



Leading cities series



RSM

Brisbane 2025

Building Future Confidence



THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD
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Introduction

The compelling tale of an ambitious city that took on the world.

When Brisbane's history is written, this period will provide one of its most compelling chapters.

Across the world, cities are competing for investment, tourists, events and skills.

The larger 'world cities' have a natural advantage in this race because they are already household names and templated into everybody's shortlist.

Brisbane has no such advantage. It has a relatively low international recognition factor and it is tucked away in a sparse southern hemisphere, thousands of kilometres from traditional global action centres.

Yet here we are – a city that has hosted a Commonwealth Games, a World Expo and a G20 Summit. A city that snuck through the pack to snare the jewel of international sporting events in the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Whether it is the confidence that the 2032 Games has given us, the energy running through the Asia Pacific, or just an alignment of stars, our *2025 Leading Cities – Brisbane* report documents a city with unstoppable momentum.

RSM in Brisbane is proud to again produce this report to document the progress, issues and opportunities Brisbane is embracing as it moves deeper into the 21st century.

As a professional services firm we have a box seat for much of the activity happening in our city.

As we pointed out when we launched the 2023 *Leading Cities – Brisbane* report, there are upsides and downsides that come with rapid growth.

Brisbane will need to learn to morph quickly without losing its renowned lifestyle, networks and highly social approach to doing business. There is definitely a growing sense of optimism that we can pull this off.

The launch of the report comes 12 years after RSM Australia opened its first Brisbane office and coincides with the official opening of our new headquarters in Queen Street (although we have been in Australia for more than 100 years and we have 32 offices across the nation).

I would like to sincerely thank the industry and community leaders who have contributed to this report. Their frank insights make compelling reading.

I hope this document gives you plenty of food for thought and some fresh insights into the fascinating opportunities ahead.

It is our contribution to ensuring Brisbane circa 2025 is recorded for prosperity – a humble city that thought big and demanded the world spotlight.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Healey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Steve Healey
Managing Partner, Brisbane
RSM Australia

rsm.com.au/brisbane

Foreword by Lord Mayor of Brisbane



Over the past 100 years, Brisbane has become one of Australia's fastest-growing cities, the country's lifestyle capital and a must-do destination for visitors from across the globe.

With the Brisbane 2032 Games on the horizon, we are now embarking on one of the most exciting chapters in our city's history.

Brisbane is alive with opportunity and our State of the City report has revealed that our economy is set to grow 68% to \$275bn by 2041.

Our record delivering vibrant new precincts like Howard Smith Wharves, West Village, South Bank and Fish Lane has helped shape Brisbane's incredible lifestyle.

These destinations are not only creating more to see and do for Brisbane, they're also driving an increase in visitors, investment and jobs in our city.

But it's not just Brisbane's incredible lifestyle that's got the world buzzing.

An infrastructure pipeline worth more than \$25bn won't just help make Brisbane a better place to live and visit, it will help keep Brisbane moving for generations to come.

Last year, three new active transport bridges opened in Brisbane, significantly improving connectivity for residents and visitors.

More than a million trips have already been taken across our Breakfast Creek and Kangaroo Point bridges, easing traffic congestion on our roads.

And we're keen to progress a bridge between Toowong and West End in partnership with the State and Federal governments before the 2032 Games.

The first Brisbane Metro service also started earlier this year, helping us make the leap from public transport to mass transit – and this is just the first stage.

A new tunnel through the heart of Brisbane's CBD and a second service will start operating later this year, and we're working closely with the State and Federal government to expand bus rapid transit even further to help people get home sooner and safer.

This report demonstrates Brisbane's incredible trajectory. By working together, we can secure a lasting legacy that will help keep Brisbane moving today, during the Brisbane 2032 Games and beyond.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Adrian Schrinner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Adrian Schrinner
Lord Mayor of Brisbane

Brisbane has become one of the most intriguing and innovative places in the Asia Pacific region, and even the world.



Executive summary

In the 1970s there was a joke about a pilot landing in Brisbane from Sydney and advising passengers to set their watches back 10 years. You do not hear that anymore. In fact, when you look closely at Brisbane in 2025, the joke would have no humour or underlying truth.

There might also have been a time when publishing a 'Leading Cities' report on Brisbane might have been considered a misnomer. Today it is a claim easily backed with compelling evidence.

Brisbane has proudly emerged from its 'big country town' positioning for much of last century to become one of the most intriguing and innovative places in the Asia Pacific region, and even the world.

RSM'S 2025 *Leading Cities – Brisbane* report paints a picture of a city where the stars are lining up.

The scene was set with a series of international events like World Expo 88 and the 2014 G20 Global Leaders Forum which gave Brisbane a taste of the international focus and the confidence to believe that it had the mettle to be a new world city.

The awarding of the hosting rights to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games has taken that confidence to a new level.

Suddenly the spotlight has spun around to Brisbane, and everyone is watching. It seems the eight-year 'Green and Gold Runway' to the 2032 Games could not have come at a better time.

Population growth is booming, and the inner city is being transformed by major infrastructure projects that are taking the city's entertainment, dining and accommodation credentials to bold new levels.

The city's universities and institutes are spinning out research that constantly attracts global attention. With each Leading Cities report, the Brisbane story becomes more captivating, and the plot takes fascinating new turns.

The following are just some of the highlights of this report that RSM is proud to produce as part of our efforts to document and celebrate a special time in history for a city that is fired up for action.

The opportunity

Brisbane already has a reputation as Australia's lifestyle capital. There is increasing evidence that many of Australia's top innovators are moving here to take advantage of the lifestyle and the city's collaborative approach to doing business.

Brisbane has a distinct advantage in key industry sectors such as health (the city is home to world-class research), advanced manufacturing in biomedical technologies, food technologies and aerospace innovation. The broader region also boasts a \$25bn infrastructure pipeline, a strong knowledge economy and a fast-growing port and experience economy.

The economy

Brisbane is a fast-growing city with a thriving \$183bn economy that is expected to grow 68% to \$275bn by 2041, according to Brisbane Economic Development Agency forecasts.



This extraordinary growth is underpinned by unrelenting population inflow, the emergence of world-class industries, and the city's convenient connectivity to the 'tiger economy' regions of the Asia Pacific.

The city's fiercely competitive edge is powered by the fastest growing working age population among Australia's major centres, and a portfolio of more than 120 ASX-listed companies headquartered in Brisbane, whose combined market capitalisation tops \$108bn.

Population and people

South-East Queensland is on track to have a population as large as the current population of Singapore by 2046. This will come off the back of 21% growth, well above many of the established cities of the Asia Pacific.

Brisbane is increasingly attractive to overseas and interstate migrants, enticed by the lifestyle and the emerging opportunities, as well as continuing high rates of natural population increase. This means the population will not only become larger, but also more diverse.

Lifestyle and environment

Brisbane is one of only two cities in the world to achieve a gold level standard from the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals Cities Global Initiative. It has also been ranked 33 out of 100 destinations and in the top five in Asia Pacific by the Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement). Brisbane has achieved Bronze Benchmarking status by EarthCheck, the world's leading global environmental management and advisory group for the travel and tourism industry.

Arts and culture

The city will soon be home to the New Performing Arts Venue (NPAV) – a Queensland Government project which will provide a 1,500 seat commercial theatre for ballet, opera, drama, and major musicals.

Brisbane is also characterised by individual precincts, each with their own personalities – from the glamorous Queen's Wharf, to a place to meet and greet at Howard Smith Wharves, the shopping precinct James St, and the more family-oriented South Bank.

By 2028 the \$2.5bn transformation of the Eagle Street Pier and Waterfront Place will join the offering, revitalising another of our waterfront dining hubs.

Towards 2032

After 2032, Brisbane will always be recognised as an Olympic and Paralympic city. This makes it part of a small and exclusive club and gives it the kudos to leverage future events and drive visitor numbers and investment.

In its preparation for the Games bid, the Queensland Government estimated the event would create 129,000 jobs in tourism, hospitality and construction and catalyse a \$20bn economic uplift from 2021 to 2036.

The *Elevate 2042* report compiled for the Games preparations, outlined the opportunity to "showcase our unique cultural and environmental landscapes, display our creativity and share our way of life with the world." It said the Games represented a significant investment in our future, and its legacy could create economic, societal and environmental changes that would make our diverse region even more inclusive, sustainable, connected, liveable and prosperous.

The opportunity

Brisbane – Bracing for the time of our lives

Brisbane is embracing a renaissance that is quickly securing it a place as one of the world's most talked-about and ambitious cities.

As Australia's fast growing lifestyle capital, beautifully positioned in the burgeoning Asia Pacific, it is becoming the place where people with new ideas come to enjoy one of the world's most enviable lifestyles in a region bursting with opportunity.

Throw in the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games hosting duties and you have a city at the heart of the action.

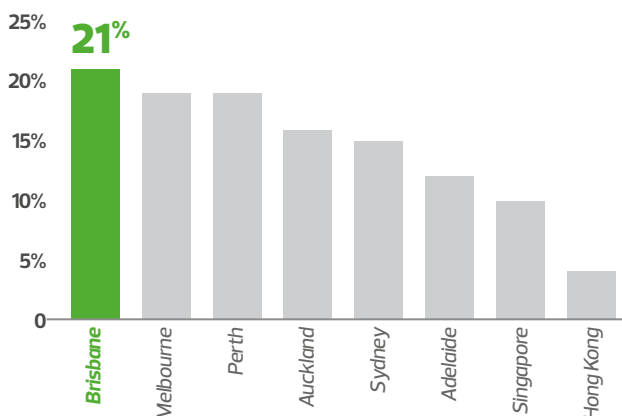
According to Queensland Government projections, South-East Queensland will grow to [six million people by 2046](#).¹

The city already has a reputation as Australia's lifestyle capital. It is also increasingly becoming a visitor destination, capitalising on the 'un-tourism' trend in which tourists seek to live the lifestyle of a city, rather than just tick off boxes on a to-do list.

It is increasingly the place where Australia's top innovators move to, to take advantage of this lifestyle and help grow our innovation economy.

The proof is in the statistics – Brisbane has the highest density of innovation hubs per capita in the country, according to the Brisbane Economic Development Agency's (BEDA) recent [State of the City report](#).² The city is powered by the fastest-growing working-age population, with 7.7% growth against an average of 4% across major cities.

Ten-year population growth in comparable Asia Pacific markets



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, based on population data

Brisbane has a distinct advantage in key industry sectors such as health (the city is home to world-class research), advanced manufacturing in biomedical technologies, food technologies and aerospace innovation. The report shows Brisbane boasts a \$25bn infrastructure pipeline; a strong knowledge economy, a fast-growing port and experience economy.

Small businesses form much of the core of the Brisbane local government area. There has been a 10% increase in the number of these businesses over five years. The city went from 123,779 small businesses registered in 2017 to 136,218 in 2022, according to the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Counts of Australian Businesses](#).³ Of these businesses, nearly 60% do not employ anyone, almost 38% have 1-19 employees, and just under 3% have 20-199 employees.

This is wrapped up in an economy projected to be [worth \\$275bn by 2041](#),⁴ nestled on the doorstep to Asia during what has been tagged the 'Asian Century'.

Despite this, only around 3% of people were able to identify Brisbane and point to it on a map according to research led by the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Organising Committee.⁵

Brisbane Economy Development Agency CEO Anthony Ryan said city marketers were initially "horrified" at the results.

