Some Teaching Ideas – Part 2

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The following pages are a selection of slides from a presentation I gave to the Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference in Auckland 2015.

The concept of liveability can be examined at a variety of scales from a local street or neighbourhood (liveable streets), to nations and regions (wealth and poverty / developed/ developing, rural / urban, Asia) and global (Earth, ecological footprints, biocapacity). Students should investigate a range of places in this topic and include the cross-curriculum priorities where relevant – Asia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Sustainability.

Part 1 (Geography Bulletin Edition 2, 2017) suggested activities for introducing liveability and the factors that influence people's perceptions of liveability.

Part 2 examines how liveability can be measured or assessed, factors influencing liveability, change over time and ways of enhancing liveability. Different geographical tools can be used to investigate the liveability of places eg. photographs, tables, maps, population profiles and spatial technologies

It is important that whatever places, concepts and tools are used to study Place and Liveability, they should link to the key syllabus concepts including;

- Access to services and facilities
- Community identity
- Connectedness
- Safety
- Environmental quality

Global rankings and criteria for assessing / measuring liveability

These tools are used to compare the liveability of large cities across the world. Each uses different criteria, have a global perspective and do not consider differences in liveability within cities. City liveability rankings are traditionally used by governments and corporations wanting to assess "the degree to which expatriates enjoy the potential standard of living in the host location" (liveablecities.org). This needs to be explained to students.

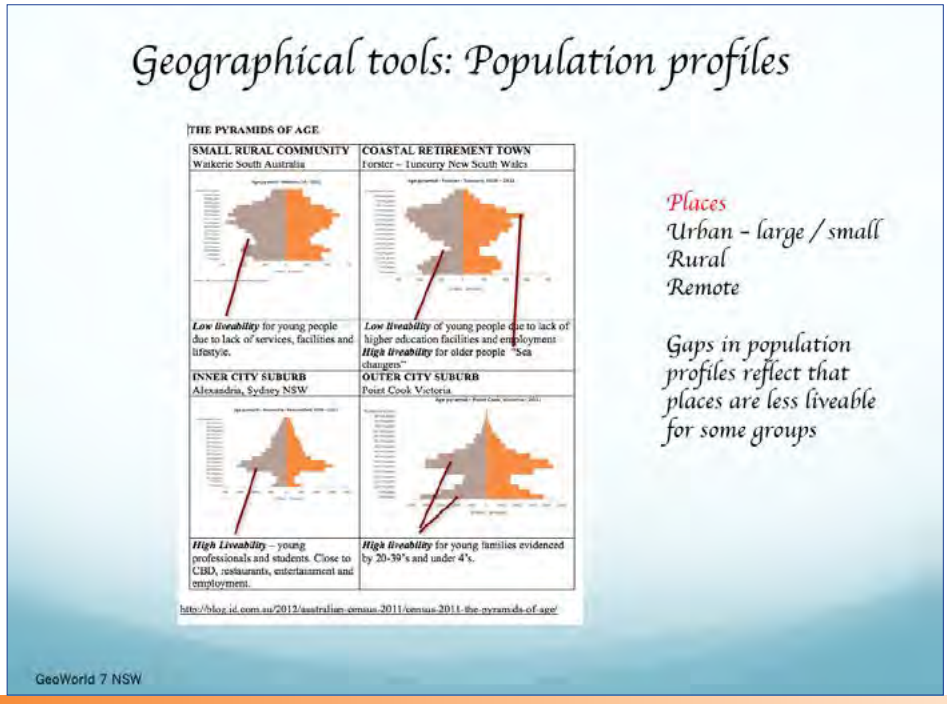
These rankings can be a useful tool for developing criteria to assess liveability in a local place. By investigating the criteria used to produce these rankings students can develop their own set of liveability rankings with which to assess and compare the liveability of local places (such as a street, park or other public place) or places pictured in photographs or videos.

There are three main liveability rankings /indices used to compare cities at a global scale although new measures such as the Global Happiness Index are becoming more popular by recognising that other factors linked to human wellbeing are also indicators of liveability.

Note: A good activity is to research the most recent liveability rankings for the three main global city measures and look for changes over time to determine why liveability changes at a city-wide scale.

Use the rankings to examine the features of the most and least liveable cities at a global scale.

