

Fact sheet

The rise of multi-city regions

Overview

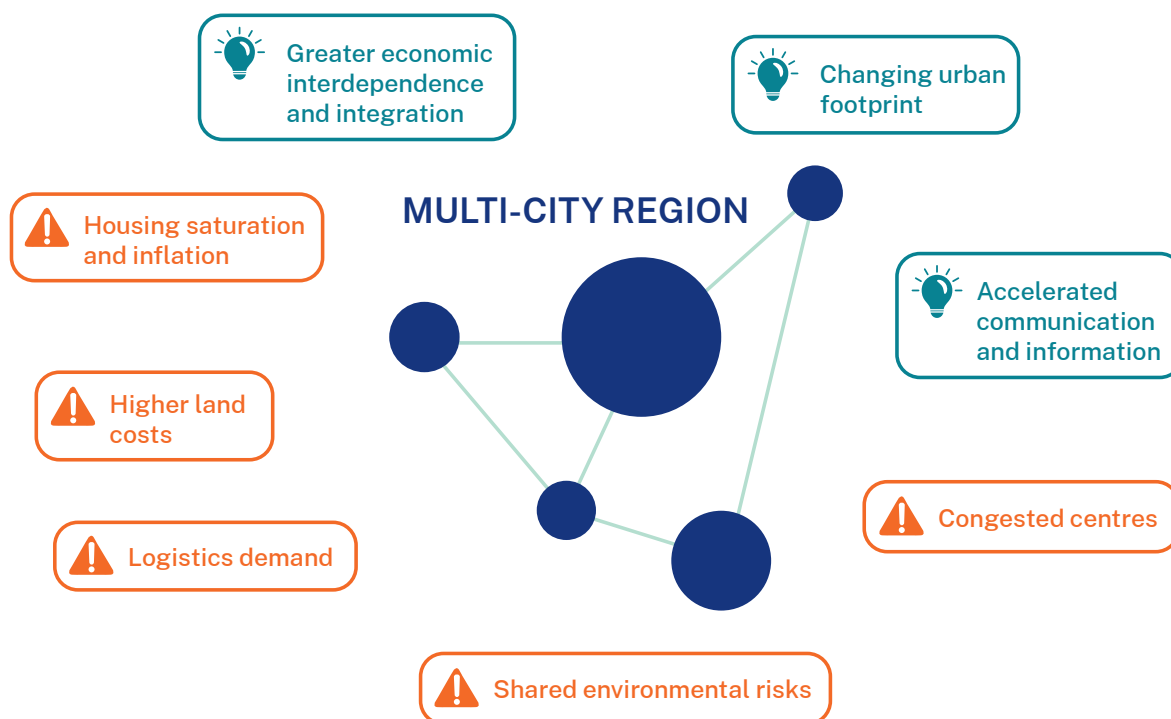
With more people (57%) living in cities than ever before, the multi-city region has emerged as a response to the urban challenges and opportunities of our time.

Expanding cities have recognised that they are becoming more and more interdependent with the cities, corridors and conurbations around them. Neighbouring places have embraced shared people, ideas and business and investment opportunities.

In the past 20 years, there has been a globally shared recognition that the multi-city region has evolved from a promising idea to an urban reality for large parts of the world—one that can be harnessed for the collective good.

This factsheet explains why the case for multi-city regions is more compelling than ever, and the social, liveability, economic and environmental issues that multi-city regions are set up to tackle.

Drivers of multi-city regions





Urban footprint has changed

- More people travelling across the region for work, study, family and leisure.



Economic interdependence and integration

- As companies expand and disaggregate, alternative cities can offer specialisation.
- Economy and labour markets less defined by boundaries.



'Borrowed scale' for smaller cities

- Smaller cities can borrow and leverage the amenities, functions and advantages of a larger network, creating effective markets for investment and greater productivity.



Issues extend beyond boundaries

- Environmental risks such as flooding and fires, climate change response and mitigation, and issues relating to housing and settlement patterns, require collective action and collaboration.



Communication and information have accelerated

- More individuals and companies connected to global networks headquartered in a central hub, while based elsewhere.



Growth of global and domestic trade

- This creates more logistics demand and pressure to better coordinate supply chains.



Hybrid and remote work

- This has expanded the choice of residential locations for employment, especially knowledge economy jobs.

Economic and productivity drivers

- Business needs: companies are distributing functions, services and supply chains to provide services and use labour across a wider area.
- Clustering and stronger brand: population centres identifying complementary strengths and clustering functions for borrowed scale.
- Technology and connectivity advances: people can work in more locations and travel long-distances efficiently.

Social and spatial drivers

- Increased inflation: increased housing and cost of living.
- Pattern of relocation: More people choosing to undertake medium-distance commuting and living further away from CBDs.
- Combating inequity: mainstreaming a higher and more inclusive standard of community-building, including in periods of crisis, such as the pandemic or natural disasters.

Environmental drivers

- Resource stewardship: Ability to better manage land-use, prevent encroachment on agricultural land and natural spaces, and improve air and water quality.
- Decarbonising transport: Opportunity to test new kinds of energy infrastructure and vehicle systems, including low carbon alternatives.
- Climate change risk management: ability to coordinate emergency response and jointly invest in mitigation and adaptation.