



## Australian strategic planning and socio-spatial vulnerability: the case of metropolitan Adelaide

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# **Australian Strategic Planning and Socio-spatial Vulnerability: The Case of Metropolitan Adelaide**

This article explores the correlation between contemporary strategic planning and socio-spatial disadvantage, utilizing data from five censuses conducted within the Adelaide metropolitan region. To assess how these two dynamics manifest across Australian cities, we introduce a vulnerability assessment methodology. Taking a historical perspective, the study delves into how ongoing socio-spatial transformations have impacted the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) over several decades. Employing mixed methods, we analyse the temporal progression of the IRSD from 1991 to 2021 and interpret the implications in the context of contemporary strategic plans. The research findings reveal that strategic plans in metropolitan Adelaide have become linked to the establishment of five interconnected/consolidated regional centres, as well as the relocation of areas of disadvantage from the traditional inner cities to the middle and outer suburbs. This has led to residents experiencing enduring socio-spatial vulnerability for several decades. The investigation illustrates the evolving nature of urban disadvantage in post-industrial Australian cities. The article introduces an innovative method for evaluating strategic plans, specifically monitoring progress in achieving their objectives. This could guide future plans to uplift disadvantaged suburbs from a state of permanent vulnerability.

Keywords: Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD), permanent vulnerability, socio-spatial vulnerability, strategic planning

## **1. Introduction**

Australia is one of the most highly urbanised societies in the world. Continued population growth in Australian cities is placing increasing pressure on infrastructure, such as public transport and roadways, energy, air, and water systems within the urban environment (Australian Government 2016a). These factors altogether have shifted strategic planning in Australia to a socio-politically sensitive practice (Australian Government 2016b). In recent years, Australia's state-level planning systems faced criticism from two main angles: environmentalism and equality (Gleeson and Low 2000). Nevertheless, many studies reveal broad-scale vulnerability across the outer suburbs of

Australian cities, which are less likely to be addressed by current strategic plans (Dodson and Sipe 2008).

Today, strategic planning in Australia is mainly obsessed with physical, environmental, functional, and financial aspects of cities, while socio-spatial and cultural matters to a larger extent have been overlooked. Therefore, there is a need to develop a better understanding of the relationship between vulnerability and strategic spatial planning in the context of Australian cities (Fincher et al. 2014).

Accordingly, the current research aims to explore dynamics that can adjust strategic planning processes to improve socio-spatial disadvantages and uphold the right to the city for its citizens. The research utilizes socio-spatial vulnerability as a framework for evaluating strategic plans, by focusing on the case of metropolitan Adelaide. Here, we implemented mixed methods based on the historiographical analysis of strategic plans in conjunction with the changes in the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) as the very indicator of socio-spatial vulnerability, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The article analyses the IRSD from 1991 to 2021 by reproducing five historical datasets in a comparable outline, using ArcGIS software.

The article is structured in four parts. The initial part (literature review) presents an overview of strategic planning patterns and how scholars have interpreted the socio-political environment in metropolitan Adelaide. The next part (framework) introduces socio-spatial arrays of vulnerability as a

measuring tool in the Australian city. The article recommends the use of IRSD as endorsed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008a), to measure urban vulnerability (see Section 4). Part three demonstrates the methodology underlying the analysis of parts one and two and proposes the results. The final section contains the discussions and conclusions arising from the analysis of the correlation between strategic planning and socio-spatial vulnerability with a focus on metropolitan Adelaide.

## **2. Research Background**

The history of strategic planning in Australia can be traced to early British colonial settlement (1788–early 19 Century), where critical decisions were made by governors to ascertain the penal and military requirements of urban settlements (Blainey 1981). Stimulated by its colonial origins, Australian strategic planning today is highly influenced by contemporary planning movements in Britain, North America, and Western Europe (Freestone 2007).

Particularly, Australia’s planning system reflects and differs from the British planning context, due to the historical, colonial, and cultural ties. The British and Australian planning contexts share a common origin and a similar structure, allowing them to learn from each other's successes and challenges (Thompson and Maginn 2012). The UK planning system has been influenced by various political, economic, and social changes, and faced challenges and contradictions, such as the tension between central and local planning, the conflict between planning and the market, and the trade-off between planning and the environment. The UK planning system also faced uncertainties and complexities, such as the lack of national consistency, regional certainty and compatibility, as well as local discretion in the planning policy process

(Tewdwr-Jones 1996). This, in turn, indicates that planning is a social, political, and spatial affair that requires complex arrangements and skills, that could be developed and tested through self-assessment case studies and exercises by planners (Kitchen 2003). Similarly, the Australian planning system needed to adapt to new forms of governance and devolution, and to reflect the diverse and changing needs and preferences of the society (Johnson et al. 2017).

Currently, Australian strategic planning (concerning cities) is dominated by the large metropolitan centres of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, the capital cities of their respective states. State governments are responsible for a wide range of economic, social, and environmental matters including health, education, welfare services, security, recreation, environmental protection and enhancement, economic development, and urban planning (Searle and Bunker 2010). State governments also play a central role in setting strategic policies in urban areas (Tan and Artist 2013). The local government is considered a less-important contributor to the formation of urban policies; simply because it is not recognized in the constitution of Australia (Pugalis and Tan 2017).

In Australia, the consequences of such authority delegated to the state government have been critical in shaping social-environmentally sustainable forms of local strategic planning. (Stilwell and Troy 2000). Resultingly, the local government and its mandated strategic planning are legally impacted by broader strategic plans, which are formulated in accordance with state laws and regulations. Thus, local governments with legal powers become

subservient to the state government's strategic regulatory processes. This, in turn, could produce metropolitan strategic plans that are reluctant to take account of local needs and authentic community participation (Bunker and Searle 2009).

Additionally, as a legacy of the 19th-century colonial socialism, state government authorities were recognized as the only service providers regarding urban infrastructure in Australia (Butlin 1982). Today, because of the dominant neoliberal and market-driven approaches urban infrastructures (including water and sewerage, rail-trams, and motorways) have been largely privatized, in metropolitan Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney (Searle and Bunker 2010). Consequently, public control and regulation of infrastructure services previously organized by state departments are gradually delegated to market-oriented global companies (Gleeson and Low 2000). This trend, in turn, has generated the democratic shortcomings of planning, and more particularly the tendency of the state and private sector institutions to ignore the critical fact of cultural diversity (Fincher 1998).

As a result of the two above mentioned factors (neoliberal privatization of infrastructure and the state government control of planning) the future infrastructure services in respect to size, location, land use and technology should be shaped by free-market necessities, which in turn may compromise on socio-environmental sustainability and immediate local needs (Harvey 2013). Moreover, such bilateral control of planning by the state government along with neoliberal speculations in housing and infrastructure may result in an unnecessary urban expansion, which can create suburban ghettos, and

incur unnecessary costs in excessive urban infrastructure (Randolph and Tice 2014).

### **3. Literature review: Strategic Planning in Adelaide**

One of the earliest forms of strategic planning in Australia involved the work of Colonel William Light, the Surveyor-General for the colony of South Australia, in planning and designing the original city centre for Adelaide in 1837 (Colonization Commissioners for South Australia 1839), (Figure 1, left). The history of William Light's plan for Adelaide, particularly its siting and the surrounding Park Lands, was a very important element in the future growth of the city, mainly shaped by both colonial and autonomous state governments from 1840 (Llewellyn-Smith 2012). Self-government had come to South Australia in 1857, putting an official end to systemic colonization; increasing the liberalization of conditions attached to the sale of land. As a result, after a brief pause in the growth of Adelaide, settlement began to spread to the hinterland in the relatively well-watered surrounding country; while hundreds of government townships were dispersed within South Australia to support the wheat-growing farms during upcoming decades (Hutchings 2007).

From 1869 the process of systematic colonization was modified, when the Waste Lands Amendment Act was passed. This act surveyed and regulated the sale of agricultural lands, townships, and suburban lots (Jaensch 1976). From the 1870s to the end of the 19th century the system had become formalized, leading to the astonishing burst of township creation, including the over-optimism about the long-term potential of producing wheat and wool, structured by developmental railways (Goyder 1897), (Figure 1, middle). Meanwhile, a close network of horse-drawn tramways was

established that served all of the suburbs neighbouring the city centre (Figure 1, right). By the end of the 19th century there was a dramatic spurt in Adelaide's growth, which let the city to expand from a population of 51103 in 1871 to 141403 in 1901 (Williams 1974).

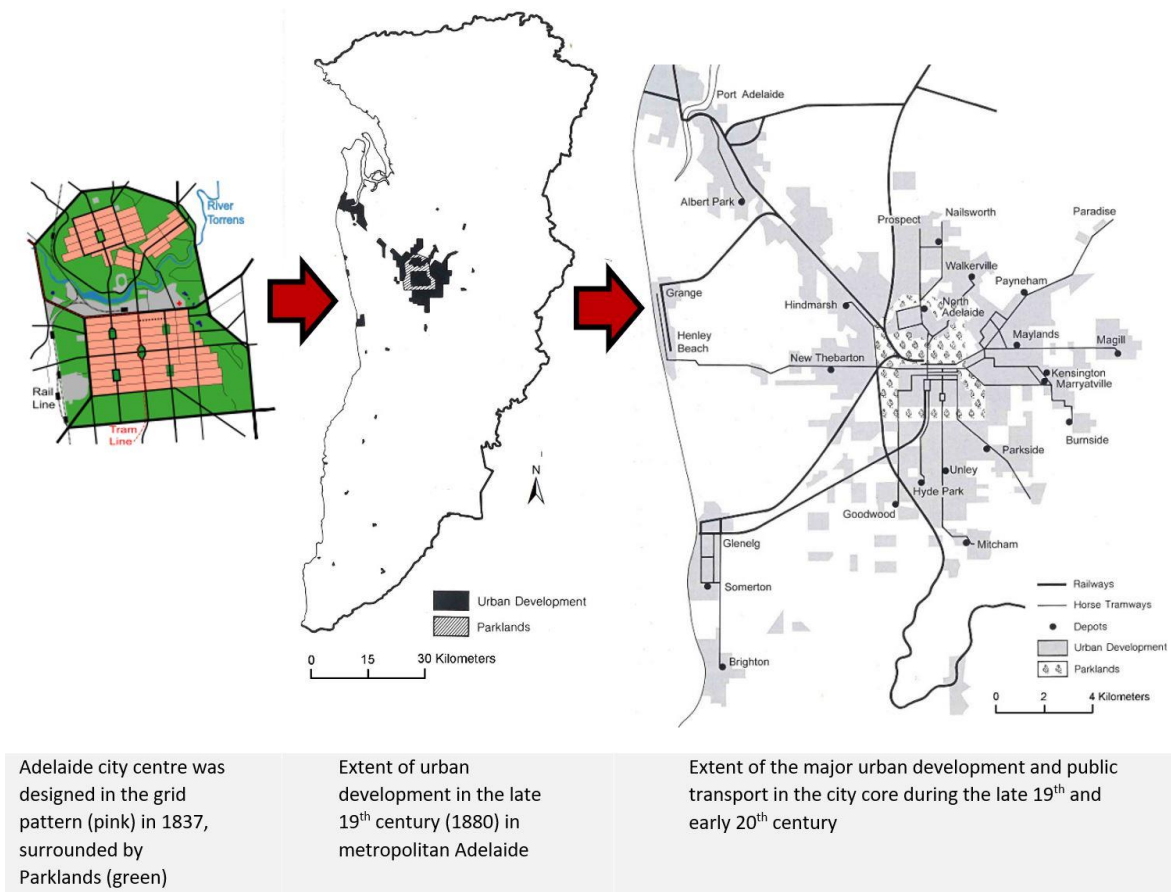


Figure1. Impacts of the 19th-century Government regulations in Adelaide. Source: Lead Author based on Hutchings (2007, 39-40).

