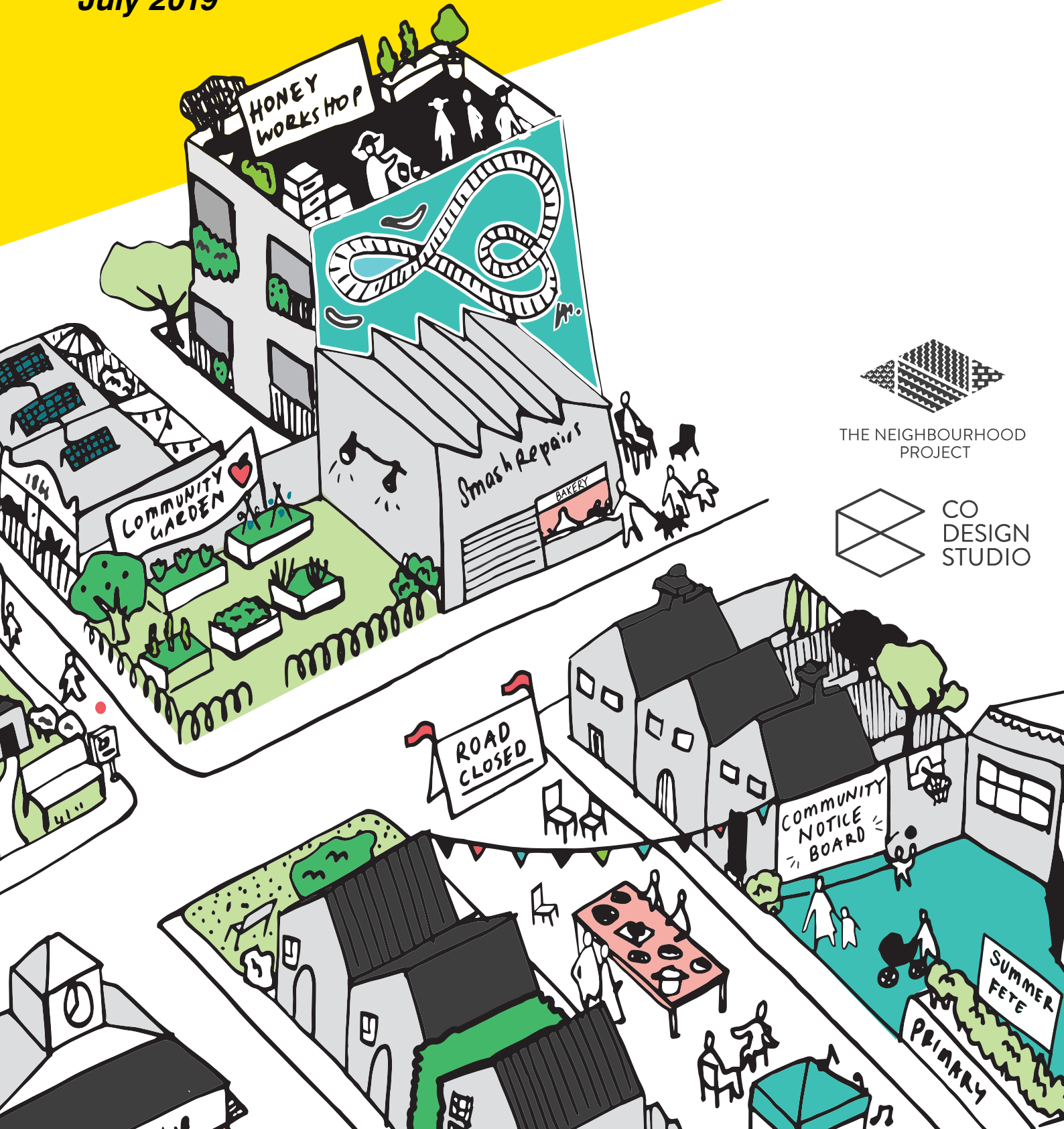


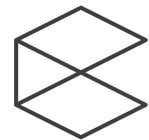
NEIGHBOURHOODS MADE BY NEIGHBOURS

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT ROUND 2 CASE STUDIES

July 2019



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PROJECT



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO



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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PROJECT



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO

CONTACT US

Melbourne

422a Brunswick St, Fitzroy, VIC 3065

Brisbane

109 Constance St, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

t + 61 3 9417 0020

e info@codesignstudio.com.au

FOREWORD

CoDesign Studio is proud to present The Neighbourhood Project: Round 2 Case Studies.

