

FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS (CBD) TO CENTRAL SOCIAL DISTRICTS (CSD); THE IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A POST-COVID BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The ability to adapt and evolve is critical for survival. As we evolve into a post-Covid society, Central Business Districts (CBDs) have changed. Covid-19 reshaped the business environment and accelerated the adoption of hybrid working structures. Working from home (WFH) has altered how we live and work, and the impact has been felt strongly in the CBDs. Historically, they were a central hub traditionally focused on economic activities, however interaction with CBDs is changing.

Challenges around the purpose and structures of post-pandemic CBDs exist. There is a need to revitalise CBD areas and adapt to new trends. Adaptive reuse of built form can optimise performance for stakeholders and can positively impact more broadly within cities. A shift from solely economic growth to social engagement and interaction, adaptive re-use provides an opportunity for mixed-use development and evolution.

Keywords: *Central Business District (CBD), adaptive reuse, Central Social District (CSD), post-Covid, Working from home (WFH).*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid pandemic changed the way people interacted with the built environment. In Australia's capital cities, this change has been permanent. As workers moved to new work modalities, the type and amount of office space shifted, as did utilisation of space, and this recalibration is continuing.

With lessened office worker population and the changing behaviour patterns of residents; the built environment of Australia's CBDs changed immeasurably. Initially these negative changes affected the retail and office property sector, but as cities recover from Covid and adapt to changed consumer and tenant profiles, we see cities being reshaped. This presents considerable opportunity for all users of the city to improve CBD environments through the way we use and interact with the built environment.

The aim of this paper is to understand what the social implications on the built environment have been due to Covid, as employees shift their working modalities. It will review how the CBD has shifted pre-Covid and post-Covid by analysing the yield changes in the commercial property sector; the vacancy rates; employment data; as well as compare the different business sectors occupied business floor area to understand the shifts in the CBD commercial space.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

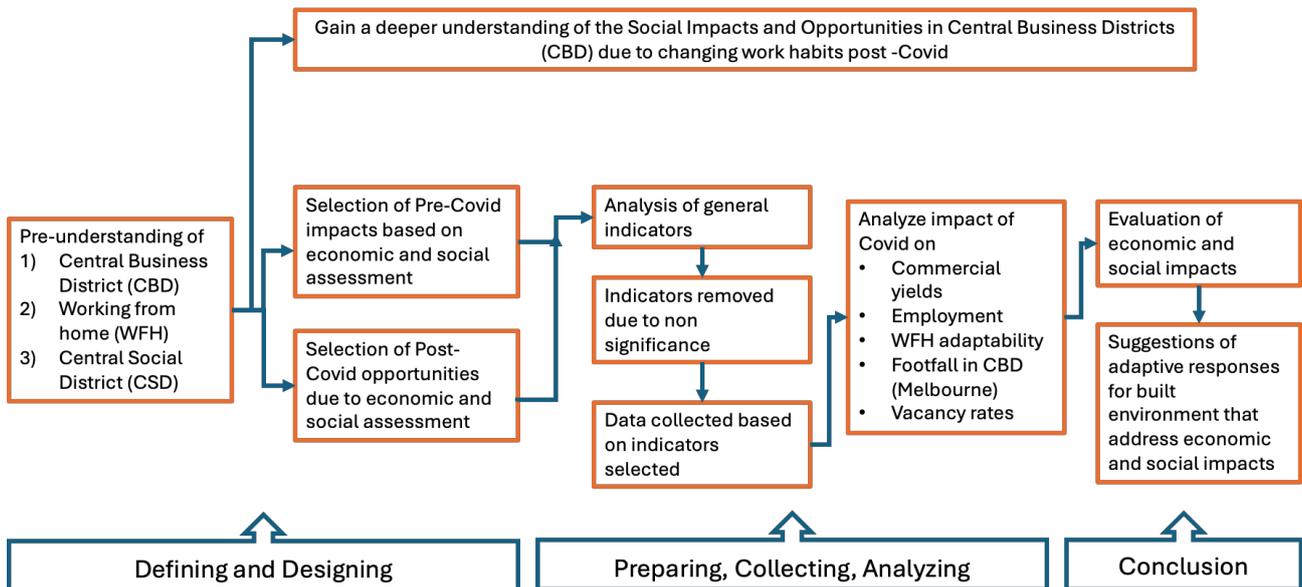
The study begins with developing an understanding of the importance of the CBD; to understand how it was impacted by Covid and WFH. The analysis will look at the CBD in a pre-Covid lens, understanding commercial property yields, employment, footfall, as well as the adaptability of certain industries to WFH.