### 3.1. The 20th Century and the modern movement

During the 20th century, Adelaide along with other European cities saw the great municipal engineering concepts of reticulated water, deep drainage, and public transport as the practical propositions for generating mass urbanism. During this period, we can also trace the systematic influence of the state government in terms of urban planning in

metropolitan Adelaide (Williams 1974). This is the period that the concept of modern town planning was internationally established and evolved in the countries of Western Europe, Britain, and the United States, initially influenced by Ebenezer Howard's (1850-1928) Garden Cities and Charles Mulford Robinsons' (1869-1917) Urban Beautification and Fredrick Law Olmsted's (1822-1903) Riverside Plan (Trogenza 2007).

The Town Planning and Housing Bill was approved in 1916 and amended in 1920, which reflected earlier British statute but contained some substantial new elements based on North American legislation (Hutchings 2007). This was the first town planning legislation in Australia, which proposed a Town Planning Commission that would subordinate the role of local government to the state in the preparation of town planning schemes. This scheme was the first Australian metropolitan strategy, linking broad ideas to functional land-use proposals, provided measures for planning new suburbs, country towns and frontier districts (Freestone 1989). The movement resulted in the Building Act 1923, which aimed to improve physical living conditions by proposing urban zoning procedures and a minimum size of a building block in the city (SA parliament 1925). This view gained momentum over the remainder of the decade, generating long-term influence over future residential, commercial, and industrial land-use, by the beginning of the Second World War (Morton 1996).

Additionally, the neoliberal perspectives that emerged following the Second World War brought about a lasting transformation in urban strategic planning in both the Western world and Australia. This, in turn, initiated a market-based system of urban planning in metropolitan Adelaide that was mainly led

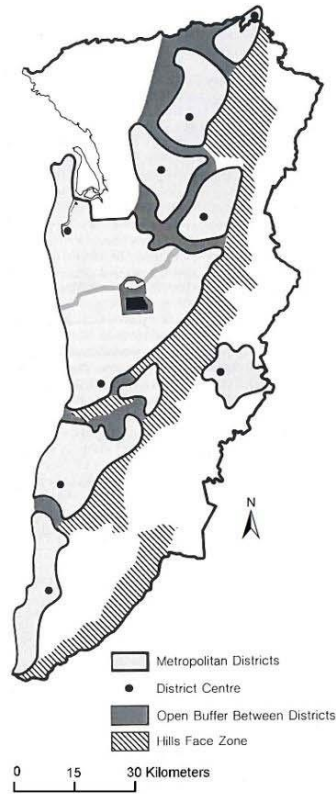
by the state government (Foster and McCaskill 2007). The post-war boom in Adelaide metropolitan initially took place in the complete absence of formal planning controls, other than the limited controlling measures provided by Town Planning Act 1929 and Building Act 1923 (Fogg 1980).

During the 1950s-1960s, it was mainly the actions of the state government (or the relevant semi-governmental departments) that shaped Adelaide growth, concerning industrial development, public housing, immigration, and transportation. The influence of SA Housing Trust (see Section 3.2) developed rapidly to the point that during the 1950s it was responsible for 30% of all low-density dwelling in metropolitan Adelaide, providing affordable accommodation options for the middle-class (Forster and McCaskill 2007). As the triangular Adelaide plain became almost completely built-up, SA Housing Trust activities generated major concern about the urban expansion to the north and south (Ramsay 1956).

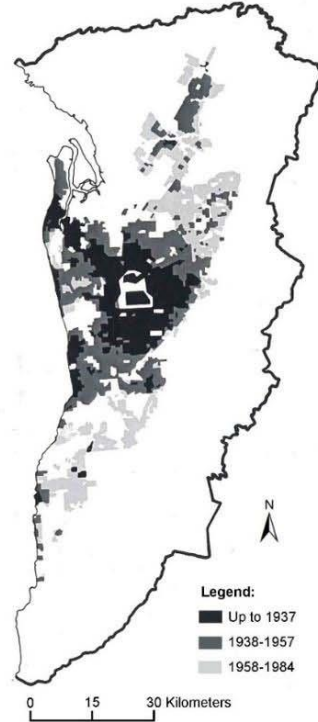
In 1955, the Town Planning Act (1929) was amended, to establish a town planning committee. The committee was given the task of assessing the provision of highways, open spaces, industrial-residential zoning, and modern infrastructure (Town Planning Committee 1963). The committee envisaged the growth over thirty years (1961-1991) of a linear city from Gawler in the north to Sellicks Beach, along spinal roads/freeways (Figure 2, top right). In the plan, it was anticipated that the increased vehicular traffic resulting from the industrial boom should be able to support a population of 1.3 million residents (Forster and McCaskill 2007). This included the provision of seven suburban district centres, surrounded by special

agricultural Hill Face Zones to restrict further urban sprawl (Figure 2, top left), (Town Planning Committee 1963).

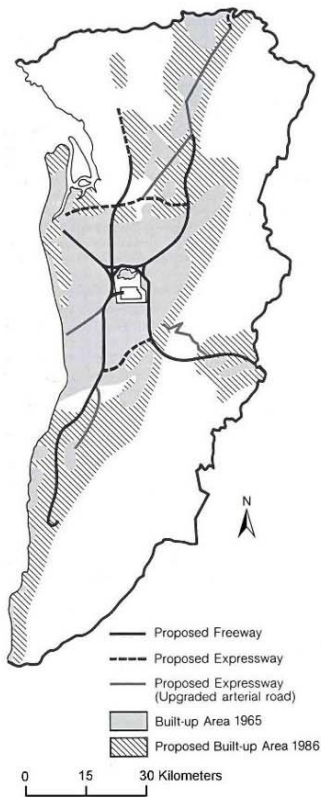
The Planning and Development Act of 1967 restated the previous strategic concepts that the newly established State Planning Authority had proposed. The Authority strongly supported the provision of future highways and interchanges, replicated in many North American cities (Figure 2, bottom left). From 1968 to the end of the 1990s' successive governments have deferred or cancelled sections of this proposal (Figure 2, bottom right and Figure 3 bottom left and middle) However, as it can be seen in the next sections, the main triangular/linear structure of the metropolitan Adelaide has remained unchanged. In the 1990s, Western countries underwent a renewed interest in the concepts of strategic spatial planning. This was increasingly viewed as a means of positioning cities within the competitive framework of a unified market and a global economy, thus promoting the concept of a 'Competition State' (Brenner 2004). The consequence of such global changes in capitalist processes led to a reduction in import tariffs during the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in the partial decimation of the Adelaide automobile and appliance manufacturing industries, and disproportionately affecting lower socio-economic groups. This intellectual movement, in turn, gave momentum to the Development Act 1993, allowed for a non-statutory procedure to guide the growth of Adelaide, proposing an integrated approach to economic development and sustainability (Hamnett 1997).



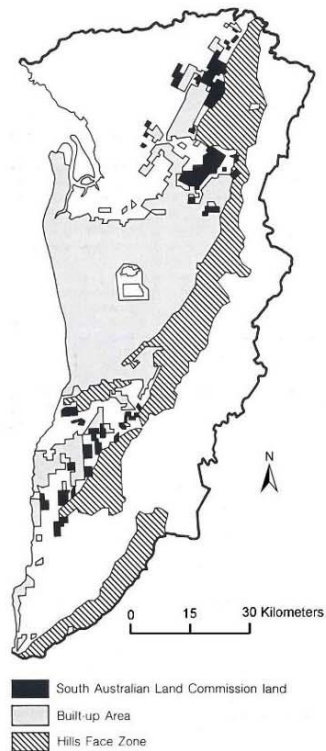
Functional plan for metropolitan Adelaide (1962)



Extent of the built-up areas in metropolitan Adelaide 1937-1984



Proposed vehicular roads as shown on metropolitan Adelaide transportation study (1968)



Extent of metropolitan Adelaide as suggested by South Australian Land Commission (1977-8)

Figure 2. Extent of urban growth and relevant strategic plans in metropolitan Adelaide during the second half of the 20th century. Source: Lead Author based on Hutchings (2007) and Town Planning Committee (1963).

### ***3.2. SA Housing Trust (SAHT) and locational disadvantage***

In 1936, South Australia's Liberal Country League (LCL) government created the SAHT, Australia's first independent state housing authority. SAHT was seen as a tool to attract industrial investment by maintaining lower labour costs compared to rival states like NSW and Victoria. SAHT's initial goal was to provide new housing for the post-war population boom and support low-income working families, while boosting the building industry. During his tenure as LCL premier from 1938 to 1965, Playford vigorously endorsed the expansion of SAHT as a major state enterprise, viewing it as a pivotal tool in economic policies, previously established by his predecessor, Richard Butler (Marsden 1986). After World War II, SAHT facilitated various endeavours, gradually transforming it into a comprehensive development/planning authority, fostering new suburbs/infrastructures (e.g., in Elizabeth SA), industrial growth, and population expansion, while playing a significant role in the state's industrialization, economic investment, and immigration efforts (Bromell 2001).

