Welcome to the Spring issue of our newsletter

The good news is that the planning for the Melbourne workshop in November is well underway.

More details as they emerge. The sad news is that we have had to defer the Sydney workshop till next year.

News from around the network

Thanks to those who contributed to this segment.
Read more

Urban Renewal

A **report by the Australia-based consulting firm SGS Economics and Planning** presents 10 principles for urban renewal that take the public interest into account, based on case studies in cities like London, Sydney, Melbourne, Hamburg and New York. According to the survey, much of the criticisms of urban renewal projects are a result of actions undertaken without the perspective and contribution of affected communities.
Read more

Al Wakrah City joins the UNESCO GNLC

The city affirmed the importance of education in implementing the Qatar National Vision 2030 and sees the network as a great opportunity to share ideas and best practice with other cities around the world.
Read more

Inequality in Education

The role of education as a pathway out of disadvantage has featured strongly in policy rhetoric over time. Successive governments have introduced policies that have enabled greater access to higher education.
Read more

Funding opportunities for Community groups

Members of Parliament regularly receive requests directly or through their electorate offices about funding opportunities for community groups. This Issues Backgrounder is designed to assist in responding to these requests. Information about funding and grant opportunities are organised under the following headings:
Read more

Grants in Australia; research findings

This research study, drawing on the views of more than 1200 grant seekers, reveals a huge amount of effort is being wasted on abandoned grant applications, large organisations are increasingly scooping up the small grants too, and pressure is building on local government to shell out more.
Read more

Contributions of Public Libraries

This report has been produced by the ALIA Australian Public Library Alliance as an advocacy document to show what can be achieved through local government investment and library staff skills and creativity.
Read more

Strategies for Transforming Cities

Building inclusive, healthy, functional, and productive cities is perhaps the greatest challenge facing humanity today, and there are no easy solutions. A key part of the puzzle, though, lies right at the heart of the world's urban areas: its public spaces. Here are ten ways you can help strengthen the social fabric of your community and jump-start economic development by creating and sustaining healthy public spaces.
Read more

Libraries of the Future

In the age of the globalisation of everything – and the privatisation of everything else - libraries can and must change. It is seldom discussed that one of the great destroyers of books are actually libraries themselves, bearing cost cuts, and space limitations. But this process can be ameliorated by companies such as Better World Books that divert library books from landfill, finding new owners and funding literacy initiatives - you can even choose a carbon neutral footprint at the checkout.
Read more

Migrants in Regional Areas

Rather than being an unsettling force, international migrants are helping to provide stability to the regional Australian communities they settle in. A considerable number of new arrivals are also younger and have the potential to build families and work in these communities.
Read more

Regional patterns in Australia

The popular idea that the economic divide between Australia's cities and regions is getting bigger is a misconception. Beneath the oft-told 'tale of two Australias' is a more nuanced story.
Read more

Rural Libraries in the United States

This report explores nuances of rurality, details challenges rural libraries face in maximizing their community impacts and describes how existing collaborative regional and statewide efforts help rural libraries and their communities.
Read more

Connecting Australians

This survey captures the value of the arts to Australians through their attitudes, views about the impacts of the arts, and propensity to donate time or money to the arts.
Read more

Walking with Communities

Local governments can play a significant role in supporting communities in local areas that are disadvantaged and/or are going through a process of local renewal. A changing focus for local government in supporting communities through these renewal processes is to adopt a more facilitative and consultative role where programs and initiatives are informed by the ideas, perspectives and skills of local residents
Read more

Return to top

News and Ideas from around the Network

Inclusive Communities Grants and Community Resilience Grants

The Australian Government is inviting applications via an open competitive process to deliver services under Families and Communities Program /Strong and Resilient Communities from 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2021 for the following two grant rounds:

- *Strong and Resilient Communities - Inclusive Communities Grants* aim to increase the social and economic participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families within their communities and enhance their life-time wellbeing and sense of community belonging.
- *Strong and Resilient Communities - Community Resilience Grants* aim to build strong, resilient and cohesive communities to help make Australia more secure and harmonious as a whole. This will be done through providing grants designed to address issues in communities that show potential for or early signs of low social cohesion, and/or racial, religious or cultural intolerance.

Applications for both grant rounds close Wednesday 23 August, 2pm
Further information about eligibility and how to apply are available on GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub websites.

Skills for thriving in the New Work Order

The Foundation for Young Australians has released the fifth in its New Work Order series – The New Work Smarts. The research series analyses the implications of disruption to the world of work for young Australians. This report reveals young Australians will need to use foundation and technical skills in increasingly enterprising and creative ways, in diverse environments.

Homework Help- Tuesdays & Wednesdays at Epping Library

Assistance with the understanding and completion of homework in English and Mathematics by volunteer school teachers. Time slots are half an hour for individual assistance.

Location : Epping Library

Time : 3:30pm - 6:00pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Moovers and Groovers (Ages 1-5 years) Mandura Library

Location: Manunda Library Cairns

Contact: BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: Email f5f@cairns.qld.gov.au

Link: Read more

Enjoy delightful songs, dances and musical activities that focus on singing, moving and playing. Your child will love exploring different sounds, playing percussion instruments and interacting with colourful props. Movers and Groovers is an interactive 45 minute class for parents and children aged 1 – 5 years.

Wiggly Worms Music is part of the first5forever program, and is all about helping little brains

From Wyong Library

Kings of war

"The proof of battle is action.... No time for speeches now, it's time to fight!" - Homer, The Iliad

Kings of War is a tabletop war game where two groups of teams compete against each other with armies of miniatures or take control of heroes on perilous adventures.

Whether just to watch, or join in come along to our fun and social monthly sessions at Lake Haven or Tuggerah Libraries. Call 4350 1570 or 4350 1560 for more information.

From Sutherland Shire Library

Taming Technology is a series of lectures aiming to demystify technology topics for older people.

