgent global challenges around future liveability and resilience. Pressing social, environmental and economic crises – headlined by the global climate emergency and political unrest – are contributing to rising inequality and increasing tensions.



What we do

We unite world class research across disciplines with a design thinking approach, engaging with academia, industry, government and community groups to shape policy and pioneer meaningful change in our cities.

Why we're different

We grasp how every element impacts and influences the spaces we occupy. These aren't just abstract considerations, they're a spatial understanding of human conditions.

- We are independent intermediaries to ensure relevancy and impact.
- Our leadership team is grounded in practice
- We understand the spatial implications of how people inhabit a city.
- We bridge academic insight with real world challenges, we focus on practical insights, diverse voices and trans-disciplinary collaborations.
- We apply a systems approach to problem

How we succeed

- 1 Leverage, extend and accelerate research across all faculties within UNSW and beyond.
- 2 Ensure that research is accessible and impactful, ultimately used to adjust policy, shape opinion and affect change.
- 3 Develop creative pathways to solutions through conversation and collaboration.
- 4 Foster ongoing relationships with government, community and industry partners.
- 5 Fast track innovation and productivity around public infrastructure.
- 6 Be informed by a First Nations methodology.
- 7 Launch real projects that show the shift in our thinking and exemplify change in our urban environments.
- 8 Listen to the lived experiences of our diverse communities.



Our real world approach gives us capacity for enquiry, passion for engagement and the technical skills to anticipate and prepare for change.

– UNSW Cities Institute

Our approach

Our strategy and research directions are shaped collaboratively, using city infrastructure, city performance and city wellbeing as the core elements that guide all of our pursuits.

Our goals

By harnessing UNSW's expertise, the Cities Institute will be a world leading advisor to industry and government, delivering holistic commercial ready solutions that embrace a long-term perspective across three highly interconnected pillars of activity.

Research and initiatives will be tailored to the unique voice and history of Asia-Pacific countries, critical in encompassing the wide range of cultures, languages, histories, environmental, social, and economic factors – tailored solutions mindful of these differences will be more effective and meaningful to the communities they are intended to serve.

RESEARCH	ENGAGEMENT	EDUCATION
Developing best practice to drive change	Interconnections of research, education, international network and external audience	Dissemination of best practice from research, growing the network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local research team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair - Professors of Practice - Postdocs and PhDs • Project startup fund 	Supporting international cross pollination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University/ research network • Government network and advisory services • Industry engagement, input and testing • City communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modular Masters degree • Continuous professional development • Growing network of alumni • PhDs to train the next generation of researchers



UNSW's Pivotal Role

Broad consultation across 2021-2022 with industry, government and community sectors strongly endorsed a need for the Cities Institute. As Australia's leading research institution experienced in city development, UNSW has identified the pivotal role it can play in helping these sectors tackle the challenges of rapid urban growth.

Through leveraging and amplifying UNSW's significant research capability and expertise – across the built environment, design, economics, climate science, engineering, energy, health and social sciences – the Institute will define problems focused on critical thematic areas that require multi-disciplinary and multijurisdictional action. The Institute will co-design project briefs with government, industry and community partners, to fast-track innovation and productivity, guiding cohesive solutions to attain long-term sustainability.

Strategy implementation

As the Institute grows in scale, we envisage strategic hires of operational managers to support academic leadership in managing the complex interactions between the Research, Engagement and Education pillars.

Establishment

- > Recruitment of Chair of Future Cities
- > Continue to build Asia/Pacific Cities Network (Universities, Government, industry)
- > First iteration design of Masters Program
- > Committee for Sydney research commences
- > Australian Healthy Cities Partnership established
- > Progress assessment (Reporting, public presentation/event)

Stand up

- > Research agenda complete, exemplar regional projects designed
- > Chair recruits Professor of Practice Positions, and
- > Postdoctoral researchers
- > First modules of Masters complete and delivered as micro credentials
- > Secure government advisory consultation assignments
- > Establish cross-disciplinary, cross-jurisdictional, cross-cultural Youth Panel
- > Cities X(change) established
- > Recruit Communications Manager
- > Progress assessment.

2024

2026

2025

2027/28

Maturity

- > Support Professorial Roles with PhD candidates – assign to exemplar projects
- > First suite of modules to constitute complete Masters developed
- > CPD accreditations secured
- > Career placements/rotations commence within international network
- > Associates Program established
- > Progress assessment.

Cities Institute BAU

- > Significant grants secured
- > Exemplar projects scaling up with external funding
- > International government advisory track record building
- > International networks well established across University, government, industry
- > Strong recognition and media presence
- > Ongoing progress assessment and process of continuous improvement.

