



Placemaking Sandbox Summit#2 Documentation Report

Shifting Climate / Shifting Places

UQ Placemaking Summit 2019

Global Change Institute, UQ St Lucia
Brisbane

20 November 2019

Shifting Climate / Shifting Places

Event Background

The UQ Placemaking Summit 2019 was held on Wednesday, 20 November. It was a learning and working session for engaged professionals: people with inspirational ideas for acting on the climate crisis and developing real solutions for building more climate resilient places.

The theme of the summit 'Shifting Climate / Shifting Places' was developed by the Queensland-based consortium partners and reflects the need to sustainably transition our places and cities in the face of climate change. The summit sought to address questions around the gap between science and policy of climate change, such as:

How are we to act?

How do we drive climate adaptation into the planning and design world?

What new skills, knowledge and relationships will we need in order to build the transformative changes needed for our cities and regions?

The focus of the summit was to develop actionable solutions to address these questions, using practical, locally developed initiatives.

The summit was the second of two state-based engagement initiatives delivered by The University of Queensland as part of the Placemaking Sandbox Project, a national research project funded by The Myer Foundation and delivered by the Place Agency as part of a national multisectoral consortium of placemaking, research and design organisations.

ATTENDEES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The UQ Placemaking Summit 2019 attracted 150 participants, including academics, established and emerging planning and design professionals from local and state government and private sector, and community activists and organisations. The breadth of experience covered built environment, including urban designers, urban and regional planners, architects, urban economists, and landscape architects; social impact and social change specialists, including housing service providers and social workers, social performance experts; and, supporting industries such as emergency services and environmental management.

Structure of the Day

- 1. Welcome and Opening Session**
Acknowledgement of Country by Aunty Ruby Sims set the cultural context for community planning. Opening comments set the political and environmental context for climate change and placemaking as part of a multi-level research agenda.
- 2. Keynote Presentation: Integrated Planning Frameworks for Resilient Cities**
Presentation by Halvard Dalheim positioned strategic city planning within a collaborative multidisciplinary approach to local-level climate change awareness.
- 3. A Neighbourhood Framework for Climate Action**
Industry and community leaders presented experiences of enabling neighbourhood actions for placemaking with climate resilience as the focus.
- 4. Ideas for Climate Adaptation: Testing the climate framework on two Brisbane neighbourhoods**
Design workshop groups generated ideas for Kurilpa and Rosalie climate strategies with John Mongard Landscape Architects and James Davidson Architect.
- 5. Great Ideas for Climate Adaptation**
The top 10 ideas from the workshops reported back to the plenary with Place Agency and UQ.



Summit Findings

CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLACEMAKING IN CONTEXT

There is a dramatic lag between the science and policy of climate change. We have 10 years to adapt to a climate of plus 2 degrees. Current planning and design need to change right now as we ramp up from mitigation and resilience toward the profound adaptation needed for the climate crisis.

We need to build places to deal with far higher amounts of physical adaptation to heat, water, fire/smoke, flooding and disruption of urban, economic and social systems. These are challenges beyond amenity and are required for survival.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND OPENING COMMENTS

Dr Sébastien Darchen, Senior Lecturer, The University of Queensland, welcomed guests and participants and provided an overview of the day.

Aunty Ruby Sims, a Mununjali and Wanggeriburra Elder, opened the summit with an engaging Welcome to Country. Aunty Ruby emphasised the significance of community in developing actions for climate resilience and finding the 'common unity' and shared language to make change. Importantly, creating shared, accessible and welcoming places to have 'courageous conversations' in our communities is critical to applying the knowledge that we have and bringing solutions to fruition.



Aunty Ruby reminded the audience that discussions about climate change are not new, but our systems have been preventing us from making any real change. As a community, we have the power to bring to action the changes our built environment and communities need if we apply an egalitarian approach, make the most of traditional custodial knowledge, and practice the 'land-based way of doing things'. Encouragingly, she said:

"we know how to adapt... now is the time for truth-telling, learning and growing together."

Opening comments set the political and environmental context for placemaking and climate action.