It will use this information against the post-Covid vacancy rates, to formulate how the evolution of the CBD has impacted the built environment. To consider the social impacts and opportunities, it will use the concepts identified in the Sustainable Temporary Adaptive Reuse (STAR) project (Armstrong et al., 2024) to discuss how to utilise vacant space for social interaction.

In a post-Covid setting, this research looks to gain an understanding of the social impacts and opportunities in the CBD due to changing work habits. It hopes to analyse the potential of changing from a Central Business District focus to a Central Social District evolution.

Figure 1 outlines the research design that aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social impacts and opportunities in CBDs due to changing work habits post-Covid.

Figure 1 – Research Design



(Source: Author, 2025)

2.1 The CBD pre-Covid

CBDs have developed over time from historic town-squares, which were the base for semi-regular trade and markets to become the commercial and financial core of a city. These areas were often adjacent to key transport linkages, including river, seaport, highway or railroad. Up until the industrial revolution of the 19th century the CBD, as it was, remained predominated by agriculture and commerce. These centralised trading areas evolved through the late 18th and into the 19th century, as they become the centres for finance and government, with the administrative function dominating, and the built form of CBD evolving to suit the changes in type of use (Rosenberg, 2025).

From the early 20th Century, American and European centres, which led the way in modern CBD development, became primarily retail and commercial cores as capitalism developed and centralised the retail model. By the mid-20th Century, the skyscraper had become a common feature in the CBD model and started to include office space in increasing volume. As work modalities shifted to desk-based operations in the 1960s (Hansen and Saini, 2020), the development of skyscrapers increased commensurately. These phenomena worked in concert in the second half of the 20th century to change work praxis, increase density, and more broadly, change the dynamic within CBDs. Office towers developed to service the office worker population and cater to the commuting worker, “*towers bring in tens of thousands of workers daily and provide a customer base for retailing, entertainment and use of public spaces*” (Longtin and Mitchell, 2021).

The pandemic has forced a reshaping of CBDs and new direction in their evolution. In an Australian context the CBD remains relevant, the city centres of Melbourne, Sydney and Perth together employ 3.5 times as many people as the resources sector (Commins, 2021). However, fewer of those people are in the CBD less regularly, and less time spent within CBD cores by employees must be addressed as the CBD evolves again.

An overview of data illustrating markets positions prior to, during and post-Covid is an indicative, micro-level analysis of change over a short, but dramatic period of upheaval. Trend data on pricing and demand of office stock is included below, which is contrasted with the following section which includes updated commercial property data from 2025, a full 5 years out from the Covid pandemic occurring, thus illustrating the permanence of the change. This also shows a need for the built environment to be better utilised moving forward, and through this, to play a role in the reimagining of CBDs.

From individual buildings having to be adaptively re-used to remain viable, perhaps through a complete change of use (Savoie, 2025), to whole quadrants of CBDs requiring investment to be reinvigorated it is clear, “*these signature skyscraper and corporate tower districts that define the skylines of great cities, and are often synonymous with downtowns, will have to adapt*” (Florida, 2021).

2.1.1 Commercial property yields pre- and post-Covid

The significant softening of yields in both prime and secondary stock is illustrative of market no longer attractive to investors, providing further impetus for both the drastic reconsidering of how skyscrapers are utilised, and, as this occurs, what CBDs become in their next iteration. This study is not an analysis of investment potential; however, it is not only rental, occupancy and incentive data that indicates the health of a market. Yields across both market segments in Melbourne and Sydney have softened considerably (Henderson et al., 2025), which could suggest investment capital is moving into other assets classes, or at the very least, other sectors of the property market. There is evidence too of considerable withdrawals occurring of stock that has failed to transact (Lenaghan, 2023). These factors are accelerating adaptive re-use assessments and developments. Table 1 highlights the transition in yields pre- and post- Covid.