If you've heard people referring to 'The Cloud' but don't know what they mean come along and find out what it's all about. From iCloud to Dropbox and Gmail. Discover how to reap the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of cloud computing.

More Information

Enquiries can be directed to Cronulla Library on
phone 02 9523 4980
email library@ssc.nsw.gov.au

Smile! Your attendance at events supported by Sutherland Shire Libraries may be digitally recorded through photographs and/or video recordings. Images may be used on council's websites, publications, social media or by newspapers. If you do not wish your image to be published, please notify staff before the event.

Return to top

10 Principals for Urban Renewal

A **report by the Australia-based consulting firm SGS Economics and Planning** presents 10 principles for urban renewal that take the public interest into account, based on case studies in cities like London, Sydney, Melbourne, Hamburg and New York. According to the survey, much of the criticisms of urban renewal projects are a result of actions undertaken without the perspective and contribution of affected communities. Finding ways to include more participation could improve success rates. The report focuses mainly on renewal; however, the principles also apply to revitalization, requalification and rehabilitation:

1. Create "Shared Value"

Urban areas do not belong to a single group or individual but should offer value to many actors. All those who are part of the broader community as a whole – from workers and tourists, children and students, to the underserved and investors – should benefit from urban renewal. "Ultimately, the 'communities' for whom the value is created to share, should be those with long-term interests, not transient stakeholders with a primary focus on value extraction and repatriation," write the authors.

2. Plan With Input From All

Delivering this shared value requires engaging with communities. Planners bringing an intervention into an existing space should share their vision and include people in the planning from day one, or risk it being rejected. Decision-making techniques such as cost-benefit analysis should be explained and employed to also promote "non-financial values," helping communities feel a sense of ownership. The researchers also suggest the creation of a common platform where information about the process and the progress of the project can be shared transparently.

Superkilen Park in the Nørrebro neighborhood of Copenhagen. The work brings together elements from many of the more than 50 nationalities represented in the area. Photo from Bjarke Ingels Group/Flickr

3. Build a Long-Term Vision

In any extensive process of urban renewal, the initial goals of the project may change over time. Even so, a long-term vision should be locked in and changes for the sake of short-terms gains resisted, with flexibility growing as the timeline extends further into the future. "A commitment to the public interest and shared value needs an inclusive approach, and future development stages should have the flexibility to be able to adapt to market and social changes," write the authors.

4. Agree on Non-Negotiables

Non-negotiation issues should be clearly understood by all stakeholders. These could include respecting existing lease terms, fixed quotas for affordable housing or protecting open spaces. The rights of renters and leaseholders should be guaranteed and stakeholders agree to a common set of design standards.

5. Agree on a Financial Profile

Studying how the space to be renovated is expected to yield from a financial perspective not only serves to set parameters for the project's development options but is also critical to whether the public's interests will be met. There are many options available to both provide returns on government investment in underserved areas but also safeguard communities from potential negative side effects, like rising taxes, and encourage a handoff to private developers in the future.

6. Establish Clear Development Goals

The planning process should develop and affirm clear objectives, not just desired outcomes. The best goals will be specific and measurable, and anticipate the physical, economic and social results of the project.

High Line Park in Manhattan is built over a disused elevated rail line. Photo by Mike Peel/Wikimedia

7. Establish Options to Achieve Development Goals

There are often multiple options for achieving the same development goals and they should be compared to one another as well as to baseline scenarios of what might happen without any intervention. The process will create "a much clearer picture of marginal benefits and costs associated with any particular development option," the report explains.

8. Incorporate a Sense of "Localness"

Local characteristics and peculiarities should be captured and incorporated into the new project. These details may come from local standards, services offered in the region, the environment, the climate or other socio-cultural specificities. Finding ways to assimilate a sense of the local into the project will help people identify with it, separate it from other similar projects and generate community acceptance.

9. Evaluate Options With the Goal of Maximizing Net Community Benefits

Cost-benefit analyses are often viewed with skepticism, but the report notes there are well-documented techniques that allow for the inclusion of things communities care about most, like open space, social capital and heritage. Finding ways to incorporate them into a cost-benefit analysis is important for avoiding the scenario where "financial considerations or otherwise vague community aims end up dominating choices between options."

10. Align the Procurement Model With the Planning Vision

Finally, the governance, implementation and contracting trajectories – how the project is actually carried out – should align with the unique vision laid out during the planning phase. Procurement targets should bespoke, rather than using "off-the-shelf" options. This may mean a greater role for the government as a developer in the early stages before handing off to private sector developers later.

"These principles are not locked in place, but are guiding principles to ensure urban renewal benefits the widest community possible," write the authors. "The renewal of strategically important urban sites must have the needs of communities, both social and commercial, at its core."

Al Wakrah City joins the UNESCO GNLC

Posted August 7, 2017 - 12:45 by **Leone Wheeler**

The Gulf Times (7 August, 2017) reported that Al Wakrah City in the State of Qatar has joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

The city affirmed the importance of education in implementing the Qatar National Vision 2030 and sees the network as a great opportunity to share ideas and best practice with other cities around the world.

The contact person for the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is Professor Rupert Maclean, UNESCO Chair on TVET and Sustainable Development, Coordinator UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre for Doha and QAPCO Professional Chair in Vocational Studies at the College of North Atlantic, Qatar (CNA-Q).

Email: rupert.maclean@cna-qatar.edu.qa

[Return to top](#)

Educate Australia fair?
Education inequality in Australia

26 Jun 2017
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre
CREATORS
Rebecca Cassells, Michael Dockery, Alan Duncan, Grace Gao, Richard Seymour

Description

The role of education as a pathway out of disadvantage has featured strongly in policy rhetoric over time. Successive governments have introduced policies that have enabled greater access to higher education. Yet there remains concern that the educational opportunities for our children are unevenly distributed across locality, with something of a 'postcode lottery' within major population centres in terms of educational outcomes and achievements.