SAHT urban planning activities became more deliberate and extensive in the late 1940s, especially as Playford fostered industrial development through the establishment and expansion of state enterprises like the Electricity Trust of South Australia. Nonetheless, many scholars admit that the main consequence of Playford's administration was a rapid and forced pace of industrialisation, rather than a sustainable and well-balanced development (Marsden 1994).

Since 2004, there have been significant changes in the delivery of SAHT services. While SAHT continues to own the houses, Housing SA now handles maintenance and tenant relations. Starting from the early 2010s, Renewal SA has taken charge of upgrades and renewal projects (South Australian Housing Trust 2022). As a result of such partnership between Renewal SA, Housing SA, the South Australian Housing Authority, local city councils and local communities, several Neighbourhood Renewal Programs have been embarked on within metropolitan Adelaide.

During the 2010s, the “Thousand Homes in 1000 Days” program led to the demolition and reconstruction of certain SAHT houses. In specific regions, non-government service providers have taken over the management and ownership of homes (Renewal SA 2017). The more recent SAHT regeneration projects, such as Westwood and Playford Alive, have proposed, in coordination with other government agencies, to diminish the size of SAHT assets in various suburbs to create additional opportunities for private home ownership. These projects also aim to improve the social environment, more evenly distribute public housing, enhance the physical amenity and value of SAHT assets, lower maintenance costs, create new jobs and use local materials and workers (SA Housing Authority 2020).

Acknowledging the constraints of constructing new homes for low-income or at-risk South Australians, the role of the SAHT and other similar organizations, such as Housing SA, has evolved. Rather than concentrating on building housing properties and infrastructure, there is now a greater emphasis on providing services like private rental assistance, community

housing, and social support to vulnerable customers. Additionally, various rent control policies limit the extent of rent increases that landlords can impose on tenants, particularly in areas undergoing gentrification and displacement. Housing SA is presently proposing assistance for vulnerable households by establishing pathways to home ownership (SA Housing Authority 2023).

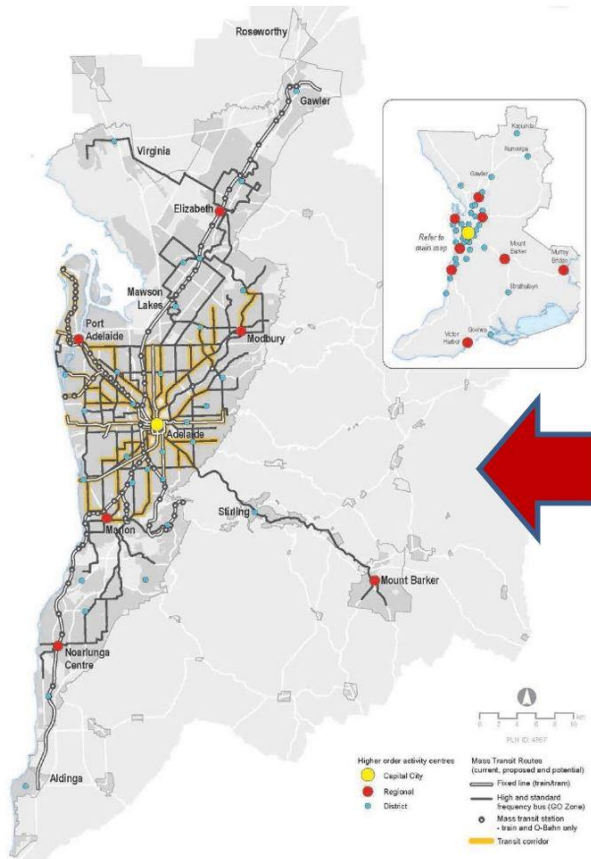
It is important to state that the SAHT's efforts have unintentionally led to the creation of new clusters of disadvantaged communities. This has occurred due to the concentration of public housing in specific areas, where limited resources and land availability led to housing developments being concentrated in certain neighbourhoods. Consequently, these areas lack social and economic diversity, limiting opportunities for residents and leading to isolated pockets of poverty (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008b). Furthermore, the stigma linked to public housing can further contribute to the emergence of socio-spatial disadvantage, resulting in negative stereotypes and the clustering of individuals and families confronting social challenges and limited resources (Atkinson 2008). For instance, the City of Playford, previously named Elizabeth and highly supported by SAHT, has become one of the most disadvantaged areas in Metropolitan Adelaide for over three decades. In 2020, the Adelaide Advertiser referred to Elizabeth as Adelaide's most dangerous suburb due to its high crime rates (Kelsey-Sugg and Appel 2022).

### ***3.3. The 21st century and urban consolidation: Trends and Implications***

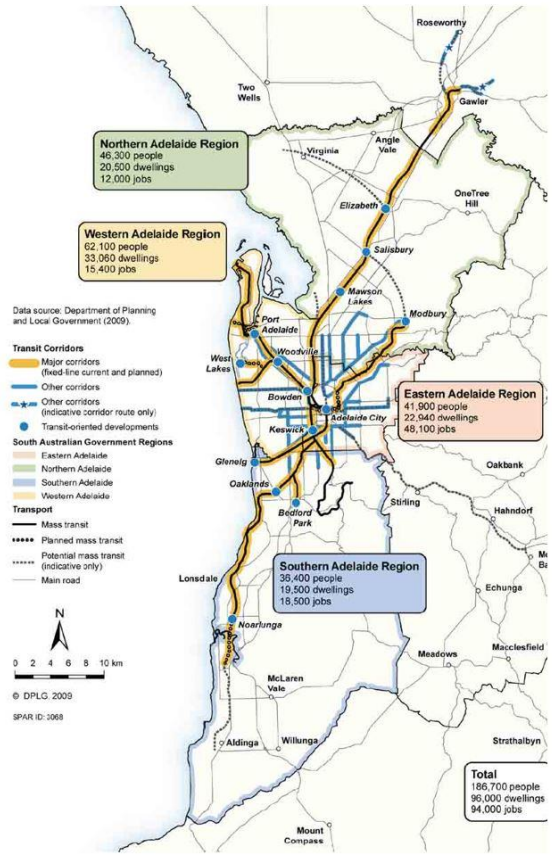
The early 21st century can be seen as a continuation of modern strategic procedures, adopted by the state government in late 20th century (Economic Development Board 2003). The Planning Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide (1987-2006) for the first time implemented the concept of urban consolidation, along with reaffirming the metropolitan urban boundary as previously proposed in the late 20th century by scholars such as Stretton (1988). Such urban consolidation included four major themes: First, creating integrated transport and land-use planning, with multiple benefits from sustainable developments; second, optimizing the net benefits from development for safeguarding the security of investments; third, enhancing accessibility to ensure the fair distribution of resources and finally, providing both certainty to investors and adaptability for policy to allow for innovation (Plan SA 2006), (Figure 3, bottom).

More recently, “The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide”, initially proposed in 2010, is the strategic roadmap for the city's long-term growth, focusing on urban consolidation. It mirrors the state government's vision for making Greater Adelaide more liveable, competitive, and sustainable (Figure 3, top). To do so, policies and actions are proposed by the State Government. These mainly include the provision of the five activity centres/growth areas along with transit corridors. This urban consolidation theme is reflected in much of the current Australian metro planning discourse, which emphasises the way in which metro strategies can produce 30-minute cities (or 20-minute ones), whereby the strategies can generate jobs and higher-level services accessible within 30 or 20-minute trips (Plan SA 2020). As such, land-use plans aim to enhance the value of heritage structures and provide mixed-use buildings and housing affordability. The urban consolidation plan also aims to retain health,

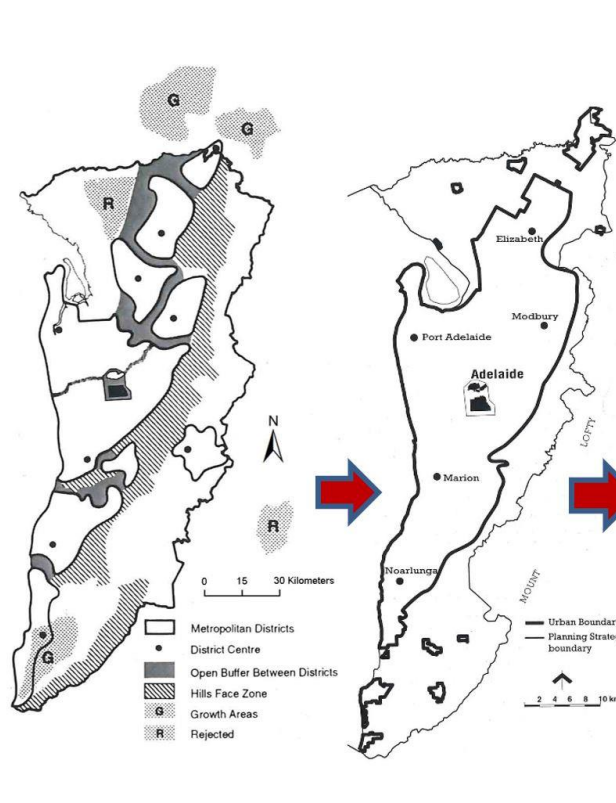
wellbeing, and social inclusion among neighbourhoods by providing new jobs/infrastructure and strengthening the local economy. Along with other objectives, this plan attempts to maintain multiple environmental policies to generate biodiversity and water sensitive design to help tackle climate change (Government of South Australia 2017).



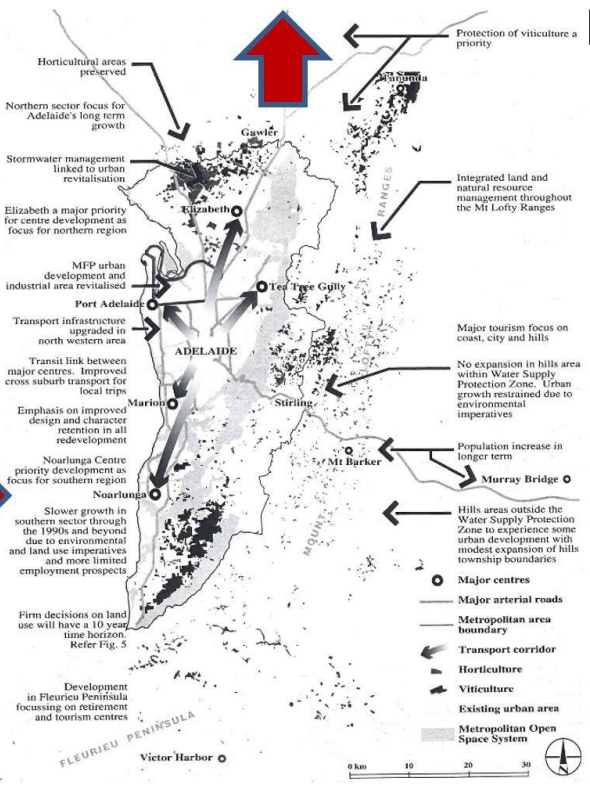
The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide: Activity centres and mass transit routes (Revision 2017)



The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, targets for transit corridors (2010)



Proposed Adelaide Growth areas (1987) Vision of 2020 Adelaide (1992)



Urban Growth Boundary, derived from Metropolitan Planning Strategy (2006)

Figure 3. Comparing strategic planning for Metropolitan Adelaide during the late 20th and early 21st century. Source: Lead Author based on “The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide” (2017 and 2010 versions) and Hutchings (2007).