Table 1 - Melbourne and Sydney Yield changes, pre- and post-Covid

	Yield 2019	Yield 2025	Change
Sydney Prime	4.62	6.03	+145 bps
Melbourne Prime	4.77	6.58	+181 bps
Sydney Secondary	5.25	7.19	+194 bps
Melbourne Secondary	5.55	7.46	+191 bps

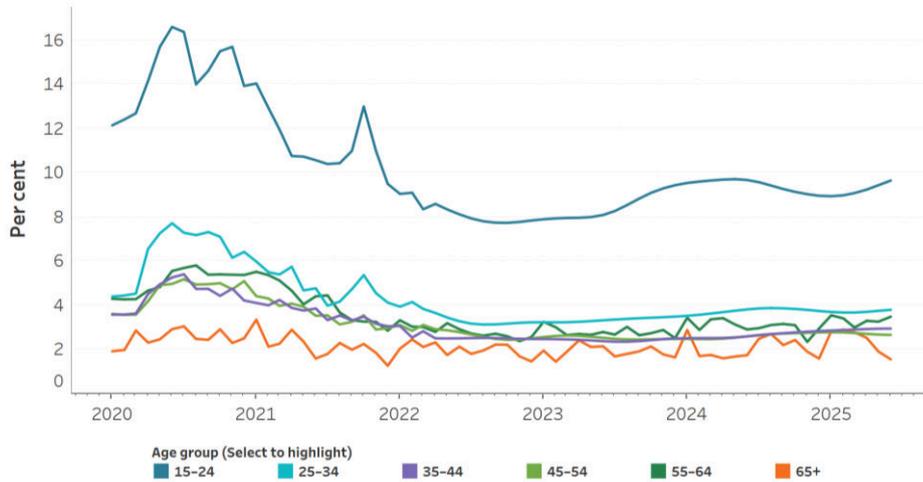
(Source: Knight Frank Research (Frank, 2019a, Frank, 2019b, Frank, 2025a, Frank, 2025b))

2.1.2 Employment pre- and post-Covid

In broader economic terms, and relating to the CBD itself, rather than the specific built environment within it, Australian unemployment data illustrated the impacts of Covid. The immediacy of the spike as Covid impacted at the start of 2020 and the tapering from high unemployment by early 2022. We see the end position of the data in Figure 2 (Labour Force Australia, 2025) presenting an improved (lower) national unemployment rate of 4.2% of persons as compared to 5.3% of persons in July 2019. What this type of broad strokes data does not show is the nuance in the type of jobs offered; the modality of work has undoubtedly moved towards remote working (Management, 2025). We now have a lower unemployment rate overall, but a markedly lessened working population in CBDs.

Figure 2 - Australian unemployment rate, December 2019 to June 2025

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(Source: Labour Force Australia 2025)

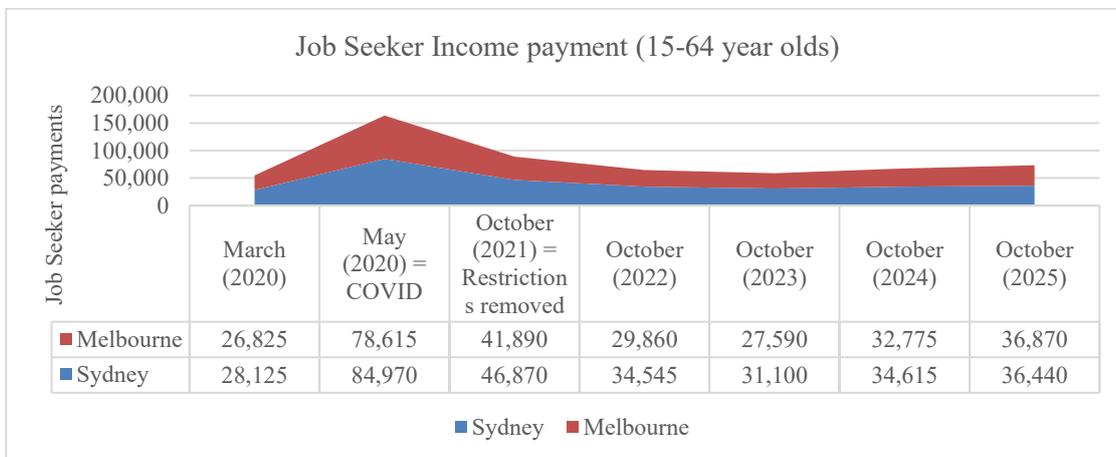
While the unemployment rate has decreased, underemployment has increased (ABS, 2025). As per Table 2 and Figure 3; income support payments peaked at the height of Covid but reduced after the restrictions were lifted (Jobs and Skills Australia 2025). These factors coalesce to create further opacity in the assessment of health of a CBDs workforce.

Table 2 – Job seeker income support payments pre- and post-Covid

Job seeker income payments (15–64 years-old)	March 2020	May 2020	October 2021	October 2022	October 2023	October 2024	October 2025
Sydney East Metro	28,125	84,970	46,870	34,545	31,100	34,615	36,440
Inner Metropolitan Melbourne	26,825	78,615	41,890	29,860	27,590	32,775	36,870

(Source: JSA 2025: Department of Social Services, JobSeeker and Youth Allowance (other) payment recipients, data.gov.au, Oct-25.)