The analysis in the report makes it clear that many of today's young children will not receive a 'fair go' in accessing education opportunities, for no other reasons than family background, demographic characteristics and geography.

A child from a low socio-economic background is up to three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable by the time she or he starts primary school. An Indigenous child is 40% less likely to finish high school and 60% less likely to go to university compared with a non-Indigenous child. A child born in remote Australia is only a third as likely to go to university as a child born in a major city.

Progress has been made in a number of areas, with the fruits of the education reforms introduced during the Rudd/Gillard governments being realised in a number of areas. More children than before are now accessing pre-school, with positive outcomes flowing on to child development and literacy and numeracy outcomes.

However, the new BCEC Educational Disadvantage Index is a sobering reminder of the level of inequality that still exists in our community, with many children falling far behind in educational access, performance and outcomes.

Compared to the most advantaged localities in Australia, children in those fifty areas at greatest educational disadvantage are, on average, half as likely to be enrolled in pre-school at age 4, half as likely to attend pre-school for 15 hours or more, and seven times as likely to be vulnerable on two or more developmental domains. Non-attendance rates are nearly five times as high, at 22%, of areas at greatest disadvantage compared to areas of least disadvantage, and nearly half of young people in areas of greatest need are neither learning nor earning.

Our findings also show that funding is largely being distributed relative to need, but what is absent from the current debate on needs-based funding is a clear understanding of the extent to which the funding changes being proposed under Gonski 2.0 would lead to improvements in educational outcomes.

The findings in this report also draw out points in the education journey where issues emerge and where we need better policy responses. This includes greater emphasis on the early years, innovative solutions to the problematic transition from primary to high school especially for Indigenous children, and bespoke programs that target a number of equity groups that are not receiving the same outcomes as other children and young people.

It is also clear that education reform will need to go beyond funding in order to address the complex barriers that impede our most vulnerable children over the course of their education journey.

[Return to top](#)

Funding opportunities for Community Groups   July 2017

Description

Members of Parliament regularly receive requests directly or through their electorate offices about funding opportunities for community groups. This Issues Backgrounder is designed to assist in responding to these requests. Information about funding and grant opportunities are organised under the following headings:

1. Government gateways to community grants;
2. Non-government gateways to community grants;
3. Grants in selected subject areas;
4. Selected NGO and Private Sector Funding Sources; and
5. Selected Local Government funding sources.

Link to Resource - hosted externally
Funding opportunities for community groups July 2017 (link is external), Funding opportunities for community groups July 2017 (link is external)

Return to top

Grants in Australia.

Annual research findings for Australian grantseekers and grantmakers, July 2017

28 Jul 2017
Our Community
CREATORS
Our Community

Grants in Australia (link is external)

Description

This research study, drawing on the views of more than 1200 grantseekers, reveals a huge amount of effort is being wasted on abandoned grant applications, large organisations are increasingly scooping up the small grants too, and pressure is building on local government to shell out more.

Other key findings include:

- corporate grants haven't recovered since the global finance crisis
- far fewer applications from sports/recreation groups
- many funders are still to lift their game with decent feedback to failed applicants
- more grants recipients are being forced to pay for their own evaluation
- some habits of successful grantseekers
- trends in the shift to online-only applications

Return to top

How public libraries contribute to the STEM agenda 2017

24 May 2017

[Australian Library and Information Association](#)

This report has been produced by the ALIA Australian Public Library Alliance as an advocacy document to show what can be achieved through local government investment and library staff skills and creativity.

Description

In March 2017, more than 100 leaders from public libraries across Australia, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe and the Americas, gathered at the State Library of New South Wales (NSW) for STEAM into Sydney.

STEAM into Sydney celebrated the innovative ways that public libraries are supporting the science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics agenda. Presentations were ambitious, inspirational and demonstrated the kind of forward-thinking that has made public libraries such successful centres for lifelong learning in their communities. There were excellent examples of initiatives in Australia, as well as from around the world.

[How public libraries contribute to the STEM agenda 2017](#) 2.68 MB

[Return to top](#)

Strategies for Transforming Cities and Public Spaces Through Placemaking

*For the full report, download UN-Habitat's "Placemaking and the Future of Cities" here.

> *What defines the character of a city is its public space, not its private space.*
>
> *-Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN Habitat*

Building inclusive, healthy, functional, and productive cities is perhaps the greatest challenge facing humanity today, and there are no easy solutions. A key part of the puzzle, though, lies right at the heart of the world's urban areas: its public spaces. Here are ten ways you can help strengthen the social fabric of your community and jump-start economic development by creating and sustaining healthy public spaces.

1. IMPROVE STREETS AS PLACES

Placemaking is based on a simple principle: if you plan cities for cars and traffic, you will get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you will get people and places. More traffic and greater road capacity are not the inevitable results of growth. They are products of very deliberate choices made to shape our communities to accommodate the private automobile. We have the ability to make different choices — starting with the decision to design our streets as comfortable and safe places for everyone — for pedestrians and bicyclists *as well as* drivers.

A plaza at the base of a Metrocable pylon in Medellín.

The Metrocable in the Colombian city of Medellín is a good example of transportation that enhances street life and contributes to social cohesion. The aerial tram system serves the neighborhoods on the city's hillsides, formerly some of Medellín's most crime-ridden and gang-infested areas. Residents of the traditionally marginalized settlements now have quick access to the city's main subway system — a connection that used to entail a daunting walk up and down hundreds of steps or a lengthy minibus ride.

When constructing the Metrocable, the city took the opportunity to invest in improving the long-neglected hillside barrios. Plazas at the bases of the pylons supporting the tram have become lively neighborhood centers with food vendors, seating, and landscaping. Parks, sporting fields, and libraries have been constructed nearby. New schools were built, and older ones improved. Pedestrian walkways link parts of the city that used to be controlled by rival gangs, and murder rates have plummeted.

