The Village, Balgowlah: creating walkable, healthy communities

Wednesday 1 August 2018
“Density Done Well”

Balgowlah is a great example of a mix of uses, quality and a density that people love.”

Dr Tim Williams, CEO Committee for Sydney
Key features

• Completed in 2009, project value of $360 million.

• Mixed-use development on Sydney’s northern beaches, home to more than 500 people in 242 apartments above a village-style retail hub.

• Three distinct precincts:

1. Civic Precinct – 60 specialty shops, cafés and a supermarket across 17,700sqm of retail space, 370 car spaces.

2. Garden Precinct – Apartment living, with private gardens for residents to enjoy.

3. Resort Precinct – Featuring a resort-style swimming pool overlooking the ocean for residents.
What makes this place great for those who call it home?
As cities continue to experience strong population growth, we need to have a clear focus on creating liveable, healthy and connected places that provide affordable options for communities.

There are four areas we need to focus on – making cities smart, connected, affordable and healthy.

Cities can and should be measured by the health and wellbeing of the people who live there.

This is a critical factor for the future liveability of our cities – health and wellbeing.

Here in Sydney, the population is set to grow by another million in the next 10 years.
Measuring community outcomes

Since 2011, we have used our customer-driven research to inform our guiding principles for liveable communities:

**Connected**
- to work, shops and community hubs ideally within 30 minutes of home.

**Smart**
- with great access to high-quality education at every stage of life and clear pathways to jobs of the future.

**Healthy**
- by providing walkable neighbourhoods and great outdoor places that encourage people to get active.

**Affordable**
- with a variety of housing options for different life stages, ages and budgets.

We use these collaboratively developed guiding principles to inform:

**Project planning**
- Development managers use the Liveability Index customer insights to better plan, design and bring forward key community infrastructure, to generate higher levels of customer satisfaction.

**Community lifecycle evaluation**
- We measure how customer satisfaction, wellbeing and happiness increase over time as our communities mature.

**Placemaking**
- Research informs the creation of a consistent placemaking approach across our communities.

**Collaboration**
- Our research shows us that if we work with government and other key stakeholders to fast-track schools, parks, childcare, cafes and shops, we can have a profound impact on the liveability of our communities and customer wellbeing.
The Stockland Liveability Index is a single number ranging from zero to 100, that represents how satisfied residents are living in a Stockland community.

The Liveability Index has been created from a comprehensive range of measures that drive liveability grouped into five main categories:

1. Community perceptions (how people feel about their community).
2. Satisfaction with community design elements.
3. Personal wellbeing (satisfaction with their life, personal safety and a range of personal wellbeing indicators).
4. Satisfaction with their own home / backyard.
5. Education (enrolment, location of schools and childcare, quality of education, adult learning facilities, and both quality and accessibility).

By focusing on improving performance of these domains, overall resident liveability will improve.
Key findings

**Health and wellbeing**

- 6/10 residents feel healthier since moving into Stockland community
- 63% are doing more exercise
- Spend 4 hours a week enjoying parks, cycleways, and walkways

**Quality of life**

- Three-quarters of residents say their standard of living has improved since moving into a Stockland community
- 63% feel safer
- Average personal wellbeing score of 79% (above the Australian average of 76.7%)
Lessons for cities and communities

Specifically, this can be broken down into some key lessons for cities:

1. **Provide opportunities for community interaction:**
   - Parks, cafés, walkways, schools, children’s playgrounds, cycleways.
   - Links with the natural environment.
   - Community programs, like parents groups and exercise classes, for community connection and physical exercise.

2. **Introduce well-designed neighbourhoods:**
   - Smart design, with places that are walkable.
   - Carefully plan all new homes to be close to childcare, schools, retail, parks and playgrounds.
   - Access to employment, transport and health facilities.

3. **Deliver infrastructure early, where possible:**
   - Fast tracking key infrastructure such as playgrounds, schools, public transport, parks, outdoor exercise stations.
   - Build in technology, to connect communities from the outset and enhance customer experience.
   - Proven to generate high levels of resident satisfaction and community pride.
   - Example Includes ‘Willowdale Community Place’ – a hub for community activities introduced within the first year of residents moving in.
Stockland is focused on increasing the walkability of our communities through good design.

Stockland has seven Green Star rated communities – the most of any residential developer in the country – awarded by the Green Building Council of Australia.

As part of the rating tool, Green Star includes target points to achieve ‘walkable access’ accreditation.

To achieve this accreditation, all homes must be:

- Within a 5 minute walk (400 metres) from primary services, for example food stores, doctors and banks
- Within a 10 minute walk (800 metres) from secondary services, such as places of worship, cafés, libraries and schools.

**Case Study: Healthy by design**

During the design phase of our communities, we ensure we allow for at least 5km of uninterrupted walking paths to support more walking and running in our communities.

Stockland partners with Parkrun to offer free timed 5km running (or walking) events, every Saturday morning in 11 of our residential communities and four shopping centres.

Organised by dedicated and passionate teams of local volunteers, the events are open to everyone and safe and easy to take part in.

Our Parkrun partnership provides us with an opportunity to help build active and healthy communities.

In addition, our Live Life Get Active Program, led by ambassador Jane Flemming, former Australian Olympic track and field athlete, is available to almost 3,000 of our residents.
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