Professor Mark Blows, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), The University of Queensland, posited that the recent Australian bushfires are a reminder that our ecological and social 'new normal' has shifted. There is a new urgency to implementing climate-adaptive planning that is responsive to creating liveable centres, while balancing population growth, infrastructure planning and commerce.

The Honourable Jackie Trad MP for South Brisbane electorate, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, explored Queensland's potential to sustainably transition its cities in the face of climate change. As more than half of the world's populations live in cities, it is essential that people and spaces are climate resilient. The impact of climate change is everywhere, and it is not a future proposition, but a real and immediate phenomenon being experienced here and today. Politicians and changemakers need to turn despair and fear into hope and action through exchanging ideas, collaboration, and making places that support adaptation.

Malcolm Middleton OAM LFRAIA, Queensland's Government Architect,

reflected on a 1971 conference titled 'The Consequences of Today'.

With the topics aptly transferrable, Malcolm made linkages between environmental thinking of almost 50 years prior where it was suggested that there is "only one endangered species – man. We are the endangered species. The problem lies with us." The difference is that in 2019, there is a clear urgency for environmental issues and community planning that is more climate sensitive.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: INTEGRATED PLANNING FRAMEWORKS FOR RESILIENT CITIES

Halvard Dalheim, Executive Director, Strategic Planning Integration, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, presented the keynote address for the summit on metropolitan planning, climate change and place.

Halvard emphasised the need for integrated collaboration between local council, regional and state governments in order to create plans that are meaningful, informed by data and are implemented at the right level. This means understanding micro-level challenges and opportunities in neighbourhoods to deliver macro-level plans for the whole city. In this way, there is a 'hierarchy of place direction' for planners and strategy-makers to follow.

This hierarchy of place direction means:

- Metropolitan level: creating integrated land use and transport plans that respond to the location where jobs growth is occurring.
- District level: allowing development for more centres, an open space network for the centres and more transport connecting centres.
- Sub-district level: making transport connections clear and detailed to allow for better policy support.
- Neighbourhood level: making provisions for more housing in the right locations to support jobs growth in the centres with accessibility to transport.



Metropolitan plans play a very important role in delivering local outcomes and have a direct role in placemaking. Integrated land use and transport planning, for example, are mitigation areas and considered 'core planning'. Planning practitioners and policy makers have the power to respond to climate change directly through their core planning roles. It requires local knowledge, collaboration across government levels and an integrated approach to communication.

The future climate of plus 2 degrees will have different impacts in different parts of the city and on different people. Municipal councils have valuable knowledge about the micro-climates and vulnerable groups in their local area. There needs to be a deep understanding of local needs that gets communicated up to the regional plan and there should be a robust feedback loop back to the local area. This practice of integrated collaboration and implementing plans that are responsive to micro-climates needs to become business as usual and not a case study.

While all municipal plans of major Australian cities mention the need to transition to a low-carbon society and be more responsive to climate change, those plans need to be integrated vertically between state and regional governments and horizontally across neighbouring councils. The messages in the multi-level plans need to be clear, coherent and align with each other.

Halvard stressed the economic cost of natural disasters that are set to increase with current climate predictions. At present, natural disasters cost NSW about \$3.6 billion per year and this is expected to increase to \$10.6 billion per year by 2050 if no climate action is taken. Integrating strategic planning across the multiple levels of government and addressing climate adaptation in those plans has an economic benefit to the state.

A NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Industry leaders presented their experience on how to enable neighbourhood actions for climate-resilient placemaking. The session was chaired by Stephanie Wyeth, UQ's

Professional Planner in Residence.

Speakers in this session were:

- Bob Spiers, an advisor on climate risk, natural resource and environmental management who presented on planning for resilient adaptation;
- Pam Bourke, a community development and engagement practitioner who focussed on the social dimensions of adaptation;
- John Mongard, a landscape architect and award-winning placemaking designer who unpacked what a plus 2 degrees change means for a zero-carbon city and country, focussing on placemaking and adaptation; and
- James Davidson, a leading designer and architect on climate change adaptation and flooding explained his experience with creating adaptive buildings and neighbourhoods.