"But in response, we all said: 'No, that's the opportunity,'" Mr Ryan said. "London, Tokyo, LA, Paris, they don't need any branding or global recognition – they've already achieved it. A city such as Brisbane has never had that and therefore by the time LA 2028 rolls around, we're the next cab off the rank so we're expecting that figure to increase dramatically."

Queensland Futures Institute CEO Steve Greenwood says one of the big challenges over the next eight years will be ensuring that Brisbane and the regions share the benefits from the emerging opportunities.

¹ Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Population Projections, 2023 edition

² BEDA, State of the City, 2024

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses. Cited in Brisbane City Council Brisbane Economic Profile, September 2023

⁴ BEDA, State of the City, 2024

⁵ Liveris A, Figure cited in Rowland public webinar, March 2024

He says the regions do better when the capital city is growing and attracting attention. This is reinforced by the fact that a large number of Queensland's regional airports only have flights to Brisbane.⁶

"I think if we acknowledge the strength of the regions and continue to invest and grow in the regions it will (also) help Brisbane," he said.

"A smart way of doing this would be to look at the role of Brisbane as a capital. We need a capital. It's important. We need a strong, high-profile capital. But we also need to be equally investing in where our wealth comes from in the regions too. And we need to promote that and acknowledge that."

People have been talking about Brisbane 'coming of age' ever since the city hosted the Commonwealth Games in 1982.

Since then, the city's international event credentials have included a six-month, spectacularly successful World Expo in 1988, the Goodwill Games in 2001 and the G20 World Leaders Summit in 2014.

As it turns out, they were just the warm-up acts. Brisbane seemed to come from nowhere to snare hosting duties for the 2032 Games and that is driving a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure program and unprecedented attention on Queensland's capital.

Just as significantly, it has activated a burst of city confidence that permeates all aspects of city commerce and economic activity.

In 2025 and beyond, Brisbane is where the action is.

⁶ Brisbane Airport Corporation, Information cited during public events to promote the new Brisbane airport runway, 2019





Q & A

With Anthony Ryan CEO – Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA)

From a BEDA perspective, what are Brisbane's major opportunities stemming from the Olympics and the anticipated economic and population growth over the next 5–10 years?

Brisbane is also one of the fastest growing capital cities, and one of the fastest growing GDPs in Australia. Is that impact solely because of 2032? No.

Being an Olympics host has brought us attention that money can't buy.

2032 is a catalyst to that growth because everyone recognises the opportunities here are huge but the population growth is a component of why our economic indicators are strong.

But more importantly it has to do with our proximity to South-East Asia and the Asia Pacific population, which is a \$90tn economy, with 60% of the world's population, and 40% of the world's trade. And Brisbane has huge competitive advantages over other ports and other airports because of our proximity and we've never really taken advantage of that, and people have never really understood that.

The Port of Brisbane is the most efficient port in the whole of Australia and our airport has 24/7 operations, which are strong reasons why you'd set up your export industries within the SEQ rim.

As we move forward do you see the need for a different type of city, with respect to the way people live, work, commute and access recreation?

We don't want to be seen as Sydney or Melbourne. And we don't want to be seen as Paris or LA either. Brisbane has a lifestyle advantage. Our numbers in the visitor economy have surged. Even from the perspective of the way Brisbane is viewed now as a destination has changed. The latest statistics show Brisbane had achieved an \$11bn visitor spend. That's a record and has smashed pre-COVID records. But more importantly it has become the hero for visitation in Queensland.

Gone are the days when visitors would land in Brisbane, get in a taxi and head directly to the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and North Queensland. We've had a strong strategy to enhance the food, hotel, hospitality, major events, and business events offerings. As a result, the numbers continue to rise and we are now leading the way

across Queensland. Now people are staying longer and spending more.

Are we effectively using our natural assets such as the river to create a unique city experience that could make us stand out internationally?

There is certainly more to be done in relation to the activation of the river. There is also a lot more work to be done with regard to product development to continue to attract visitors and spend in this part of the world.

The Better Brisbane Alliance was established three years ago to unite decision makers who were interested in getting things done, and getting them done well and quickly. One of the focal points of that alliance is examining how to end the gap in thinking between the local, state, and federal governments, and come together with a consolidated vision for the river. It's already happening. There are wonderful activations through South Bank, Queens Wharf, Howard Smith Wharves, right down to the Brisbane Powerhouse. It's about understanding where the new gaps are, the historical gaps, and ensuring the river becomes known as an adventure playground. Over the next 5–7 years leading up to the Olympics, that co-ordinated effort will demonstrate something that is a shining light on the river and the bay. That will be the drone shots, the way people will remember Brisbane leading to 2032.

There's always a lot of discussion around whether Brisbane needs a Sydney Opera House-type icon. Do you think we need to build something that would be internationally recognised?

I was in Paris for the Olympics and they did an amazing job. They played to their strengths which is their physical infrastructure. I was able to sit next to the Eiffel Tower for the beach volleyball, experience the equestrian at Versailles, all of those things were amazing and were their strengths. I think Brisbane and SEQ's strengths are going to be the wildlife and biodiversity settings for our sporting events such as sailing where you can see the whales breaching. It's also going to be about our relationship with our First Nations people and how we tell the most important story of all, as well as how we embrace the Paralympics and start building for accessibility and sustainability. Those are the things that Paris could tell a good story about. But Brisbane can tell an extraordinary story, and we can actually show when good planning meets good event management, how you can honour all citizens and visitors in the one hit.

What is driving investment into Brisbane both domestically and internationally at the moment?

A number of factors. Firstly it is our reputation of having a coordinated approach and a humble approach to how can we assist you to get things done.

Brisbane is creating an ecosystem that is welcoming and collaborative.

We assist people to access key decision-makers to ensure that things happen as quickly as possible. There are the geographical advantages of Brisbane being closer to markets. And there's direct evidence that as new aviation routes emerge, you can almost graph investment into those cities in a year or 18 months. Air India coming into Brisbane is going to be a key target for us. When I was speaking to an investor in New Delhi, they said they literally had to fly over the top of you (Brisbane), fly back to you, then fly to Sydney or Melbourne and then fly back home. So they said they'll wait until they get a direct flight. Ultimately what investors want to know is whether they are going into a dead or growing market. Our population growth, GDP, the upcoming Olympics and Paralympics, and our lifestyle are all pointing to greater interest in this part of the world.

What needs to be done in the next 5-10 years to retain this investment, businesses, and talent?

Identifying new significant investments into this part of the world gives confidence to everybody else and they start looking at the future pipeline. It's all part of the bigger picture – we have the Olympics, the number one hotel in Oceania (The Calile), some of the best restaurants and chefs in Australia, and our visitor numbers are going through the roof.

Brisbane will also be home to the world's first commercially viable quantum computer and that becomes a catalyst because any investment firm that's wanting to redirect profits into a region has to do due diligence. So when you start seeing the likes of PsiQuantum coming to Brisbane, all of a sudden other firms relax a bit more and go okay, they've done the due diligence, they would not be playing in that space if it wasn't a good investment.

We're still an emerging city because we are continuing to grow and reinvent ourselves. We have got this validation that we are number one in many things. We're in the top 50 in the world for sporting events, we have some of the best beaches in the world. All of those things are pointing towards a different way from what we have been viewed in the past.

What do you think Brisbane does that is globally interesting, or globally significant?

From a Brisbane perspective, the work that we're doing in med tech and life sciences is making the world take note. We have Dr Ian Frazer with the Gardasil breakthrough, Vaxxas, and strong breakthrough innovators in that space with regard to research and development. We're now seen as a global leader and therefore investments are going to flow and you'll find that investment will flow into key life sciences like the Boggo Road and Herston precincts.

We're home to resource management, all the executives from the mining firms are here. We're the largest health precinct in the southern hemisphere. Of course, our infrastructure is going to surge over the next 20 years. Our conservative population forecast is that by 2046 the population in SEQ will be over six million people. That's extraordinary and therefore the infrastructure required to cater for that growth is going to be important.

SEQ is emerging as one of the heroes of the Australian economy.

What are we currently doing to promote Brisbane overseas?

BEDA has in-market representatives in three of our key markets – South-East Asia, North America and China, and we are working with key buyers and sellers of tourism and business events in those markets. We've really enjoyed seeing growth as a result of key investment into those spaces, and we partner with Brisbane Airport on South-East Asia and North America specifically. Once again, we will always continue to do things better and grow those markets.

What major events should we be looking at attracting until 2032 and beyond?

As I said, collaboration is Brisbane's superpower. And for the first time in history we've got all of the major venues to share their calendars with us in an open and transparent manner to help support cross-city planning.

The calendar allows us to understand where the gaps are and where we can hunt as a pack together to ensure that gap doesn't happen.

For instance, we have former *Powderfinger* bass guitarist John Collins from the Fortitude Music Hall and Triffid who sits on the Better Brisbane Alliance and he's always looking for international acts to fill his venues. By sitting on the Alliance he knows that the British & Irish Lions (rugby union team) are coming, so he's started hunting British Indie bands to come here in unison. We're all working together so that when things are happening we're leveraging the power of the moment and getting greater span in the city. So it's not just one event, it's a whole-of-city activation. It's a really exciting time.



A city with unstoppable
momentum

The economy

An optimistic city accelerating into hyperdrive

Brisbane's economy is firing on multiple pistons as it diversifies, innovates and capitalises on its perfect location for the "Asian century."

The city has a thriving \$183bn economy that is expected to grow 68% to \$275bn by 2041, according to the Brisbane Economic Development Agency [BEDA State of the City report released in 2024](#).⁷ This extraordinary growth is underpinned by unrelenting population inflow, the emergence of world-class industries, and the city's convenient connectivity to the 'tiger economy' regions of the Asia Pacific.

Brisbane's fiercely competitive edge is powered by the fastest growing working age population among Australia's major centres, and a portfolio of more than [120 ASX-listed companies](#)⁸ headquartered in Brisbane, whose combined [market capitalisation tops \\$108bn](#)⁹.

Spurred on by a willing workforce and a contagious optimism, international companies are setting up bases in Brisbane.

Plus, net migration inflow is unyielding – averaging [14,400 people every year since 2017](#)¹⁰. There is a culture of skilled migration, with two-thirds of migrants born in the Asia Pacific region.

RSM Economist Devika Shivadekar said the construction, technology, health and energy sectors offered the best growth opportunities for Brisbane over the next 10 years.

"It's no secret the construction industry is the standout performer, not just in Brisbane but across Australia," Ms Shivadekar said.

"There's close to \$100bn in public infrastructure projects in the pipeline, and I think the pan-Australia push for clean and green energy, and renewable energy is also contributing to growth.

"Tech is also growing, with a lot of startups popping up in the AI, fin-tech, and biotech space. Adopting more tech into your business will make it more efficient and you won't have to rely on unstable labour market conditions."

Ms Shivadekar said the overstretched health sector would benefit from the relaxation of visa rules which allow for more nurses and specialists to help fill the labour market gap in healthcare.

Much of the predicted economic growth will be driven by international demand for Brisbane's products. With [exports set to rise 3.5% every year until 2031](#)¹¹, the city is ideally located to become one of Asia Pacific's major economic powerhouses. By the time the Olympics kicks off, we will have experienced [41% export growth and 34% economic growth](#)¹².

The influx of investment and innovation momentum are propelling the scientific and technical services sector to overtake healthcare, education and construction to ultimately become [Brisbane's leading industry by 2041](#)¹³.

Advance manufacturing in robotics, biomedical, food technology and aerospace innovation is expected to [grow 29% by 2031](#)¹⁴. The knowledge economy is projected to grow even faster, [expanding 50%](#)¹⁵ in the same period.

