



Melbourne Handles the COVID-19 Fight Better than Sydney

Melbourne has reduced movement compared to Sydney, but to decrease the infection rate, both cities need to further curb mobility

The fear of the virus, Tom Hanks' diagnosis while in Australia and the quarantine of the Ruby Princess, led to an increased awareness among Australians. While visitation at place categories began to drop in February, people's movement continued (especially in Sydney) showing that Australia's social distancing efforts may need to be further tightened to win the fight.

We analyzed the density and mobility across cities to understand the vulnerability of a city to the spread of COVID-19.

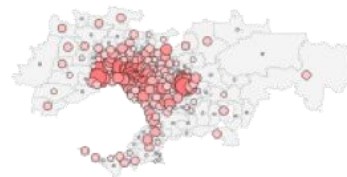
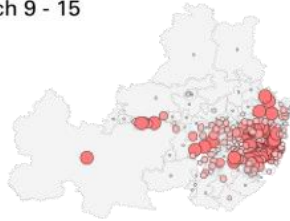
Using data gathered from real-world signals, we devised metrics - the Density index, a representation of how crowded place categories such as supermarkets, QSRs, places of worship can get within the busy hours, and the Mobility Index which measures people's movement across postcodes in a particular city. We believe that such insights can benefit policymakers, public health officials and organizations aid the decision-making process.

These metrics are good indicators to understand how quickly the infection can spread in a city and also measure whether people were practicing social distancing/self-isolation.

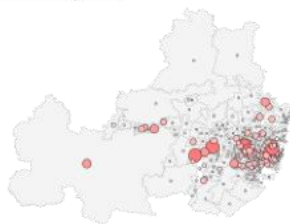
Here is what the data showed.

Sydney and Melbourne Got Serious with Social Distancing in Mid-March

March 9 - 15



March 30 - April 5



SYDNEY



MELBOURNE

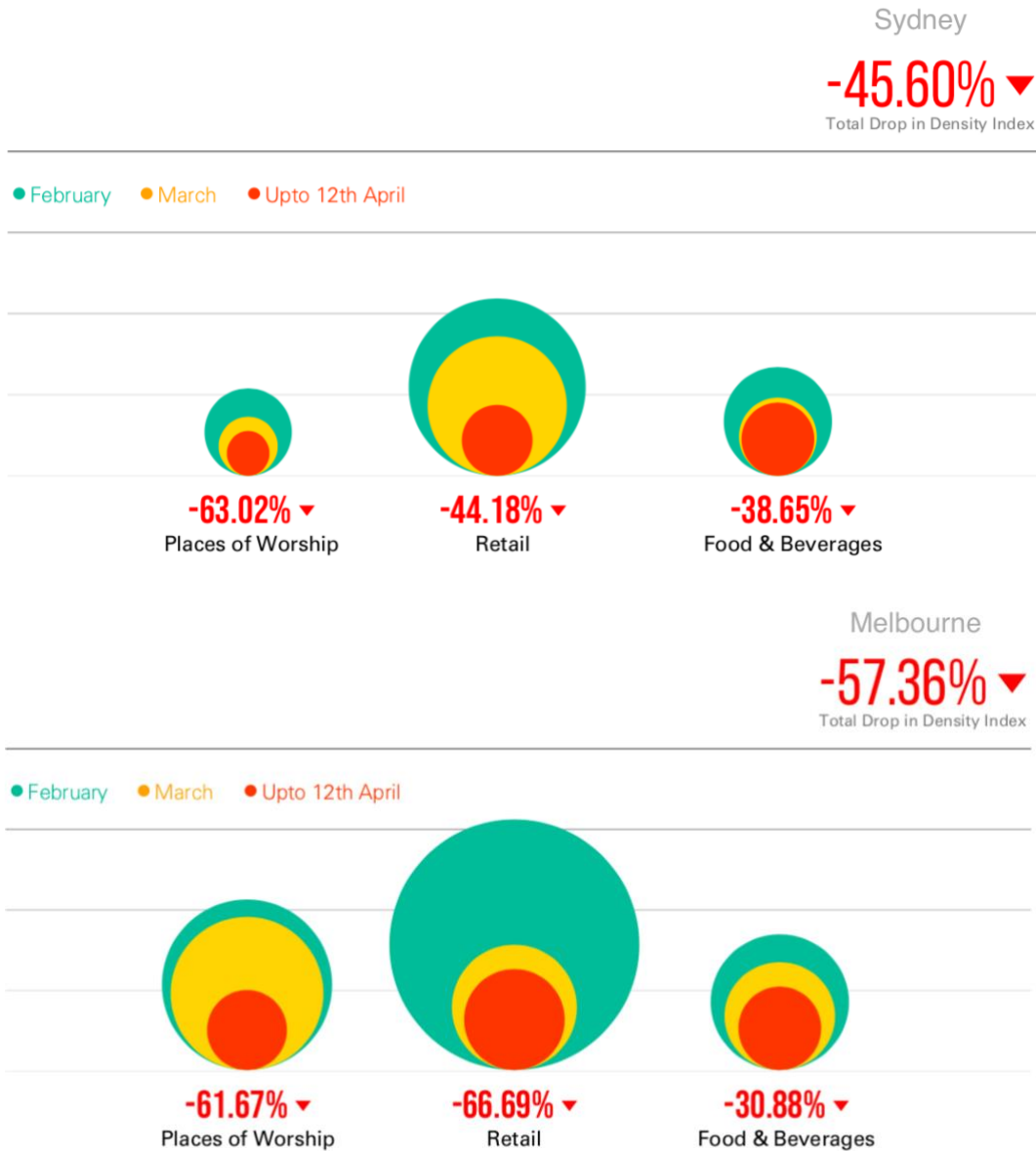
Figure: Mobility Index of every postcode, during mid-March and early April

