



Let's talk about Social Infrastructure



Social Infrastructure refers to the shared places and spaces that create opportunities for people to connect, build trust, and work together every day.

These physical places and spaces form the foundation for social capital to grow. They enable everyday connection and become critical support hubs in times of crisis.

Social infrastructure is grouped into:

- **Community places**
- **Open spaces**
- **Social businesses**
- **Places of culture & faith**

Measuring social infrastructure matters to everyone who uses or helps shape the places and spaces that keep communities connected, supported and resilient. This includes governments, councils, not-for-profits, businesses and communities.

WHY MEASURING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE MATTERS

If we don't measure it, we don't value it.

- **Identify** where communities can access connection-enabling spaces and where gaps exist.
- **Target** investment in social infrastructure to strengthen social ties and community resilience.
- **Support** equitable access for regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- **Ensure** shared places are safe, welcoming and well-used by diverse groups.
- **Track** how social infrastructure overlays with risk and hazard mapping.
- **Foster** collaboration across planning, health, emergency management and social services.

Identifying the places and spaces that matter most

We measure the location and spread of physical places and spaces that support social connection. These fall into four categories: **community places**, **open spaces**, **social businesses**, and **places of culture & faith**.

We can't map every type of social infrastructure because of its diversity, rapid turnover (especially among businesses), and limited resources to capture it all. We also can't measure the places and spaces we can't put on a map.

We focus on the places and spaces most directly linked to everyday connection. Many others, such as health services, crisis support, media and transport, also contribute to community life and wellbeing, but they aren't included in this scope.



 Community places

Shared physical places like schools, libraries, sports clubs and community centres where people gather, connect and build relationships.



 Open spaces

Outdoor spaces like parks, playgrounds and dog parks where people can meet, exercise, relax, and connect with others.



 Social businesses

Commercial premises bringing people together through everyday services and shared spaces, like cafes, pubs, gyms, hairdressers, and caravan parks.



 Places of culture & faith

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and sacred sites led by connection to Country, alongside churches, mosques and synagogues that bring people together for spiritual connection.

3 steps to measuring Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is measured by mapping the location and density of these places and spaces within a neighbourhood.

1. Map places and spaces

We carefully map neighbourhoods* to identify places and spaces of social infrastructure.

2. Calculate density

We calculate the places and spaces in each social infrastructure category, and overall. This creates a neighbourhood-level 'density score,' showing whether there are many or few opportunities to connect.

3. Overlay social capital bridging ties score

We overlay a SA1 area's density score with social capital bridging ties. This reveals overall gaps and strengths, and points to where investment can build more connected, resilient communities.

* A neighbourhood (SA1 area) is an area of around 200 to 800 people, with its size and spread varying across metro, regional and remote areas.

Mapping tool

Australia has a new mapping tool available at sociabli.resilientready.org



-  Community places
-  Social businesses
-  Open spaces
-  Places of culture & faith

WHO BENEFITS?

We all benefit from measuring Social Infrastructure

Measuring social infrastructure helps us understand which shared places and spaces matter most, which is good for everyone, including:

- **Individuals**
- **Community groups**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**
- **Local councils**
- **State and federal governments**
- **Emergency services and first responders**
- **Big and small businesses**
- **Not-for-profit organisations**
- **Academics and educational institutions**
- **Philanthropic funders**
- **Peak organisations**
- **Faith councils**

By measuring social infrastructure, we can see where we need to invest and how infrastructure supports connection and resilience.





Connecting the dots between Social Infrastructure and Social Capital

Social infrastructure includes the places and spaces — from cafes and sports clubs to parks and community centres — where people can meet, connect and build bridging ties.

Social capital grows through everyday interactions with people we know, trust, and work with to solve problems and support each other. But these connections don't form in isolation. They need places and spaces to form and grow.

Measuring social capital alongside social infrastructure provides a clearer picture of how and where communities connect, guiding investment to strengthen resilience.

Discover more in the National Social Capital + Social infrastructure Measurement Framework

Visit sociabli.resilientready.org to find out how harnessing social infrastructure can benefit your community



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Australian Government
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This Creating a Social Capital + Social Infrastructure Measurement Framework to benefit every Australian project received funding from the Australian Government.