In 2015, CoDesign Studio set up The Neighbourhood Project (TNP) as a three year research project to measure and report on the effectiveness of community-led placemaking practices in action.

The practical TNP program incorporated a series of bootcamps, funding, resources, mentoring and expert support, as well as networking, to be a practicable means of answering this question:

How can we fast-track a systemic transition to community-led liveable cities?

With funding from the Myer Foundation, and network partnerships from Resilient Melbourne (part of The Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities initiative) and the Municipal Association of Victoria, the pilot was green lit to engage with community members to instigate the creation of a replicable model that can be used by both councils and communities across Australia.

Enclosed in these pages you will find details on five core projects that took place in Victoria, Australia in 2017-18 as part of the second round of The Neighbourhood Project. Each group applied CoDesign Studio’s award-winning methodology to implement locally-led placemaking trials in their area, with outstanding results.

These case studies demonstrate the significant and ongoing positive impacts that can be achieved through effective locally-led placemaking for communities, government, developers and industry; providing measurable improvements of place value that is social, cultural, environmental, and financial.

A sincere thank you to project partners, community-led placemakers, participating councils, volunteers, CoDesign Studio staff and all others who helped make Round 2 such a success.

We hope you enjoy the case studies and feel inspired to take action in your own community or neighbourhood!



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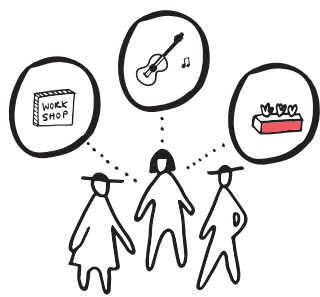


THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT METHODOLOGY

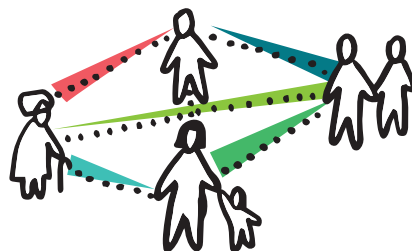
CoDesign Studio has a world-leading methodology to transform neighbourhoods in three critical areas of change: People, Process and Place.

Our experience, knowledge and tools are designed to make community-led placemaking easier for both authorities and communities, by removing roadblocks and common headaches. The premise behind the methodology is that short-term, temporary responses to local issues provides a catalyst for long term change.

The Neighbourhood Project is based on a tried and tested 6-step methodology. You start with an idea, create an enabling environment, mobilise community, locate resources, test it out, evaluate and scale. Each of the six participating teams underwent this process.



1. IDEATE TOGETHER



2. CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



6. EVALUATE & SCALE



3. MOBILISE COMMUNITY



4. LOCATE RESOURCES



5. TEST IT OUT

PEOPLE, PROCESS, PLACE

Great places are made when people are given the opportunity to influence the places they live. This can't happen unless those who govern places have processes in place to support communities taking action in their local places.

Neighbourhoods are made of more than just 'hardware' like buildings, roadways and facilities: these create the physical space, but social infrastructure such as events, arts and culture, programs, people, community services and local business make up the unique 'software' that defines a place.

The Neighbourhood Project recognises that collaborative citymaking requires innovation in three key areas: People, Process, Place. Many great projects only involve one or two of these ingredients, but involving all three drives more systemic change to how we create neighbourhoods and cities. These changes aren't easy, but they're worth it. These three principles plus a big dash of leadership and innovation, will help you identify and implement changes to make a difference.

PEOPLE

Community-led placemaking starts and ends with the people who share a neighbourhood. Without local leadership, ideas, enthusiasm, skills, and knowledge, it's a standard industry-delivered project. Many people don't even know it's possible to run local projects, let alone have the time or energy to figure out how to navigate a complicated system that constantly knocks them back. Giving people 'licence to act' and building local peoples' agency, networks, and capacity to deliver projects pays huge dividends.