2. CREATE SQUARES AND PARKS AS MULTI-USE DESTINATIONS

A great urban park is a safety valve for the city, in which people living in dense urban areas can find breathing room. While a poorly planned or maintained park can a place of fear and danger, thus repelling people, business, and investment. A great square, on the other hand, can be a source of civic pride, and it can help citizens feel better connected to their cultural and political institutions.

Despite being anchored by one of the busiest train and bus stations in the city, the Las Condes plazas and commercial galleries in Santiago, Chile had become a place to pass through as quickly as possible. After the galleries were built in the 1980s, they steadily lost customers to the city's shopping malls and became desolate — a problem that was compounded by a surfeit of entrances which made the square appealing to muggers.

The Las Condes plaza area following management and public space improvements.

Marcello Corbo and Rodrigo Jullian, co-founders of Urban Development, saw this well-located space as a major opportunity for both the city and their company. The project they launched to revitalize retail by improving the public space was exceptionally collaborative. The municipality of Las Condes created new plazas and taxi stops; the Ministry of Transportation modified the street design and created new bus stops; the Metro leased the galleries to Urban Development; and Urban Development found the vendors, rented out the stalls, reduced and improved access points, and created a private team to manage the site.

In 2005, Mr. Corbo invited PPS to Santiago to hold a workshop with the design team and city partners. PPS developed a series of design and management recommendations and principles that included letting in more light to make the underpasses feel safer and more welcoming, changing the park design into a plaza surface to promote more public uses, and replacing the barriers between businesses with glass panels to create a feeling of continuity and openness. The resulting effect was akin to an old-fashioned marketplace, blurring the distinction between inside and out, and between private and public.

Much of the project's success, however, had little to do with the physical renovation, and more to do with the way Urban Development developed its relationship with the community, first during the planning stage and then through creative outreach strategies since the galleries opened in March 2008.

3. BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIES THROUGH MARKETS

An informal public markets economy thrives in many cities around the world, but often chaotically — clogging streets, competing unfairly with local businesses, and limiting the hope of upward mobility to marginalized populations. Markets can, however, provide a structure and a regulatory framework that helps grow small businesses, preserve food safety, and make a more attractive destination for shoppers.

Warwick Junction Market in Durban, South Africa. | Photo credit Dennis Gilbert

The Traditional Medicine and Herb Market in the Warwick Junction neighborhood of Durban, South Africa, was once a ramshackle and dangerous place. Vendors had to sell their goods in

the open air from the pavement, and sleep on the sidewalk under a highway with their wares to protect them from thieves. Wastewater from the preparation of the local delicacy of bovine heads was drained into the municipal stormwater system, attracting vermin and clogging pipes.

A redesign has changed all that. The local municipality has developed a comprehensive approach for improving local infrastructure, and the market is one of its premier projects. Government workers went to the traders and found out what they needed and wanted, then repurposed empty space in the market's neighborhood to create enclosed stalls for vendors and locked storage spaces. Pedestrian routes have been widened, allowing easier movement for shoppers. The vendors preparing bovine heads are now equipped with sanitary cooking facilities. The result of all these improvements, informed by the very people who were to use them, has been an economic blossoming, a safer marker, and a dramatic increase in opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

4. DESIGN BUILDINGS TO SUPPORT PLACES

In many cities new buildings are going up at an unprecedented pace. Massive gated communities are being built for the middle class, exacerbating the gulf between rich and poor. Traditional neighborhoods are being replaced by towering skyscrapers and civic institutions like schools and libraries often end up looking like fortresses. This trend has spread around the globe and it is damaging the fabric of cities everywhere.

Melbourne, Australia has been bucking this trend. The city sports an impressive municipal office building, Council House 2, which richly enhances the surrounding neighborhood. This is a bold, beautiful architectural accomplishment that earned Australia's six-star Green Star rating in 2005, using innovative "biomimicry" technologies that mirror natural systems to save energy and water.

But Council House 2 is more than just a showcase "green" building. At the ground level, it is dynamically connected to the surrounding neighborhood, fostering street life and creating a strong sense of place. The area around the building is enhanced by shade structures and other amenities, making this a comfortable place and an integral part of the community. It shows that "iconic" architecture need not be divorced from the urban fabric, but can exist in constant dialogue with the people and places around it.

5. LINK A PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA TO A PUBLIC SPACE AGENDA

A healthy city is one in which citizens have access to basic infrastructure such as clean water, sanitation, and sewage treatment. It is also a place where healthy food is available to everyone, where women and children can walk without fear, and where people can enjoy parks, squares, and other public spaces in safety and comfort.

Community participation in Detroit.

Central Detroit is a neighborhood with a lot of basic needs. Many residents are out of work. Many don't own cars. And the public transit system is utterly inadequate. Safety and security are a major concern. The city can't even keep up with repairing broken streetlights. A lot of houses are abandoned and occupied by squatters.

In 2011, PPS helped organize a very successful harvest festival outside the Central Detroit produce market Peaches & Greens that was undertaken with key support from the Kresge Foundation and the Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation. Even though Peaches & Greens is flanked by vacant lots, the festival revealed how it can be a great place for the neighborhood to come together. And many local residents expressed an eagerness to take part in more community building events.

6. REINVENT COMMUNITY PLANNING

The starting point in developing a concept for any public space agenda should be to identify the talents and resources within the community — people who can provide historical perspective, insights into how the area functions, and an understanding of what is truly meaningful to the local people. Tapping this information at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of ownership in the project that can ensure its success for years to come.

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI), an innovative international partnership, transforms impoverished communities by collaborating with residents to create low-cost, high-impact built environments that improve their daily lives. KDI believes that participatory planning and design are key to sustainable development. A Public Space Project they launched in 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya is a good model for how Placemakers can build on the ideas of local residents, enhance them with technical knowledge and design innovation, and empower communities to advocate for themselves.