Figure 3: Job Seeker Income Payment pre- and post-Covid



(Source: Author, 2025 using data from JSA 2025 – Job Seeker income support overview)

2.1.3 Working from home impact

With data showing 88% of Australian workers now want to WFH at least partially, we can assume a considerable loss of work population Monday to Friday. Studies have shown workers under 54 would reportedly consider a new job if they were not given flexible work options (Scarborough, 2023).

Reports from ABS Census 2021, looking at the mode split of CBD workers by occupation, show the 10 main industries that quickly adapted to WFH in Table 3. Majority of office work is now conducted in a hybrid modality, which adds a new dynamic to the office environment. Historically, it was an opportunity to create large networks and innovation as most conversations and/or meetings could be done face-to-face. Video conferencing was predominantly large meetings, such as monthly sales meetings; but all other engagement was done via telephone, email or face-to-face. Accessibility to online Zoom or Teams meetings means that staff have no reason to come into the office.

Table 3: Adaptation of WFH for CBD workers by occupation, 2021

Industry	Sydney CBD	Melbourne CBD
ICT Professionals	93%	90%
Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	90%	86%
Specialist Managers	91%	86%
Numerical Clerks	87%	82%
Sales Representatives and Agents	84%	74%
Office Managers and Program Administrators	87%	83%
Personal Assistants and Secretaries	88%	81%
Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators	83%	77%
Legal, Social and Welfare Professionals	83%	79%
Arts and Media Professionals	81%	68%

(Source: ABS Census, 2021)

The top industries shown above account for over 50% of total CBD employment, a considerable portion. Even if a conservative estimate of 50% is applied to employees who continue to utilise a WFH approach (either fully or partially) post-Covid, a major reduction in employee numbers within the CBD is evident. According to ABS labour force survey (ID, 2024), it was reported that there were 652,241 jobs in Melbourne's CBD. If we extrapolate this, we can apply the standard rate of WFH reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2024) of 36%. This was reported as 37% in 2023 showing that the WFH rate has effectively stabilised post Covid. To this end, 234,807 of the total jobs in Melbourne's CBD, could, at any one time being done from home, thus, significantly reducing the worker population of the city on a given day.

We have used City of Melbourne footfall data in Table 4, from pre-Covid (2019) and then compared this with the same date in 2020 (Covid) and then with the same date in 2025 (post-Covid) to explore footfall change over time. Specifically, we chose four locations in the CBD and one on the northern edge of the CBD adjacent to the Melbourne University precinct to assess change based on location. Noting that different workdays attract various levels of worker population, Mondays have been the least popular, with 63% of those who can WFH choosing to do so on this day (Visontay, 2023). Numbers have recovered from pre-Covid levels, but major sites are approximately 20% down on their pre-Covid numbers. The interesting thing about the data is that the two sites that have shown an increase on their pre-Covid foot fall levels, albeit marginally, Lonsdale/Elizabeth

Street (+3%) and Lincoln Square on Swanston Street (+3.8%) are more associated with retailing and academic built environment uses respectively, while the three other locations, which all remain below their pre-Covid levels, are predominated by office and commercial uses, suggesting that while CBD day time populations are returning, the dynamics of the day time population may have shifted.

Table 4 – Melbourne City footfall data pre- and post-Covid

Location – Melbourne City	Year		Change due to Covid	Year	Change from 2019 to 2025
	2019	2020		2025	
Lonsdale/Elizabeth Street	604	303	-50%	622	+ 3%
Queen St (South)	584	233	-60%	393	-33%
Spencer/Collins St	2,023	661	-67%	1246	-38%
Collins Place (south)	805	293	-64%	171	-79%
Lincoln Sq, Swanston St	209	3	-99%	217	+4%

(Source: Melbourne City Council, 2025)

2.2 The CBD post-Covid

The Covid shock has irrevocably changed Australia’s CBDs. It has rapidly brought forward a series of events, and these have re-shaped CBDs overnight (Perez et al., 2022). There is now a role for property professionals to play in the movement of CBDs into new social, tourism, retail, and residential hubs. Many changes may have developed naturally over time; a lessening of typical office environments and more flexible work arrangements was beginning well before Covid with shared spaces such as We work, albeit the transition was far slower. The pace of change caused by the Covid shock has left business, residents, regulators, and all levels of government flat-footed, and there is a clear need to define a pathway forward for Australia’s changing CBDs.