Collectively, they shared their practitioner and personal experience from two neighbourhoods: the Kurilpa peninsula in West End and Rosalie village in Paddington. Key insights from the presentations and discussion included:

Sense of urgency:

- ☑ Climate change is happening now and climate action is up to us, as members of our own communities. We cannot wait for direction from our local, regional or state governments to guide us and community resilience and place design is integral to our future city living.
- ☑ How we use the built environment is changing as the climate changes. There will be greater needs for more water play areas and public places need to be safer at night for all users.
- ☑ Business as usual should not be our objective, we need radical change in how we design and shape our built environments.
- ☑ Greater consideration needs to be given about how more frequent hotter days, smoke haze, and extreme weather events will be challenging for more vulnerable groups (including the old, young, disabled, homeless, mental health challenges, visitors, pre-existing health issues, etc).
- ☑ The consequence for inaction and continuing with 'business as usual' is that more places and more people (particularly more vulnerable people) get impacted during extreme weather events and the economic, social and environmental cost to society increases.

There has been \$15.6 billion damage to assets in Queensland since 2015.

Sense of community:

- ☑ There needs to be a mindset change at the neighbourhood level to encourage local action and make change.
- ☑ Healthy community resilience to create change = regaining knowledge and skills (e.g. growing food), rebounding from setbacks (e.g. re-planning and planning better built environments), and resetting expectations about what is enough (i.e. changing consumption patterns).
- ☑ Need to make sure that the most vulnerable members of our community are involved in any level of strategy around climate crisis response.
- ☑ Dialogue with all community members can help to bridge the gaps between denial, despair and disinterest to robust relationships and collaboration.
- ☑ Climate adaptation starts with place. Communities are the drivers of climate action and placemaking. People need the tools to adapt their places to the changing climate.

Climate change is a place crisis. We need to learn how to adapt our placemaking quickly and collectively for it to be sustainable enough by the time they come to fruition in 10 years' time.

Realisation of actionable tasks:

- ☑ A local-level strategy, developed by community members at a neighbourhood level, can help to make a shift from the consequence-takers (recipients of change) to consequence-makers (changemakers).
- ☑ Action can be achieved by planting verge gardens, greening hardstand and being 'flood smart'.
- ☑ Understanding flood patterns to help community members and practitioners plan neighbourhoods better and develop design guidelines that are character-sensitive but also flood-resistant.
- ☑ Lobbying for fair insurance practices for flood resilience measures.

Some locations and their people are more vulnerable than others to climate change: the social dimension of adaptation is an important topic.





IDEAS FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION: TESTING THE CLIMATE FRAMEWORK ON TWO BRISBANE NEIGHBOURHOODS

A climate adaptation co-design workshop was facilitated by John Mongard Landscape Architects, using a curated program of workshop activities co-designed with James Davidson Architect, UQ Project Team and community leaders. The afternoon showcased a way for any group or community to use for their own neighbourhood to prepare themselves for the shifting climate in the coming years. Grassroots action is likely to be the forerunner for governmental action. Therefore, a climate strategy developed in communities using local knowledge intentionally designs and develops the urban setting to respond to shared experiences and future climate-related hazards.

Two Brisbane suburbs were chosen that have been affected by flooding in the recent past. The inner-city Kurilpa area in the West End peninsula and the middle-suburb neighbourhood of Rosalie in Paddington were the focus areas for the design workshops. Groups of seven brainstormed climate-resilient design solutions that envisaged these Brisbane suburbs in the Summer of 2030 (plus 2 degrees) under four themes:

- Flooding
- Extreme heat
- Vegetation
- Adaptive communities

The groups brainstormed ideas to counter the extreme flooding and hot weather events and found that ideas from each scenario complemented one another. For example, prioritising vegetation and tree planting would reduce the intensity of hot weather events, provide a permeable surface to increase stormwater retention (to be reused for other purposes), and enhanced green space would provide opportunities for greater community interaction.

Other suggestion for local adaptation included:

- Adapt and design buildings that provide shade
- Consider the local strengths and assets within the street or neighbourhood and work with that
- Consider the needs of the most vulnerable in any planning and design

Participants were high engaged in the workshop discussions and design-thinking. Given the nature of the program, the role of table facilitators was critical for ensuring all participants had the opportunity to contribute and that each group completed their task. Attendance was maintained throughout the 2.5 hour session. One participant commented that the afternoon workshop was "*such an empowering process.*"

UQ CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT EVALUATION

The UQ project team distributed an evaluation questionnaire for summit attendees to provide feedback about their experience. There was a total of 31 respondents, though not all of the questions were compulsory.