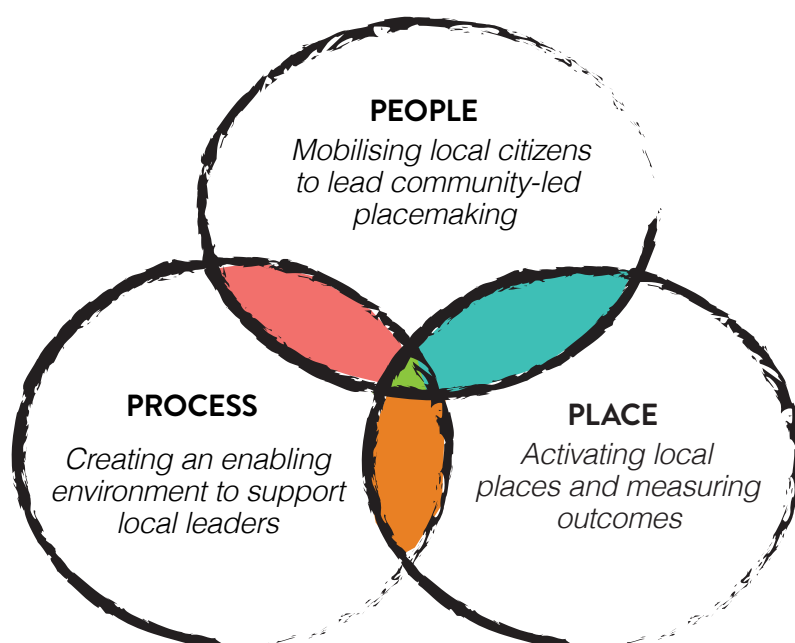
PROCESS

The processes that shape and control neighbourhoods have enormous impact on how they operate. They can limit community agency, or enhance it. Simple innovations, such as reviewing permitting processes or elevating the importance and understanding of placemaking within an organisation can have enormous impact on how communities benefit as well as making life more straight forward for authorities.

For councils, improving the process will make it easier and less risky to say yes to great community ideas. It unlocks community energy to tackle issues locally, helping council to deliver great neighbourhoods and social outcomes. It has been shown to improve staff morale and community trust in council.

PLACE

Places are filled with untapped potential! Next time you move through your neighbourhood, look carefully – there are many pockets of underused land that could work harder for you and your neighbours. One report estimates up to 30% of land in Australian cities is underutilised (The Economist, 2015). This represents significant opportunity to use these spaces for community benefit and share some of the load of creating great neighbourhoods. Activated spaces are proven to trigger or improve economic activity for local traders, property owners, developers and place managers alike.



FAWKNER FOOD BOWLS

AN UNDERUTILISED BOWLING GREEN IS TRANSFORMED INTO A COMMUNITY MARKET-GARDEN AND URBAN FOOD SOURCE

Goal: Revitalise an underutilised bowls green into a family-friendly market and garden where people can grow and share locally grown produce, interact with each other, attend workshops and learn about sustainable food growing.

When Kelly met Sally, an idea was sparked! The horticulturist and the community worker could see their local bowls club struggling to bring in new members. Meanwhile, their fast-growing northern suburb of Fawkner was transitioning from a predominantly industrial neighbourhood to a thriving and diverse community in desperate need of family-friendly space.

What if the community could revive the existing bowls club space to grow local produce and provide an opportunity for families to meet? Enabled by CoDesign Studio through Round 2 of The Neighbourhood Project, and with the bowls club in full support, a local working team of four was established. Fawkner Food Bowls was planned, workshopped, tested, and piloted; and today, it stands as a thriving market-garden and beloved local destination!

Now a welcoming community space, the project has achieved positive community connection and skill-sharing, and has directly contributed to boosting health through local food sources.

This project demonstrates how The Neighbourhood Project's methodology can be applied to take a space with previously zero public usability, and increase that use by 1500%. Quality of use was also enhanced, 86% of surveyed locals agreeing they are likely to spend more time at the site, with 100% feeling more involved in community.