There exists considerable discussion about how the built environment, particularly office stock, should respond to Covid-induced challenges (Vigiola et al., 2022). At the same time there is an increasingly pervasive view that CBD areas, while in a state of recovery, are experiencing challenges as they transition to become something new, something other than their traditional paradigm as a place, primarily, for business, *“offices are not going back to the way they were pre-pandemic, and neither are the downtown neighbourhoods that house them”* (Florida, 2021). From this we can take two things, firstly, that a return to the pre-Pandemic status quo is not going to occur. The comparative data contained herein proves that point, and while some sectors of the economy remain optimistic it is now apparent that the shock and immediate changes, as well as other changes that have filtered through (Perez et al., 2022) have combined and driven forward an evolution in CBDs.

The second and more nuanced message is the interlinked nature of built environment, predominantly office, and the neighbourhoods, quadrants, and sectors of a CBD in which they are located (Longtin and Mitchell, 2021). An important consideration as we move forward is what role the built environment plays in the transition of a CBD into a Central Social District (CSD), and how can all stakeholders capitalise on the unique property conditions. Specifically, how can commercial office and CBD retailing – both experiencing high vacancy, be better utilised, to attract new tenants and rejuvenate CBD areas. The vacancy and loss of jobs, *“can have negative implications for long-term economic sustainability, including the reorientation of CBDs and their (re)development”* (Fieger et al., 2023).

As we move to a new era of property usage, illustrated most obviously by the decline of the office-working model and an increase in WFH (ABS, 2024) and the new normal of flexible working arrangements post-Covid

(Labour Force, 2025), momentum is building to drive more and better adaptive reuse approaches. Office buildings are less populated with workers, and staff are fulfilling their roles more efficiently with a lesser space requirement. Hence, the capacity to deliver benefit to multiple stakeholders if office spaces that are un-utilised or under-utilised, are adaptively re-used. To this end, we see stakeholders as inclusive of those frequenting CBD areas and seek to find intrinsic benefits to the built environment (the building) through adaptive re-use but also highlight the benefit that the adaptive re-use of an asset can have on the surrounding area and socioeconomic wellbeing of the whole population (Mohamed et al., 2017) (Rosenbaum et al., 2021).

Pre-Covid office markets were a major driver of weekday footfall traffic, retail consumption and general activity levels within business hours, Monday to Friday. Friday night drinks were once a non-negotiable for office bonding and outside office dealmaking, but as WFH predominates these have ceased, completely (Duggan, 2025). This exemplifies not only the interlinked relationship between office and retail assets but the interactions between the two in shaping CBDs. As office buildings become wholly or partially vacant for much of the week, the throughput of office workers to associated retail reduces, parts of the city become quieter, there is less worker traffic, and fewer food and beverage offers are patronised after work. Certain food and beverage retail targeted toward office worker populations, for example, has adapted and responded in adjusted hours or offers. As the CBD changes and evolves office buildings must adapt, change, and be re-used or they will rapidly become obsolete.

2.2.1 Vacancy Rates

The severity of office market change in Australia's two largest centres, Melbourne and Sydney, is evident as vacancy rates remain severely inflated and incentives stubbornly high (Henderson et al., 2025).

Using data sourced from Colliers Quarterly Asset Class Snapshots Q2 2025 (Henderson et al., 2025), Figure 4 and Figure 5 show to drastic shift in office vacancy with Sydney having a 297% change in Prime real estate, and 136% in Secondary. For Melbourne the data is even more alarming, with a 500% change in Prime vacancy and 281% in Secondary.

Figure 4 – Office vacancy data – Sydney

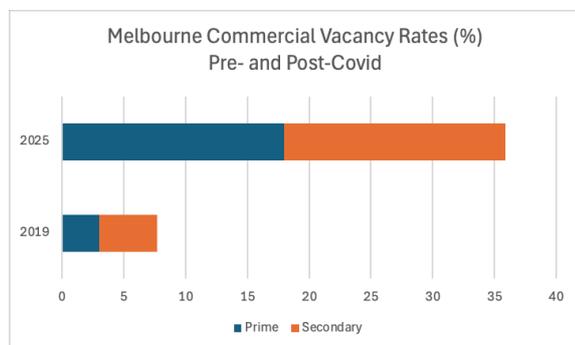
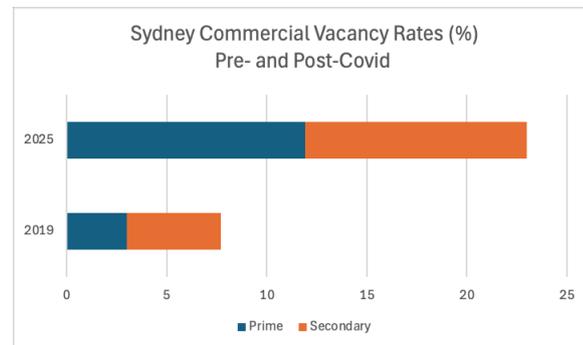