### ***3.4. Inclusive planning approaches for disadvantaged communities***

On top of social housing policies as discussed in Section 3.2, there are other general planning policies that are not included in the strategic plans but can effectively shape them. For instance, there is a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy that requires developers to provide a certain percentage of affordable housing units in their projects, based on the size of their projects, such as 15% or more (McGreevy et al. 2023). Currently, there is a transport policy in place that reduces the cost of public transport for vulnerable populations, such as students, seniors and people with disabilities, and also enhances the availability and quality of public transport services. However, in the context of Australian planning and specifically Adelaide metropolitan areas, the lack of policies that further subsidise public transport in disadvantaged areas is a major flaw of the current strategies-policies to address social inequality (Rosier and McDonald 2011).

Nonetheless, increasing local input in strategic planning could more effectively address spatial disadvantage. The concept of transactive planning, which is based on the collaborative exchange of knowledge between planners and the community, is crucial in this process (Parker 2014). This method combines the technical expertise of planners with the community’s local knowledge to devise strategies that are both effective and relevant to the context. Consequently, the resulting policies authentically reflect the local conditions and needs (Taufiq et al. 2021)

In a context similar to Australian cities, the Greater London Authority (GLA) in London serves as a promising example of proactive engagement with

vulnerable communities in urban planning. Through initiatives like the London Plan, the GLA has implemented policies that promote social inclusion and address the needs of disadvantaged groups. Notably, the GLA has worked in collaboration with organizations representing disabled individuals to prioritize accessibility in new developments (Greater London Authority, 2024)

New York City's Participatory Budgeting process is another excellent example. It empowers residents, including those from vulnerable communities, to decide how to allocate a portion of the municipal budget. This process has led to funding for projects that directly benefit disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as improvements to public housing, parks, schools, and employment opportunities (New York City Council, 2024)

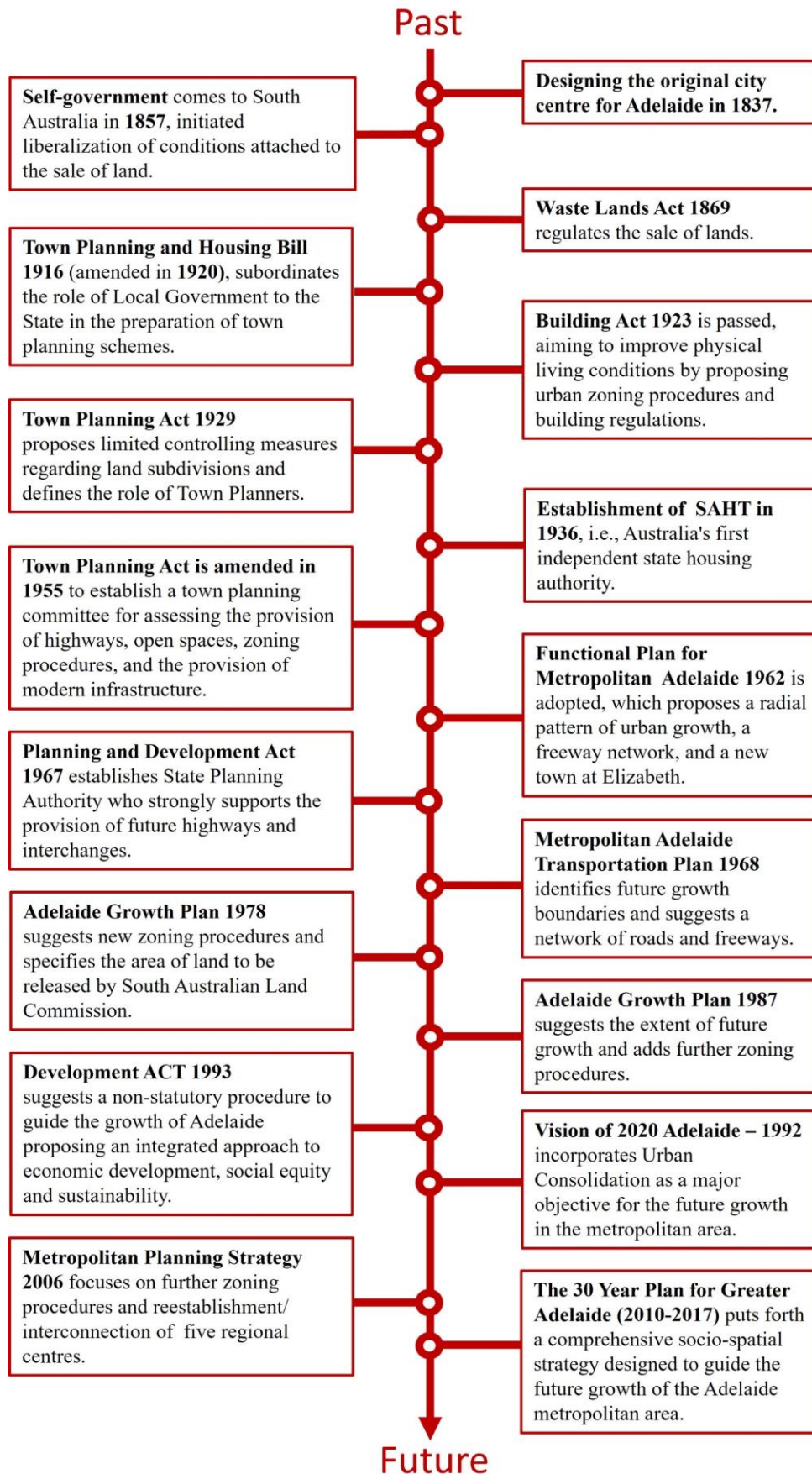


Figure 4: Timeline of Strategic Planning in Adelaide

#### **4. Theoretical framework**

As it was scrutinised in Sections 3.1-3.5, contemporary state governments have primarily endeavoured to address a variety of policies in response to challenges such as population growth and demographic changes, sustainability, climate change, water-sensitive design, employment and housing, together with urban renewal and consolidation, heritage conservation, and the integration of land use and public transport programs (Australian Government 2016b). Consequently, the current strategic planning approach in metropolitan Adelaide has traditionally embodied a top-down system of urban management, with state governments possessing constitutional authority over spatial planning (Pugalis and Tan 2017). Therefore, state governments are not legally required to gain the concurrence of local governments to produce metropolitan strategies, which gives them the freedom to insert much spatial detail to guide and direct urban developments (Searle and Bunker 2010).

Yet, it has clarified how the reform agendas of neoliberalism are transforming Australian strategic planning, to become outsourced, privatised, marketized and stripped of the knowledge and confidence that informed its founders (Gleeson and Low 2000). Hence, spatial consequences of such neoliberal processes might offer no refuge from the challenges of the future to satisfy socio-spatial disadvantage, diversity and housing affordability, together with race/gender equality, the democratization of spaces, right to the city and community aspirations (Harvey 2013). Since 2005, frequent revisions and policy shifts in state government planning have prioritized metropolitan-wide strategic planning, exemplified by initiatives like the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide. This emphasis may potentially overshadow local considerations in the planning process (Kellett 2014).

Historically, the dynamic of socio-spatial change produced by strategic plans found its expression in the top-down procedures and radical implementation of neoliberal approaches in the Adelaide metropolitan area (Searle and Bunker 2010). Despite all productive efforts, over the past several decades, the rate of crime, vulnerability and disadvantage has skyrocketed in certain suburbs of the metropolitan Adelaide, such as in Elizabeth, Port Adelaide, Smithfield, Oaklands Park, Kilkenny and Elizabeth South (Seeto 2020). Hence, a gap in knowledge is identified in this paper, wherein such lingering socio-spatial disadvantage in metropolitan Adelaide has hardly been considered as a key component in shaping socially sustainable plans for communities.

Thus, this article presents an approach for re-evaluating contemporary strategic planning through the lens of vulnerability in metropolitan Adelaide, whereby communities/individuals in disadvantaged suburbs can be systematically and historically monitored. To research this issue, the most significant question to be answered is: How can Adelaidean strategic planning be evaluated through the lenses of socio-spatial vulnerability? This, in turn, requires responding to two sub-questions; 1) to what extent can socio-spatial vulnerability be identified and documented?, and 2) to what extent can socio-spatial vulnerability, as an analytical tool, inform future strategic planning in Australia?.

#### ***4.1. Locational disadvantage as a tool for understanding vulnerability***

Urbanization continually alters spatial patterns of social disadvantage and hazard exposure, which in turn affects socio-spatial vulnerability. In this respect, the evidence for combined environmental equity and socio-economic disadvantage may vary by hazard as well as region (Andrey and Jones 2008). Related studies suggest that deprived neighbourhoods are co-located with hazards, leading to the conclusion that spatial inequities do exist while generating socio-spatial vulnerability (Bolin et al. 2002). For instance, the poor mental health of welfare recipients in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Australia may limit their opportunities to gain work and participate in community life, which makes them more vulnerable (Kiely and Butterworth 2013). While the relative importance of different processes for spatial inequities in hazard exposure is difficult to establish and/or generalize, studies of changing vulnerability can point to societal forces that contribute to such inequities (Bankoff 2003).

Evaluating vulnerability via the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD): Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly censuses. IRSD is one of four Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFAs) compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011).

The IRSD is a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area, and is therefore capable of elucidating socio-spatial vulnerability on the metropolitan scale. The IRSD represents the

socioeconomic status of Australian communities and identify areas of disadvantage and scores each area by summarising the attributes of the population, such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and so forth. This, consequently, establishes the general or average degrees of disadvantage within the population of an area (Radisich and Wise 2012).

