

participate, we must educate ourselves about the past triumphs we benefit from and raise awareness of the history we're making right now, so we can enhance perceptions of the city.

There can be no denying that Adelaide's achievements as an urban laboratory are ground breaking and numerous. Arguably nothing has changed to prevent us from carrying on with the lessons of history and inscribing our place in the 21st century. Except, perhaps, ourselves and where our priorities lie. Rather than look to our neighbouring interstate cities – the enormous metropolises skyrocketing in population and in geographic size – we should think of our smaller size as a strength; as an opportunity to focus on sustainability. But we need a clear strategy to do this. The economic growth of our past is disappearing and future fortunes require tapping into our advantages and making the world pay attention to them.

Adelaide is changing and its moment of excellence may be on the horizon – but only if we're smart enough to identify and grasp the opportunities that are there.

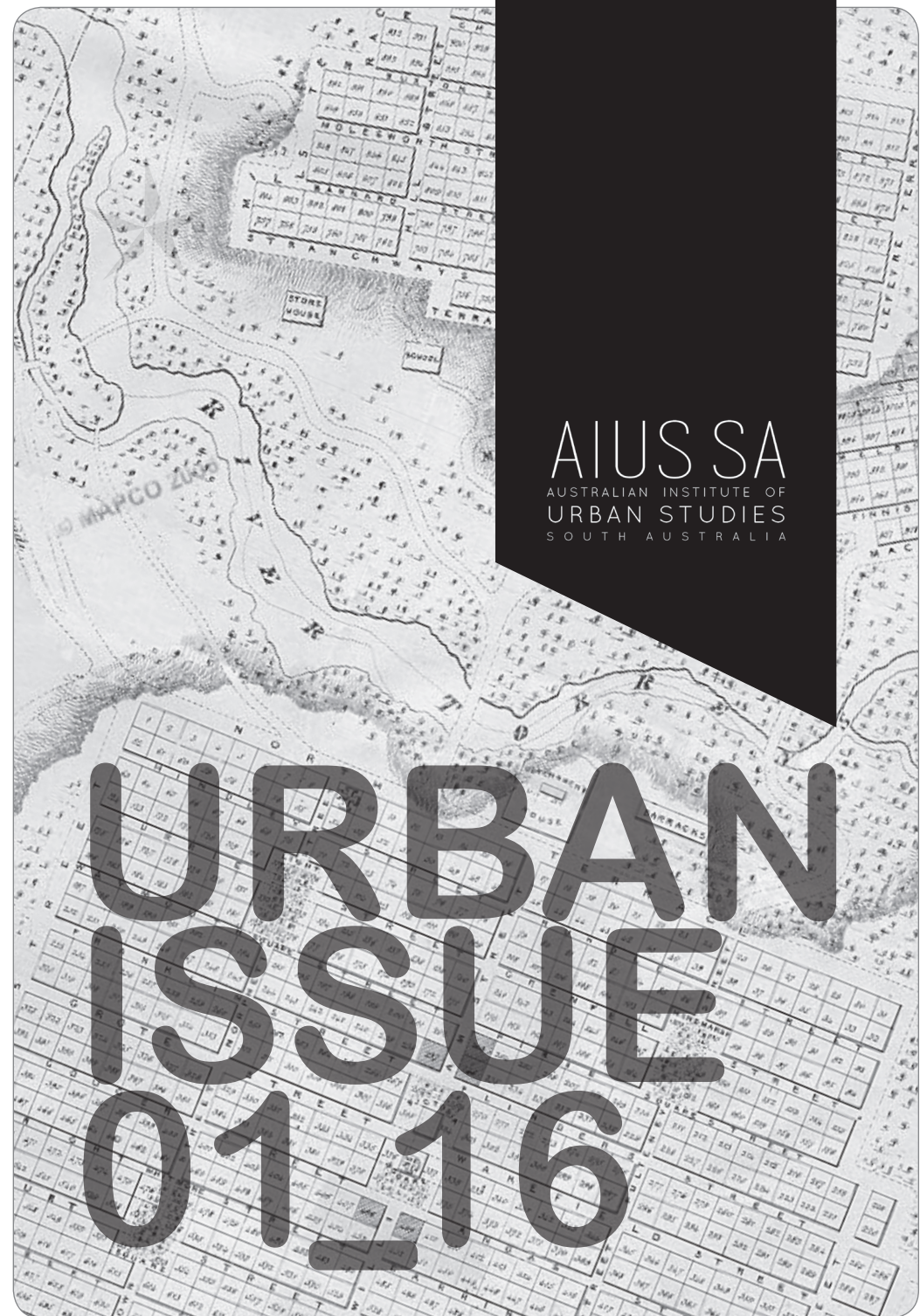
This city exhibits excellence in a multitude of ways. But we need to build a kind of excellence that celebrates our legacy – both the triumphs and the tribulations – and also builds bridges to a brighter urban future by building upon what we've learnt. Cultivating a narrative that blends our experimental history with our future urban possibility is our current challenge. The problems climate change poses are a unique starting point for a city that aims to revolutionise the way cities respond to serious environmental issues. An impressive range of political, economic, social, cultural and environmental exploits have nurtured a unique urban life, and these experimental attempts to make our city and our state known the world over demonstrate how we can also lead the world in the way cities and their people thrive by responding to climate change with experimental know-how. In this way Adelaide is a city with global potential, and it's time that we celebrate the way this has always defined us, harness our reputation as a city of firsts, and use our reputation to build the prosperous future that we all want.