But Ms Shivadekar warned of economic consequences from the curbs placed on international student numbers, saying it was not the answer to our housing crisis.

"Unfortunately, in catering to the populist narrative, we have created a short-sighted policy by targeting a section of our society who aren't even a problem," Ms Shivadekar said.

"Students are everything but inflationary because you often have six or seven students staying in a two-bedroom apartment because they can't afford the rent."

Ms Shivadekar said it would be difficult for Brisbane and Queensland to re-establish themselves as top destinations for international students. If they gained a reputation for having no opportunities to pay back debt, students would be inclined to study elsewhere.

"Education is one of the top exports that Australia provides to the world, and our universities rely heavily on international students to bring in revenue which has now been halved," Ms Shivadekar.

"Local businesses also rely on student spending, and students are what drives the gig economy – they often come to Australia with sizeable loans to pay for their education – so they work in cafes and do odd jobs."

On the upside, she said housing affordability was slowly improving, along with reforms to streamline the development process.

^{7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15} BEDA, State of the City, 2024

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional internal migration estimates, 2021

However there were still supply bottlenecks that had shifted focus towards public infrastructure, limiting the availability of labour for housing.

"We need a collaborative effort from the public and private sectors as the city continues to expand. It should take another two to three years to see significant improvements, but in five years there should be a better balance between demand and supply for housing."

In other sectors, the [\\$1bn federal and state government deal](#)¹⁶ to build a quantum computer in Brisbane is expected to bring 400 new highly-skilled jobs to the city and position it as world-leading in the realm of quantum computing with a \$2.2bn potential by 2030.

The deal will help the tech sector overtake the healthcare economy which is one of the fastest growing in Australia, forecast to [grow 36% by 2031](#)¹⁷.

The second largest growth sector is transport and logistics, with transport infrastructure expected to [expand by 43% by 2031](#)¹⁸. It will lay the groundwork for the Olympics, but also make it an easier city to get around, in turn strengthening the economy and exports.

Brisbane exports are projected to grow from its current [\\$44bn to \\$62bn by 2031](#)¹⁹. This growth will require increased capacity on freight routes, as well as increased air services and better linkages to more international destinations.

If these are delivered, they will make things easier for tourism and the experience economy which is predicted to [grow 41% by 2031](#)²⁰. In 2023 alone, the [overnight visitor expenditure for the Brisbane region totalled \\$10.1bn](#)²¹.

Despite growing stock, demand continues to outstrip supply in the luxury hotel market, increasing commercial opportunities for investors and developers.

With a strong post-COVID rebound, Brisbane had the [highest growth in revenue per available room of any Australian city](#)²².

Brisbane-based Chemist Warehouse Managing Partner, Brett Clark, says the economic environment in Brisbane is being driven by the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games opportunities and the imperative to reach net zero carbon emissions.

"There is a Queensland Government procurement policy which prioritises Queensland-based business that are competitive," Mr Clark said. "All of this is creating an environment where everyone is approaching the same objective and once you get to that level, you will win financially."

"In Brisbane, the business opportunity also lies in commercialisation of our world-leading university research. It's saddening when you see great technology coming out of our universities and then you hear it lands in the US or somewhere else, because that's where the money is.

"We need our businesses to connect with the researchers and universities and find out how they can plug into their systems and create new ventures."

Putting fresh vitality into Brisbane's heart

Brisbane's metropolitan economy is rapidly diversifying, with [\\$32.5bn added to the value of the inner city in 2024](#)²³.

The Committee for Brisbane's latest Inner City Vitality report shows Brisbane is leading the way for other cities in Australia and overseas.

The organisation's CEO, Jen Williams, said the report showed Brisbane's inner city was increasing its economic diversity beyond traditional sectors, becoming a vibrant and resilient heart.

"The inner-city economy is supported by the strong performance of the office market," Ms Williams said. "New business registrations are up, vacancy rates are down, and new developments are appearing on the skyline."

The building economy is expected to [surge 41% in the next 10 years](#)²⁴. The [GDP growth rate for the inner city has more than doubled](#)²⁵ from 1.7 in 2019 to its current 4.1, illustrating the propensity to gravitate towards the CBD.

This is supported by Cushman & Wakefield's Brisbane CBD office report for Q3 in 2024-25, which found the [demand for office space remained consistently strong](#)²⁶. It also said the economy had a growing reliance on population growth, as net overseas migration surged to over 70,000 in Q2, contributing significantly to overall economic activity and helping offset productivity challenges.

¹⁶ Joint Ministerial Statement, Delivering a Future Made in Australia with 400 New Technology Jobs in Brisbane, 2024

^{17,18} BEDA, State of the City, 2024

^{19,20} Brisbane City Council, Brisbane's Economic Development Plan, 2012

²¹ BEDA, Citing research from Tourism Research Australia, 2024

²² Savills, Brisbane, Sydney and Perth Lead Hotel Market Growth, Taking Revpar To New Levels, 2023

²³ Committee for Brisbane, Brisbane Inner City Vitality, 2024

²⁴ BEDA, State of the City, 2024

²⁵ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, State of the Regions, 2023

²⁶ Cushman & Wakefield, Brisbane Marketbeat reports, 2024

Office rent in Brisbane also averages \$450 per square metre – [lower than comparable Australian and international cities](#)²⁷.

Ms Williams said while residential development continued to prove challenging, the inner-city's residential population had increased. There was a strong pipeline of approvals ready to be enacted, and new transport links and projects proposed or under development in the inner city would come to fruition.

"Likewise, while retail remains under pressure, there are bright spots across the inner city's different precincts," she said. "New food and beverage operators are investing heavily, and curated precincts, like South Bank, are defying trends to see lower vacancies and an increasing number of new retailers opening their doors."

Ms Williams said data also showed there had been steady growth in the health sector, which was not as impacted by the pandemic as many other sectors of the city's economy. Major hospitals and the introduction of new private healthcare facilities are driving the sector's [\\$2.9bn annual contribution](#)²⁸ to the economy.

Arts and culture on the other hand, which was significantly impacted through the COVID pandemic, has bounced back to near pre-COVID record highs.

In the past year, over [6.2 million people attended events](#)²⁹ in the inner city, Ms Williams said. With inner-Brisbane's arts and cultural institutions servicing a state population of around 5.5 million, this equates to every person in Queensland attending at least one event in the past year alone.

Queensland Ballet chairman Brett Clark said the ballet had enjoyed record numbers last year.

"For instance, the CoCo Chanel ballet completely sold out and was in such high demand that we could have run it for another week," Mr Clark said. "The Nutcracker in December, which has been running for 13 years straight, shows a similar story with audience numbers at record highs."

"Brisbane's inner-city continues to build strength and momentum as we head towards the critical milestone of 2032," Ms Williams says.



Measuring and monitoring activity in the inner city will be more important than ever, to ensure Brisbane continues to be valued as an important social, cultural and economic driver for Queensland.

²⁷ BEDA, State of the City, 2024

^{28, 29} Committee for Brisbane, Brisbane Inner City Vitality, 2024

Brisbane's metropolitan economy is rapidly diversifying, with \$32.5bn added to the value of the inner city in 2024.



Q&A

With Devika Shivadekar
Economist – RSM Australia

Are there signs emerging that hosting an Olympic Games is boosting the depth of Brisbane's economy?

The government expects the Olympics to create 130,000 jobs. On top of this, they estimate there is \$180bn in opportunities solely from Games-related projects. In terms of direct economic benefits to Queensland, the government expects the Games to bring in \$8.1bn, and \$17.6bn nationally which will help position Brisbane as a global destination for tourism. The government's 'Buy Queensland' procurement strategy which has also been designed to favour Queensland businesses that are competitive and fulfill all of the right criteria.

The construction pipeline for Queensland is more than \$100bn over the next five years. What does construction of that scale mean for Brisbane's economic development?

This scale of construction is going to be transformative for Brisbane. The current pipeline of projects will ultimately position Brisbane as a key economic and tourism hub within the APAC region. The pipeline is incredibly important for improving connectivity and attracting business talent. Good talent also sits in the suburbs and outlying areas like Toowoomba, but they're not able to access the city because of connectivity problems so the access for regions into Brisbane also needs to be addressed.

In last year's Leading Cities – Brisbane 2024 report, several commentators pointed to the risks that can arise from cities growing too quickly. Do you think Brisbane is doing enough to handle the growing pains?

Some of the biggest concerns when it comes to Brisbane include a lack of renewability in the urban spaces, the slow pace of major infrastructure projects, and the biggest problem I think that Brisbane has is the traffic congestion.

As the city's infrastructure goes through an overhaul, it's extremely important that the planning is done in such a way that we do not face these issues. If we're facing this day in and day out in Brisbane, just imagine what will happen when there's thousands of people coming to Brisbane for the Olympics – all of them booking hotels, wanting Ubers, hiring cars. It's going to be crazy if planning is not done in such a way that accessibility to the venues is improved regardless of where you're coming from. Which is where projects like the Cross River Rail and Brisbane Metro are important. Because effective management of urban sprawl shows in the long-term.

If infrastructure keeps pace with growth, it helps mitigate these growing pains. Fix the transport and the economy will rise up.

Are there any major structural changes you are noticing in the Brisbane economy and any particular green shoots of activity that are worth noting?

There is a structural change towards a more sustainable knowledge-based economy and that's not just in Brisbane, it's national. There's a push for more sustainability when it comes to business practices. There's also a lot of investment growth in the renewable energy, green construction and digital tech space, particularly in Brisbane because it is a more affordable place to build infrastructure for business. As the expansion of tech driven industries, particularly in AI and biotech, grows and fosters innovation, I think sustainability-focused projects will definitely be the priority areas if Brisbane was to position itself as a leader in environmental stewardship.





Q&A

With Jen Williams
CEO – Committee for Brisbane

What are Brisbane's major opportunities stemming from the Olympics and the anticipated economic and population growth over the next 5–10 years?

It's an opportunity for us to look at the shape of our economy and cement a transition to the knowledge economy. We have an incredible number of start-ups in Brisbane.

In terms of that population growth, getting it right will mean we can actually service all of those wonderful things that we've always wanted like river taxis, or more places to dine.

We often talk about how we close early as a city; if we've got more people we can stay open later.

There's always a lot of discussion around whether Brisbane needs a Sydney Opera House-type icon. Do you think we actually need to build something that would be internationally recognised?

We need to consider what we need before we design it. If we are designing new things, we should go bold, we should be ambitious, and we should be looking at how can we design that, so that it becomes our icon. It's a conversation around what is the right thing for us. The Brisbane sign (at South Bank) has become that moment, that photo, and I think with the Star and Queen's Wharf now in the backdrop, that is our postcard view. But we definitely need to think about what is the image that we want to project to the world. What are the experiences people are going to want when they come here, and how do we curate them for the benefit of Brisbane as well? What are the must-see things, the postcard shots that people associate with our city?

Are you already seeing growing international interest in Brisbane from all of the recent activity and development that's been happening?

Traditionally in boardrooms it was always Sydney first, then Melbourne. Then you had a conversation. And even the Gold Coast was known before Brisbane.

Now we are hearing anecdotally that Brisbane is being brought up unprompted as an investment destination.

People are coming here, looking at investment opportunities and thinking years ahead. We were never considered as a head office destination, and now people are starting to consider Brisbane as a head office, instead of just Sydney or Melbourne. But there's a big difference in getting Brisbane recognised internationally among the business community and investors who are now starting to pick up on who we are; as opposed to the general population who aren't going to know who we are until the LA Games Closing Ceremony when we get our 10 minute timeslot to show off to the world.