Trajectory to impact

Enabling city systems to transition at pace to respond to complex legacies of settlement, marginalisation and neglect



JURISDICTIONS

Local, state, federal, international



FOCUS

Asia-Pacific region

INPUTS

UNSW multi-disciplinary expertise: 7 Faculties & 10+ research centres/labs/institutes

Government cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional knowledge

Industry partner knowledge

Asia Pacific alumni network

National and international university alliances

Community consultation – citizen-centric insights

Youth forum

Research Pillar

Research hubs to interrogate how cities are evolving, focusing on three initial themes:



CITY WELLBEING



CITY INFRASTRUCTURE



CITY PERFORMANCE

Building team capability, recruiting: Chair, Professors of Practice, Postdoctoral researchers, PhDs

Project startup fund

OUTPUTS

Engagement Pillar

- > International University network
- > Government advisory roles
- > International industry engagement
- > The International Society for Urban Health
- > Asia Pacific alumni network
- > Alliance for Healthy Cities
- > The Committee for Sydney
- > Japanese University Alliance
- > Australian Healthy Cities Partnership
- > Times Higher Education Global Sustainable Development Congress (UNSW is a content partner)
- > Career placements/rotations
- > Associates Program
- > Citizen Youth Panel
- > Cities X(change)
- > Cities Roundtable Sessions
- > Communications officer

Education Pillar

- Coalition of city universities in the Asia Pacific region delivering Master of Cities – flexible post graduate program:
- > Modular micro-credentials, stack to create Masters
 - > Accredited for CPD

OUTCOMES

> Cities Institute is the independent urban advisor of choice.

> An international network of urban leaders who bridge academic insights with real world challenges.

> A critical framework to inform urban policy and practice.

> Evidence-based models translated into co-designed commercial solutions and policy ready applications.

> Diverse voices embedded within city-design, resulting in a more inclusive sector.

> Innovation is un-locked through coalescing multidisciplinary, multi-sector, international teams.

> UNSW's strengths as a key SDGs knowledge partner for the Asia-Pacific are communicated and recognised.

> A community of practice established with strategically identified Pacific partners.

> Strengthening of existing Asia Pacific knowledge partnerships.

> New strategic partnerships are developed.

> UNSW invited to join THE Impact Rankings advisory board.

IMPACT

> A sustainable urban environment supporting better equity, stronger social cohesion, improved economic growth, enhanced environmental outcomes and overall citizen wellbeing.


> Mobilisation of key decision makers to adopt cohesive, city-level strategies to address the need for transitions in city systems, at pace to respond to significant stressors for the wellbeing of the planet.


> Cities Institute has made a significant contribution towards supporting the UN'S Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities targets by 2030.





Global Alliances


We've formed strategic partnerships with major universities across the globe to amplify our expertise and help to solve pressing issues.


 APRU is a network of 45 premier research universities from 16 economies around the Pacific Rim.


 The Group of Eight (Go8) is a coalition of leading Australian universities, intensive in research and comprehensive in general and professional education.


 The PLuS (Phoenix London Sydney) Alliance combines the strengths of three leading research universities in addressing challenges in global health, social justice and sustainability while progressing the responsible innovation of advanced technologies.


 Universitas 21 is the leading global network of research intensive universities.


 A global network of universities promoting evidence-led solutions to tackling climate change.


 The Sydney Quantum Academy aims to develop a quantum ecosystem through education, industry, community engagement and entrepreneurship.


 TEDI seeks to transform engineering education to change lives – both for higher education students and for users of the products they design and make.

 A collaboration between experts in health, research and education, MBG develops innovative ways to deliver better healthcare to NSW communities.

 Project Mezza develops ways to deepen existing collaborations between UNSW Sydney and Western Sydney University.

 The NUW Alliance seeks out big collaborations that make a difference, unlocking new value, impact and benefit for our communities

 The USRN brings together universities from around the globe interested in embedding social impact into their activities.

 This collaboration monitors trends in poverty and inequality over time, explores drivers, and develops solutions to sharpen the focus and stimulate action to tackle these policy challenges.



Multidisciplinary knowledge¹

By harnessing UNSW's trademark disciplinary excellence across the built environment, design, economics, climate science, engineering, energy, health and social sciences, we offer holistic, commercially viable solutions that embrace a comprehensive and long term perspective.

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FACULTIES

- Arts, Architecture & Design
- Business
- Engineering & Technology
- Law & Justice
- Medicine & Health
- Science & Environment
- UNSW Canberra at ADFA*

45
SCHOOLS

125
CENTRES & INSTITUTES

Collaborate with us

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In the spirit of reconciliation, the UNSW Cities Institute acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, waters and community. This publication was prepared by the UNSW Cities Institute. August 2023

1. As at 2019. *Australia Defence Force Academy (ADFA). Copyright ©2023 UNSW Sydney. All rights reserved. CRICOS Provider Code 0098G.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We support the Sustainable Development Goals

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