Urban Issue No. 1 is the first in a series of essays published by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies – South Australia.

Each essay explores and articulates what an inspiring urban future looks like for Adelaide and South Australia, that's good for people and the planet in relation to a particular topic.

Throughout 2016, the AIUS – SA will focus on Climate Change, acknowledging that it is one of the most important issues of our time.

Established in 1967, the Australian Institute of Urban Studies – South Australia, provides an independent platform to provoke rich conversation, thoughtful discussion and rigorous debate about urban life in South Australia.



GLOBALISING ADELAIDE'S URBAN POTENTIAL: CULTIVATING A CULTURE THAT CELEBRATES THE 'CITY OF FIRSTS'

BY MARK DEAN

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Philosophers, economists and urban thinkers have for centuries known that the future of a place can't be understood without looking to its past. The past creates conditions for the future. If we ignore a place's history, we risk leaving the most important questions unanswered.

For example, as the world's population rapidly urbanises, how do we build a city that prospers? The answer touches on issues that go far beyond built form. A prosperous city needs sustainable social, political, cultural and economic foundations. Only by looking to these pillars can we give life to our cities for years to come.

We are currently faced with global uncertainty, something we see locally in Adelaide's mounting economic crisis. As part of a new normal where our political and economic systems are at the mercy of global forces, prosperity has escaped many and could elude many more. And while public unease around our social and political institutions makes change difficult, it is unclear where our future lies. But Adelaide has a proud and vibrant culture and this is the most important place for us to begin our search for answers. Adelaide's past can help us build a vision for the future.

One of the greatest threats facing our planet today – climate change – contains opportunities for Adelaide to showcase its global potential and develop a prosperous future for its people. The severity of climate change has the potential to bring governance, industry, people, and the built and natural environments together in an experimental vision of what it looks like to achieve progressive change and adaptation in urban settings. Where we can't start over with our institutional and

cultural foundations, we can recognise how often we've shown the rest of the country, and the world, where Adelaide's experimentation has yielded intergenerational benefits, and use this to give us the confidence to make change where it's most needed.