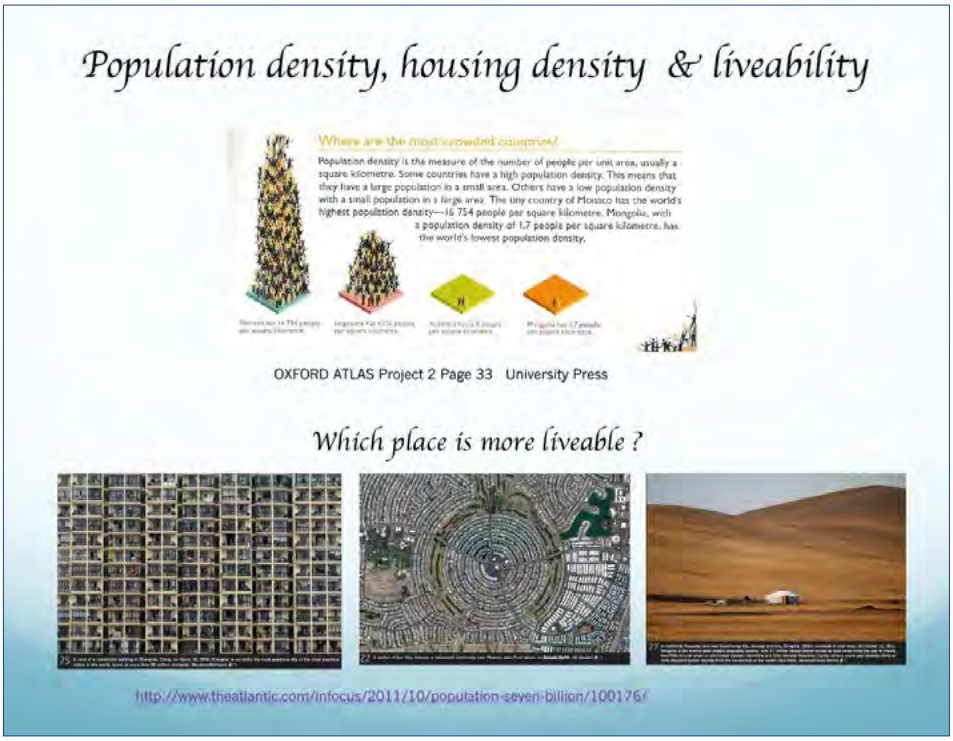
The criteria used to develop global city rankings can be linked to syllabus concepts including safety and access to services and facilities. Housing affordability has become a key indicator of liveability in Australia's large cities. This can lead to an investigation of ways liveability is being or can be enhanced at a city scale, particularly for those places considered least liveable.

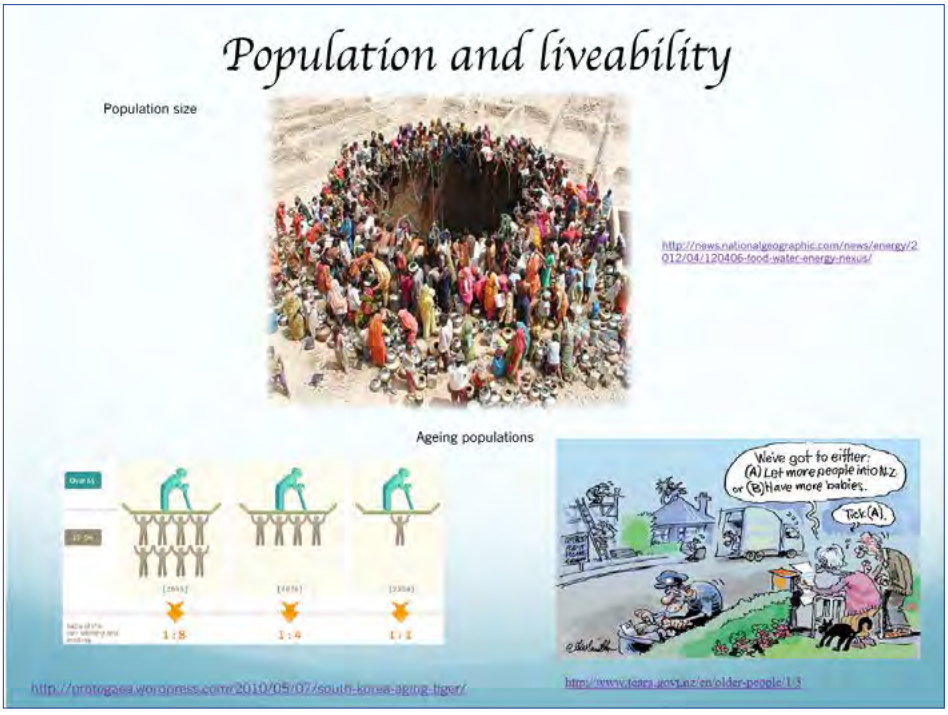


Population and liveability

Population profiles reflect the liveability of places within countries. Gaps in these profiles indicate migration to other places some age groups see as more liveable

Population density can impact on environmental quality and access to services and facilities, connectedness, community identity and environmental quality.