Opening celebration of the improved river area in Kibera, Nairobi.

The project was in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Nairobi. The site lies along a river running through the settlement that is used for waste disposal throughout the year and floods during the rainy season, when poor drainage along the access roads hinders the access of nearby residents to their hillside homes. The river is a play area for children, a laundry area for families, and a gathering area for residents.

The KDI Kenya team conducted numerous community workshops with residents and the community-partners to prioritize needs, create design solutions, and explore micro-enterprise opportunities at the site. The resulting project design includes: a poultry farm, an improved

drainage channel, flood control, a community center to house a school and health clinic, kiosks, and a playground constructed from locally sourced lumber and recycled metal.

7. UTILIZE THE POWER OF 10+

What if a neighborhood had 10 places that were that good? The area would then achieve a critical mass — a series of destinations where residents and tourists alike would become immersed in the life of the city for days at a time. Taking the next step, what if a city could boast 10 such neighborhoods? Then every resident would have access to outstanding public spaces within walking distance of their homes. That's the sort of goal we need to set for all cities if we are serious about enhancing and revitalizing urban life.

Community placemaking at work in Nairobi.

The informal settlement of Kibera, in Nairobi, is home to roughly 200,000 people. It is a place where public spaces are generally overlooked. But there are exceptions, and the Silanga Sports Field is one of them. The soccer field was formerly run down, polluted, and a magnet for crime. But a local group called the Kilimanjaro Initiative has been working steadily over the last few years to upgrade it. They have leveled the field so that it is fit to play on, improved the drainage system, and started programming the space with concerts and other events. As a result, the field has been transformed from a barren, unsafe waste space and is now a magnet for the community.

In order to make the space even more attractive and safe for the Kibera's residents, PPS recently met on site with local residents and City Council Staff and brainstormed about how to create synergy and connections among the facilities already located here including a primary school, a public toilet, a community garden, a playground, river, a pottery studio, a meeting hall,

and a resource center. The focus became less on the sports field and more on how to maximize the use and potential of all of the resources at Silanga Sports Field, to make it a true destination for the neighborhood, creating a ripple of positive effects. This is the Power of 10 at work.

8. CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SPACE AGENDA

A comprehensive approach to developing, enhancing, and managing public space requires both "top-down" and "bottom-up" strategies. Leadership at the highest level of city is essential if transformation of public spaces is to occur on a large scale. A "bottom-up" grassroots organizing strategy is also integral to the strategy.

The first step in developing a citywide agenda is to make an honest assessment of how existing public spaces are performing — or under-performing. Communities should make note of a schoolyard that often sits empty, for instance, a lifeless plaza, a dilapidated park. The assessment should include every neighborhood and involve the people who live there as well as other key stakeholders.

With this inventory, city leadership can develop a bold consensus vision. For example, in New York, the city set out a goal to carve a new "public plaza" out of existing street space in each of the 59 community board districts. Such a district-by-district approach encourages residents and officials to look at their neighborhoods anew. Any public space agenda must also be tied to new development projects. Governments should take advantage of growing real estate markets in cities by creating incentives for developers to preserve and enhance the public environments that are so greatly affected by their projects. A small tax on new development, such as one recently levied successfully in Chicago, could fund many of the improvements identified in the process of creating a public space agenda.

The Colombian city of Bogotá is one where the divide between rich and poor had long been in-grained in the city's fabric, with many parts of the city suffering from economic and geographic isolation. Over the last 20 years, the city's leaders, notably former mayor Enrique Peñalosa, have embarked on a citywide campaign to use public space and transportation systems to bridge the social divide and create opportunity for all of Bogotá's citizens.

Ciclovía in Bogotá takes over the streets once a week.

Central to the campaign has been the development of the TransMilenio bus rapid transit system, which provides fast, efficient, and reasonably priced public transportation to large areas of the city. Some 1.4 million people ride the system daily, and when it is completed there will be 388 kilometers of route, achieved at a fraction of the cost that an underground metro system would have cost.

Another key aspect of the holistic approach that Bogotá has taken to its transformation is the Ciclovía. Each Sunday and on holidays, for several hours, most streets of the city are closed to cars so that people can enjoy biking, walking, and various recreational activities in the streets. These events have helped to raise awareness of the negative impact that car traffic has on people's lives, and have been a key part of the city's ongoing effort to regain street space for pedestrians and bicycles. City leaders cracked down on sidewalk parking; pedestrianized Jimenez Avenue, the main street downtown; and introduced a system that restricted car use during rush hour.

Peñalosa also led an effort to increase green space and playing fields in neighborhoods around Bogotá. The result has been a decrease in crime and gang activity. Many citizens who were formerly without recreational options can now enjoy safe, healthy outdoor activities that are inclusive of women and children.

9. START SMALL AND EXPERIMENT, USING A "LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER" APPROACH

Public spaces are complex, organic things. You can't expect to do everything right initially. The best spaces evolve by experimenting with short-term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years. Places to sit, a sidewalk café, a community event, a garden, painted crosswalks are all examples of "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" changes that capitalize on the

creative energy of the community to efficiently generate new uses and revenue for places in transition. If one thing doesn't work, try something else. If you have a success, build on it.

Gyrumi, Armenia was struck hard by a 1988 earthquake that left 25,000 people dead and 100,000 more without homes. In 2001, Aram Khachadurian, former PPS Chief Operating Officer, joined the Urban Institute to help build thousands of housing units for the displaced families, who were still living in temporary shelters in public spaces all over the city. With the success of this rehousing program, the central square was again available to the public, opening the way to plan its revitalization.

Gyrumi, Armenia, the square full of people for the first time.

In July 2003, a grant from the *Academy for Educational Development* (AED) brought PPS to Gyumri to facilitate the first effort since the earthquake to recapture some of the civic life that had characterized this cultural center. Local project partners included the Urban Institute and a local steering committee of architects, planners, NGOs and city officials. Despite fears that this public involvement effort would fail because, in Armenia's 6,000-year history, participation has been virtually unknown, more than 70 people attended a daylong Placemaking workshop. The enthusiasm immediately sparked a cross-sector collaboration in the city on an unprecedented scale.

