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## Reputation Key to Shaping Perth

In the same way a country's reputation can be effected by tolerance, safety, standard of living and its attractiveness to tourists, the reputation of a city greatly determines its ability to appeal to visitors, businesses, investment and talent.

Creating a positive reputation and place branding is about influencing people's perceptions, however perception of a place is an evolving process with many contributing factors changing it over time.

The latest FACTBase Bulletin released by the Committee for Perth investigates the reported external reputation of Perth in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, identifying the influencing factors and the evolution of Perth's character.

"This latest report is the first research output in the Committee for Perth's *Hashtag Perth* project. This project aims to reposition Perth by enhancing its reputation in order to grow the economy, create jobs and increase the region's prominence," explains Committee for Perth's CEO, Marion Fulker.

"Reputation is important to sustaining long term economic development, and a city's competitiveness is a key indicator of its performance. A city that is perceived positively both economically and socially is a drawcard for new firms, skilled workers, tourists and international students."

City reputation can be defined as the aggregated views of single stakeholders on the ability of a city to meet the demands and expectations of many stakeholders, including residents and prospective residents, business and investors, tourists, visitors and purchasers and consumers of goods and services.

Investigations by researchers and marketing organisations as well as academic literature suggests a combination of several factors influence stakeholder perception. Whilst attributes such as climate, quality of the natural environment and the beauty of a location typically remain relatively stable, others such as cost of living, quality of infrastructure, governance and branding are subject to significant change and as a result reputation of a place evolve, both positively and negatively.

Research cited in the report named Perth as the fourth most competitive capital in Australia, with indices identifying quality of life and liveability as one of its greatest competitive advantages. Whilst still below that of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Auckland for liveability and well behind Sydney and Melbourne as a place to study, innovation and smart technology, Perth has substantially improved its cost of living rating in recent years. The Economist Intelligence Unit now ranks Perth 64<sup>th</sup>, making it the most affordable capital in Australia.

Perth was showcased to the world in the mid to late twentieth century when it hosted a series of major international events, including the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, the 1987 America's Cup and the first orbital space flight. These events had a pivotal influence on Perth's reputation to external audiences and helped promote Perth on the global stage.

The mining 'boom' is another twenty first century term associated with Greater Perth and Western Australia. The peak of the mining expansion in the early 2000's fuelled an economic upswing in the region and bought about a migratory explosion, shifting the perception of Perth from 'dullsville' to 'boomtown'.

Such periods of investment and revitalisation create positive transformations amongst residents, businesses and visitors to the city, however periods of underinvestment can be harshly judged and have lingering impacts on reputation.

Mrs Fulker highlights the need for Perth not to be complacent.

"As this research shows Perth needs to continue to cultivate its reputation as a liveable, vibrant, prosperous place to live, visit, invest and study. Unless we do, Perth will lose out to other cities," explains Mrs Fulker.

"The investment in Perth's infrastructure over the past decade has transformed the region and now international journalists are describing it as a 'hipster' city, a must visit place. Continuous investment is needed to ensure this positive shift in reputation endures. "

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Media contact – Abi Smalley, 0415 450889