Population issues can impact on liveability eg ageing, highly dependent populations eg large % under 15 years of age. Use visual stimulus to promote discussion on how these issues impact on the liveability of places.

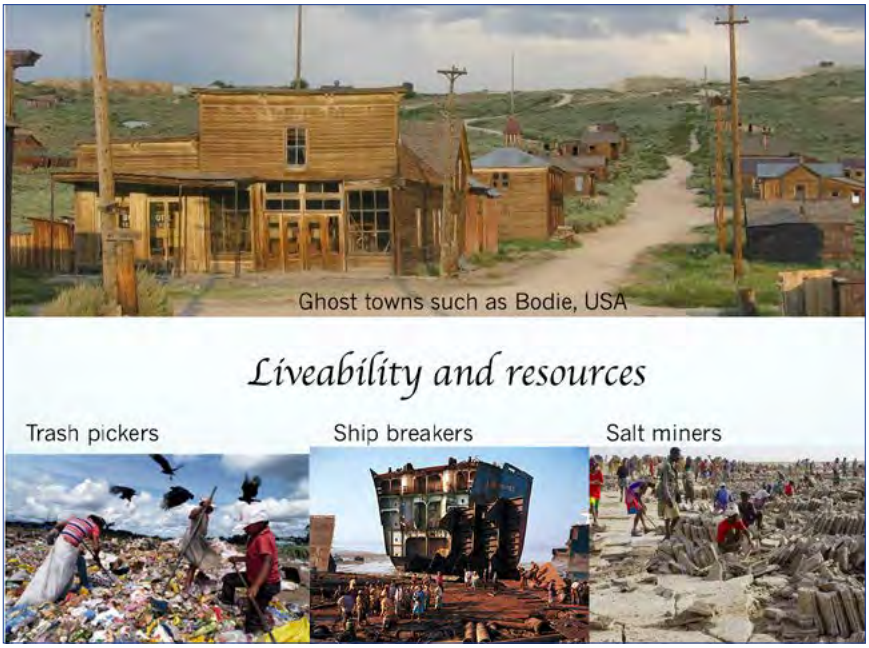
This type of activity is suited better to students needing more higher order thinking and can be used as a tool for differentiation.

Environmental quality influences liveability

Environments can be aesthetically and climatically attractive, resource rich or poor and well managed and cared for or polluted and degraded. Environmental quality can be impacted by natural and human processes eg drought and war and therefore can change over time.

Many places Australians would consider unliveable because of their harsh natural environments are liveable by those seeking to extract valuable resources. When resources run out the very environmental feature that attracted people disappears and populations decline – leading to the creation of ghost towns.

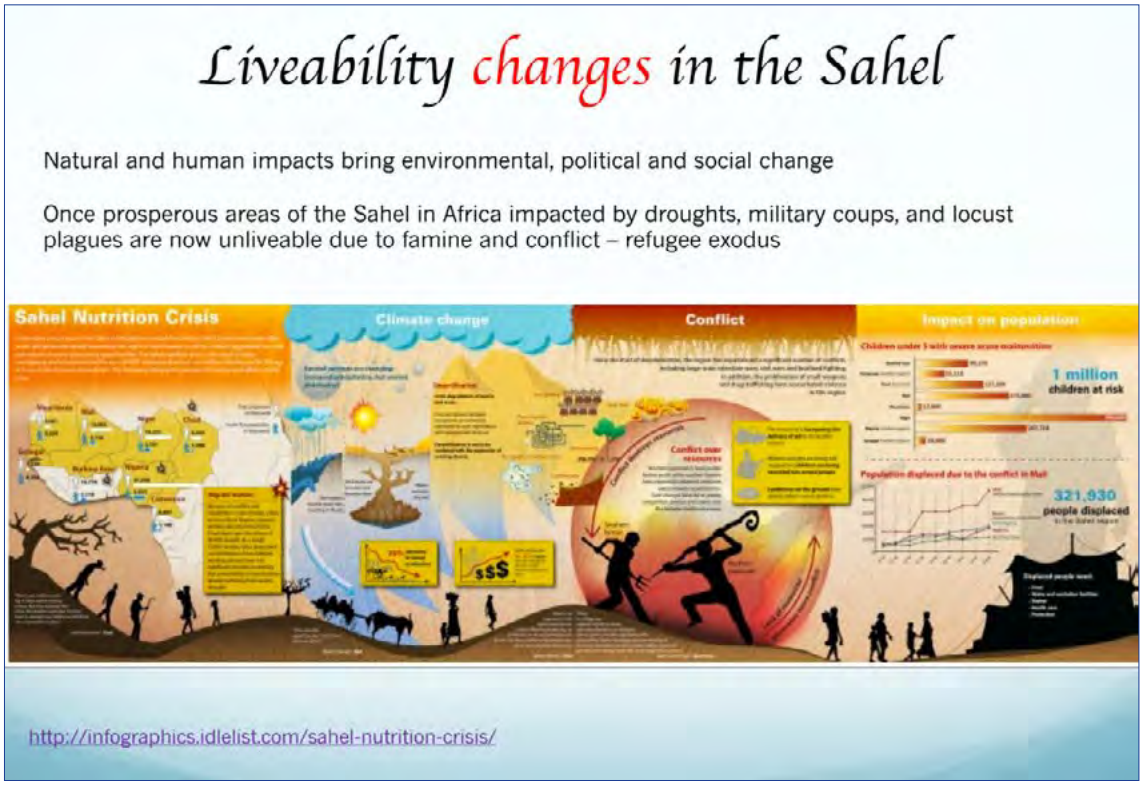
When resources are degraded, or depleted, liveability declines.



