

Research capability
delivering value



Urban Futures

Enabling Capability Platform

Contact us to partner for a better future

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Making cities great places to live

Cities around the world are bulging with people and facing unprecedented urban design and liveability challenges as a result.

These pressing problems are complex, important and happening right now. They include population growth; traffic congestion; climate change; rising greenhouse gas emissions, poor air quality, noise, and fossil fuel depletion; declining biodiversity; pressures on social, physical, digital and green infrastructure to meet population demands; declining housing affordability; food, energy and water insecurity; growing inequities and social exclusion; digital disruption impacting work, industry, and transport; and rising chronic disease.

Integrated planning and design solutions are needed across multiple sectors to address these and other implications of rapid population growth and urbanisation. RMIT's **Urban Futures Enabling Capability Platform** (ECP) draws together cross-disciplinary research expertise that responds to the major challenges confronting cities locally and globally.

Our Urban Futures ECP research affiliates are specialists in urban and regional planning, architecture, design, communication, environmental science and sustainability, global and social studies, ecology, civil engineering, construction, transport planning, spatial analysis and other complementary disciplines. These experts are passionate about working with RMIT's partners to transform urban planning policy and practice and achieve liveable cities that promote the health and wellbeing of residents.

Research that delivers for our partners

RMIT's Urban Futures ECP serves as a streamlined, single point of contact within the University for research projects and partnerships involving city planning and design and the built environment.

This capability platform is actively enabling new research collaborations between RMIT and government policy-makers, non-government organisations,

planning and design practitioners, and individual communities. It harnesses expertise across the entire University, including teaching and research academics, undergraduate and post-graduate students and alumni.

The Urban Futures ECP also works across our other seven Enabling Capability Platforms, supporting their research projects and drawing on their expertise to support cross-disciplinary city-shaping investigations.

Many of our research affiliates are collaborating at the global level. For example, RMIT hosts the United Nations Global Compact Cities Program and partners with its primary urban agency, UN Habitat.

A Sector Expert Research Advisory Group of leaders from government and other key sectors will help shape the future direction and priorities of this capability platform.

How fast are the world's cities growing?

Over 50 per cent of the world's population now lives in cities and over the next 30 years that figure is predicted to increase to 70 per cent.

In Australia, our population is forecast to double by 2050, with most of that growth occurring in cities.

What makes a liveable city?

Research indicates that liveable cities have healthier and happier residents.

A truly liveable city is one that:

- > is safe, socially inclusive and cohesive
- > is environmentally sustainable and biodiverse
- > has affordable housing close to good public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure
- > enables residents to live close to employment, education, public open space, local shops, health and community services
- > has good leisure and cultural facilities, and
- > has access to clean water, low carbon energy and healthy food.



Our vision

Billie Giles-Corti, Director, RMIT Urban Futures ECP



RMIT and our external partners will work together to address the complex urban and transport planning, design and policy challenges facing cities across the globe.

Our multidisciplinary research capability will enable the public and private sectors to transform the way cities are planned, built and governed to achieve healthy and sustainable urban development.



Examples of Urban Futures ECP collaborative research projects

RMIT has vast potential to provide innovative research that delivers policy value to communities and government.

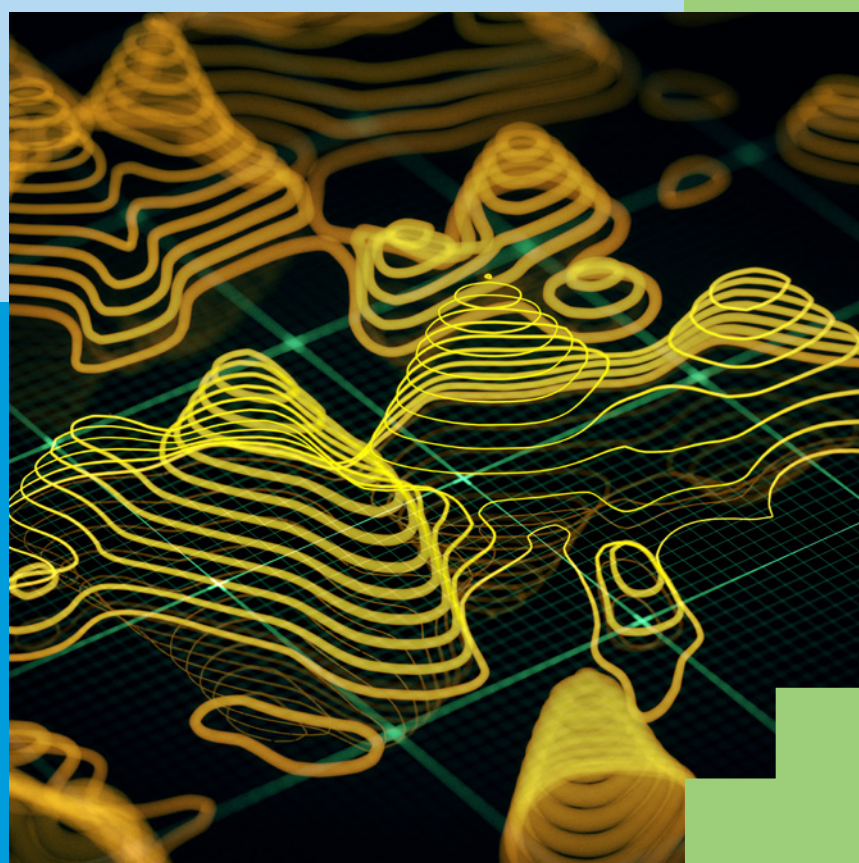
The Policy@RMIT initiative will enable the University to apply our cross-disciplinary research expertise to help resolve pressing policy challenges, particularly those requiring innovative design, planning, science and engineering solutions.