The result was the "New Gyumri Festival and Placemaking EXPO," which occurred just two months later. The people of Gyumri saw their square full of people (estimated at 35,000) for the first time in anyone's memory. The lengthy list of events and improvements included: a flower market, which has since become a regular bi-weekly event; a roller-skating rink with new asphalt surfacing; a giant chessboard made out of plywood by the local chess club; seven cafés; night lighting; striping to direct traffic correctly; an installation of new street furniture;

an art fair; performances, dances, wrestling matches, gymnastics, and children's programs; flower gardens planted by the church; new banners and street signage; and daily TV news broadcasts. This catalytic event has been followed by more events on the square, and is part of a larger civic resurgence.

10. RESTRUCTURE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SPACES

Unfortunately, government is generally not set up to support public spaces and Placemaking. In fact, the structure of departments and the processes they require sometimes impede the creation of successful public spaces. Transportation departments view their mission as moving traffic; parks departments are there to create and manage green space; community development agencies are focused on development of projects, not the spaces in between them.

If the ultimate goal of governance, urban institutions, and development is to make places, communities, and regions more prosperous, civilized, and attractive for all people, then government processes need to change to reflect that goal. This requires the development of consensus-building, city consultation processes, and institutional reform, all of which enhance citizenship and inclusion. In cities where Placemaking has taken hold, local government is often not directly involved, for example, in implementation, but relies on community development organizations, business improvement districts, and neighborhood partnerships to take the lead in making community change happen.

Mexico provides a positive example of how that can occur. Since 2007, SEDESOL, the Mexican Ministry of Social Development, has "rescued" 42,000 public spaces across the country by promoting the realization of social actions and the execution of physical works to restore community meeting places, social interaction, and everyday recreation in insecure and marginalized urban areas. The goals of the Rescue of Public Spaces program are to help improve the quality of life and safety through the revitalization of public spaces in cities and metropolitan areas across Mexico, thereby promoting healthy living.

Furthermore, the initiative is intended to link urban development to social development; promote community organization and participation; increase community safety and prevent antisocial activity; and help strengthen the sense of community belonging, social cohesion, and equitable relationships among genders.

For the full report on which this list is based, download UN-Habitat's "Placemaking and the Future of Cities" here.

Return to top

Libraries of the Future

In the age of the globalisation of everything – and the privatisation of everything else - libraries can and must change. It is seldom discussed that one of the great destroyers of books are actually libraries themselves, bearing cost cuts, and space limitations. But this process can be ameliorated by companies such as [Better World Books](#) that divert library books from landfill, finding new owners and funding literacy initiatives - you can even choose a carbon neutral footprint at the checkout.

Libraries, by which I mean public libraries that are free, open and accessible, will not become extinct, even though they face new competition from the rise of private libraries and the Internet. Libraries will not turn into mausoleums and reliquaries, because they serve a civic function that extends well beyond the books they hold.

Libraries can and must change. Quiet study areas are being reduced, replaced not only by computer rooms but also by social areas that facilitate group discussions and convivial reading. There will be more books transferred to offsite storage, but there will also be more ingenious methods of getting these books back to readers.

There will be an emphasis on opening rare books collections to greater numbers of readers. There is and must be greater investment in digital collections. Your mobile phone will no longer be switched off in the library, but may well be the very thing that brings the library to you in your armchair.

The much heralded "death of the book" has nothing to do with the death of reading or writing. It is about a radical transformation in reading practices. New technologies are taking books and libraries to places that are, as yet, unimaginable. Where there will undoubtedly be new wonders to catalogue.

An excerpt from "why libraries can and must **change**" by Camilla Nelson, University of Notre Dame Australia