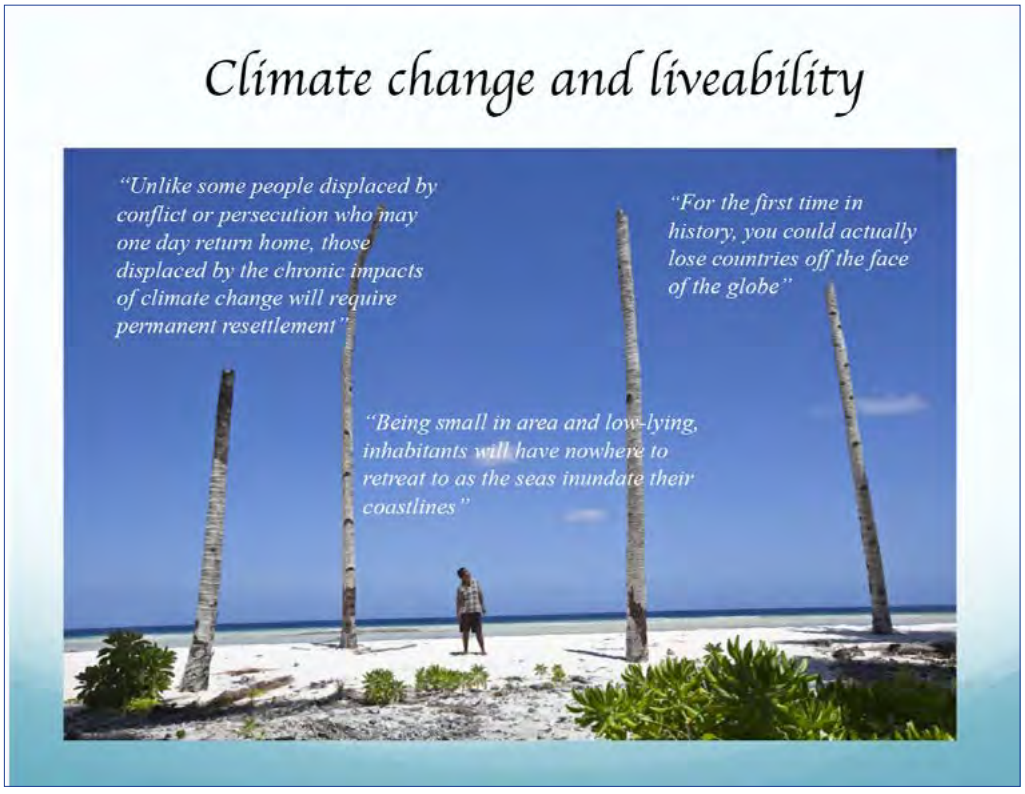
Liveability changes over time

In many places, liveability is impacted by ***natural and human factors***. When countries have limited resources to deal with these environmental issues, liveability is affected.

Liveability improves when enhancement strategies are implemented eg urban renewal, development



Climate change brings with it other environmental changes that impact on liveability. Examples include sea level rise and loss of productive land and settlements, patterns of weather and climate such as an increase in cyclones and the incidence of disease.