Policy@RMIT is being piloted in partnership with the Victorian government to deliver better sustainability and liveability outcomes for Victorian communities.

Over three years, the partnership is developing, trialling and evaluating a best-practice model for co-producing policy-oriented research undertaken between RMIT and Victorian policy agencies. The new model will enable us to deliver co-designed research that addresses many of our partner's most urgent and complex policy problems.

The development process is also expanding capabilities within the University's research community and within our partner's policy area in relation to collaborating to deliver research-policy impact.

This project is being funded by RMIT's ECP Opportunity Fund.



RMIT's unique and world-leading expertise in spatial science, analysis, computing and visualisation is being harnessed to establish a 'Spatial Capability Cluster @ RMIT'.

This new interdisciplinary community of practice creates a one-stop-shop of capabilities and networks for connecting spatial expertise at all levels and disciplines within the University. Our comprehensive spatial research capability ranges across science to social science, architecture to business, and the environment to artificial intelligence.

This opens up a rich area of cross-disciplinary expertise within the University to benefit our external research partnerships. In addition to supporting the work of the Urban Futures ECP, the cluster also assists other ECP research activities, particularly those undertaken by the Social Change, and Information and Systems (Engineering) ECPs.

This initiative is being funded by RMIT's ECP Capability Development Fund.

Key capabilities

Hundreds of expert research affiliates in disciplines ranging from urban, global and social studies; architecture and design; property, construction and project management; media and communication; engineering and business.

Internationally recognised areas of research excellence in:

- > urban and regional planning
- > architecture
- > environmental science and management
- > civil engineering and building
- > design practice and management
- > sociology and
- > communication and media studies

Additional cross-cutting research strengths in:

- > spatial analysis and visualisation
- > spatial computing and gaming
- > transport
- > green infrastructure
- > low carbon energy
- > climate change mitigation and adaption
- > employment and economic development
- > urban governance and social equity

Research facilities and centres include:

- > Centre for Urban Research
- > The Centre for Design Practice Research (d_lab)
- > Centre for Art, Society and Transformation
- > Centre for Environmental Sustainability and Remediation
- > Social and Global Studies Centre
- > Centre for Communication, Politics and Culture
- > The RMIT Design Hub
- > Centre for People, Organisation and Work (CPOW)
- > Water: Effective Technologies and Tools (WETT) Research Centre
- > Centre for Game Design Research
- > United Nations Global Compact – Cities Programme

Close relationships with:

- > local, state and federal governments
- > United Nations (UN) Global Compact Cities Program and UN Habitat
- > Australian APEC Study Centre
- > World Economic Forum
- > Practitioners, peak bodies, research institutions and networks in Australia, Asia and Europe

Research and innovation priorities

Urban transformation

Investigating how we achieve urban transformation that creates liveable and sustainable future cities, in response to rapid population growth and urbanisation.

We will examine how to transform the way metropolitan and regional cities are planned, designed, built, governed, financed, experienced and valued, to achieve better social, economic, environmental, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Understanding and engaging communities

Examining how communities, business and industry can be engaged to shape the transformations needed to ensure our future cities are healthy, liveable, sustainable, inclusive and equitable.

Anticipating and shaping infrastructure requirements

Determining how we can anticipate, shape, finance and ensure timely delivery of the social, digital, green and physical infrastructure required for rapidly changing new and established communities.

Harnessing big data and technology

We will explore how big data and technology can be used to support urban decision-making and governance.

For example, using big data, sensors, technology and citizen science to benchmark, monitor, simulate, visualise and evaluate cities.

Rethinking urban economics

Looking at how to measure and value the intangibles of good city planning.

What new economic methods could be developed that value the costs, benefits and externalities of building sustainable liveable cities that foster health and wellbeing?

Key application areas

- > Urban planning and design
- > Housing
- > Transport
- > Economic development and employment
- > Resources (water and energy)
- > Urban greening
- > Infrastructure (social, digital, water and physical)
- > Urban governance
- > Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Priority Industry Sectors



RMIT'S ENABLING CAPABILITY PLATFORMS (ECPs)

- > Advanced Materials
- > Biomedical and Health Innovation
- > Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication
- > Design and Creative Practice
- > Global Business Innovation
- > Information and Systems (Engineering)
- > Social Change
- > Urban Futures