Figure 5 – Office vacancy data - Melbourne



(Source: Author, data abstract Colliers 2025)

While rents have shown little growth post Covid, save for premium grade assets, the above images serve to illustrate the fundamental issues within the CBD office markets. They prove that the increase in WFH has translated into a much lower worker population day-to-day. We can now conclude, using these data, that five years post-Covid markets have changed, negatively, and that it is unlikely that they will return to pre-Covid levels in the short to medium term. With drastically lessened demand and high vacancy across most grades the role of the CBD as a hub for office-based business is questioned.

Further, the viability of office market stock as an investment grade asset has diminished, as our previous yield analysis has shown capital value growth expectations should be reduced. In the future, if costs associated with keeping this office stock occupied, remain restrictive – Incentives in both Melbourne and Sydney have all doubled, or more, across grades, the attractiveness of this asset class will diminish further. Rent free periods, fit outs and outgoing deals are also at play in many new commercial leases further reducing the net rent (Kwan, 2024). With both markets expecting significant stock additions (from stock that did not come online during the Pandemic) (PCA, 2025) there is further risk for a market typified by low demand and low rental growth, and

inflated costs bore by the landlord to ensure occupancy. Further weakening the asset class's investment potential and influencing the development and shaping of the future development of CBDs.

Major structural changes have and will impact not just individual buildings and that specific office space; they will affect the broader CBD. In concert with social and economic changes that have occurred due to the shock of Covid the structure of CBD areas has shifted, as has the make-up of retail offers, 'busy days and CBD hot spots – we are seeing the emergence of a 'new normal' (Ziffer, 2025).

This new normal will necessitate the re-use of buildings to be more efficient, optimise their performance, and, critically, rejuvenate CBD quadrants that have been adversely affected. But it will, and already is, seeing a level of inherent structural change within CBDs, they are no longer the working hub that they once were they are reshaping as a public space with entertainment, retail, tourism offers, resident amenity and communities embedded (Ellul and Ong, 2021).

2.2.2 Social evolution

As employees work from home more often, and major tenants choose to decentralise post-Covid, for example, Auspost took up 24,000sqm of new space in Burnley after decamping from their Bourke Hill CBD office (Lenaghan, 2024), the city is losing its business credentials. The direct and indirect impacts on areas of Australian cities have been profound, and quadrants of major CBDs have been reshaped. At the same time, fringe areas are being re-energised and experiencing uplifts in both office and associated property demand.

The domino effect of lessening office occupancy in CBDs affecting retail demand, pushing up vacancy are coalescing and 'hollowing out' cities (Maginn and Mortimer, 2020) and reducing the appeal of large areas of CBDs, in turn creating a perception of CBDs as 'ghost towns' (Kruk, 2024). Because of this now permanent change there is a need to reconsider how our cities operate, and what their role is in a post-Covid economy – it is evident their previous role as a centralised meeting point for business and commerce exists no longer and technology, stakeholder preference and continuing re-shaping of behaviours post-pandemic must all be taken into account as CBDs become CSDs.

3. THE EVOLVING CBD

The Central Business District (CBD) is defined as *“an area of urban concentration that has been in existence since the beginning of the city and will last as long as the city endures”* (Murphy and Vance Jr, 1954).

As the evolution of a post-covid CBD takes shape, the focus has shifted from a purely economic-centred model, to enable more possibilities of sustainable impact. The predominant shift is towards social inclusion.

Opportunities around the adaptive CBD provide social inclusion with a focus on economic survival.

3.1 Economic Survival

The CBD plays a significant role in powering the economic growth of a city and has been renowned as the central core of wealth, success, and opportunity. Known for its sheer size and vibrancy, it is the pulse of all major cities, and a destination that was heavily sought after.