From a property industry perspective, what are the major challenges and opportunities in Brisbane currently?

The opportunities are endless. The population growth is not going to stop. So the future is bright. And it's not just population growth, it's business and investment growth as well which is a positive story for Brisbane. But of course there is the converse effect, which is construction – we don't have the people, productivity is very low, and construction costs are high. So actually being able to deliver on the desired vision is a massive challenge, and is going to be for the foreseeable future.

What are the major drivers of activity in the city currently?

Brisbane is finally starting to diversify. During the mining boom, all of the CBD offices filled up with mining companies. Then the mining boom finished, and the city cleared out. Now we're seeing a resilient, diverse city centre. The diversified sectors are organically growing, and new entrants to the market are coming in.

As we move forward do you see the need for a different type of city, with respect to the way people live, work, commute and access recreation?

I think Brisbane is finally coming into its own and being comfortable with who it is. The challenge for us is to maintain our lifestyle as we grow, but I think we're just becoming more Brisbane. We love the river and we're spending more time on the river. We love dining outdoors and we're getting more venues that have outdoor dining. We're building the transport infrastructure to make sure we can still connect and keep that equity. That social equity that's probably missing from some of the other cities as well. So I don't see us as being a different city, I think I see it as reaffirming more broadly who we are and what our value is.

Infrastructure

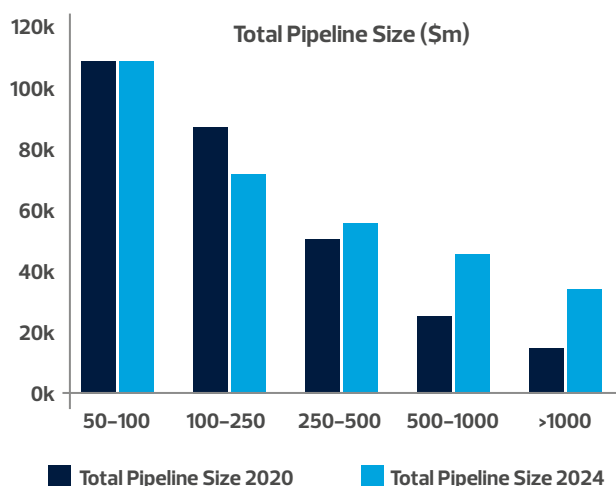
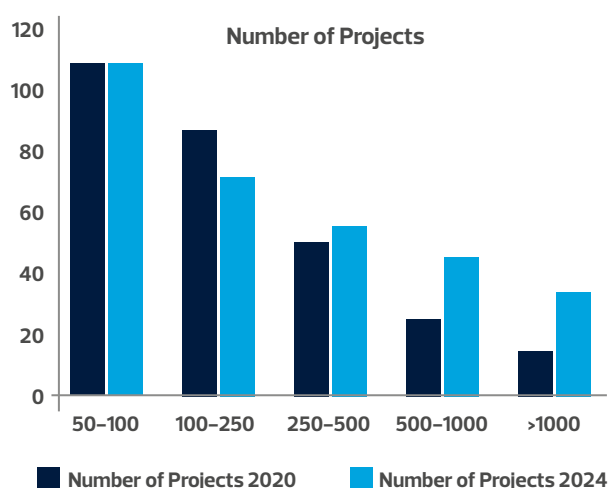
Transport bonanza at the heart of city building program

Sizable investments in major transport, sporting, accommodation and dining projects are driving generational change in the way Brisbane people move around, and their options for living and entertainment.

The transformation of Brisbane in societal and economic terms is requiring new approaches to mass transit, and an unprecedented road building program to mitigate the constant threat of bottlenecks.

The 2024 Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA) [Major Projects Pipeline report](#)³⁰ cited a \$15.5bn five-year pipeline for Greater Brisbane.

Pipeline Comparison 2020 to 2024



Of this, around 80% was already funded. This included Cross River Rail in the Brisbane CBD, the Brisbane Metro underground super busway and upgrades to the Bruce Highway and Gateway Motorway.

Mooted, but still to be funded, were the Brisbane Airport Third Terminal, the station upgrade program for the 2032 Games and the North-South Urban Arterial Corridor.³¹

The massive transport investment complements an unprecedented boost to dining, retail, accommodation and entertainment city precincts, particularly on the inner reaches of the Brisbane River.

Howard Smith Wharves, Queens Wharf, and Eagle St Pier precincts are creating more options for locals and tourists, beautifully timed for the influx of visitors for the 2032 Games.

Connectivity in the inner city is improving with the opening of two new walking bridges.

There will also be a burst of stadium and venue construction as part of the official infrastructure to host the Games, and the New Performing Arts Venue (NPAV) will open late 2025.

This is on top of the regular and growing infrastructure requirement for the port, airport, schools and hospitals.

There are plans in the lead-up to the Olympics to expand the Brisbane Metro beyond its current Roma Street to Eight Mile Plains, and University of Queensland to Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital routes. This includes routes north to Carseldine, south to Springwood, east to Capalaba, and to Brisbane Airport. This would add 30 million 'seats' to the network each year.

This was one of 18 potential transport initiatives in [The Race to Gold: Brisbane's Games Transport Legacy](#) released by the Brisbane City Council in 2024.³²

Others were:

- An expansion of the popular CityGlider network to provide high-frequency services between The Gabba, RNA Showgrounds and Northshore Hamilton.
- Enhancements to Brisbane's river transport network to boost capacity, improve frequency and explore new services such as a connection to the International Cruise Terminal.
- Progressing plans for a new active transport bridge between Toowong and West End.
- Mobility 'super highways' to provide stronger suburban links for people riding e-mobility devices and bicycles.

^{30,31} Queensland Major Contractors Association, Major Projects Pipeline Report, 2024

³² Brisbane City Council, The Race to Gold: Brisbane's Games Transport Legacy, 2024

In delivering the [BCC 2024-25 Budget](#) last year, Brisbane Lord Mayor, Adrian Schrinner, said Brisbane was Australia's lifestyle capital and this was prompting many Sydney and Melbourne residents to move here.

"Growth is both an opportunity and challenge," he said. "We can't let Brisbane be a victim of its own success."³³

Sustainable urban renewal projects will be among the most enduring outcome of the Brisbane Olympics.

The city's property and construction sector is set to be supercharged, with forecast growth of 41% by 2031, mainly due to rapid population growth, a super-sized injection of funding and unique market characteristics, according to the Brisbane Economic Development Agency's [State of the City](#)³⁴ report.

QMCA CEO Andrew Chapman said the industry and government needed to develop some big-picture thinking, an integrated approach, and to do things differently if need be.

"We have this one opportunity that the Games gives us, to invest in real city-changing infrastructure that will deliver economic and community value for the next 20-30 years," Mr Chapman said.

"We should not shy away from it. We need to be focussed, and make sure we take that opportunity and do it well."

Mr Chapman said Brisbane's overall construction strategy should examine how existing assets could be "sweated" to buy time to devote the necessary resources for the projects that had to be completed for the Olympics.

³³ Brisbane City Council, Lord Mayor's Budget Speech, 2024-25

³⁴ BEDA, State of the City, 2024

"We also need to look at our transport corridors and how we get to our key regional centres at the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Toowoomba," Mr Chapman said.

"We've got massive constraints along our highways to these regions and they're not going to be solved any time soon. That's why we need to do the Gold Coast faster rail, we need to do the Sunshine Coast direct rail, and we need to do a passenger rail connection to Toowoomba.

"If we had proper fast rail services it would help solve some of our housing crisis so people could live in a regional centre and still work in South East Queensland."

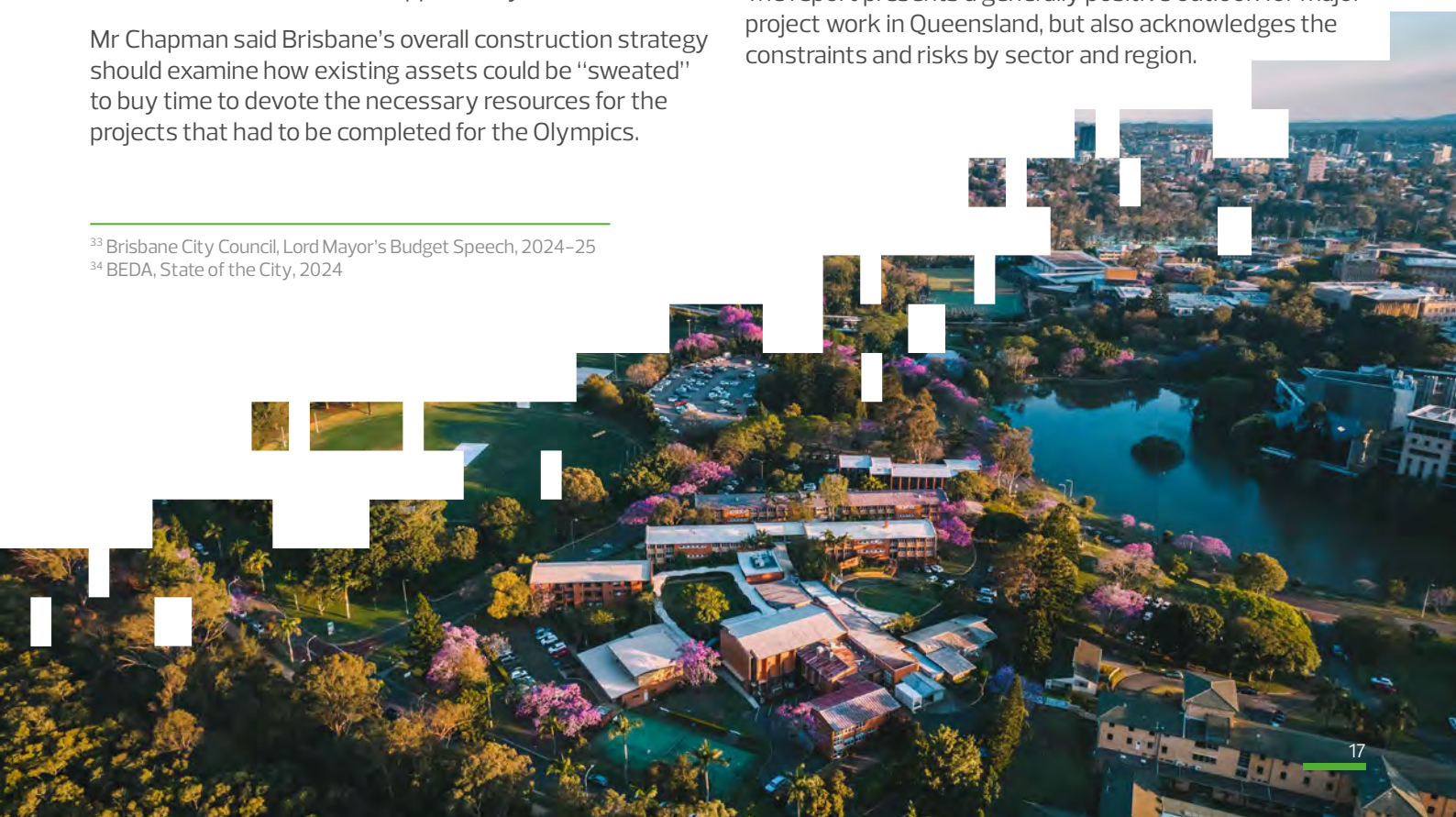
Mr Chapman said capacity issues on the north side also needed to be solved.