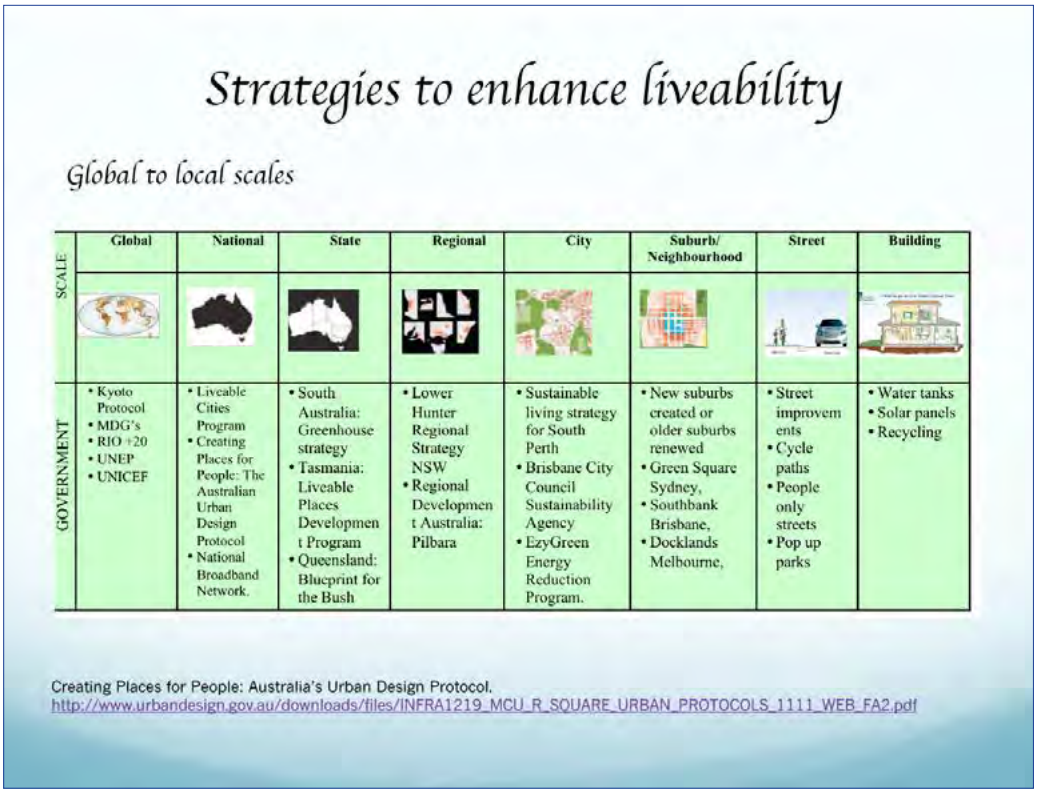
Enhancing liveability

Strategies can be implemented across local to global scales. Improved street lighting at a local scale can enhance liveability by improving safety while strategies to reduce global climate change rely on international cooperation.

Choose a range of strategies chosen to suit student abilities when investigating this section of the syllabus. A local activity in which students propose a strategy to enhance the liveability of a local place would fit well here.

There is great potential for differentiation here where strategies can range from simple changes to streetscapes to more complex such as creating transit oriented developments in cities.

Select examples from the local to the global scale to reinforce the concept of scale. Discuss the effectiveness of strategies at each scale – which would be more successful? Why?



At a local scale

Students can be asked to propose changes to a local street and show proposed changes on an annotated photograph or map such as Scribble Maps. Link to concepts such as safety, access to services and facilities, community identity and connectedness.

Enhancing liveability: Liveable streets

A. Pedestrian Street Lamps. Lighting shouldn't be just for cars	**B. Street Trees and Plantings** provide shade and oxygen, make the street look nicer, increase traffic safety, improve business	**C. Vendors** help make streets into destinations rather than places to be driven through	**D. Bollards** prevent motorists parking on pavements and can be used to stop cars entering streets	**E. Dedicated bus lanes** get buses out of traffic and make trips faster and predictable.
F. Curb extensions are safer - reducing crossing distances and by narrowing the street they reduce drivers speeds.	**G. Speed bumps** slow traffic.	**H. Separated bike lanes.** Dedicated lanes provide physical protection and encourage bike use.	**I. Traffic** lights with a leading pedestrian interval gives pedestrians time o cross before cars turn corners.	**J. Raised, textured crosswalks** create natural speed bumps and make pedestrians more visible.

A simple activity easy to adapt to classroom use to "develop students' ability to evaluate the liveability of their own place and to investigate whether it can be improved through planning" Australian Curriculum Geography year 7 level description.

