

CISTRI HELPS SHAPE THE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF ASIA

EXPORT CASE STUDY | APRIL 2020

Australian urban planning and design and economics consultancy Cistri is using its evidence-based insights to help Asian developers design and plan urban communities that enhance quality of life.

Founded in 2016, Cistri represents property advisor Urbis Australia's international business. Based in Singapore, Cistri provides planning and design, urban and property economics, and transaction support services to public and private-sector clients.

The company has delivered several notable projects across Asia. These include preparing a market and feasibility study for the KLIA Aeropolis in Malaysia; developing a master plan for an integrated sports and residential community in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam; and conducting retail market and asset review studies across four Chinese cities.

'While we represent clients in different parts of the world, collectively we have one simple goal – to shape cities and communities for a better future,' says Peter Hyland, Regional Director, Cistri.

'The depth of opportunities in Asia is large and increasing, particularly in the ASEAN region where rapid urbanisation is spurring ASEAN leaders to design urban environments that are liveable and environmentally friendly.'

Enhancing Orchard Road

In 2018, Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB) engaged Cistri to identify how Singapore's iconic Orchard Road retail district could be enhanced.

Cistri led a 10-member consortium to undertake a comprehensive study of issues facing Orchard Road and develop strategies to address these issues. The strategies and recommendations look to build on the



Cistri's reimagining of Singapore's iconic Orchard Road. Image courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore, Singapore Tourism Board & National Parks Board of Singapore.

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strengths of the area and provide a blueprint for the evolution of Orchard Road.

Putting people first

The study went to the heart of what makes a successful place: **people**. Cistri engaged with local retailers, visitors, landowners and government to capture their thoughts on what works and what could be enhanced in the future.

This was completed through a comprehensive study of consumer behaviour using a large intercept survey and an online survey. The team also analysed anonymised mobile phone data to develop



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a comprehensive understanding of visitors to Orchard Road, and how they move around the precinct. Cistri's economists used this data to assess the potential impacts of various changes.

Orchard Road's performance was also benchmarked against major international retail precincts and supported by research on international best practice that could be applied to Orchard Road.

A retail district for the future

The study provided a detailed and dynamic future strategy for the ongoing development of Orchard Road. The core recommendations of the study included:

- capitalise on Orchard Road's three-kilometre green corridor to provide a cool, leafy setting for visitors
- promote a stronger feeling of place and experiential opportunities by introducing pocket-sized parks, playgrounds and water play areas along Orchard Road
- include organised spaces and activity hubs for non-specific cultural and creative events to further enrich the unique liveliness of Orchard Road
- increase the amount and proximity of street crossings to encourage people to wander and discover the area.

The URA and STB will implement key elements of the study, such as introducing curated 'pop-up' entertainment along the public realm to invigorate Orchard Road.

'The most rewarding aspect of this project was to truly utilise all of the core Cistri skills in property economics, urban planning and design, and to work in partnership with world-class professionals in the Singapore government agencies,' says Hyland.

The Australian connection

While Australia's free trade agreements have not directly assisted Cistri to enter new markets, Hyland says there is no doubt they have further enhanced the reputation and position of Australia in the region.

'While Cistri is a Singapore-based company, we also highlight wherever appropriate our link to Australia through our parent company, Urbis. This has provided many opportunities for us,' he says.

Hyland adds that Cistri has received 'wonderful' support from the Australian High Commissions and Embassies in the region and invaluable support and engagement from Austrade.

'The support from Bruce Gosper, the High Commissioner to Singapore, has been invaluable in helping grow our business.

Similarly, the Austrade representatives in Singapore, supported by their Australian colleagues, have provided significant intelligence and guidance to opportunities in the region.'

About Austrade

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- › develop international markets
- › win productive foreign direct investment
- › promote international education
- › strengthen Australia's tourism industry
- › seek consular and passport services.

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