"Even if you do a railway line to the Sunshine Coast, the problem is that you can't get the number of trains needed through the network beyond Northgate because all of the rail paths tighten up," Mr Chapman said.

"So we need to examine how we operate our rail system differently, or put some additional infrastructure in place to give us that extra capacity."

The \$103.9bn expected construction pipeline for Queensland over the next five years will create an extra 20,000 jobs over the next two years alone, according to the QMCA [Queensland Major Projects Pipeline 2024](#) report.

The report presents a generally positive outlook for major project work in Queensland, but also acknowledges the constraints and risks by sector and region.





With Andrew Chapman CEO – Queensland Major Contractors Association

Does Brisbane have the capacity to deliver on infrastructure needs over the next eight years in the lead up to the Olympics?

Yes. But there are caveats with that. We must prioritise what is critical to 2032 and what is not. And we need an 80% increase in our workforce, or an increase in productivity.

We aren't going to increase our workforce by that much, but we can increase our productivity because we've done it in the past. During the resources boom of 2011–15 we were able to address our productivity by planning and sequencing the works well and importantly collaborative procurement and delivery approaches. We delivered the same amount of work back then with a workforce of two-thirds of what we have today.

We just need to be more productive than we have been in the last 5–10 years.

Some of the inefficiencies come down to industrial relations, some of it is due to the policy settings of the project life cycle. For instance, for every project we need to lodge a strategic, preliminary and detailed business case which all seem to each take a year. Why can't we consolidate that and be more efficient?

Some of the inefficiencies also relate to the high levels of technical specification that don't allow innovation and technology. We need to address the fact that we are laggards in adoption of new innovation and technologies too.

So yes, I do think we have the capacity to deliver – if we're able to deliver higher productivity, adopt new technology and innovation, look at how we use our workforce better, and remove some of the policy and IR roadblocks to achieving that. We want safe, productive worksites, and we don't need to be spending time on stuff that's not productive. Yes, we need to manage the community and the environmental aspects, but we also need to be very laser-focused on improving our productivity as an industry.

How are the major construction groups feeling around their ability to deliver on the pipeline? What are the biggest challenges?

We need to look at how we do things smarter, and use the climate and the environment to be an attractor for people to come work here. In the past, labour across the

east coast was somewhat nomadic in nature – that is no longer the case. We are competing for labour with Victoria and New South Wales, which still have significant spending investments. There wasn't a lot of investment in the period between 2016 and 2021 so we're playing a lot of catch-up now.

The challenges we're facing are ones of capability, capacity, productivity, cost pressures and deliverability.

We need to build capability and capacity to be able to deliver, not just people, but also our supply chain. The issue of COVID affecting our supply chains globally has worked through. It's now about local supply chain capability and capacity. And one of the big ones is steel fabrication capability and capacity.

Capability refers to the skills required. We need to be looking at different technology to support what we're doing. We need to be able to incorporate modularisation, prefabrication, and automation.

With productivity, aside from the issues I mentioned above, we need to look at how we adopt technology quickly and use our resources more efficiently.

We've also seen massive cost pressures since 2021 and that's starting to come off a bit now. But we are still looking at cost increases at an annual rate of somewhere between 6% and 8%.

If more projects came into the pipeline like fast rail or new precincts/ arts centres would we have the capacity to deliver on those? Do you think we need more big projects in the pipeline?

We need to work out what can be done post 2032 and they should be planned and executed that way. This includes some of the infrastructure spend on health, transport, energy and water. Look at what is critical, and then look at what's nice to have.

If there were some extra projects not currently accounted for, we'd need to look at how we'd do it. We need to move away from this view that everything needs to be stick built, and look at how we can use modular and pre-fabrication in our building approaches as well. These solutions don't work for everything, but if we can be more innovative in the way we plan, design and build, then we will be more productive and able to deliver more in the constrained timeframes that we have.

There has been a lot of emphasis on the Olympics infrastructure. How important will that be in maintaining confidence in our ability to deliver economic development and the Games?

The infrastructure is not just venues and facilities, but the economic or critical infrastructure associated with the Games. The whole premise of us going for the Games was simply to get generational infrastructure in place over the next 10 years that would deliver economically for the community over the next 20–30 years. That whole narrative seems to have been lost in the period after we won the Games through to only recently.

Instead of asking what we want the region to look like, examining how we want it to operate, and then fitting the infrastructure around that vision with an integrated plan, it instead became an argument around where the stadium would go, without looking at our transport infrastructure. If we want to have a generational change in transport patterns, we need to be looking at faster rail connections, spreading the load, and then with that plan in place, looking at where the venues fit.

We're really grateful that the Queensland Government has now given terms of reference that say generational infrastructure is a critically important part of the Games plan.

Do we have the necessary skills/talent?

We will need to increase our workforce, but do it in a sustainable way so that we can build those numbers, and build capability and capacity over a sustained period of time. The last thing we want to do is what Sydney did where they had this massive injection of work and funds up until 2000, and then they hit the cliff and there was very little work straight after the Games until 2008. We need to think beyond the Games.

We also need to increase the diversity of our skills. There are two prongs to this. We've got existing trained

workers and if we were to go ahead and do what we've always done the same old way, then we would need to increase our numbers dramatically.

But if we adopt technology to improve site productivity, that means we will still need an increased number of workers, but it won't be a dramatic increase.

We can use that technology, coupled with skills and resources so that we can deliver more with the same number of people, or a small increase in people. And we can start to redeploy people to other areas, to deliver more in the same period of time, and for better value for money, so that's where technology is going to play an important role. It's not going to supplant people in their roles, it's going to supplement them. It's going to mean we can do things more productively and deliver value for money.

Your report 'Queensland Major Projects Pipeline 2024' highlights the number of projects mooted but not yet funded. Will we need a lot more funding to deliver the infrastructure needed?

I don't think we do. We will still need significant spending. But if we're smarter about the way we deploy public money and we utilise the private sector where there is an opportunity for commercial return, then yes we can make that public dollar go a little further.

Population and people

Staggering growth transforming Australia's new super city

South-East Queensland is on track to have a population as large as [Singapore](#) by 2046 off the back of staggering people inflows and continuing natural increase.³⁵

The city will grow faster than Singapore and even Hong Kong over the next 10 years, with an expected 21% population growth, according to the Brisbane Economic Development Agency [State of the City 2024 report](#).³⁶

Most of Brisbane's migration is coming from overseas. For example, the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) estimated annual inflow figures for 2022–23 show 51,800 people were expected to arrive from abroad, 15,300 from internal migration, and 14,100 through natural increase.³⁷

Fortitude Valley, Kangaroo Point and West End are the densest inner Brisbane suburbs, with around 8,500 people per square km.

Australian Government figures, contained in the [South East Queensland – Population, Housing, Jobs, Connectivity and Liveability report](#), show that across inner Brisbane there is a density of 2,425 people per square kilometre.³⁸

While there has been much discussion around the desire of people, particularly younger people, to live in the inner city, this report shows that suburbia also remains popular.

Between 2016 and 2020 the outer suburbs of Greater Brisbane accommodated 54.9% of the population growth.

This is compared with 28.6% for 'middle' suburbs and 16.5% in the inner ring. Despite this, around 300,000 people now call the inner-city home and this increased by 30,000 in just four years.

The Brisbane City Council area is set to grow from [a population of 1.26 million in 2021 to 1.55 million by 2041](#), according to Council estimates. This equates to around 275 new residents calling Brisbane home each week.³⁹

Currently around [33% of the SEQ population live within the BCC boundaries](#) and 24.6% of the entire State population call the capital home.⁴⁰

The Council has introduced a number of policies to help lower construction costs to cater for the population boom and housing issues by reducing infrastructure charges, introducing new planning strategies, fast-tracked assessment, advocacy for Queensland and Australian planning reforms, and support for more housing.

RSM Economist Devika Shivadekar said Brisbane's population would become more diverse over the next 10 years, driven by migration and domestic population growth.

"Brisbane offers good affordability, so it is likely to be the choice for people making the move to Australia," Ms Shivadekar said.

"I think we have already seen over the past three years, that so many people have left Sydney and moved to Brisbane because the weather is much better, and it's a lot more affordable," Ms Shivadekar said. "There's little that Sydney offers that's not available in Brisbane. You have better, bigger homes, and you've got a garden.

"Brisbane is going to be more diverse, more mixed – and of course that has economic implications. The larger number of highly skilled workers moving to Brisbane is going to also help with labour market demands. There's a lot of scope for Brisbane to open its gates and capture that talent pool."

Brisbane city is also one of the hardest working cities, with 1474 annual hours worked per working-age resident in 2023, ahead of Melbourne at 1,327 and close to Sydney at 1,484, according to a [2023 State of the Regions report by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research](#). This research also showed the average house price in 2023 was \$1.462m in Sydney, \$850,700 in Melbourne, and \$890,300 in Brisbane.

³⁵ Worldometers, Continuous population monitoring, Singapore, 2025

³⁶ BEDA, State of the City Report, 2024

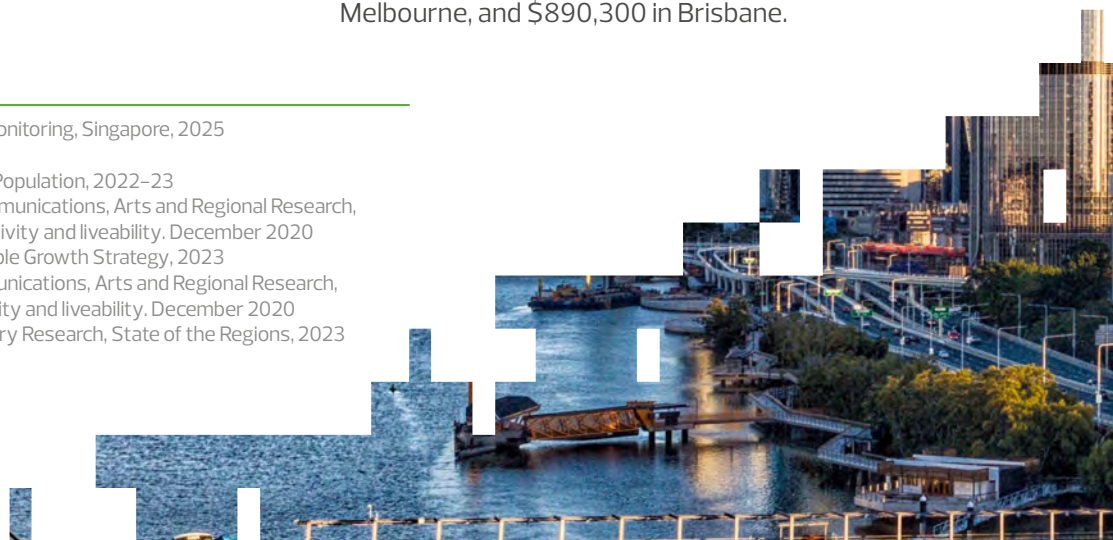
³⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population, 2022–23

^{38,39} Australian Government, Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research, SEQ Population, Housing, Jobs, Connectivity and liveability. December 2020

⁴⁰ Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Sustainable Growth Strategy, 2023

⁴¹ Australian Government, Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research, SEQ Population, Housing, Jobs, Connectivity and liveability. December 2020

⁴² National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, State of the Regions, 2023



Ms Shivadekar said Brisbane's high-quality education helped attract workers with children at the peak of their careers, as well as international students. According to Queensland's 2023 *School Opinion Survey*, 91% of parents agree their children attend a good school. This is supported by standardised literacy and numeracy testing, with Brisbane schools in the 79th percentile of schools nationally.