To recoup significant loss from WFH, there are opportunities through adaptive reuse of space, that will provide economic survival. With the shift towards hybrid working models, it is recommended to focus on employee-centric strategies while ensuring the workplace experience is important. (Amoils, 2021)

Adaptive reuse provides an opportunity to change the purpose of the space that may become vacant. Section 4 addresses these adaptive options through the Sustainable Temporary Adaptive Reuse (STAR) toolkit (Armstrong et al., 2024)

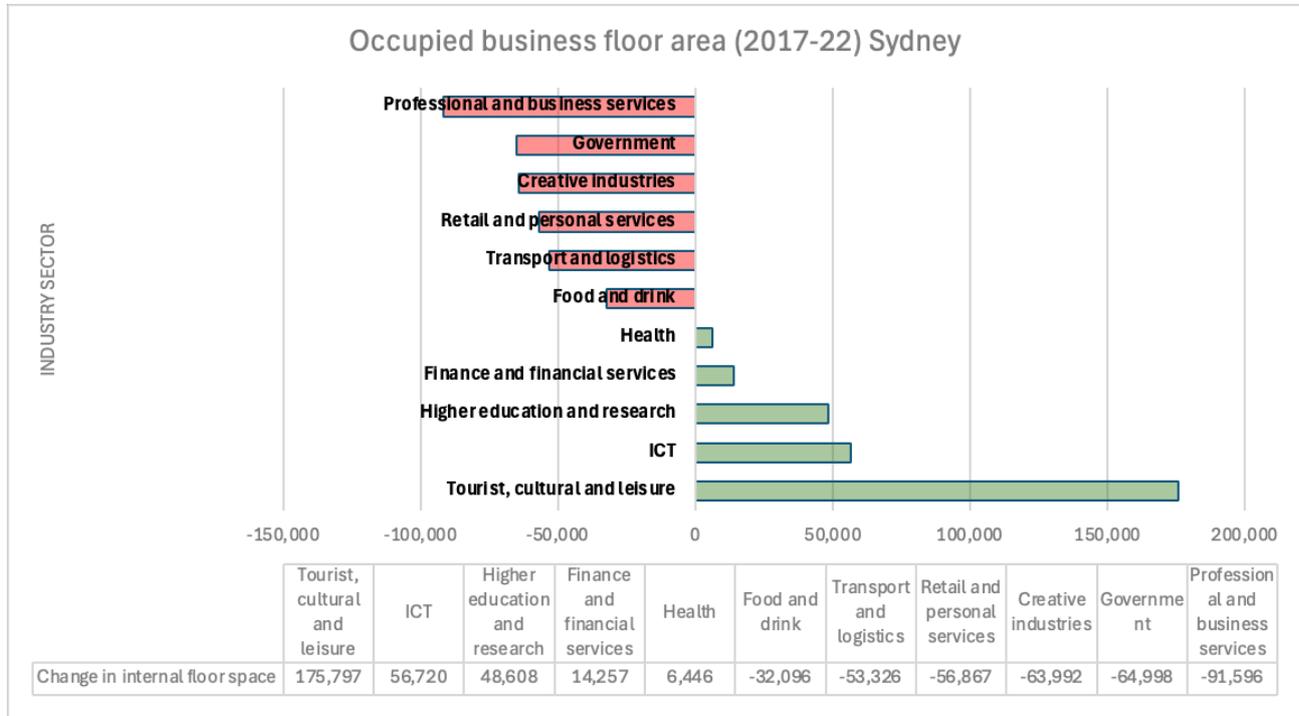
Interestingly, when reviewing occupied business floor area pre- and post-Covid, the **tourist, cultural and leisure** industry have grown rather than reduced. This creates an opportunity to adapt the vacant space to tap into this industry, as the CBD still thrives with tourists; does this mean a shift in purpose for unwanted space?

As per Figure 6, which reviews the change in internal floor space per industry from 2017 – 2022; while the ICT industry was the highest ranked industry for adapting to WFH (see Table 3), their growth in internal floor

space has changed by 56,720m². As our technology provides the opportunity to work from home, the infrastructure to support that convenience has enabled a growing sector.

Another opportunity is the growth of higher education and research. While they option to teach and meet virtually is available, consensus is that this isn't the most productive way to collaborate.

Figure 6 – Occupied business floor area (2017 – 2022) Sydney



(Source: Author 2025 data from City of Sydney Report (Sydney, 2022))

3.2 Social Inclusion

One of the main opportunities that a CBD provided, was access to a multitude of workers, and the ability to build competencies. Efficiency is vital to the modern business model, and this not only considers products and/or goods, but people and ideas. Economic agglomeration is known as “the availability of intermediate/final goods, labour market pooling, and technological spillovers.”(Combes and Duranton, 2006)

High density of people provides competency growth and knowledge sharing, which have enabled innovative and technological advancement. The flow on effect of this consolidation of people with innovative ideas and opportunities, is that places are needed for socialising and networking.