A low score on this index indicates a high proportion of relatively disadvantaged people in an area, indicating a relatively greater disadvantage in general. An area could have a low score if it contains: many households with low income, many people with no qualifications, or many people in low skill occupations. We cannot conclude that an area with a very high score has a large proportion of relatively advantaged and well-off people, as there are no variables in the index to indicate such a claim. We can only conclude that such an area has a relatively low incidence of disadvantage in general. Therefore, the IRSD is recommended in situations where the researcher wants to look at disadvantage and lack of disadvantage or wants a broad measure of disadvantage, rather than a specific indicator such as low income or lack of literacy. Thus, the IRSD may be applicable when an inquiry into strategic plans wants to ensure an allocation of funds goes to disadvantaged areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011), not unlike the objectives in this article (Table 1).

Table 1: Indicators and variables of the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008a).

Indicator ID as proposed by ABS	Description of the indicator
INC_LOW	% of people with stated household equivalised income between \$1 and \$25,999 per year
CHILDJOBLESS	% of families with children under 15 years of age who live with jobless parents
NONET	% of occupied private dwellings with no internet connection
NOYEAR12ORHIGHER	% of people aged 15 years and over whose highest level of education is Year 11 or lower
UNEMPLOYED	% of people (in the labour force) who are unemployed
OCC_LABOUR	% of employed people classified as Labourers
LOWRENT	% of occupied private dwellings paying rent less than \$215 per week (excluding \$0 per week)
ONEPARENT	% of one-parent families with dependent offspring only
DISABILITYU70	% of people under the age of 70 who have a long-term health condition or disability and need assistance with core activities
SEPDIVORCED	% of people aged 15 years and over who are separated or divorced
OCC_DRIVERS	% of employed people classified as Machinery Operators and Drivers
OCC_SERVICE_L	% of employed people classified as low skill Community and Personal Service workers
NOCAR	% of occupied private dwellings with no cars
OVERCROWD	% of occupied private dwellings requiring one or more extra bedrooms
NOEDU	% of people aged 15 years and over who have no educational attainment
ENGLISHPOOR	% of people who do not speak English well

The index of IRSD can have a standard span of ranges divided into five levels: very high (750 – 959), high (960 – 989), middle (990 – 1019), low (1020 – 1049) and very low (1050 – 1087) in official ABS census reports. The indexes thus can be used to help investigate the relationship between disadvantage and other variables of interest (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008b). This type of analysis can yield some very interesting findings; however, it is important to understand that the IRSD index is a contextual variable, as it can be misleading to say that an individual is a very disadvantaged person if he/she lives in a very disadvantaged area. (Wise and Mathews 2011). Upon reviewing "The 30-Year Plan" in this research, it is evident that the IRSD has not been meaningfully utilized to propose future structures in Greater Adelaide. Nonetheless, this research doesn't claim that urban strategic planning solely aims to reduce spatial disadvantage. Instead, we investigated

whether the IRSD could serve as a valid key performance indicator for evaluating and guiding strategic plans or planning procedures.

## **5. Methods**

The research utilises mixed methods of data collection and analysis to historically compare strategic planning and socio-spatial vulnerability in a case study, i.e., metropolitan Adelaide.

### ***5.1. Statistical data:***

The research collects data regarding the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) in five ABS censuses, including 1991, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 while demonstrating relevant metropolitan maps in a comparable format (Figure 5). This section required access to ABS historical sources (Statistical Area Level 2) and implementation of ArcGIS program to carefully demarcate such socio-spatially vulnerable areas.

### ***5.2. Archival data/government documents:***

This part involves gathering and examining historical documents, archival materials, and maps pertaining to urban policies, strategic plans, and the historical development of metropolitan areas since the founding of Adelaide in 1837.

### ***5.3. Quantitative Analysis:***

Amongst the five levels of socio-spatial disadvantage as proposed by ABS (very high, high, medium, low, and very low) this paper demarcates the two highest levels of vulnerability (very high and high, i.e., scores lower than 989), as it was presented in each census. This, in turn, culminates in juxtaposing the historical layers of socio-economic disadvantage to recognize how socio-spatial vulnerability has been transformed in

metropolitan Adelaide between 1991-2021. As a result, a mapping overlay is conducted, which identifies urban areas that have experienced the lowest scores of the IRSD.

#### ***5.4. Qualitative analysis:***

This section includes historiographical investigation of strategic planning practices since the early days in metropolitan Adelaide. The analysis primarily focuses on five key components of strategic planning during the 20th and early 21st centuries, encompassing urban growth boundaries, zoning policies, infrastructure development, the establishment of regional centres, and urban consolidation. The examination revolves around assessing the impact of these strategic plans on the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage they will create in the immediate future.

## **6. Results and analysis; tracking socio-spatial vulnerability in metropolitan Adelaide**

### ***6.1. Socio-spatial vulnerability:***

We generated five maps for metropolitan Adelaide by identifying areas with significant socio-spatial disadvantage (i.e., IRSD scores below 989) during the 1991, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 censuses, maintaining a consistent format (Figure 4). The 1991 census revealed concentrated disadvantaged areas in the northern suburbs, extending from the eastern Playford to sections of Salisbury, Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt, West Torrens, and Tea Tree Gully. In the south, northern Marion, and large parts of Onkaparinga faced socio-spatial challenges. By 2006, socio-spatial disadvantage increased, with the focus shifting to western Playford, eastern Salisbury, Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt, West Torrens, and Tea Tree Gully in the north, while Marion and central-southern Onkaparinga remained disadvantaged, forming an interconnected pattern from Playford to Marion. The 2011 and 2016 censuses echoed the same trends,

with added socio-spatial challenges in larger areas of Salisbury and the city of Adelaide. Disadvantage was reduced in West Torrens, but southern Onkaparinga persisted as being a socio-spatially vulnerable area. In 2021, the socio-spatial landscape exhibited small changes. While the overall pattern persisted, disadvantaged areas appeared more dispersed, forming irregular patches from north to south in the metropolitan region (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Mapping the spread of very high and high levels of socio-spatial vulnerability as indicated by the IRSD (scores lower than average, i.e., 989), between 1991-2021 in metropolitan Adelaide.

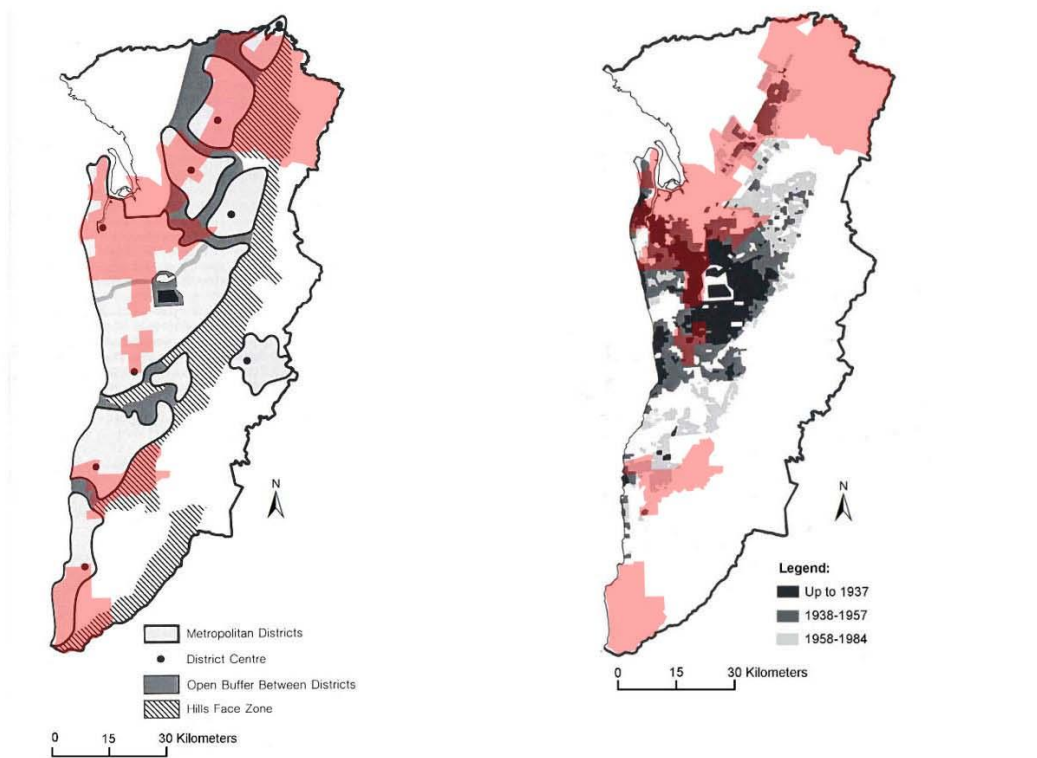
### ***6.2. Historiographical analysis of strategic plans:***

From examination of the spatial expansion of metropolitan Adelaide between 1937-1984 (Figure 6, top right) in relation to the socio-spatial disadvantage in Adelaide metropolitan areas in 1991, the preliminary analysis indicates that, excluding the northwestern areas of the City of Adelaide (specifically encompassing Port Adelaide Enfield and Charles Sturt), most disadvantaged areas emerged within new urban growth zones developed after 1984. This partially reflects the ineffectiveness of the early strategic plans in addressing socio-spatial disadvantage within the areas of future growth in metropolitan Adelaide.

While investigating the spatial expansion of socio-economically disadvantaged areas in 1991 in comparison to the 1962 functional plan for metropolitan Adelaide (Figure 6, top left), it can be argued that the early strategic plans underestimated the size of metropolitan districts (i.e., by proposing inadequate growth boundaries), partially miscalculated zoning propositions, failed to uphold urban consolidation and to maintain the proposed open buffer zones between districts, resulting in uncontrolled urban growth. It is also evident that both the city and disadvantaged areas noticeably extending beyond these initially proposed boundaries/zones by 1991.