The activation process of this project built a case for longer term financial investment, triggering capital works funding in excess of \$44,000. As well as unlocking funds, the pilot prompted a council-level internal process review, which has initiated a more open pathway for community project approval in the future. What's more, increased leadership confidence and placemaking skills were reported for both council and community members. The project enabled capacity-building so that government, community and industry will continue to engage people at the centre of process and place.

What started as two neighbours with one idea, has flourished into an incorporated community group of eight dedicated committee members, holding established partnerships with Moreland Council Food Network, Merri Health, Fawkner Bowls Club, The Green Grocer, and a range of local businesses.

“[I NOW] HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO APPROACH COUNCILS AND THAT THEY ARE ENCOURAGING OF THESE TYPES OF EVENTS OCCURRING. [THIS PROJECT HAS] HELPED ME UNDERSTAND HOW THESE KINDS OF THINGS ACTUALLY HAPPEN”

~ HILARY, PARTICIPANT

“A GREAT PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO GET TOGETHER. A PLACE TO DIG, MAKE COMPOST, PICK FRESH VEGGIES OR JUST SIT WITH THE KIDS. A LOVELY SPOT”

~ COMMUNITY MEMBER



PEOPLE

- > Of surveyed community members, 100% reported they met someone new at the site
- > 100% of people surveyed feel more involved in their community since the project

PROCESS

- > 75% of participating staff reported they did not have the skills to support this type of work coming into the project
- > 100% of participants indicated they already are, or will be highly likely to participate in another project in their community

PLACE

- > 1500% increase in space usage
- > 93% increase in neighbourhood pride

POINT COOK POP-UP

WIDE-SCALE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION CATALYSES SELF-SUSTAINING SHOPPING STRIP ACTIVATION

Goal: When Susan and Sara saw a pop-up park trial in nearby Yarraville, they knew it was an action their own town centre needed. The Point Cook Pop-up Park aimed to create a heart for the centre of Point Cook by closing down the street and turning it into a vibrant, fun and accessible place for the community.

One of Australia's fastest growing areas, Point Cook in Melbourne's outer west hosts a diverse population of over 50,000 people, and yet lacked a central community heart where people could meet and connect. The main street shopping centre was underutilised, split in two by a traffic-heavy road, and local trade was understandably sluggish, with Point Cook being Australia's largest consumer of online shopping at the time.

This changed in 2017 when local residents Susan and Sara envisioned the potential for greater social cohesion through a pop-up park in the pedestrian-unfriendly town centre.

Initially, the proposed solution was a permanent road closure and the creation of a new public open space. However, major changes can be difficult to pursue at a government level at first, the idea was knocked back at a council budget meeting. Wyndham City Council could contemplate such a measure, however without a practical trial, it was going to be immensely difficult to garner community support for such a bold move. Enter, The Neighbourhood Project. The duo's inspired idea was developed into a successful Round 2 application, and the Point Cook Pop-Up was born.

In effect, The Neighbourhood Project methodology enabled an existing community organisation, Point Cook Action Group, to forge a new pathway for effective multi-stakeholder engagement, which produced high-level community-led coordination between residents, council and local industry.

Their reach was widespread, engaging everyone from the local music school, cultural groups, traders, performers, artists, individuals, businesses and more, all championed by Wyndham City Council and Stockland shopping centre managers, to achieve a life-filled space day and night.

The result was a highly successful seven-week pop-up park installation with 150 events and activities serving an estimated 50,000 visitors. This triggered a reported 30-100% boost to local trading, with 63% of surveyed attendees stating they went on to spend money at the town centre.

A further \$200,000 was secured post-project through the Victorian Government's Pick My Project initiative to redeliver a refreshed project in 2019, delivering further benefits to the community and demonstrating that when there is investment and ownership from the community, the results are inspiring.

The rest is history - or rather, the future! The pilot identified council process methods which required revision for greater clarity and equitability. The Neighbourhood Project delivered an activation toolkit to enable new council teams to run community-led projects based on our tested framework for a locally-led approach to master planning and consultation.

Susan and Sara have since founded a not for profit around projects and initiatives that build social capital and local economy.