Have students take or select a streetscape and using "Tablet" Apps or drawing tools to show changes that will improve liveability.

It is important to use interesting stories that illustrate successful liveability strategies such as the cable transport system in Medellin that links slum dwellers to city employment, bypassing the informal street system previously used by slum dwellers.

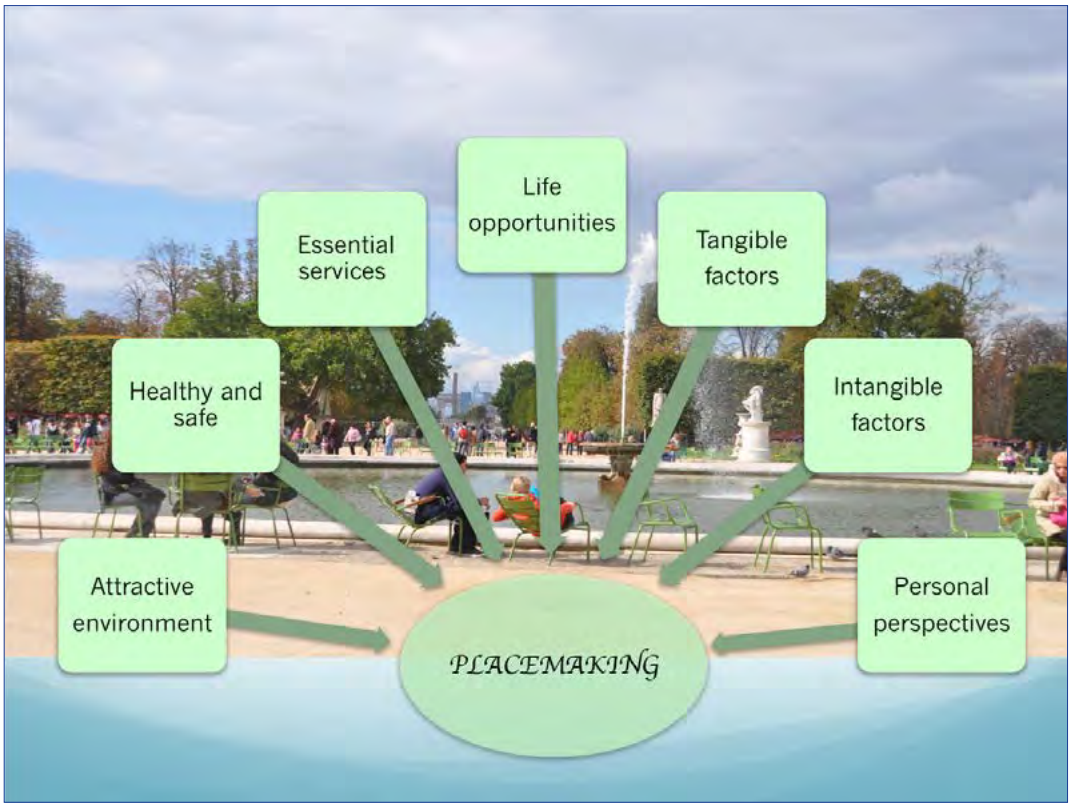
Enhancing liveability: Medellin

http://www.designother90.org/cities/solutions/medellin-metrocable-and-northeast-integral-urban-project

Transport services enhance liveability for slum dwellers

Consider what Australian places can learn from places overseas considered to be highly liveable. Use these ideas when proposing local solutions to liveability challenges. ***Asian*** examples could be used here eg. The greening of Singapore or China's fast trains network.

Placemaking is a relatively new concept used in planning the renewal or provision of places for people to live. The features of good places link to factors affecting liveability.