Migrants are stopping regional areas from shrinking

July 11, 2017 6.08am AEST •Updated July 11, 2017 9.18am AEST
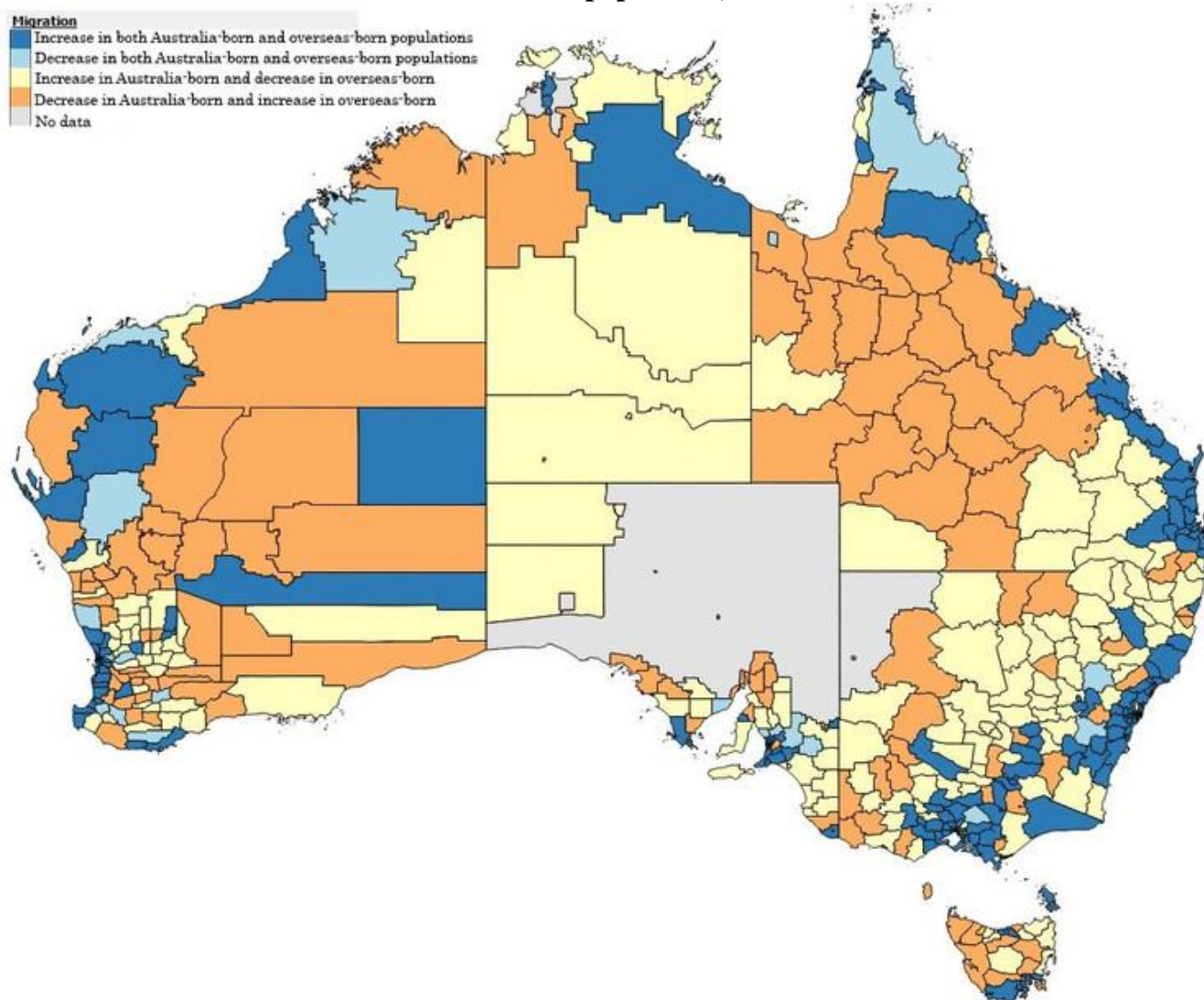Emily Longstaff

Rather than being an unsettling force, international migrants are helping to provide stability to the regional Australian communities they settle in. A considerable number of new arrivals are also younger and have the potential to build families and work in these communities.

Research with the Regional Australia Institute, examining the latest 2016 Census data, found 151 regional local government areas were helping to offset declining population in regional areas by attracting international migrants.

We can see that, for many small towns, the overseas-born are the only source of population growth. A majority of these places rely on primary industry for economic viability. Although predominantly rural, these places are not in the most remote parts of Australia.

Growth of Australian-born and overseas-born population, 2011-16

Of the 550 local government areas we reviewed, 175 regional areas increased their population, while 246 did not; 151 increased their overseas-born and decreased their Australian-born population. Only 20 areas increased in Australian-born population and decreased in overseas-born population.

We also found that 128 regional areas increased both Australian-born and overseas-born population. Another 116 regional areas decreased in both Australian-born and overseas-born population.

Darwin is one example of where international migration has helped counter population decline. At the 2011 Census, Darwin had 45,442 people recorded as born in Australia and 19,455 born elsewhere. By 2016, the number of Australian-born locals had reduced to 44,953 and the number of overseas-born had increased to 24,961.

Without this increase in overseas-born residents, the Darwin population would have decreased. The local economy would likely have suffered as a result.

The problem of shrinking regional towns

Ever since the influx of immigrants following the second world war, the settlement of international migrants has been [overwhelmingly focused on large metropolitan centres](). This has been especially evident for recently arrived immigrants and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Migrants perceive metropolitan areas as presenting a higher likelihood of [finding compatriots]() and better access to employment, as well as [education and health services](). Large cities have therefore been considered the most appealing settlement locations, with Sydney and Melbourne [the most popular]().

If settlement of international migrants had been proportional to the overall population distribution in Australia, an additional 125,000 migrants would have settled in regional Australia between 2006 and 2011.

In a concerted effort to promote the social and economic viability of regional communities, in 2004 the federal government [started a campaign to increase migrant settlement]() throughout different areas of the country.

Regional settlement of migrants has since been encouraged across levels of government as a ["win-win scenario"]() for new arrivals and host communities alike.

What international migrants bring

In the past decade, there has been a particular focus on [secondary migration]() to regional areas. That is, relocating international arrivals from metropolitan areas to regional ones.

Proactive community-business partnerships and local government initiatives have propelled this process. For example, in the Victorian town of [Nhill](), the local arm of the poultry production company Luv-a-Duck worked with settlement service provider AMES Australia to help more than 160 Karen refugees find work in the area between 2010 and 2015.

In another town, [Dalwallinu](#) in Western Australia, the population was in decline and local infrastructure was deemed underused. In response, the local council has worked closely with residents since 2010 to attract skilled migrants.

Notwithstanding the challenges involved in attraction and retention, international migrants remain a vital asset for building regional economies and communities. They help stem skilled labour shortages in these areas – for example, [by filling much-needed doctor and nursing positions](#).

International migrants are also key contributors to the unskilled workforce, often filling positions that domestic workers are unwilling to take on. For example, abattoirs and poultry plants are important businesses in regional Australia. Many would be unable to operate without international migrants, as many local residents do not consider this kind of work ["acceptable employment"](#).

As a consequence of the various efforts to spread the settlement of overseas arrivals, the number of international migrants living and working in non-metropolitan Australia has increased. Between 2006 and 2011, 187,000 international migrants [settled outside the major capital cities](#).

Still, regional areas have remained underrepresented as a settlement location. Despite regional Australia being home [to about one-third of the population](#), less than one-fifth of all new arrivals between 2006 and 2011 settled in a regional area.

For regional areas to make the most of the many advantages migrants have to offer, there needs to be more focused policy that encourages and assists regional settlement across the country. This policy needs to be informed by the work in a growing number of regional communities (like Nhill and Dalwallinu) that already draw on international migration to combat population loss and persistent labour shortages. By encouraging more international migrants to call regional Australia "home", we can start focusing on ensuring regional prosperity for the long term.