“WE HAVE HAD GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY WE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO COME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY”
~ LOCAL STORE OWNER

“TNP SHOWED US A WHOLE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON URBAN PLACEMAKING AND HOW WE CAN TRANSFORM UNDERUTILISED SPACES AROUND OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD INTO A THRIVING, INTERACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY HUB”
~ WANDA, PARTICIPANT



PEOPLE

- > Estimated 50,000 visitors over seven weeks
- > Of 500 surveyed attendees: 70% stated the park was their reason to visit the precinct

PROCESS

- > Permanent road closure trialled with insights given into social impact of proposed changes
- > The team is now running their second twelve week street closure project

PLACE

- > The Local economy saw a 15% increase in visits to the shopping strip
- > The number of people using the space increased from 50% to 80%

EDITHVALE COLLECTIVE

KICK-STARTING REVITALISATION IN A RUN-DOWN BEACHSIDE TOWN

Goal: Activate, beautify and engage with the built environment to return a sense of pride and belonging to an underutilised park and tired main street.

The Edithvale Collective is a dedicated group of traders and community members who share a love for their beachside town. Located in the outer south-east bayside of Melbourne, Edithvale had once boasted a vibrant shopping strip with thriving local reserve, yet in 2017, it was lacking a central place for connection, and had become run-down and vacant - bypassed by residents and visitors alike.

Jono and Jessie are two local traders who remember a flourishing Edithvale from their childhood. Seeing the disconnect between people and place, and feeling the impact on their local business' bottom line, they applied for The Neighbourhood Project and set about activating the built environment.

Empowered by the program, the pair recruited their customers and neighbours in order to pool their skills and kick-start momentum for revitalisation.

What started as a team of two, quickly grew to an organisation of eleven; eventually engaging over 700 people across a series of events, including a Morning Tea pop-up, Mural Art installation, Street Greening initiatives, and then a Pop-Up Park trial.

In their pursuit to generate ideas, engage with council, and highlight community-specific needs, the group uncovered significant place barriers that were both functional (disability access, signage, seating, bike parking, reasons to gather), as well as beautifying (plain space, vacant shops, empty garden boxes).

As a result, they set about targeted and effective initiatives: designing, up-cycling, building, painting and planting a colourful new identity for Edithvale main street and reserve - to rave reviews from their fellow locals! 90% of locals who visited the site reported an increase in neighbourhood pride, and local business saw a boost of 15% in visits to their stores.

Community members contributed more than 4,000 collective hours to the project. Unskilled labour is typically valued at \$25 per hour in Victoria. This represents over \$100,000 of collective value unlocked to improve the suburb for the benefit of fellow community members. Edithvale is a great example of a neighbourhood built by neighbours.

With two major infrastructure works - a Level Crossing Removal and updated Surf Life Saving club - well underway, and new families pouring into the area, the time is ripe for people to be put front and centre of placemaking initiatives; Kingston City Council agrees. They themselves have been enabled by this process, and thanks to the success of the Edithvale Collective, they are now applying the model across all five Level Crossing Removal sites in their council area.

“[IT’S HELPED] MEETING MORE LOCALS, GAINING THE CONFIDENCE TO ATTEMPT PROJECTS LIKE THIS, A SENSE OF PRIDE AT WHAT WE’VE ACCOMPLISHED, AND THE STRONG FRIENDSHIPS I’VE MADE WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP.”
~ EDITHVALE COLLECTIVE MEMBER

“I LOVE TO SEE PEOPLE PULLING TOGETHER AS PART OF A TEAM. SUCH POSITIVE ENERGY. GREAT TO SEE IN EDITHVALE.” ~ COMMUNITY MEMBER



PEOPLE

- > 700 people attended the mini events and pop-up launch with a 90% increase in neighbourhood pride
- > Significant volunteer recruitment with over 30 people assisting with events

PROCESS

- > Council staff reported much stronger connection between different department's deliverables since the project
- > Council reviewed their community grants program to include placemaking opportunities

PLACE

- > Local economy saw a 15% increase in visits to the shopping strip
- > The number of people using the space increased from 50% to 80%

LET'S MAKE A PARK, STRATHMORE

YOUTH-LED PLACEMAKING DELIVERS LOW-COST PROJECT WITH POWERFUL RESULTS

Goal: Turn an unsafe green space into a welcoming pop-up park: Made by young people, for young people to reconnect with each other and with nature in an otherwise concrete jungle.

