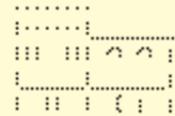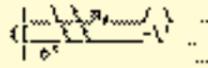# MELBOURNE

SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

Melbourne was a lifeless place when Rob Adams emigrated from his native Zimbabwe in the 1980s. As the city's new urban designer, he was thoroughly underwhelmed; but he'd brought with him a lesson from Cape Town University, where a rising student population was accommodated not by increasing square footage but by intensifying students' use of the campus over the course of the day. "It's the same for Melbourne," says Adams, now director of city design for the City of Melbourne. "The best way to tackle densification is to repurpose and retimetable our city to use what it's already got."

Today, his vision to invigorate the city is manifest. With its population anticipated to increase by five to seven million by 2040, Melbourne has become even smarter. Municipal councils, designers, and entrepreneurs are embracing digital technology, hot-wiring the city and intensifying infrastructure to transform the built environment and daily lives.

A snapshot reveals that the smart inner city and suburbs like Fitzroy offer all amenities within walking distance—210 acres of city asphalt have been converted to wider footpaths and open space, while in eclectic Smith Street, Collingwood, a proliferation of mid-rise development has popped up along tramlines to cater to a growing population. "High density doesn't necessarily mean high rise," says Adams. Whole precincts, like Cremorne, have also become sharing communities with fluid coworking spaces to rent, while modular companies such as Unitised Building fine-tune digital technology to construct the city faster using factory-built prefabricated designs.

While Melbourne consistently tops livability rankings, residents are demanding a bold vision and the government announced last year it had doubled infrastructure investment over the past decade. "If we can continue to repurpose, we'll become more vibrant," says Adams. "People will be close to what they need, and we can foster the sense of community." —*Annie Reid*
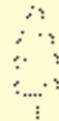
GREEN SPACE
The total area of Melbourne's parks, gardens, and reserves is 1.54 square miles.

DATA PLATFORM
The City of Melbourne now publishes 74 open datasets —from heat maps to the Urban Forest platform— for anyone to download and adapt.
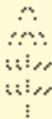
ARCHITECTURE
The city's oldest building is the Mitre Tavern, which was built in 1837.

MULTICULTURALISM
An estimated 48% of Melbourne residents were born overseas.

STORM-WATER HARVESTING

Some of Melbourne's oldest open spaces are working hard beneath the surface, housing major water-harvesting infrastructure thanks to the City of Melbourne and Biofilta. Last February, one of the largest systems—two underground tanks that hold a total of 1.3 million gallons of storm water—was installed under the 167-year-old Fitzroy Gardens. It produces up to 18 million gallons to irrigate the surrounding natural landscape. In 2011, Melbourne's first major in-road harvesting system was built under a street in East Melbourne, saving more than five million gallons of water. Biofilta's technology treats and redirects runoff that otherwise would have been lost to waterways. This also helps the city during times of drought.

ARBORY BAR AND EATERY

Newly opened and already a firm favorite, Arbory Bar & Eatery is a 394-foot-long hybrid public/private terrace between the Yarra River and the iconic Flinders Street Station, in the heart of the city. The site reclaims land formerly occupied by a disused railway line and is built from prefab illuminated shipping containers. A central passage from the east entry to the west offers timberlined bars and places to perch under a canopy of plane trees. "It nestles comfortably within its heritage context," says project architect Jon Clements, director of Jackson Clements Burrows. "And it redefines Melbourne's central business district's connection with the North Bank of the Yarra River."

TOP AND BOTTOM: COURTESY NILS KOENNING; COURTESY JOHN GOLLINGS