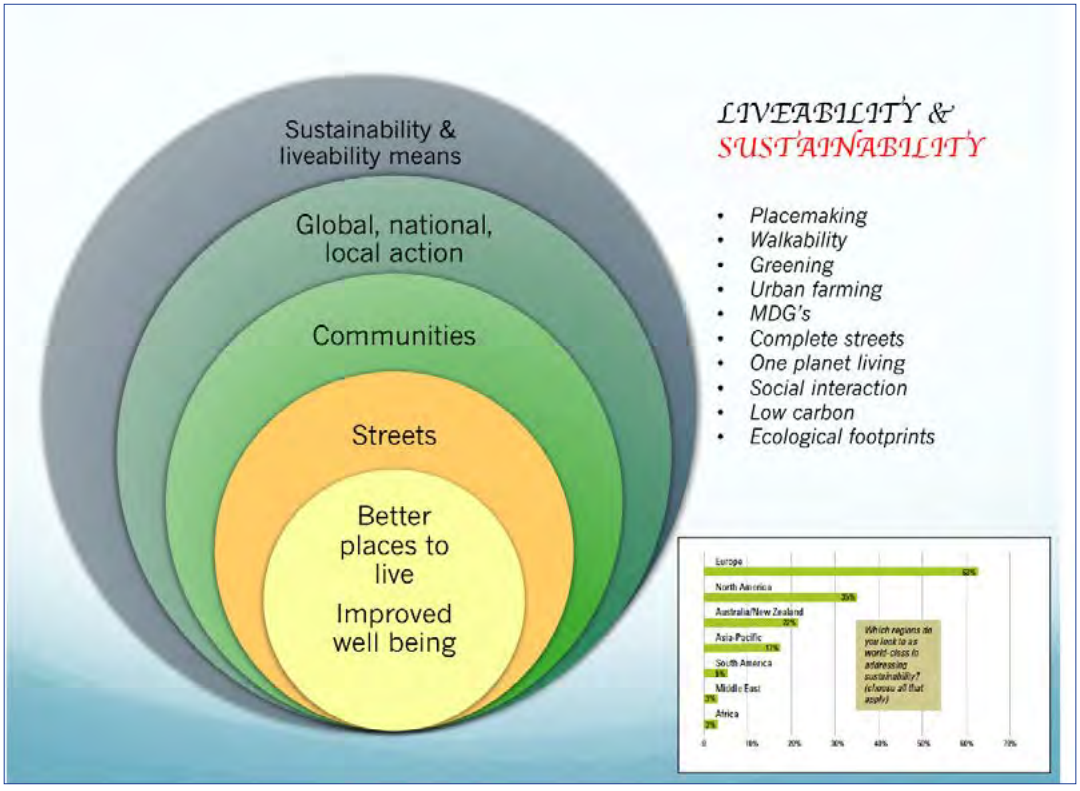


Incorporate Cross Curriculum Priorities

(Asia, Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and cultures)

1. Consider the cultural needs of indigenous people when proposing or investigating strategies to enhance liveability for Australia's Aboriginal peoples.