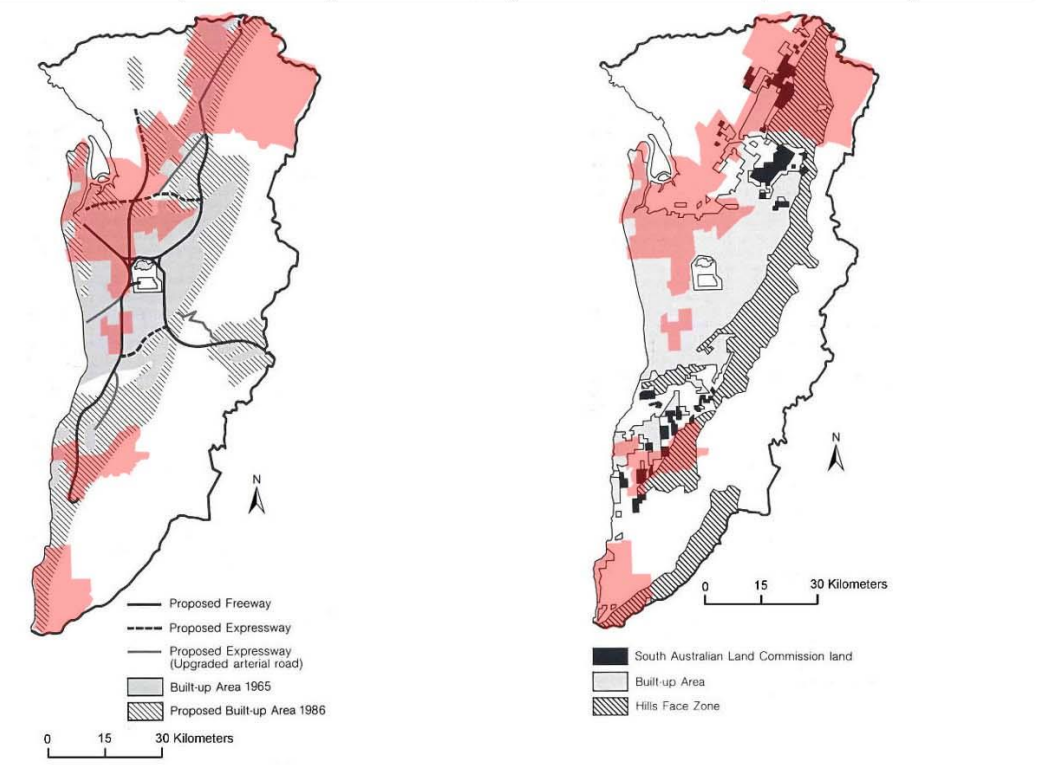
Upon examining the recommended vehicular roads outlined in the Adelaide Transportation Study (1968) alongside areas of disadvantage in 1991, it could be argued that these proposed roads only partially mitigated urban vulnerability, while interconnecting new developments (Figure 6, bottom left).

Upon examining the strategic plan presented by the South Australian Land Commission in 1978 in connection with the concentration of socio-economic disadvantage in 1991, it can be asserted that a substantial portion of the land released by the commission quickly transitioned into disadvantaged areas in less than 13 years. Not dissimilar to the deficiencies noted in the 1962 functional plan, the expansion of the urban built environment, alongside areas facing disadvantage, surpasses the planned boundaries (in the northern and southern sections of metropolitan areas) as proposed in 1978 plan. Additionally, specific agricultural Hill Face Zones in far north, south, and deep south of metropolitan areas have transformed into settlements experiencing socio-economic challenges in less than 5 years. Another significant observation is that a considerable amount of the proposed built-up areas in the north of the city has been covered by disadvantaged communities by 1991 (Figure 6, bottom left). The substantial increase in disadvantage among lower-income areas, particularly in both Northern and Southern suburbs during the 1970s and 1980s, stems primarily from shifts in capitalist processes within the global economic landscape. As discussed in Section 3.1, these shifts led to the decline of local manufacturing industries in Adelaide. This decline exacerbated challenges for lower socio-economic groups, particularly local workers, and surpassed the capabilities of planning interventions.



Functional plan for metropolitan Adelaide (1962) against the extent of socio spatial disadvantage in 1991

Extent of the built-up areas in metropolitan Adelaide 1937-1984 against the extent of socio spatial disadvantage in 1991



Proposed vehicular roads as shown on metropolitan Adelaide transportation study (1968) against the extent of socio spatial disadvantage in 1991

Extent of metropolitan Adelaide as suggested by South Australian Land Commission (1977-8) against the extent of socio spatial disadvantage in 1991

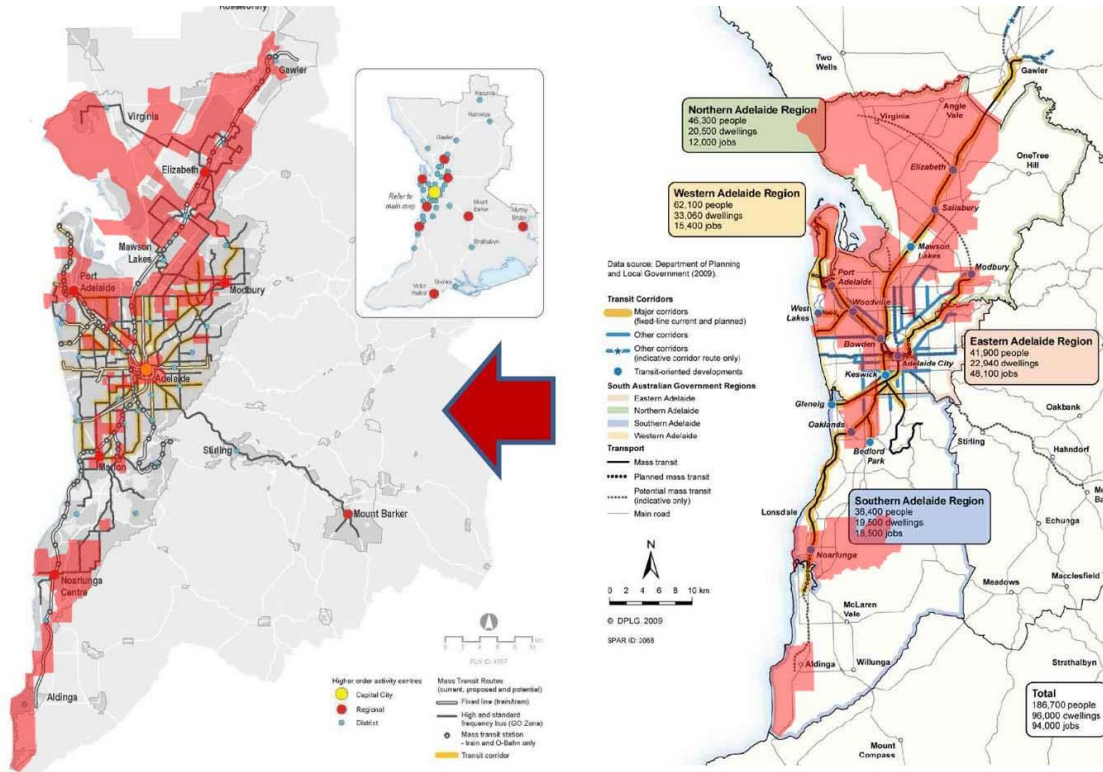
Figure 6: Outcomes of strategic plans (1962-1978), in conjunction with the future extent of socio-spatial disadvantage, highlighted in red.

Examining recent strategic plans reveals persistent issues in achieving success with proposed urban growth boundaries, zoning policies, infrastructure development, regional centre establishment, and urban consolidation plans in alleviating socio-economic disadvantage. Comparing the proposed Adelaide growth areas in 1987 with the disadvantaged areas in 1991, it can be argued that the zoning procedures (including Hill Face Zones, open buffer zones between districts, and designated growth areas) did not achieve their initial objectives: to maintain separate identities for distinct sub-regional districts, prevent the continuous sprawl that diminishes the uniqueness of places, and protect and provide scenic landscapes. Instead, metropolitan districts expanded beyond the anticipated zones, with district centres rapidly becoming hubs of socio-economic disadvantage in less than five years.

Analysing the 2020 vision for Adelaide proposed in 1992 against socio-economic disadvantage in 2006, it is evident that the major city extension in Playford and Onkaparinga occurred outside proposed urban boundaries. Additionally, over 50% of the suggested growth areas turned into disadvantaged settlements in under 14 years. While investigating the urban growth boundaries proposed by the Metropolitan Design Strategy 2006, it can be observed that zones designated for horticulture and viticulture, especially in the north of Elizabeth, have transformed into socio-economically disadvantaged urban fabrics in less than five years. Moreover, the proposition of district centres and transport corridors will be closely tied to socio-

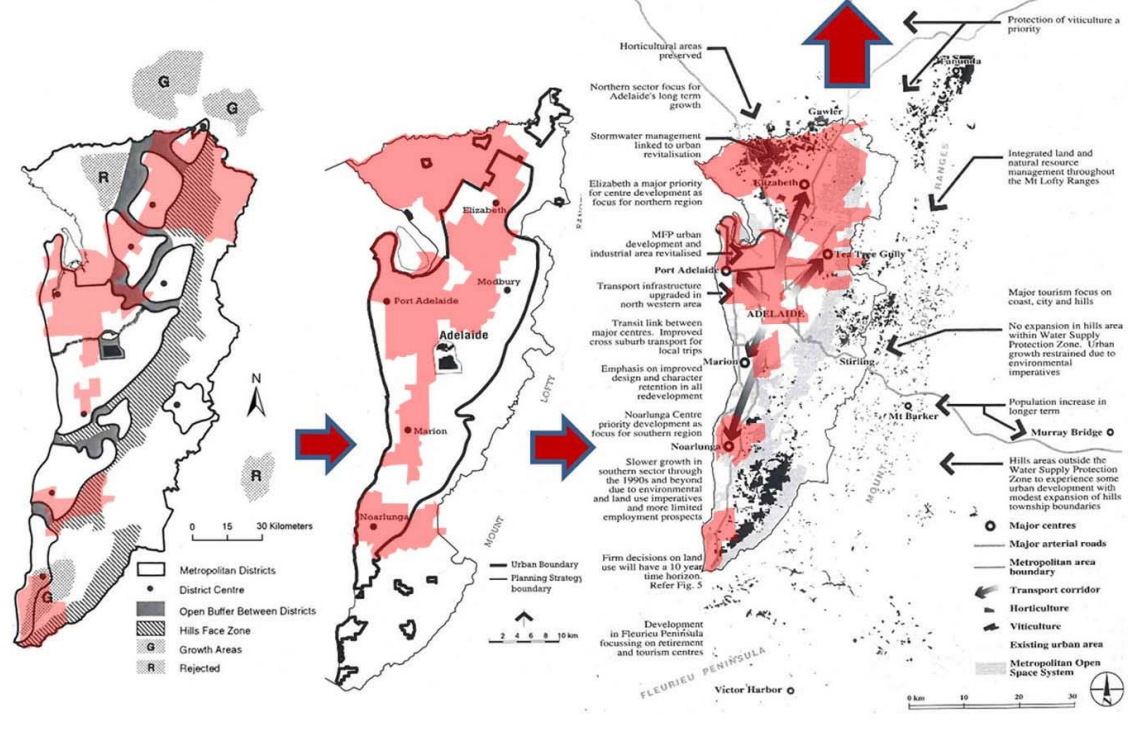
economic disadvantage as we progress through the first quarter of the 21st century in 2011.