This innovation and technological advancement meant that lockdown did not stop the work from being done, as employees quickly adapted to working from home. The peak hour commute to the city Monday to Friday, with Friday night drinks at the end of the week, is now a mere distant memory. This new working from home model, meant that the lure of CBD became something that needed to be incentivised. The question went from which worker to employ, to how to get the worker back to work.

An opportunity to adapt has become pressing. The evolution of the Central Social District (CSD) puts the focus on the people within the CBD, and what they need to thrive. An opportunity for economic and social to coexist. The Community Wellbeing Indicators Report of the City of Sydney (Sydney, 2024) measures how dynamic and resilient the economy is. It considers the prosperity, competitiveness, and diversity of the local economy, as well as work force skills and productivity. The report highlights that conventional indicators of economic growth do not relate to social wellbeing.

Economic growth was the fundamental measurement for the traditional business model. To measure the ability to be productive, indicators that measure knowledge, innovation, education and upskilling, become the focus.

These social enhancements are necessary to restore the central district and are vital for a Central Social District to evolve.

4. SUSTAINABLE TEMPORARY ADAPTIVE REUSE (STAR) - A SOLUTION

The Sustainable Temporary Adaptive Reuse (STAR) Toolkit was a research project in response to the vacancy rates in commercial buildings post-Covid, in Sydney and Melbourne CBDs, undertaken from 2022 to 2025. As the interest in working from home (WFH) grew, so too did the under-use of the offices in the CBD. The STAR Toolkit was developed to address the temporary use of buildings to bring people back into the CBD, and to identify and discuss opportunities of how to do this. The STAR Toolkit comprises seven interconnected tools designed to facilitate temporary adaptation of underutilised commercial properties, addressing post-COVID vacancy challenges while creating multiple forms of value.

The stakeholders engaged throughout the development of the toolkit included industry experts, such as property owners, property designers, and tenancy market specialists; as well as experts in building codes and compliance; council representatives; alongside the research team with their background in urban planning, surveying, financial and asset management in property, and architectural science (Armstrong et al., 2024)

By opening commercial office buildings to even partial adaptive re-use outside their typical usage, there is capacity to rejuvenate and reimagine CBD areas as they struggle to respond to new visitor, retail, and worker occupancy patterns post-Covid. An issue raised was compliance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) or the National Construction Code (NCC) and planning codes. As a result, an NCC Checklist was designed and developed to address the crucial aspect of compliance with the NCC for temporary change-of-use projects. The NCC Checklist guides conversations between space owners, space seekers, and regulators, ensuring compliance with building standards and safety requirements. Its primary purpose is to flag potential new uses that could trigger compliance issues with various aspects of the NCC, which might add time and costs to a STAR proposal. It helps stakeholders understand what needs to be considered upfront to ensure safety and legal compliance, thereby facilitating the low- cost, low-risk nature of STAR.

The checklist focuses on two critical factors for assessing the suitability of spaces for a new STAR use: Fire safety (or egress) and access for people with disabilities. It prompts users to consider elements such as the existing and proposed use classifications, the desired duration of temporary use, the estimated number of people using the space, and the location of the STAR within the building. Critical issues flagged include fire loading, load-bearing capacity of existing floors, means of escape, number and accessibility of fire escapes, and disability access and amenities (e.g., toilets, accessible lifts, ramps). The NCC also addresses sustainability matters, which are to be discussed in further detail with a building certifier and the owner. By providing structured guidance, the STAR NCC Checklist aims to demystify regulatory requirements, reduce perceived risks, and encourage greater uptake of STAR as a sustainable asset management strategy.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted the way the Covid pandemic changed the way people interact with built environment, in Australia's capital cities, and that this change has become permanent. As workers moved to new work patterns the type and amount of office space changed, as did space use continues today. Office and other assets, such as retail experienced change and are adjusting to a post-Covid CBD. This paper has outlined the changes experienced in commercial office demand Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane CBDs.

With a lower office worker population, initial reductions in tourism and visitors, and changing resident behaviour patterns, Australia's CBDs changed. Initially these were negative changes with retail and office property, which were the most directly impacted. However, as cities recover from Covid and recalibrate to changed consumer and tenant profiles, cities are being reimaged and reshaped, and this presents considerable opportunity for all stakeholders to improve CBD environments through the way we use and interact with the built environment. Social events and spaces for people to interact are being encouraged and promoted as we evolve our CBDs to CSDs.

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