The Neighbourhood Project demonstrates that with the right methodology and empowerment, locally-led placemaking works regardless of age and experience. This was exemplified by the youth-led Let's Make A Park initiative in Melbourne's north west suburb of Strathmore, where two university friends, Michael and Adam, saw a growing need for safe, youth-focussed public space and decided to do something about it.

In front of Strathmore train station, sat a solo tree in the middle of a roundabout - it was here that Michael and Adam saw an opportunity. An uninviting grass area, unsafe to access, and for the most part unusable, this was the only green space in the area; and desperately needed. Despite a rapidly expanding demographic of people under 25, the suburb had limited public space targeting young people, leading to effects of loneliness and disconnection within the concrete jungle.

Receiving a place in Round 2 of The Neighbourhood Project, the burgeoning leaders were empowered by the methodology and set aside any feelings of 'unconfidence'. They quickly enlisted a committee of eight members and a volunteer group of twenty, aged from 12 – 25 years. The program helped them to highlight their diverse and effective skills sets - from administration to graphic design - and taught them how to work together and with council.

Together, the mobilised community built a beautiful green space, which encourages passers-by to engage in watering the newly planted garden or take-five in the shade; they even have a little library full of books, built by the local Aberfeldie Men's Shed. The activated space utilised native plants and recycled goods to bring in the lowest costing project in the history of The Neighbourhood Project.

Importantly, the program opened up pathways beyond guerrilla gardening to ensure effective long-term change. Not only has this ensured longevity of their program, but the group has been engaged by the Moonee Valley City Council to actively contribute to its 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy, effectively putting locally-led placemaking on this council's agenda.

Moreover, one of the major challenges highlighted by the team was the lack of safe crossings in an otherwise high pedestrian traffic area. After demonstrating neighbourhood engagement - including the practical action of drawing desired walk lines on the road - VicRoads and the council took notice and are now developing a masterplan design for the entire intersection.

All of these outcomes are in addition to the group's original goal - delivering increased community connection (up 70%), and neighbourhood pride (up 88%), in what was previously an unwelcoming concrete jungle thoroughfare.

“THERE IS NOWHERE IN STRATHMORE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HANG THAT DOESN'T COST MONEY, OR EVEN ACCESS GREEN SPACE. WE WANTED TO BUILD A PARK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BY YOUNG PEOPLE”

~ STRATHMORE GROUP LEADER

“EVERYONE DESERVES GOOD QUALITY PUBLIC SPACES. EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH NATURE. EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD.”

~ PARTICIPANT



PEOPLE

- > 88% increase in neighbourhood pride, especially reported by young people
- > 70% stated they had met new people in the space

PROCESS

- > Youth led from start to finish providing valuable work experience, networking opportunities and overall strengthened sense of place in the area
- > A community-led placemaking approach was adopted into City of Moonee Valley's 20 Minute Neighbourhood pilot project

PLACE

- > Vic Roads and Council planning to implement pedestrian crossings
- > 77% of people surveyed stated they are more likely to spend time in the space

WILLIAMS LANDING COMMUNITY GARDEN

LOCALLY-LED METHODOLOGY GETS ADOPTED AS GOVERNMENT BEST PRACTICE

Goal: Trial whether a community garden would build community connection, and promote understanding of sustainable practices, on an old site dividing a newly developed area.

Williams Landing is a growing community of rapid urban expansion with high diversity in Melbourne's west - the local primary school alone has over 60 cultures represented. Such an area has substantial potential and a great need for social connection, yet faces a physical barrier in the form of the decommissioned 1890s Main Outfall Sewer, dividing the area.

When the Greening the Pipeline project piloted a local park on top of the heritage-listed pipeline in Williams Landing - as part of Melbourne Water's linear park master plan - two local residents spotted an adjacent stretch of vacant land and envisaged an opportunity to activate social connection.

Already members of the Williams Landing Residents Association, the locals participated in Round 2 of The Neighbourhood Project to transform the 80 metre by 20 metre patch into a green and sustainable community garden.