Migration would create pressure on housing and transportation as well as public services in the short term, Ms Shivadekar said. However, the city just needed to make sure it planned accordingly to ensure infrastructure development kept pace with population growth.

Queensland Futures Institute CEO, Steve Greenwood, said managing the huge growth over the next 20 years would require policies that capitalised on capacity in the regions.

"I think we need to look at the growth of Queensland and SEQ as a whole and not an isolated series of questions on what we should do with each area," he said.

"We shouldn't be making growth policies, density policies, and traffic policies just on Brisbane alone, without looking at SEQ and the rest of Queensland."

Mr Greenwood said traffic issues tended to arise because we kept accommodating people in a small area.

"We need to be embarking on policies of investing in regional centres and sub-centres like Gatton, and Toowoomba, and along the coast to Mackay, Townsville and Cairns," he said.

"We need a population policy that says we're going to invest big time in our regional centres, not in just terms of promoting them but in terms of social infrastructure, the arts and culture."





Q&A

With Steve Greenwood CEO – Queensland Futures Institute (QFI)

What are Brisbane's major opportunities stemming from the Olympics and the anticipated economic and population growth over the next 5–10 years?

The most significant opportunity is for the Olympics to propel Queensland onto the world stage as an attractive investment destination.

As Queensland's capital, Brisbane has the opportunity to take centre stage, working with the rest of Queensland, extolling the many and varied investment opportunities that exist across our State.

From a Queensland Futures Institute perspective, what are the major challenges and opportunities in Brisbane currently?

One of the biggest opportunities is to better define and grow the State's financial services sector. QFI research indicates that the time is right to focus on and grow a financial services sector that builds on the State's unique strengths, in particular, sustainable finance.

We believe that there would be value in establishing a Centre for Sustainable Finance Excellence.

How do we leverage our location so close to Asia?

As a state and a capital, we need to actively engage with the nations we believe would benefit from investing in Queensland. It's an active process of visiting, of identifying shared cultural interests and building cross-cultural awareness.

As a society it's also our responsibility to support our universities to continue to attract and service international students.

What is driving investment into Brisbane both domestically and internationally at the moment? What needs to be done in the next 5–10 years to retain this investment, businesses, and talent?

The QFI's report into Opportunities for Queensland's Growth of its future economy identified the need to shift away from business as usual and take deliberate action to ensure that Queensland harnesses all options to grow its economy.

The report recommended the development and maintenance of a vision for the future economy of our State; what we are calling "Queensland's Future State." Queensland's Future State would outline a 30–40 year economic vision to provide investors with greater clarity on the investment opportunities on offer.

Can you talk us through the appeal of Brisbane to outside investors and any policy changes that might be required to attract the necessary capital?

The appeal to outside investors in Queensland includes that we have very low sovereign risk, our political environment is relatively stable, and there is high quality policy support for running a business, protecting capital and supporting investment. That's all very positive.

At the same time there is a great deal of concern over the regulatory burden being experienced by business and this issue is one that focuses the attention of investors and business operators.

What do you think Brisbane does that is globally interesting, or globally significant?

We don't have Sydney or Melbourne's unique built icons, and I don't think we should aim for that. We've got something better. We've got a lifestyle, a climate, a broad culture that holistically is very attractive, we've got people who are friendly and open.

We could spend billions on creating a unique built structure, but there are countries that are doing more than we could ever hope to achieve – look at Dubai as an example. We're not going to compete with that. So it's not going to be a built structure, it's our natural attractions, such as the Great Barrier Reef and other globally unique natural areas which make us stand out.

Only 3% of people overseas have heard of Brisbane, according to research commissioned as part of the Olympic and Paralympic Games preparations. How do you think Brisbane can or should change this statistic?

There needs to be an agreed goal and strategy around using the 2032 Games to promote Brisbane globally as an investment destination. There needs to be a process to define that as a concept, drive it hard, and get overall support from across the State.

What's needed is a holistic strategy around how we're going to do that. How are we going to leverage the Olympics in terms of promoting Brisbane to the world? Investment attraction is the main game here – so we need a clear strategy. We have all of our investment offices overseas, ambassadors, trade links, Queensland has its own trade network. We need to activate those. We also need to link into our regional investment bodies like Advance Cairns and Townsville Enterprise. It's a holistic strategy.

Steve Greenwood is former Property Council of Australia executive director for Queensland, and former Cane Growers Association CEO.



Brisbane is going to be more diverse, more mixed – and of course that has economic implications.

Arts and culture

Brisbane eyes a 'field of dreams' for entertainment

The Kevin Costner movie *Field of Dreams* tells the story of a farmer who builds a baseball diamond on his land because of an unshakeable belief that it will attract players and people.

His faith is driven by a ghostly voice that tells him: "If you build it, they will come".

The theme of the movie provides Chemist Warehouse Managing Partner Brett Clark's favourite analogy when referencing Brisbane's opportunities.

If the city creates the necessary arts and culture assets, he argues, it will lift its credentials in this area and the audiences and visitors will come.

Mr Clark has a unique vantage point for these opportunities. As well as his business roles, he is chair of Queensland Ballet and the Queensland Rugby Union, and is on the board of the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

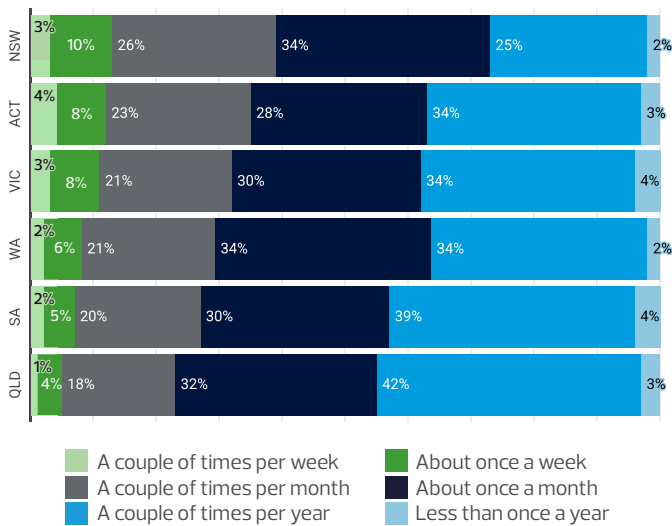
"We are a superpower in lifestyle and natural assets, but we've got to overlay that with cultural experiences and traditional artforms like ballet, the theatre, and opera," Mr Clark said.

"If businesses want to attract talent to relocate here, vibrant after-hours attractions are just as important as the quality of the office building, transport or connectivity.

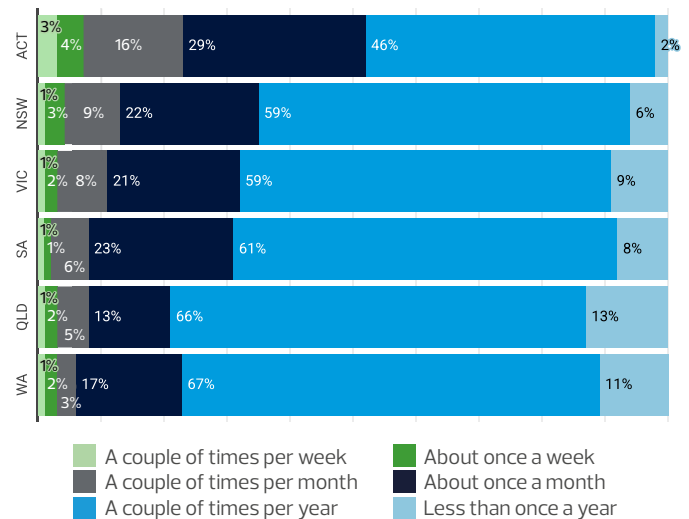
"In the old days it would be that on a Saturday night you could watch Rugby, AFL, or League on free-to-air TV. Now we have great restaurants and bars, but we also need to aim to have the leading ballet company, or the leading opera company, or the leading First Nations performance company."

The city will soon be home to the New Performing Arts Venue (NPAV) later this year which will hopefully join the ranks of the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) and the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) which are among the [most visited galleries in the world](#).⁴³

Attendance frequency at performing arts events by state or territory, August 2023. (n=955)



Attendance frequency at museums and galleries by state or territory, August 2023. (n=2,307)



Source: [AOM_August2023_Full_Phase_9_Queensland_Report](#)

⁴³ The Art Newspaper, Visitor Figures 2021: The 100 most popular art museums in the world, 2021

Brisbane is also characterised by individual precincts, each its own personality – from the glamorous Queen's Wharf, to a place to meet and greet at Howard Smith Wharves, the shopping precinct James St, and the more family-oriented South Bank.

By 2028 the \$2.5bn transformation of the Eagle Street Pier and Waterfront Place will join the offering, revitalising yet another of our waterfront dining hubs.

The city's major cultural offerings include the annual Brisbane Festival and the BIGSOUND music festival in the walkable Fortitude Valley precinct which features hundreds of live acts. Brisbane is also home to the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, the Affordable Art Fair, and the Brisbane Comedy Festival.

And, in a show of support for Brisbane as host of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the city has also been christened [the sporting capital of Australia](#)⁴⁴ in an annual index by Swiss global communications agency BCW (now Burson). Brisbane scored the gong because it integrates sports events into its strategies, capturing the public's attention in advance of the events and forges partnerships with the largest sports brands.

Some of the world's sporting heroes battle it out in Brisbane's world-class venues, and 2025's program is full of exciting events including The Brisbane International tennis championships, the Australian PGA Championship golf tee-off, the National Rugby League (NRL) Magic Round festival of football, the British & Irish Lions tour rugby, the Tour de Brisbane cycling festival and the Brisbane Marathon.

The fresh attention on Brisbane propelled it onto the [New York Times' list of 52 Places to Go in 2024](#).⁴⁵ The city also ranked as the 16th most liveable city in the world on the Economist Intelligence Unit's [Global Liveability Index](#)⁴⁶ out of 173 cities in 2024.

Brisbane's lifestyle and safety are the envy of the world and a critical ingredient in its economic success story.⁴⁷

The city continues to grow its natural and built assets, based on a powerful conviction that we are building it, and the people are coming.

⁴⁴ BCW, Ranking of Sports Cities, 2023.

⁴⁵ New York Times, 52 Places to Go in 2024, 2024.

⁴⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Liveability Index, 2024.

⁴⁷ Brisbane Economic Development Agency, State of the City, 2024





Q&A

With Brett Clark Co-founder of ePharmacy and Partner of Chemist Warehouse

What is unique about Brisbane's cultural and social environment? What makes us stand out?

We are an inclusive, ethnically diverse and a strong First Nations city right at the gateway to the South Pacific and South-East Asia.

Brisbane is a tolerant society with a social and cultural flat structure which enables people to feel as though they can achieve more in this society than probably some of the other cities.

I do a lot of business in Sydney and Melbourne, and I love those cities but there tends to be a hierarchical class system in larger cities – where you went to school, where you went to uni, how much you earn, where you live.

Brisbane people tend not to be as tribal as other cities when you look at the arts and sports sectors. That's probably because there's not as much history or hierarchy here. The audience or supporters will always support excellence and a winner above all else.

In the lead up to the Olympics what are the big picture opportunities for us culturally?