In the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2010 and 2017 revision), a paradigm shift occurred with the state government expanding growth boundaries beyond previous plans and eliminating intermediate zonings (such as Hill Face Zones, Horticulture, Viticulture, and some areas of the metropolitan open space system). This shift emphasized urban consolidation, especially the development of transport-oriented developments (TODs) and associated infrastructure along major or secondary transport corridors. However, a notable situation persists, as disadvantaged areas form along TODs, partially encircling the capital city and impacting regional centres about a decade after the plan was first initiated in 2010 (Figure 7).



The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide: Activity centres and mass transit routes (Revision 2017) against the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage in 2021

The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, targets for transit corridors (2010) against the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage in 2016



Proposed Adelaide Growth areas (1987) against the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage in 1991

Vision of 2020 Adelaide (1992) against the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage in 2006

Urban Growth Boundary, derived from Metropolitan Planning Strategy (2006) against the extent of socio-spatial disadvantage in 2011

Figure 7: Outcomes of strategic plans (1987-2017), in conjunction with the future extent of socio-spatial disadvantage, highlighted in red.

### 6.3. Interpretive Analysis:

By juxtaposing the results within two layers (socio-spatial vulnerability and historiographical analysis of strategic plans) in this study a mapping overlay was generated. This map suggests that the proposition/development of regional centres (i.e., Marion, Port Adelaide, Elizabeth, Modbury, and Port Noarlunga) are historically accompanied by the highest levels of socio-spatial disadvantage in metropolitan Adelaide since the 1990s census (see Figure 8).

However, the escalation of socio-spatial inequalities around the designated regional centres does not necessarily signify their failure in addressing such disparities. Instead, it may imply a necessity for reinforcement, reassessment, and modification of the current plans and programs. Hence, the primary role of these centres is to ensure more equitable access and distribution of higher-level jobs and services for all residents.

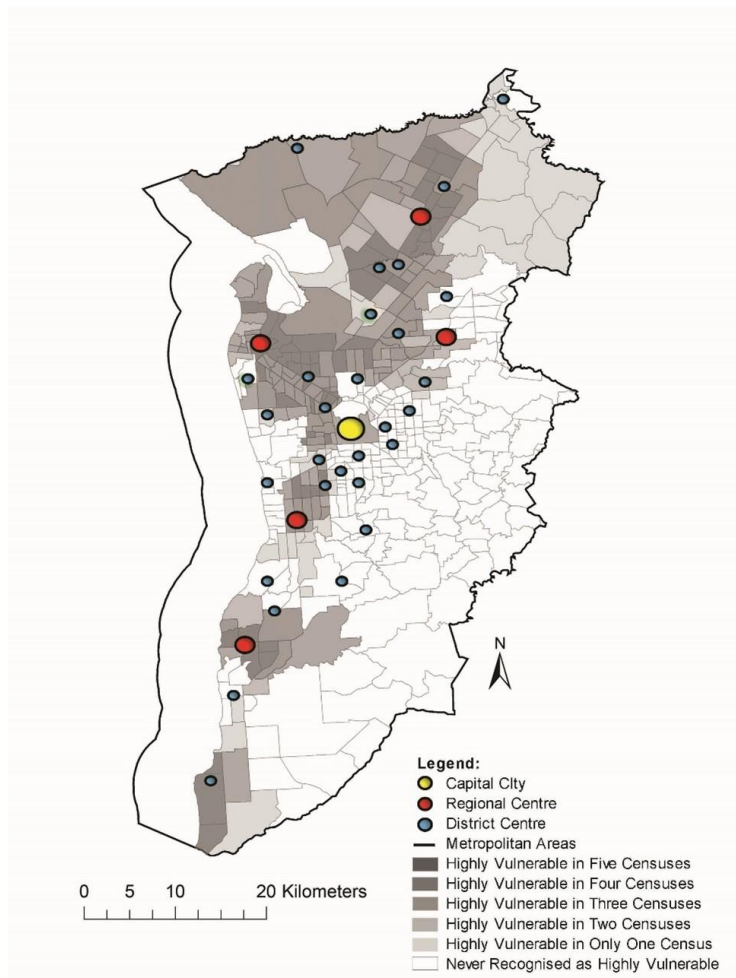


Figure 8. Spread of socio-spatial vulnerability (based on ABS censuses between 1991-2021) in conjunction with five regional centres as historically proposed by strategic plans.

## **7. Discussion; permanent vulnerability in metropolitan Adelaide**

This article critically examines the historical lack of emphasis on addressing socio-economic disadvantage in South Australia's strategic planning context. The research introduces an innovative method for assessing strategic plans, with a focus on monitoring progress towards their objectives. The discourse argues that socio-spatial vulnerability could be regarded as a key indicator of urban planning goals, as it has the potential to affect the accomplishment of other strategic objectives at all levels. Simultaneously, the paper suggests enhancing local input into strategic processes, thereby advocating for a more inclusive approach to urban planning. With the 2020 reforms, a crucial period is needed to observe the implementation of the new planning system and compare current levels of socio-spatial vulnerability against future outcomes.

The article discusses the dominance of state government-controlled strategic planning historically in metropolitan Adelaide and explores how recent programs have embraced the idea of urban consolidation by reaffirming metropolitan boundaries to curb urban sprawl. Given the neoliberal socio-political context, there is debate about how current plans aim to optimize the net benefits from development for safeguarding the security of investments, to improve accessibility for equitable resource distribution (Plan SA 2006). The dominance of these factors (strict neoliberal socio-political context and the state government control over strategic plans) in SA planning (and perhaps the Australian planning) systems underscores a knowledge gap, urging the need for evaluating and recalibrating contemporary strategic plans.

To fill this gap, this article offered a mixed methodology for assessing the outcomes of contemporary strategic plans in metropolitan Adelaide, by studying changes in socio-spatial vulnerability. This, in turn, was facilitated by demarcating historical changes in the IRSD. It was concluded that in many cases current planning policies and methods have predominantly engaged with environmental and physical aspects of cities, rather than cultural and socio-spatial characteristics. A mapping overlay suggests that the revitalisation of the five regional centres (as the major goal of strategic plans since the 1960s) correlates with the extent of socio-economically disadvantaged suburbs, and these have remained perpetually vulnerable during the last five (ABS) censuses (Figure 9). The increasing socioeconomic inequalities observed around the five regional centres underscore their growing importance. Regional centres are essential for achieving the concept of 20 or 30-minute cities, fostering the development of sustainable and equitable urban environments. However, achieving these goals in Adelaide requires a reassessment of current plans and additional support from complementary planning procedures to effectively enhance job creation and improve access to essential services within and beyond these regional centres.

Looking into the historical objectives of strategic plans in metropolitan Adelaide, the article suggests that contemporary programs have been relatively unsuccessful in predicting future needs as well as detecting and ameliorating socio-spatial disadvantage in metropolitan Adelaide since the 1990s, resulting in recurring patterns of urban vulnerability. This, in turn, clarifies how strategic planning in metropolitan Adelaide historically has

become associated with the suburbanization of the locations of disadvantage away from the traditional inner cities and into the middle and in some cases outer suburbs, where residents have remained in a state of permanent vulnerability, for several consecutive decades (Figure 9).

This article highlights that one reason for such shortcomings can be the fact that local governments have limited or no authority to influence or leverage state planning decisions for local communities. This reveals a considerable gap between strategic plans and local-level planning, and highlights the need for a much stronger connection. A possible solution is to develop a participatory planning framework, engaging local residents, community leaders, minorities, and stakeholders in the state decision-making processes. This can foster a better understanding of socio-spatial nuances and enable tailored solutions within the strategic planning framework.

The research findings specify the need to define and formalize legal responsibilities for local city councils to ensure cooperation between state and local levels. This enables collaboration and information exchange in planning and includes local insights by fostering dialogue between local communities and strategic plans to consider the unique characteristics and challenges of each area, contributing to the development of strategies that can uplift disadvantaged suburbs while remaining contextually relevant.

The article demonstrated how the avant-garde aspects of strategic plans mostly depend on transport-oriented developments (TODs) and urban consolidation to provide integrated planning, arguably providing ideal

physical structures, transport, and land use management in-between major urban centres (Cervero et al. 2004). By the same token, within the contemporary state government policies in South Australia, it is largely assumed that filling up the triangular Adelaide plains with medium-rise developments along with transit routes can solve many problems. It is widely believed that TODS could connect the local community to the transport network, improving efficient utilisation of the existing infrastructure, creating employment opportunities, and saving funds, which together may engender liveability and just redistribution of resources in the city (Planning Institute of Australia 2009).

However, such urban consolidation policies could have been critiqued as potentially increasing gentrification and thus exacerbating spatial inequality: While gentrification can lead to the revitalization of a neighbourhood, it can also cause displacement of long-time residents and businesses, as well as a rise in property values and a possible class transformation of the city (Atkinson 2004). Nonetheless, there are some concerns about the uncertain efficiency of TODs and their interconnection with socio-spatial vulnerability, suggesting that such programs could become little more than park and ride transit stops, and may make very small reductions in metropolitan Adelaide's overall socio-environmental sustainability (Allan 2013).

We discussed that the South Australian Housing Trust has made significant efforts to address housing needs, however, it is important to acknowledge and address unintended consequences that have resulted in the creation of vulnerable communities. Thus, it is essential that the SAHT and relevant

stakeholders adopt more balanced and inclusive approaches and policies. This, in turn, may involve dispersing public housing developments throughout various neighbourhoods to promote social and economic diversity (Azpitarte et al. 2021).

We discussed that the relevant planning agencies need further work to rectify the issues associate with the SA planning reform, particularly in addressing socio-spatial vulnerability. To address these concerns, the government should focus on effective communication, efficient budgeting, clearer socio-environmental sustainability objectives, and more inclusive community engagement strategies to address socio-spatial disadvantage.