Showing the world how cities should respond to climate change on the basis of experimentation is possible because Adelaide is a city of firsts. We have found the solutions to problems in experimentation before and can do so again. We boast world- and nation-leading reform across many realms of public life. We have led the nation and the world in terms of governance, as the first Australian state to legislate the right of women to vote and stand for parliament, and where The University of Adelaide admitted women to tertiary education before any other Australian university. We expanded civil rights to sexual minorities when SA Parliament decriminalised homosexuality before any other Australian jurisdiction in 1972, setting the bar for how a culture evolves and progresses towards greater equality.

Our capability for economic renewal also belongs in our proud tradition of firsts. Adelaide exported Australia's first wine and has maintained an international reputation for primary produce ever since. In the post-war years our Housing Trust was the most progressive in the nation, developing the city's urban character by not just delivering public stock, but also by providing a growing population with the opportunity of home ownership – at the time a key policy for a modernising state with a burgeoning middle-class. This was clever policy designed to balance the great investment of the State in new manufacturing industries – the sector

on which our State's economic fortunes have been built for generations. With advanced stages of decline in these industries, we've again showcased our experimental ideas: Australia's first innovation district now grows with activity and economic importance on the former site of the Mitsubishi factory at Tonsley, incubating cutting-edge technological possibilities for more world firsts to be born right here in SA.

South Australian cultural and social institutions produced Australia's first female Prime Minister, and Australia's first astronaut. We lead the country in embracing multiculturalism, as the site of Australia's first mosque, which has sat resplendent in the South West of the city for more than one hundred years, attests. The spirit of experimentation that thrives here is already propelling Adelaide into 2016, with research conducted by SAHMRI examining residents' happiness being rolled out to help us develop better-targeted social policies. Add to this list the forthcoming arrival of Australia's first mobile, pedal-powered pubs and it becomes ever clearer that our penchant for social and cultural leadership is not only embraced, but celebrated.

Our built environment and its design lead the nation in many areas. Even before Melbourne, a tram network was established in Adelaide, transforming the city and facilitating an energetic urban life. We recently tested the world's first driverless car.

The embedding of an integrated design strategy for urban issues in planning policy, another first, is the envy of other Australian cities, and it continues to help us achieve world-class excellence in Adelaide's urban rejuvenation. This project is based on a model developed by a former international participant in Adelaide's Thinkers in Residence program, a project that existed nowhere else in Australia and has yet to be matched by our interstate neighbours.

Our connection to the natural environment has inspired a sustainable design approach in the urban realm. An SA team delivered on a national

zero-carbon house challenge, which, if certified to national standards, will be a first in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Adelaide stands at the forefront of efforts to tackle climate change as we cultivate technological developments produced in renewable energy – efforts supported further by the Government's recent commitment to make Adelaide a carbon neutral city by 2050 – again, a world first.

We live in a city defined by conscious efforts to cultivate difference at every turn, and we've witnessed much success. And whether or not everyone recognises this to be true, the eyes of the world should find us more often because our past speaks volumes about our future potential. We are not only a city of firsts; we are an experimental city

ADELAIDE STANDS AT THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE AS WE CULTIVATE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS PRODUCED IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

full of new ideas and an eagerness to see them succeed and produce positive change for all of Adelaide's and South Australia's citizens.

Yet this does not always appear to be the case – sometimes to ourselves

and often to outsiders. And it could be argued that Adelaide is known better for where we've failed. And it's true – the stories of experimental success mentioned above have not occurred without numerous failures running in parallel.

One clear factor that influences our perceptions is the economic uncertainty obscuring our vision of the future. Opportunities for growth in the industries that delivered wealth to Adelaide and the State after World War II have all but disappeared, and it's not yet clear how we can return to comparable levels of prosperity without undergoing massive economic transformation. Yet Adelaide is full of talented people prepared to invest the energy required to create a city of the future.

Perhaps it's not these people who need to be convinced of Adelaide's strengths. Within a rejuvenated culture that embraces new ideas, fertile ground can seed changes, while expanding the landscape in which new ideas can be formed and nurtured. Building support for world-leading ideas, through a social and cultural environment willing to grasp the experimental is a change process that must involve all of us. But in order for all to