The Cultural Olympiad – holding an arts festival in parallel with the celebration of sporting competitions – is the biggest opportunity for arts and culture in Brisbane.

The Brisbane Festival is a mini cultural Olympiad. It's risqué, and exactly what art should be. We want people to come and see art, be challenged, be uncomfortable, and hopefully it's something they enjoy.

We have just come off a record season of the Nutcracker at Queensland Ballet. It started 13 years ago but still every year it's sold out. Coco Chanel was also sold out. And this season 35% of the audience had not (previously) been to the ballet. So the market is undoubtedly there.

What's missing from Brisbane's cultural landscape?

Brisbane, especially the ballet, desperately needs more Federal Government funding. They have a view that art can only thrive in Sydney or Melbourne, unlike the State Government which has been very supportive of the arts industry in Queensland.

If I had a billion dollars to spend, I'd build a Sydney Opera House-style home and facility for First Nations people with a 3D interactive, holographic experience – something that blows your mind. The second thing we're missing is another theatre venue. QPAC is a phenomenal facility but it's running out of room and it's booked every night of the week. I know we have a new theatre about to come on board, but we need to start building another one. Before Queensland Ballet moved into the Thomas Dixon Centre, we looked at doing it far cheaper in places like Ipswich or Springfield. But to be a modern city you need to have a cluster and keep your arts precincts together. So I think we should build a new theatre around West End or Southbank – where we already have a precinct.

What do we need to do to be globally significant in our cultural offerings?

There has to be investment in the arts as well. The Cultural Olympiad will bring arts to the forefront of people's minds. And if you build a new theatre, and a First Nations repository that's an interactive museum – I think that would put Brisbane culturally on the map. We already get a large amount of interstate movement coming here for arts events. But we don't monetise it or track what the commercial value of art brings to Brisbane or Queensland. We need to get better at tracking it.

What are the opportunities to improve the relationship between corporate Brisbane and arts Brisbane?

Business needs to understand that from a sponsorship perspective, the amount of money you need to invest in the arts is not a lot compared to the potential marketing outcomes.

For the ballet, a \$20,000–\$50,000 sponsorship deal is not a lot, but it means a lot to the ballet and it can make a huge difference. In the sports world, sponsorship rates are five or ten times that amount.

We need to better communicate what the arts represents, to demystify it. There are some great supporters in business and some who do it exceptionally well.

The other opportunity that exists for business is to use arts talent and knowledge and integrate that into business. We have some young dancers who could be amazing when integrated into some business discussions.

The challenge arts companies have is that there's a connotation that the arts is for high socio-economic snobby people. Our opportunity is to remain relevant to demystify the arts. That also goes to First Nations people who have to demystify their craft. Society doesn't want to push back against First Nations art, it's just that they don't understand it and they haven't been educated. For instance, at the ballet, one of the biggest questions we get is "What do I wear to the ballet?" We say wear whatever you want. Whatever you feel comfortable in. You don't have to wear black tie.

There are issues with Brisbane sustaining a pipeline of creative talent – especially when you have other states and overseas attracting them with larger budgets. How do you think Brisbane should address this?

Talent retention is the biggest problem facing the arts, but also business and sport.

We have just three boys in our Queensland Ballet Academy – that's out of 260 dancers. And with rugby, we are competing with AFL and QAS to attract talent. The reality is the biggest pockets win and at the moment it's not arts or rugby.

Brett Clark is also chair of Queensland Ballet and the Queensland Rugby Union, and on the board of the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.



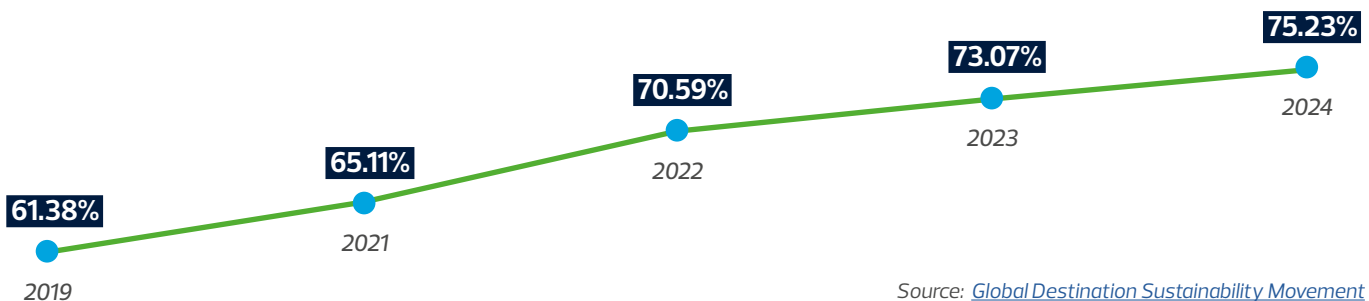
Lifestyle and environment

Sustainability accolades help put Brisbane on the map

Australia's lifestyle capital is starting to gain the kudos it has worked so hard for. Brisbane has cemented its reputation as one of the world's most sustainable cities, with three international organisations ranking it among the top destinations for sustainability.

Brisbane is one of only two cities in the world to achieve [a gold level standard](#)⁴⁸ from the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals Cities Global Initiative, fortifying its reputation as one of the cleanest, greenest and most sustainable global cities.

It has also been [ranked 33 out of 100 destinations](#),⁴⁹ and is in the top five in Asia Pacific by the Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement) – a 22.5% increase since joining the GDS-Index in 2019. Plus, Brisbane has achieved [Bronze Benchmarking status](#)⁵⁰ by EarthCheck, the world's leading global environmental management and advisory group for the travel and tourism industry.



Source: [Global Destination Sustainability Movement](#)

The sun shines more than 300 days a year in [Brisbane](#)⁵¹, a city surrounded by mountains, rivers, beaches and rainforests. Almost 40% of Brisbane is covered in natural habitat, and it is home to more than 800 species of unique native wildlife, 2500 species of native plants and 4000km of waterways.

From a global perspective, the Swiss-based [The Place Brand Observer \(TPBO\)](#) describes Brisbane's "allure" as its balance between a thriving urban environment and natural beauty.⁵²

It also characterises the city as a "gentle mix of an active subtropical climate, scenic nature and urban sophistication".

One of the city's highest global rankings (4th) is in the [Best Urban Cities for Digital Nomads](#) list compiled by Spotahome.⁵³

For those who can work anywhere, knowledge economy workers say they are attracted to Brisbane because of its green space and parks, annual sunshine, quality of coworking spaces and acceptance of migrants.

According to the Queensland Government's 2032 website, the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be used as a catalyst to accelerate the state's climate ambitions.

Brisbane 2032 is committed to removing more carbon from the atmosphere than the Games emits.

To achieve this, there will be a focus on minimising direct and indirect Games-related carbon emissions and encouraging climate-friendly behaviour from the broader public.

"Brisbane 2032 will shape a brighter outlook with long-term sustainability benefits that will be enjoyed by all Queenslanders before, during and after the Games," the policy states.

"Our new and upgraded venues, villages and transport options will prioritise renewable energy, green space and smart design that represent leading environmentally sustainable building practices.

"New and significantly upgraded venues will target 6 Star Green Star ratings (world leadership) from the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA)."

⁴⁸ Brisbane City Council, SDG Cities Global Initiative – Gold Level, 2023.

⁴⁹ Global Destination Sustainability Movement, GDS-Index, 2024.

⁵⁰ Brisbane Economic Development Agency, Twin accolades rank Brisbane among the world's most sustainable cities, 2024.

⁵¹ Brisbane City Council, Brisbane. Clean, Green, Sustainable, 2024.

⁵² The Place Brand Observer, Brisbane City Profile, 2025

^{53,54} Spotahome, Best Urban Cities for Digital Nomads Report, 2025

The Brisbane City Council has identified [five focus areas](#)⁵⁴ to drive the next phase of the city's lifestyle and environmental development – Sustainable, Adaptive, Clean, Green and “for the Future”.

So how is Brisbane measuring up to these goals, and what does it need to do to achieve them?

A Sustainable City

This initiative looks at improving residents' quality of life in areas such as accessibility and inclusivity, connectivity, community safety and resilience, as well as environmental improvements in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond.

An Adaptive City

As the capital of Australia's fastest-growing region, Brisbane's ability to quickly recover from adversity, adapt to changes, and transform to achieve better results, is key to a resilient city that is sustainable.

As Australia's largest carbon neutral government organisation since 2017, this also includes taking action to deliver a low-carbon footprint and supporting residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A Clean City

To achieve a clean, green future, the Council has invested in innovative and transformational plans for clean air and reduced emissions from transport, management of waterways, and renewable and low-carbon energy. The aim is to achieve a more than 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2032 and net zero by 2050.

A Green City

Brisbane is the most biodiverse capital city in Australia, according to the Brisbane City Council. Projects are constantly underway to incorporate well-designed parks and green spaces, increase urban forest, ensure sustainable development and water use, protect and conserve biodiversity, and create climate resilience. The council gives away 45,000 native trees each year on average. There is a target to achieve 40% of natural habitat cover on mainland Brisbane by 2031.

A Future City

Collaborative partnerships, new technology and innovative thinking are all important in encouraging sustainable practices. One of the main goals is to create a walkable Brisbane, with pedestrian-focused suburbs and a more accessible public transport network.

The Council will measure progress on its plan by monitoring household carbon emissions and use of sustainable transport options.

It will also seek to demonstrably reduce waste generation, increase resource recovery and improve the natural habitat and green spaces in the city.





Q & A

With Jacob Elkhishin National Leader ESG and Climate Services – RSM Australia

What are the ways in which Brisbane businesses can grasp opportunities that are unique to our city, in which we can lead the world when it comes to energy and sustainability?

Brisbane businesses have a unique opportunity to lead in energy and sustainability by aligning with Queensland's ambitious climate goals and the transformative plans for the 2032 Olympics. The city can become a global leader in cleantech innovation, integrating ESG principles into business strategies, and developing zero-carbon products and/or services.

Key opportunities include contributing to sustainable infrastructure for the Games, manufacturing low-emission equipment, and revolutionising green transport and fleet solutions. Businesses involved in construction, renewable energy, circular economy initiatives, and supporting services can play a crucial role in supporting the city. Those who innovate and invest in this space will be well-positioned to capitalise on future opportunities and shape Brisbane's global reputation as a sustainability leader.

What does Brisbane need to do to meet its energy commitments?

Brisbane must take a pragmatic and balanced approach to meeting its energy commitments while ensuring a stable and reliable power supply. The city's targets – 50% renewable electricity by 2030, 70% by 2032, and 80% by 2035 – are ambitious, and while Queensland has already reached 27%, higher levels of renewables bring new challenges.

To achieve these goals, Brisbane needs to invest in energy storage solutions such as batteries and pumped hydro to manage supply fluctuations. Strengthening the grid infrastructure, integrating smart energy systems, and ensuring a diversified energy mix – including transitional backup sources – will be critical to maintaining reliability. Public education and industry collaboration will also be key, helping businesses and communities adapt to a cleaner energy future without compromising stability. By focusing on innovation, infrastructure, and responsible transition strategies, Brisbane can successfully meet its energy commitments while securing a resilient power system for the long term.

What renewable energies should Brisbane be concentrating on?

Brisbane should focus on a mix of renewable energy sources, with solar, wind, and battery storage playing key roles. Given the city's abundant sunshine, solar power is the most viable option, but its biggest challenge is storage – while we generate significant energy during the day, capturing and utilising it during the night or cloudy periods remains a hurdle.