The discussion in this paper recognizes that integrating housing with transit provision can significantly improve access for residents of disadvantaged outer suburbs to the Central Business District (CBD) and other remote job opportunities, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment. However, given the identified pattern of socio-spatial disadvantage, this article argues that addressing permanent vulnerability alongside the proposed and anticipated Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) may be impractical in the greater Adelaide metropolitan area. In this case, along with the proposition of regional and district centres, it can be argued that TODs on their best perhaps, can ameliorate deprivation closest to the centre; however the vast proportion of socio-spatially disadvantaged areas has been located in outer northern suburbs such as Elizabeth South, the outer southern suburbs such as Hackham West and the north-western suburbs such as Mansfield Park (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023), (Figure 9). In this context, it is

improbable that TODs will extend their benefits to the more remote disadvantaged areas.

Arguably, such deleterious conditions are more likely to continue in future decades, unless new types of strategic plans and/or planning schemas can respond to socio-spatial disadvantage. In this sense, new types of strategic plans should focus on addressing cultural diversity, gender/race equity, the right to the city, socio-spatial vulnerability and just redistribution of resources side by side with the provision of sustainable, liveable, and efficient physical structures.

We acknowledge that issues such as the rise of the post-industrial economy are structural ones that underpin disadvantage across developed economies, and on which planning can only have somewhat limited impacts. So far, this is evident that urban planning/strategies have perhaps promoted knowledge-based employment that have done little to help disadvantaged areas (Olesen 2014). Implementing the lessons learned from the UK in the Australian strategic planning context (Section 2), state governments need to monitor the effectiveness of strategic planning in achieving desired outcomes. In other words, the most effective criterion to evaluate strategic planning is whether it works in its specific context or not.

The discourse in this paper identifies a significant correlation between the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage and contemporary strategic planning practices. Recognizing this relationship could inform future revitalisation initiatives aimed at moving marginalised areas of the city out of

permanent vulnerability. The discourse offers policymakers and practitioners a fresh perspective to view specific suburbs within the Australian metropolis as consistently vulnerable urban areas. This perspective can pave the way for the development of new strategic-regulatory models that address socio-spatial disadvantage, thereby contributing to the improvement of effective regulations and programs.

Integrating local input into strategic planning through transactive planning methods can empower all citizens, particularly those from socio-spatially disadvantaged groups. This approach provides a crucial platform for citizens to voice their unique concerns and encourages active participation in the development of strategic plans that impact their daily lives (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012). Consequently, as discussed in the literature review (see Section 3.4), involving vulnerable populations early in the strategic planning process has enabled many Western cities—such as London and New York—to effectively address issues of accessibility, urban equality, housing affordability, employment, and environmental justice. Therefore, this approach can be efficiently implemented in Australian cities.

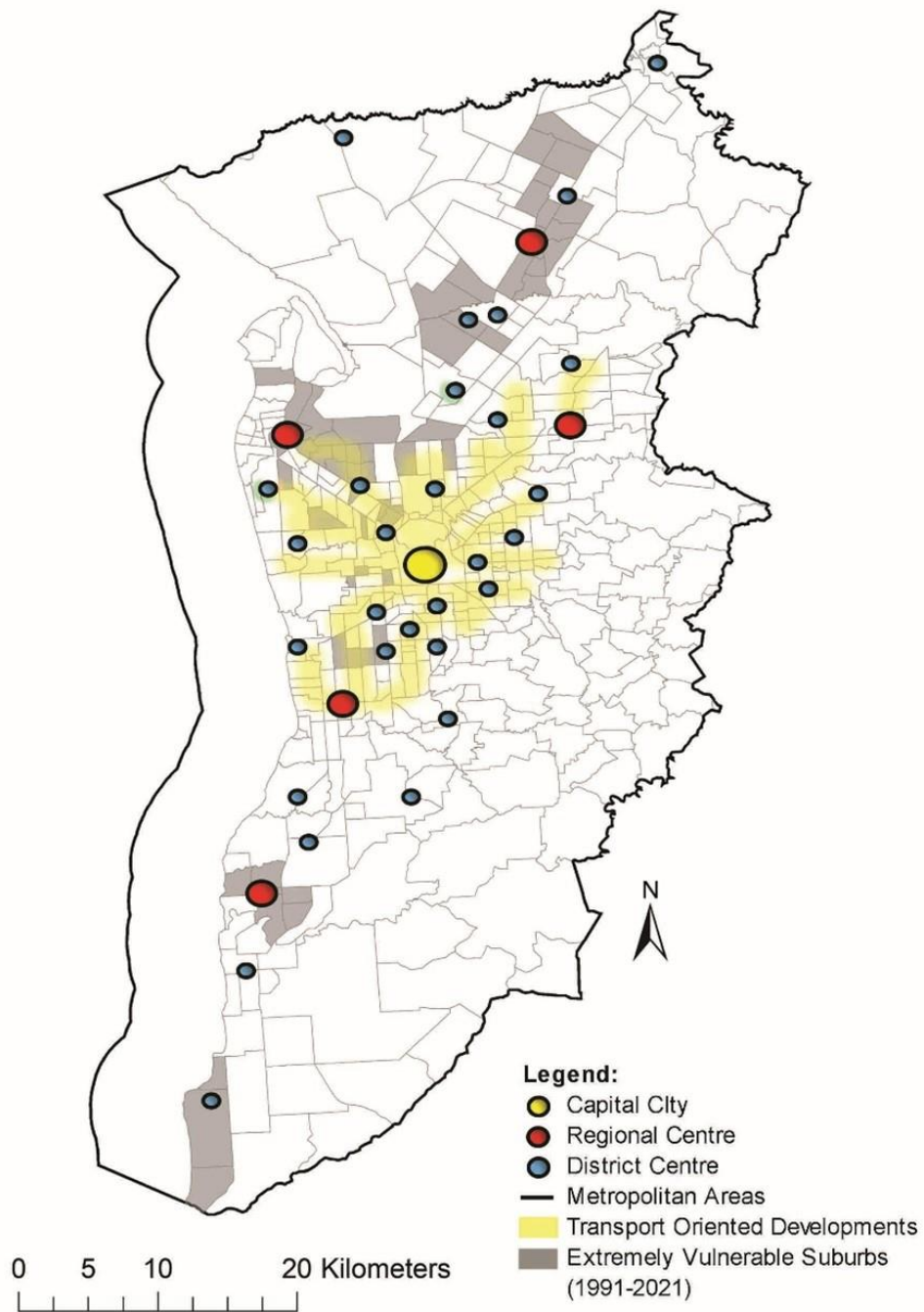


Figure 9: Mapping permanent vulnerability in suburbs that have experienced the highest levels of socio-spatial disadvantage between 1991-2021, in conjunction with the proposed TODs (source: Lead Author).

## **8. Conclusions; moving out of permanent vulnerability**

This article proposes that the approach presented by contemporary strategic plans needs improvement and refinement before being applied to the Australian metropolis, especially in the context of socio-spatial disadvantage. The research has emphasised the need for new epistemological tools in urban planning, suggesting that investigating socio-spatial vulnerability can be a useful theoretical framework for understanding and assessing the impacts of strategic plans in Australian cities. The article elaborated permanent vulnerability as a theoretical concept in metropolitan Adelaide. In this context, the introduction of an innovative method for assessing strategic plans, particularly in monitoring the progress towards their identified objectives, is asserted as a noteworthy research outcome. This contribution is seen as augmenting the existing body of research and architectural theory. The discussion and findings allow practitioners, academics, and policymakers to understand socio-spatial equations in Australian cities in a real-life context. In the case of Adelaide, -, socio-spatial vulnerability is proved to be associated with the contemporary strategic plans since the early 20th Century.

Throughout the paper, socio-spatial vulnerability has proven to be an amorphous phenomenon that applies to Australian urban context alongside post-industrial transformation, which has become associated with the suburbanization of the locations of disadvantage away from the traditional inner cities and into the middle and outer suburbs. In this case, residents of such disadvantaged suburbs are likely to experience a state of permanent vulnerability for consecutive decades.

However, several inevitabilities point to the re-examination of the current discussion by conducting further studies. First it must be acknowledged that the IRSD index has some limitations, such as the lack of data on some aspects

of disadvantage, the use of averages that may mask variations within areas, and the potential lag between the census data and the current situation. Second, the paper assumed that strategic plans are one of the best ways for planning to address socio-spatial disadvantage. However, we acknowledge considering other policy dimensions that could ameliorate locational disadvantage, that are outside the scope of this research. In line with spatial disadvantage, other cultural, social, and financial implications of strategic plans need to be further scrutinised to improve the quality of life amongst vulnerable communities. In this case, questions such as ‘how can populations in a state of permanent vulnerability transition into a more physically and socially integrated population?’ become critical.

Proposing socio-spatial disadvantage as an analytical tool offers great potential for recalibrating strategic plans in contemporary Australian cities and specifies other neglected cultural-financial and local dynamics, that need to be reinvestigated and regulated. Hence, this research serves to broaden the perspectives of both urban planners and developers, shifting the focus from solely improving physical structures, economy, and efficiency, to a more comprehensive consideration of strategic planning in Australia, by incorporating the concept of socio-spatial vulnerability. Such revaluation of strategic plans raises several political, economic, and multicultural agendas, while the entire situation can be seen as an unforeseen outcome of incomplete processes of post-industrial planning in contemporary Australian cities.

There's a pressing need to reassess our society's inability to meet fundamental community needs and effectively address emerging public health challenges.

Examining South Australia's strategic planning approach reveals an underestimation of people's evolving aspirations for prosperity and contribution. In this respect, it is observable that state planners may often be unaware of the various local problems perceived as impediments by the residents. Furthermore, the overarching ideas for strategic plans might be adversely influenced by the attitudes of middle-class state planners, bureaucratic mindsets, or unhelpful neoliberal ideologies.

Socio-spatial dysfunction and strategic planning appear to be linked to economic disadvantages. However, social planning can serve as a bridge between strategic and local (master) plans to achieve economic and social well-being. Particularly, transactive planning that facilitates the integration of local community input is indispensable in strategic planning, ensuring that the resulting policies are equitable, effective, and truly representative of the diverse needs of the population they serve. Australian strategic planning now grapples with socio-spatial disadvantage, climate change, bushfire, flood, species extinction, and the impacts of pandemics. This has shifted the focus toward adapting our lives to new circumstances, necessitating effective strategic planning for resilience, shelter, and safety as top priorities.

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