Australia: Rising Up Down Under

Australia is one of the world’s least densely-populated countries, and yet it has one of the highest proportions of urban dwellers, a figure that is increasing. A boom in tall building construction is underway, paralleled by several significant transportation projects, particularly in the three CTBUH 2017 Conference cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. This study examines the timeline, composition, and location of buildings 100 meters and taller (complete or under construction), set against the backdrop of new public transportation projects that are “connecting the city” and aligning towards a denser, more sustainable future.

Note: The six cities in this study are Australia’s six largest in terms of population, and all contain at least one 100-meter or taller building. “City” in this study is identical to a “metropolitan area,” as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. All population data is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census. All tall building data is from the CTBUH Skyscraper Center: www.skyscrapercenter.com.

Timeline of Buildings over 100 Meters in Australia

Bars represent the total number of buildings completed or under construction each year. Dots represent a specific building and its height and function. Note: chart begins in 1960 as the AWA Tower, Sydney (1939), was Australia’s first and only building over 100 meters until 1962.

Study of 100m+ Buildings in Australia

356 Completed; 82 Under Construction; 438 Total

By Function

Residential 45.4% (199)
Office 36.5% (160)
Mixed-Use 12.1% (53)
Hotel 5% (22)
Government 0.7% (3)
Education 0.2% (1)

By City

Melbourne 33.3% (146)
Sydney 32.5% (142)
Gold Coast 11.4% (50)
Brisbane 16% (70)
Perth 5.9% (26)
Adelaide 0.9% (4)

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The proposed Orion Towers (South Tower), Gold Coast, would become Australia’s tallest building at 328 meters, overtaking the 323-meter Q1 Tower, Gold Coast.

The Sydney Metro project’s first stage, due in 2019, will deliver 16 new stations and increase train frequencies to every four minutes at peak hour.

Eureka Tower, Melbourne, hosted “air plants” on its roof, in a cross-disciplinary art/science collaboration to determine the potential of greenery at height.
Three major floods hit Brisbane – in 1893, 1974, and 2010–11, causing 87 deaths and more than AU$9 billion in damage. The Somerset Dam, completed in 1953, mitigated the effects of the two later events.