The Mobility Index which measures people's movement in a particular city showed that a majority of people in Sydney and Melbourne were commuting between postcodes around mid-March. The Mobility Index in both the cities dropped in the first week of April.

A few postcodes in Blacktown and Canterbury-Bankstown areas in Sydney experienced one of the lowest drops in mobility, but due to unknown sources of infection in these areas it is highly recommended that additional measures be taken to reduce the number of people traveling from this suburb. In Melbourne, 98% of postcodes saw a drop in the Mobility Index towards the end of March which progressively declined in April.

Retail Sector Saw Reduced Crowding Over the Period

Analysis of the Density Index, an indicator of how crowded a place can get, revealed that retail locations experienced a significant drop in the density index from February to April.



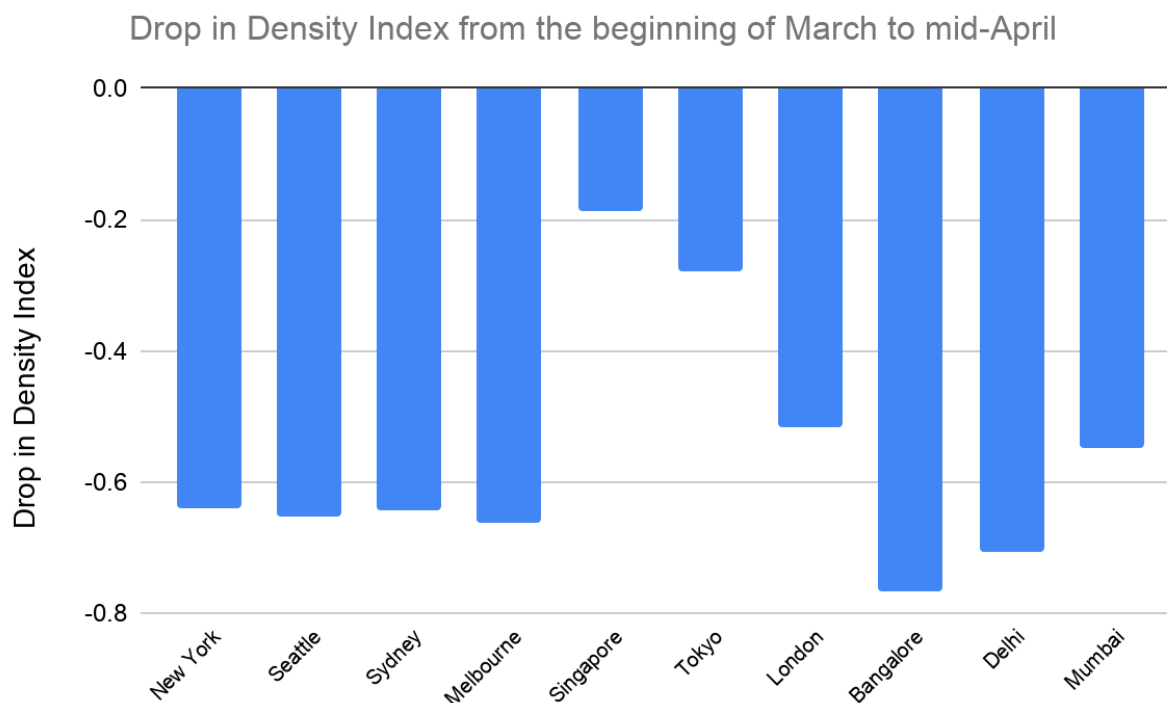
Data showed that in February retail stores in Melbourne saw more crowding than Sydney during busy hours, however, by mid-April there was an exponential decrease in the density at those locations. This indicates that Melbourne did a commendable job of practicing social distancing.

On comparing the overall drop in the density index, Melbourne saw an 8% higher drop than Sydney in March and April.

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Sydney and Melbourne Need to Continue Social Distancing



When compared with the other global cities, Sydney and Melbourne are doing a far better job than Singapore and Tokyo in implementing social distancing measures. But they have to continue the effective measures to avoid a widespread infection akin to New York City.

To read the full Global COVID-19 Report, please [click here](#).

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Founded in 2012, Near is headquartered in Singapore with offices in San Francisco, New York, London, Bangalore, Tokyo, and Sydney. Today, marquee brands such as News Corp and Mastercard work with Near to provide enhanced customer experiences.

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