[Return to top](#)

Regional patterns of Australia's economy and population

Description

The popular idea that the economic divide between Australia's cities and regions is getting bigger is a misconception. Beneath the oft-told 'tale of two Australias' is a more nuanced story.

Income growth and employment rates are not obviously worse in regional areas. Cities and regions both have pockets of disadvantage, as well as areas with healthy income growth and low unemployment.

And while cities have higher average incomes, the gap in incomes between the cities and the regions is not getting wider.

This research casts doubt on the idea that regional Australians are increasingly voting for minor parties *because* the regions are getting a raw deal compared to the cities.

Given that people in regions have generally fared as well as those in cities over the past decade, major parties may need to look beyond income and employment to discover why dissatisfaction among regional voters is increasing.

The highest taxable incomes in Australia are in Sydney's eastern suburbs, followed by Cottesloe in Perth and Stonnington in eastern Melbourne. The lowest taxable incomes are in Tasmania and the regions of the east-coast states, especially the far north coast of NSW, central Victoria and southern Queensland.

But income *growth* in the regions has kept pace with income growth in the cities over the past decade. The lowest income growth was typically in suburban areas of major cities.

While unemployment varies between regions, it is not noticeably worse in the regions overall. Some of the biggest increases in unemployment over the past five years were along transport 'spines' in cities, such as the Ipswich to Carole Park corridor in Brisbane and the Dandenong to Pakenham corridor in Melbourne.

The biggest difference between regions and cities is that inland regional populations are generally growing slower – particularly in non-mining states. Cities are attracting many more migrants, particularly from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The east coast "sea change" towns are also getting larger, but unemployment is relatively high.

This research will contribute to a forthcoming Grattan Institute report examining why the vote for minor parties has risen rapidly over the past decade, particularly in regional electorates.

[Return to top](#)

Rural libraries in the United States

Recent strides, future possibilities, and meeting community needs

31 Jul 2017
American Library Association
CREATORS
Brian Real, R. Norman Rose
Rural libraries in the United States - report285.67 KB

Description

This report explores nuances of rurality, details challenges rural libraries face in maximizing their community impacts and describes how existing collaborative regional and statewide efforts help rural libraries and their communities.

The authors combine data from the final Digital Inclusion Survey (link is external) with Public Libraries Survey (link is external) data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to find:

- Sixty percent of rural libraries have a single location as part of their administrative system, hampering economies of scale.
- Rural libraries furthest from population centres ("rural remote") are most likely to be single-outlet entities and lag rural counterparts ("rural distant" and "rural fringe") in most measures of operational capacity.
- Rural library broadband capacity falls short of benchmarks set for U.S. home access, which is 25 Mbps download and 4 Mbps upload speeds. By contrast, rural fringe libraries average 13/8.6 Mbps, rural distant is 7.7/2.2 Mbps and rural remote is 6.7/1 Mbps.
- Overall, one in 10 rural libraries report their internet speeds rarely meet patron needs.
- Rural libraries are on par with colleagues in larger communities in terms of public wi-fi access and providing patrons' assistance with basic computer and internet training, but more specialised training and resources can lag.
- More than half of all rural libraries offer programs that help local residents apply for jobs and use job opportunity resources (e.g., online job listings, resume software), and rural libraries are comparable to their peers in providing work space for mobile workers.
- Significant proportions of all rural libraries (even the most remote) offer programs and services related to employment, entrepreneurship, education, community engagement and health and wellness.
- The level of programming and services is particularly noteworthy in light of staffing levels: 4.2 median FTE for rural fringe, 2.0 for rural distant and just 1.3 for rural remote libraries.
- Rural libraries were the least likely to report renovations had taken place in the past five years; about 15 percent, compared with a national average of 21 percent. The Digital Inclusion Survey noted a relationship (link is external) between facility updates and services and library program offerings.

Finally, the authors consider the roles of state and regional cooperation in adding capacity and resources for rural libraries, looking at examples from Maryland and Iowa.

Return to top

Connecting Australians

Results from the national arts participation survey
28 Jun 2017

[Australia Council for the Arts](#)

CREATORS

[Australia Council for the Arts](#)

This survey captures the value of the arts to Australians through their attitudes, views about the impacts of the arts, and propensity to donate time or money to the arts.

[Connecting Australians - survey report](#)   1.91 MB

[Return to top](#)

Walking with Communities: Local government and community responses to local area renewal

Description

Local governments can play a significant role in supporting communities in local areas that are disadvantaged and/or are going through a process of local renewal. A changing focus for local government in supporting communities through these renewal processes is to adopt a more facilitative and consultative role where programs and initiatives are informed by the ideas, perspectives and skills of local residents.

Organisations who work with communities are increasingly utilising more collaborative approaches where the community and the administrative body work together collectively to address local issues.

This study seeks to understand how local government can address place focused renewal by collaborating with communities. It aims to explore:

- The role of local government when working with communities, particularly in areas with a focus on local renewal;
- How a tool such as the 'collective impact framework' can be utilised by governments in community collaboration initiatives; and
- Key elements for success in local government led collaborations that involve a range of community stakeholders.

The study includes a review of theories and approaches that support collaborative place-based approaches and innovations. These provide considerations for local governments when framing approaches to collaborate with more self-reliant and sustainable communities through the lens of community wellbeing, social justice, public value and governance.

The study draws on the work of two local councils in Australia, Penrith City Council in New South Wales and Burnie City Council in Tasmania, who have responded to programs of local renewal by developing innovative and tailored local initiatives and solutions with their communities using tools to support a collaborative approach.

This report provides governments and stakeholders involved in local and place-focused renewal with conceptual framing and case study examples that can help inform and shape new community collaboration initiatives for their own contexts.

Return to top