This project illustrated the benefits of creating a place where neighbours can meet around a physical task; this was shown to accelerate opportunities for meeting new people, as well as promoting interaction and cohesion.

Immediately the community members set to work, raising funds and even leaving a few pot plants on the site to see what would happen! Key focuses for this team were capacity-building and vision-guidance in order to harness their enthusiasm into workable plans and outcomes, as well as developing a council relationship.

The result is an ongoing vibrant space, with events and picnics for connection, as well as knowledge-sharing workshops to promote sustainable environmental practices. 100% of surveyed participants now spend more time in the area, and 86% agreed it was now a more friendly and welcoming space.

The most significant success of this project, is that the Council themselves felt enabled to engage with a locally-led approach. This triggered a new understanding of their skills and processes that could enable future projects.

To this end, The Neighbourhood Project methodology is being upheld as "best-practice" for the remainder for the Greening the Pipeline Master Plan. This is predicted to lead to increased local agency and greater community connection all the way along the 27-kilometre stretch of heritage-listed land.

“IT'S BRINGING THE TWO SIDES OF WILLIAMS LANDING TOGETHER, ACTIVATING THE PARK AND GIVING THE COMMUNITY A REASON TO COOPERATE” ~ PARTICIPANT

“CONFIRM YOUR OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND AUDIENCE EARLY AND CALL OUT DIFFERENCES. IF YOU AREN'T ABLE TO ALIGN THEM, CONSIDER SPLITTING INTO DIFFERENT INITIATIVES”
~ PARTICIPANT



PEOPLE

- > 100% surveyed stated they now spend more time in the area
- > Over two thirds of participants surveyed on site stated they had met new people since the community garden project

PROCESS

- > Members learnt the value of starting with a shared vision, aligning opinions, and developing key messages early to avoid delays to decision making and in later stages.

PLACE

- > 86% agreed it was a more friendly and welcoming space
- > Williams landing experienced a 95% increase in neighbourhood pride



WALK ‘N TALK, THOMASTOWN

Round 2 of The Neighbourhood Project had six participants, and as you may have noticed there are only five case studies in these pages. We promise we can count!

The sixth group was a heritage-focussed initiative: the Thomastown Walk ‘n Talk project. The initiative was led by The Thomastown Neighbourhood House; a vibrant centre of activity in the City of Whittlesea, Melbourne’s far north region. The organisation resides in a rapidly growing and diversifying community, and the area has been largely driven by migrant growth over the past 50 years. The team wanted to find a way to connect people with the local stories and history of their area, and worked with The Neighbourhood Project on a plan to activate an underutilised park area.

In March 2018, they ran an initial pop-up morning to test a historical walking trail around the new and old creek, which yielded some excellent first outcomes. Of surveyed attendees, 67% met new people, 84% agreed the space was more friendly, and 50% agreed they were likely to spend more time there.

However, the Thomastown project did not eventuate to full completion within The Neighbourhood Project program. While this means the case no longer sits within the scope of our studies presented in this booklet, their story and participation is still vital to the overall findings of the research.



IDEATE WITH CODESIGN STUDIO

Feeling inspired? Want to learn more about how you can lead a community-led placemaking project in your community? We are rolling out tools and resources to inspire, equip, and empower you to affect change in your region.

The first step to improving your local neighbourhood is inspiration! This is why we have developed our free Ideation Tool to unlock your next big idea.

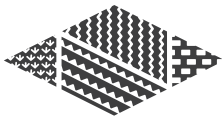
Using your responses to three interactive questions, the web-based app will match you with placemaking project ideas specifically calculated for you and your community.

Simply visit ideate.codesignstudio.com.au to play!

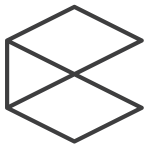
STAY IN TOUCH

To learn more about CoDesign Studio and how we work with councils, developers, and community-leaders, sign up to our newsletter at www.codesignstudio.com.au

We'd love to hear from you! You can reach us at info@codesignstudio.com.au



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PROJECT



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO

Melbourne

422a Brunswick St, Fitzroy, VIC 3065

Brisbane

109 Constance St, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

t + 61 3 9417 0020

e info@codesignstudio.com.au