To address this, Brisbane must invest in large-scale battery storage, pumped hydro, and emerging energy storage technologies to enhance grid stability. Wind energy can also complement solar, particularly in areas where wind patterns peak at different times of the day.

A diversified renewable energy strategy, supported by advanced storage solutions and smart grid infrastructure, will be essential in ensuring Brisbane maximises its clean energy potential while maintaining a reliable dispatchable power supply.



One of the world's most sustainable cities with three international organisations ranking it among the top destinations for sustainability.

Towards 2032

Taking off on the “Green and Gold Runway”

Once you are an Olympic and Paralympic city, you will always be one.

That's the Trade and Investment Queensland advice for businesses wishing to capitalise on the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In other words, Brisbane has joined a small and exclusive club. And the Games are not just a one-off thing. Leveraged well they will keep on giving.

In its preparation for the Games bid, the Queensland Government estimated the event would create [129,000 jobs in tourism, hospitality and construction, and catalyse a \\$20bn economic uplift from 2021 to 2036](#).⁵⁵

The Brisbane bid took advantage of 'The New Norm', a fresh approach by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to give cities increased flexibility and support in staging the Games in a way that is cost efficient and consistent with long-term infrastructure goals.

Brisbane is currently on what is termed the “Green and Gold Runway” into 2032, a time to plan, leverage and lock in a legacy.

The [Elevate 2042](#)⁵⁶ report outlined the opportunity to “showcase our unique cultural and environmental landscapes, display our creativity and share our way of life with the world”.

It said the Games represented a significant investment in our future, and its legacy could create economic, societal and environmental changes that would make our diverse region even more inclusive, sustainable, connected, liveable and prosperous.

Research outlined in the report says [the Games will deliver](#)⁵⁷ around \$8.1bn in direct social and economic benefits to the Queensland economy (\$17.6bn nationally) including increased trade and tourism of \$4.6bn to Queensland (\$8.5bn nationally).

“Whilst the legacy from the Games can do many things, it cannot do everything,” the *Elevate 2042* report says.

“Creating a clear and compelling view of future success specific to our context and community will be the starting point for legacy planning, setting out what we want to achieve and where to focus our endeavours to provide the greatest opportunities for transforming lives.”

Brisbane's Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee President, Andrew Liveris, says the business case for hosting the Games remains sound.

“Once we put Brisbane on the world stage, it will forever be on the world stage,” he said. “And that's a pretty spine-tingling moment. You've got to figure out how you present yourself on that world stage and we're working hard on that.”

The *Elevate 2042 20-year vision*⁵⁸ focuses on four areas that the Games will enable for future change growth – the economy, sporting and cultural life, connectivity and the environment.

The report says hosting the Games will create greater unity and a stronger global identity for the region by showcasing the unique value propositions of contemporary Brisbane, South East Queensland, Queensland and Australia.

“Made in Queensland” will also be key to growing local and small businesses, supporting local businesses to scale up sustainably and creating potential to showcase their achievements to the world.

Local procurement will be favoured, advancing equitable economic participation, while increased jobs and growth in target industries and sectors such as the sport and sports tech industries will help encourage innovation. High on the economic list is the goal to foster arts, culture and creativity to make our communities more vibrant, interesting and distinctive.

⁵⁵ Queensland Government, Q2032 website, 2025

^{56, 57, 58} Queensland Government, *Elevate 2042*, 2023

The report also sets out parameters for an inclusive, active and healthy sporting life for everyone with increased opportunities for First Nations, rural and regional and para-athletes.

Mr Liveris said he would approach all of his Fortune 500 contacts around the world to engage them in the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"I will open up all the contact levels I have around the world in the Fortune 500 and go to their boardrooms and ask them if they have heard of the highest quality of life in the world – and tell them they should move some of their people here," Mr Liveris said.

Improved public and active transport is another goal to enable communities to connect locally and regionally, while accelerating faster movement of people, goods and ideas to increase competitiveness.

All of this is to be done with a sustainability mindset and a zero carbon journey to transition toward renewable energy and a circular economy while protecting and regenerating our habitat and biodiversity.

Mr Liveris said the jobs created from the Games would come through a variety of supply chains, from procurement to training facilities, working with our Pacific neighbours, security and transport, and having teams come to our regional centres to train there and help boost regional economies.

"We will get millions of tourists to our region who aren't coming right now. From the Barrier Reef, to the rainforest and beaches – we have it all."

Summer Olympic Games

1896	Athens, Greece
1900	Paris, France
1904	St. Louis, United States
1908	London, United Kingdom
1912	Stockholm, Sweden
1916	Cancelled (<i>WWI – Berlin had been awarded</i>)
1920	Antwerp, Belgium
1924	Paris, France
1928	Amsterdam, Netherlands
1932	Los Angeles, United States
1936	Berlin, Germany
1940	Cancelled (<i>WWII – Tokyo had been awarded</i>)
1944	Cancelled (<i>WWII – London had been awarded</i>)
1948	London, United Kingdom
1952	Helsinki, Finland
1956	Melbourne, Australia
1960	Rome, Italy
1964	Tokyo, Japan
1968	Mexico City, Mexico
1972	Munich, West Germany
1976	Montreal, Canada
1980	Moscow, Soviet Union
1984	Los Angeles, United States
1988	Seoul, South Korea
1992	Barcelona, Spain
1996	Atlanta, United States
2000	Sydney, Australia
2004	Athens, Greece
2008	Beijing, China
2012	London, United Kingdom
2016	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
2020	Tokyo, Japan (<i>postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic</i>)
2024	Paris, France
2028	Los Angeles, United States
2032	Brisbane, Australia



Q & A

With Andrew Liveris AO – President of the Board for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee since its inception

Given your global experience, what do you see as the main opportunities for Brisbane arising from hosting the Games in 2032?

The Barcelona 1992 Games is a good example of how to place a city on the world stage. That Games did something for Barcelona and Spain similar to what 2032 will do for Brisbane, Queensland and Australia. Barcelona used its Olympics and Paralympics to showcase not just their Spanish culture, but their Catalonian culture – they took that to a whole new level and made Barcelona a world destination. We want to do the same with Brisbane.

Brisbane needs to look at how to integrate our First Nations people into our society using the Games. And you had better start thinking about Brisbane as an Asian growth city. Brisbane is absolutely booming – you can feel the hub, the pulse.

We want to make Brisbane and Queensland a world destination where the awareness index of who we are will go off the charts.

The story that we can tell hasn't yet been told – our narrative will be one of “Come to Australia, Brisbane and Queensland – visit, have fun, invest and live.”

There are lots of examples we can take from other Games. For Sydney 2000, it was talked about as the Happy Games and the Fun Games, where everyone came and enjoyed themselves. London 2012 had an extensive urban renewal program which set a high benchmark in terms of creating a continuing legacy that was strong and credible for community use well after the Games was finished. And more recently, Paris showed us the extra societal values of sustainability, with a massive amount of recycling sports equipment, reusing existing venues and temporary stadiums.

You know Brisbane well, and you've also had a global career. What does Brisbane do that's potentially globally interesting or significant?

Let's start with Australia – a country of mavericks, frontier people, adventurers, fun-loving people. Everyone loves to be with Australians. You're welcomed pretty much everywhere. This ability to embrace every culture

around the world puts us into a category that takes itself seriously but understands you work to live, not live to work.

Brisbane is a lifestyle superpower. Everyone who visits is gobsmacked at the quality of life and in the context of global standards, it's a terrific place to live. Pretty much everyone who visits asks, “How do I move here?” When we integrate that with our natural hospitality, our wildlife and nature, our climate, and our world-leading standards on inclusion, sustainability, and accessibility – and top it all off with financial outcomes – it makes it an enticing proposition.

Another goal of course is to have so many iconic Australian athletic moments, because this is an athletic experience as well, in one of the best sporting cities in the world.

How do you think we can leverage the benefits to avoid getting post-Games fatigue?

We're moving out of the planning phase into implementation, which is the fun phase. We're bringing with us the best of previous Games, and we're working very closely with LA because they're the next Summer Games.

Starting in 2025, we are going to be conducting community outreach to speak to the people of Queensland and Australia. We will be asking Queenslanders what does it mean for you to be hosting the Olympics and Paralympics? What can we do to integrate you into the presentation of the events? And what can we do so that you can see the economic benefits?

We want people to be engaged, volunteer, be part of our supply chain procurement – that's everything from temporary seats to meat pies.

Do you think Brisbane is finally coming of age? People often talk about cities doing that. Is that a current, authentic description?

Absolutely. A greater story was never told. I really feel Brisbane's maturity. We are already out there.

Come the closing LA Ceremonies and us becoming the next Summer Games, from that moment Brisbane will be known around the world. Fasten your seat belts because people are going to come to stay.

Do you think Brisbane is getting enough support from Melbourne and Sydney to ensure its success? What else should they be doing?

These Games will not be successful unless Sydney and Melbourne see it as Australia's Games. We understand that our country does the parochial state versus state thing, but this is a unifying moment for our country. When we celebrate our athletes and para-athletes as a country, we don't look at their address. So I think it's important to begin the outreach programme with the whole country in mind.

The first layer of outreach to make this Australia's Games is to get Australian corporates to believe their brand will be enhanced by being part of the Olympics and Paralympics.

When I first started talking about the Games in Sydney and Melbourne, that's right – there was scepticism about it. But now I'm getting a strong positive reaction from companies headquartered in Sydney and Melbourne. They really do see this as Australia's Games. But we will extend our outreach to other states because we need to make them feel that this is Australia's Games.

You have said that you want a mascot to represent Australian culture – what mascot would you choose?

I sometimes get into trouble with questions like that because I answer as an individual and not as President of the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee.

The patriotism that was evident in Paris for France and French culture was massive. It was a collection of those things in a mascot. It really made you feel that a cultural piece of it was there. What they did they did to be bold.

We're driven by culture which will be at the heart of our choices – that's something to give you a hint on.

We are a new world city and we're presenting to the world what that means. And I think that being big and bold means you've got to stretch yourself.

I've already given you clues. Clues around nature, inclusion, our warm hospitality. So that's the thinking going around. If I could take Brisbane and South East

Queensland and put it in a bottle and sell it as a perfume what would it be? Think about all the senses, not just one iconic symbol. I think that's enough clues for now.

Do you think Brisbane needs some kind of iconic structure, like the Opera House? People always talk of Brisbane being a collection of intangible things, like the lifestyle and warm fuzzy feelings so do we need an icon?

I was leaving Brisbane on a plane not that long ago. It was a beautiful sunny day and as the plane took off, I got a full view of the city. The Story Bridge, South Bank, the river and the many bridges crossing over. I took a picture, and I said that looks iconic to me. Okay, so there wasn't an Opera House or an Eiffel Tower. But I don't know whether you need one. I think you need the entire view of what is becoming a vibrant, growing, very fascinating city that's evolving.

*Andrew Liveris was Chair and CEO of one of the world's most significant corporations – Dow Chemical Company – during a period which the company's market capitalisation grew to more than \$US135bn at its peak. He has been an advisor to multiple US Presidents and sits on the Advisory Board of Salesforce, the Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Teneo, NEOM, IBM, Aramco, Worley, Lucid Motors and NOVONIX. He is a Special Advisor to the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. In April 2022, Mr Liveris was named President of the Board of the Brisbane Organising Committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. He has also founded an academy in his name at The University of Queensland that supports emerging leaders to effectively navigate unrelenting transformation. He is the author of *Leading Through Disruption* and *Make it in America*.*

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