Over 60% of respondents found the summit useful to identify meaningful actions that they can take in their own community to respond to the changing climate. Finally, 84% of respondents said that they were extremely, very or somewhat likely to use the planning and design strategies they learnt at the summit in their own practice or community.

All respondents reported the summit to be a positive experience. Almost all respondents (96%) thought that the mix of speakers and workshops was valuable to help their understanding of climate change adaptation practice. About 80% of respondents found the afternoon workshops either very helpful or somewhat helpful for exploring design strategies and tactics to manage climate change impacts at the local level.

When asked which two climate change challenges the project team should provide more information/ dialogue about in the next 12 months, the responses were split. Almost half of the respondents (n = 15, 48%) said that environmental design for climate change adaptation (landscape, biodiversity, water, heat) should be the top priority, followed by Indigenous Australian perspectives on climate change adaptation (n = 11, 35%).

Each of the following categories had about a quarter to a third of respondents' support (n= 8-10, 25%-32%): community-led planning and action; infrastructure planning; neighbourhood planning and design; and, city policy and strategic planning. The remaining answers received less than 25% (n = 1-7): social planning (disaster preparedness, community resilience); individual householder strategies; economic, technology and innovation; and, global perspectives.

Next Steps:

FUTURE THINKING: WHERE TO NEXT FOR THE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE AGENDA

At the end of the summit, a number of question marks remained about how to deal with climate change adaptation. Some themes associated to climate change adaptation and planning require further research:

1. The governance of climate change adaptation: who should lead the process? Should it be a community-led process?
2. How do we determine the population that are the most vulnerable to climate change, what are the criteria to be used to determine which population are the most vulnerable?
3. In terms of planning policies: are there areas in Queensland that need to be prioritised over others? How do we determine those priority areas?

The UQ Project team will advance discussions with practitioners and climate change experts through industry engagement activities.

QUEENSLAND RESEARCH FOCUS

The Queensland research is focused on understanding how placemaking and tactical urbanism can be delivered successfully in the middle and outer suburbs of Australian cities – where the majority of Australians live.

The University of Queensland's Urban Planning Program is leading a consortium of industry partners and practitioners to deliver a targeted program of education and engagement which will form the state's contribution to the Placemaking Sandbox Project.

Queensland consortium members include:

- The University of Queensland
- John Mongard Landscape Architects
- Gold Coast City Council
- Office of Queensland Government Architect

PLACEMAKING PRACTICE IN QUEENSLAND

Currently 'placemaking' in Queensland is seen as an urban design-led process, either driven by local governments seeking to renew a precinct or street; or by a private developer seeking to optimize a commercial return from a project by promoting a design concept which aligns with a contemporary approach to 'place branding' and project marketability. Queensland universities are not seen to be active 'placemakers or tactical urban strategists' within government or industry.

There is a number of experienced practitioners, designers and creative firms who are driving innovation and the development of a body of good practice in placemaking in Queensland. They are active contributors to industry events and discussions on social media.

Placemaking approaches are not yet integrated in local climate adaption strategies, and this provides as good opportunity for future research and engagement with government and industry leaders.

APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

Through 2018 – 2020, The University of Queensland will bring together interested researchers, policy makers, practitioners, students and industry stakeholders to explore and debate the role and impact of placemaking in the suburbs of Brisbane and beyond.

Through a series of facilitated discussions and workshops, UQ and program participants will unpack and discuss what comprises successful placemaking practice, with the results shared as part of the Queensland consortium's contribution to the National Placemaking Sandbox Project.

PROCEEDINGS FROM THE UQ PLACEMAKING SUMMIT 2019

To access more information from the 2019 Summit, please go to:

<https://sees.uq.edu.au/event/12638/shifting-g-climate-shifting-places>

or visit the UQ Planning Blog: <https://uq-urbanplanning.org/>

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Photos provided: UQ Project Team 2019

Place Agency - <https://placeagency.org>

