University of Melbourne Estate Planning & Development
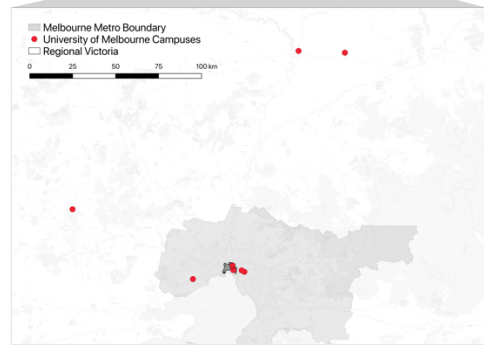
SDGs Cities Challenge Snapshot

Challenge Overview

Our challenge is how to more meaningfully connect local action with global sustainability issues as we develop the University's campuses. SDG 11 provides a suitable entry point to the broader SDG framework, as we work to understand the merits of a localized SDG approach.
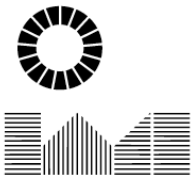
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Key City Characteristics

➤ <u>Population</u>: 54,000+ students, 44% international students, 9,380 staff, 7,000+ participants in alumni mentor programs and 420,000+ living alumni.

➤ <u>City Classification:</u> The University of Melbourne encompasses 7 campuses. Across those campuses is just over 2,500 hectares in site area, with approximately 2,400 hectares associated with the University's agricultural campus at Dookie in central Victoria, and almost 0.9 million square metres of gross floor area.

➤ <u>Governance</u>: The University of Melbourne was established by an Act of the Victorian Parliament in April 1853. The 13-member University Council is the governing body of the University of Melbourne and has oversight of its entire direction and superintendence. There are six Council committees including the Academic Board, the chief academic body responsible for academic quality assurance. The University has 10 faculties and is led and managed by the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive.

➤ <u>Climate & Geography</u>: The University's main (Parkville) campus sits within the suburb of Parkville, on the northwest side of the City of Melbourne. Melbourne has a temperate oceanic climate with warm to hot summer and mild winters.

➤ <u>Languages</u>: There are more than 150 nations represented at the University, with 44% of the student population belonging to international students. Of the share of international students, the top five represented countries are: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

➤ <u>Cultural Features</u>: The University of Melbourne ranked #1 in Australia in THE Global Rankings and #31 globally, for the year 2019 has 8,258 research publications, 51% undergraduate student population, 49% graduate and $500m in Higher Education Research Data Collection research income. The University has twelve museums and galleries across its campuses, where their cultural collections are unique in Australia for their calibre, depth and size.

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CITIES CHALLENGE

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of Melbourne

Existing Data & Challenge Data Needs

The University has many different data sets, but the goal is getting the different data sets to talk to each other more effectively to provide insights.

Existing Challenge Partners

The University of Melbourne Estate Planning & Development program is looking for partners with experience in localizing SDGs, in particular, advising on how much modification of a target or indicator is acceptable if we still want to claim alignment or consistency with the SDGs.

"South Lawn Orientation Day 2017"

The SDGs Cities Challenge Pitch

It is hoped that this Challenge will:

➢ Enable the University to localize the SDGs for its Estate Planning & Development activities
➢ Through this, to evaluate the merits of using localized SDGs to guide campus development
➢ Gain better outcomes for University precincts as a result of applying the localized SDGs
➢ Inform University-level sustainability planning about the merits of localized SDGs as the basis for a framework

Key Challenge questions:

1. When localizing SDGs, how much can a target or indicator be modified and still credibly be able to claim that the result is aligned with the SDGs?

2. How can we succinctly communicate the localisation process to stakeholders (e.g. staff and students) and the public?

3. Are there examples of where localized SDGs have been used to guide the design and/or development of a building, campus, precinct or city?

Key Linkages

 The University is a signatory to the SDGs and has a Sustainability Charter and Plan, as well as annual sustainability reports (https://sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au/sustainability-commitment).

The University has undertaken some high-level mapping of our sustainability activities against the SDGs as part of recent sustainability reports. We have also started to embed the SDGs in our thinking for campus and precinct planning. A localization process appears to be a sensible next step if we want to take these reporting and campus planning activities to the next level.

Key Linkages contd:

While the University's current strategy, *Advancing Melbourne*, does not explicitly reference the SDGS, it does send a strong message about the importance of sustainability for the University. For example (p.6 https://about.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/132629/Advancing-Melbourne.pdf):

"Our commitment to place is also reflected in our aspiration to be leaders for a sustainable future – through education and research, through our campuses and their operations, through partnerships and in the development of precincts intertwined with the city."

It is intended that the SDGs will have a role as a performance framework for measuring progress of Advancing Melbourne.

The University was also a signatory to a recent letter sent by the Global Compact Network Australia calling on the Federal Government to use the SDGs as a framework for economic recovery. https://unglobalcompact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Road-to-Recovery.pdf

The University has a number of academic groups with expertise in the SDGs, including the Connected Cities Lab (https://sites.research.unimelb.edu.au/connected-cities), Centre for Spatial Data Infrastructures and Land Administration (http://oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=1005177), Centre for Disaster Management and Public Safety (https://www.unimelb.edu.au/cdmps/research/research-units) and leadership of the U21 Health Sciences SDG initiative (http://u21health.org/u21-sdg-initiative/). Incorporating SDGs into campus development will contribute to the University's overall adoption of the SDGs.