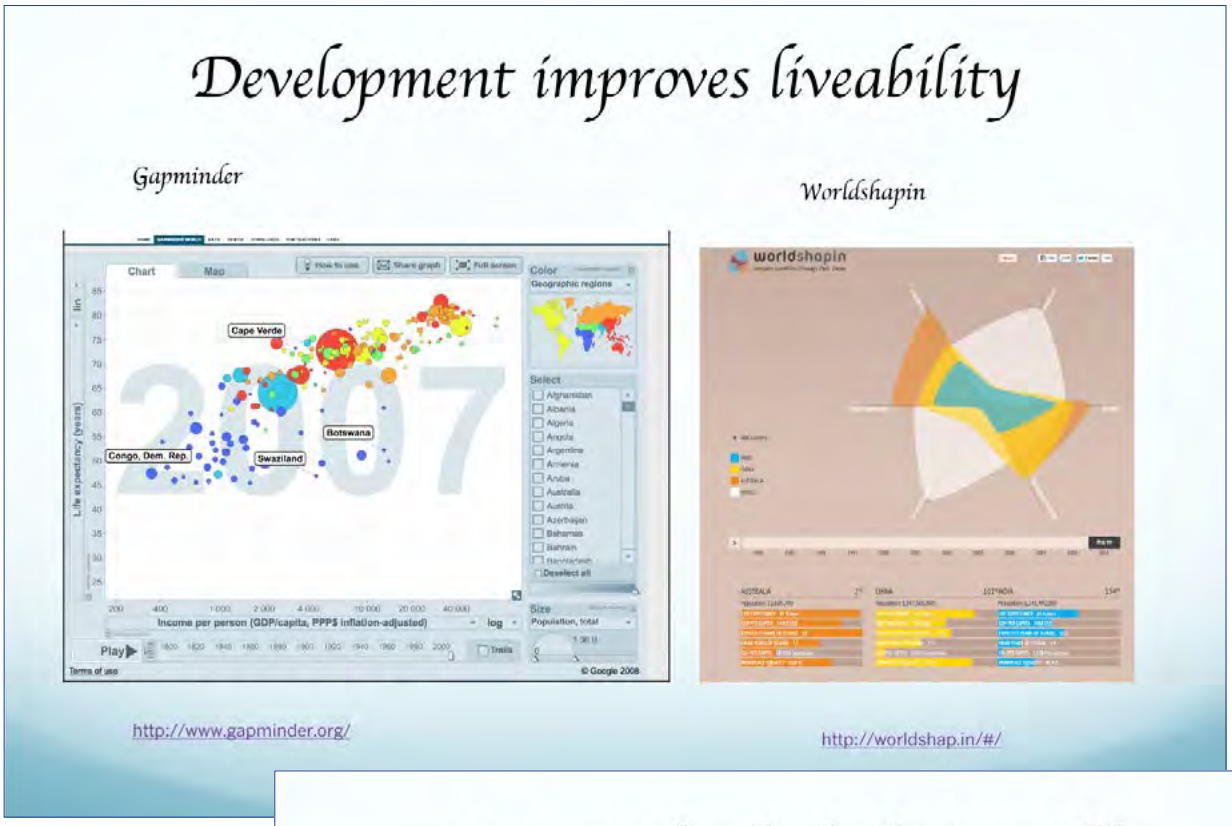
2. Links to sustainability



3. Link to Asia

Use interactive tools such as Gapminder and Worldshapin to make comparisons and propose solutions. Extend gifted students by linking development strategies with liveability.

Choose Asian countries when making comparisons.



Choose Asian examples if investigating strategies to enhance the liveability of places in the developing world. Keep in mind students they will be investigating Human Wellbeing in Stage 5 where some of these ideas may be investigated in more detail… use this topic to generate interest in future Geography studies

Make it fun

Create learning activities where students can apply their learning eg to a part of the school grounds or a rooftop. This can be a hypothetical e.g. "imagine the roof of our school hall is flat", or real e.g. Find the least liked part of the school grounds, assess why it is not liked and propose strategies to improve its attractiveness to students.

Choose activities and examples wisely

In the NSW Geography Syllabus Place and Liveability can be taught in year 7 or 8 (Stage 4) while Changing Nations can be taught in Years 9 or 10 (Stage 5). The points raised in this slide (produced for an Australian audience) are equally applicable as programing considerations.

Warning

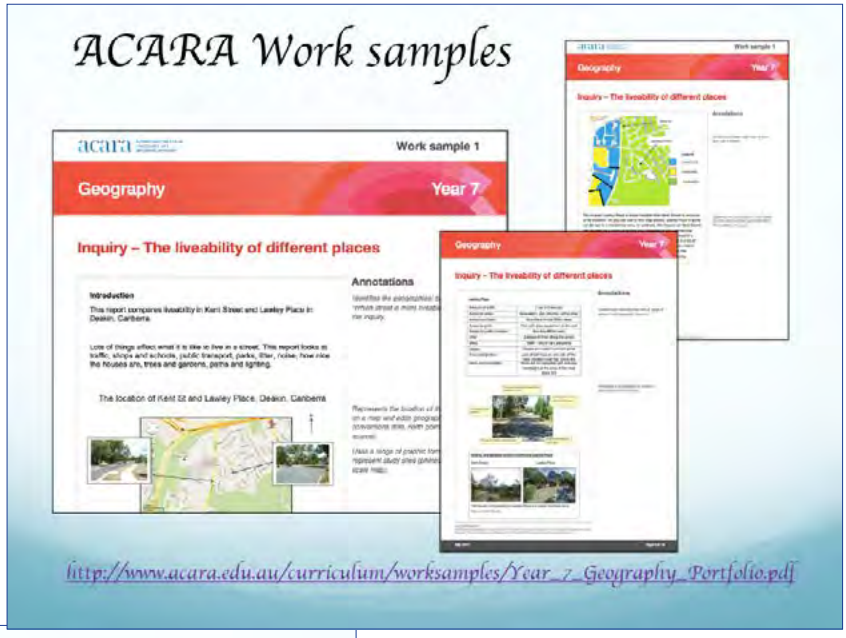
Enhancing liveability is connected to increasing sustainability – economic, social and environmental

In changing Places in Year 9 students will look at strategies to make urban places more sustainable and liveable

Program Year 7 to avoid repeating strategies that are more appropriate to urbanisation in Year 9

Resources and Fieldwork

Find resources already developed to support this topic and adapt to the needs of your students and school resources.



Use this Geogspace survey chart to develop one appropriate to your location and the needs of students. Using surveys such this provide the essential fieldwork component and allow students to apply their learning to the real world.

Web curation sites such as Scoop.it and Pinterest are a source of contemporary articles and a place to collect your own resources for personal or student use.

This full PPT presentation can be found in the members only resources section of the GTANSW website.