PLACEMAKING BIG IDEAS

Placemaking Consortium Collaboration Workshop - 30th-31st of October 2017.

Thinking Back on the Past Two Days
Thinking Forward to the Next Two Years

Over the course of 2 days, 35+ academics and 13 practitioners of the Placemaking Consortium worked together to refine the objectives of the Placemaking Sandbox Project.

The key objective of this workshop was to consult with current practice and ensure that the Placemaking Sandbox Project helps strengthen placemaking efforts across Australia by addressing the gaps in the industry and building upon the efforts of our various partners.

This document provides a simple outline of the results from said workshop as divided into 7 sections:

DAY 1
1. Alignment
2. Envisioning
practitioners join the discussion
3. Current Practice Gap Analysis
4. Capabilities (identifying the programs desired skill sets)
practitioners leave

DAY 2
5. Subject Modules (planning the theoretical foundation)
6. Studio Framework (identifying potential strategies for studios)
7. Summits, Celebrations and Capacity Building

Section 1- Alignment

Myer's Vision

Elena Mogilevski, representing Myer Foundation, shared with us their vision for the project

- Better cities - walkable, liveable, with **increased social interaction and greater interaction with nature**
- A focus on individual streets and neighbourhoods, with communities in the centre of the design process and applying tools like tactical urbanism
- Universities combining the practical with the theoretical to train existing and emerging workforce to be good city-makers in councils and industries

THE MYER FOUNDATION

Principles, visions and goals

What principles and flows need to be considered for placemaking?

The LENSES diagram to the right identifies the principles guiding the project and the outermost circle, the 12 circles in the middle represent the knowledge flows we bring to the table

Changing the Placemaking Definition

"An inclusive process that empowers every group within the local communities to co-create space that is: resilient, responds to the local culture, and increases their physical and mental health while providing a meaningful experiences or emotional connections between people and place."

This is an aspirational definition that can be used as a basis but needs to be more concrete
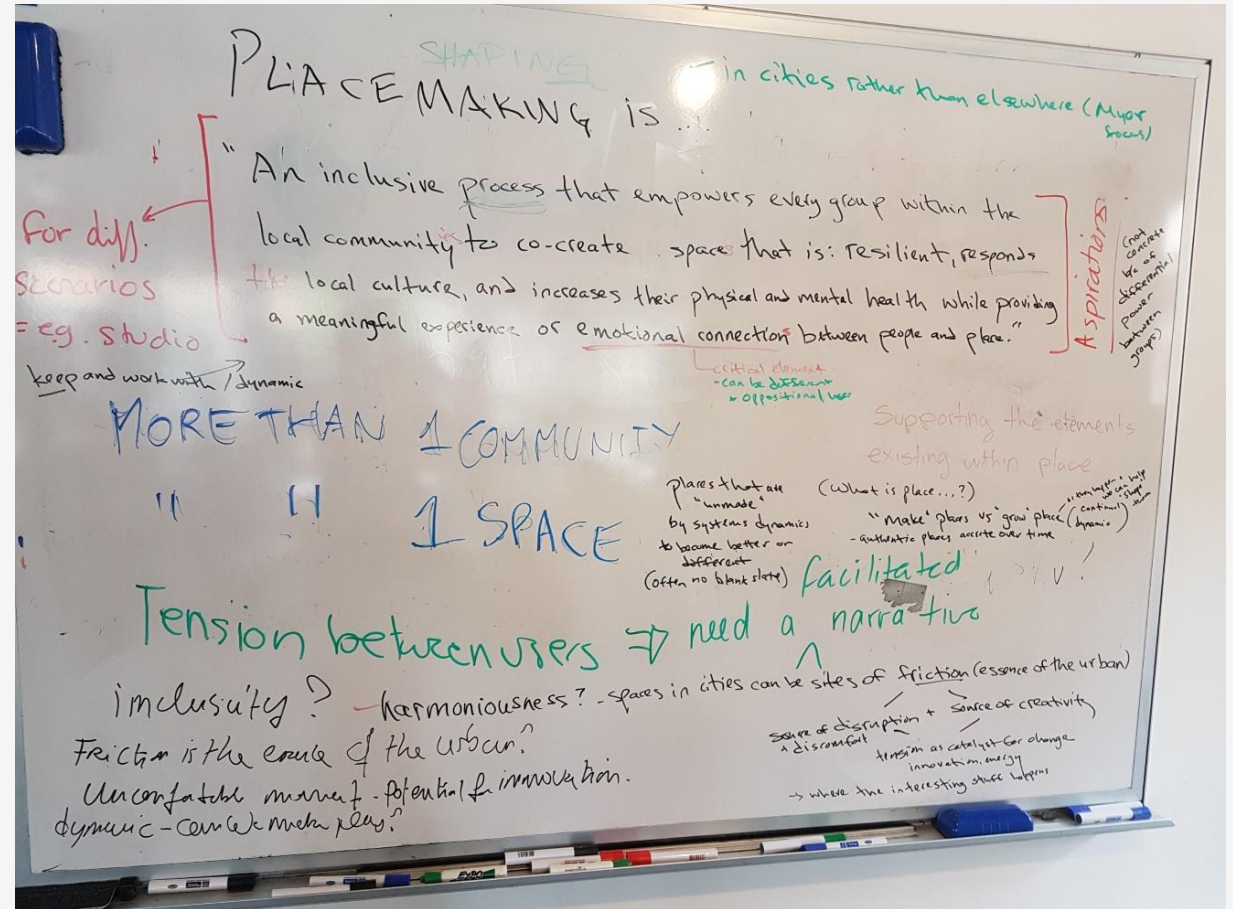
Here's what the academics said during their discussion on placemaking

- *Placemaking i*s a ==*process*== rather than a product. It is a ==*responsive* and *dynamic*== to the conditions of a place

- ==*Authentic inclusivity*== - there is a tension between users, and a differential power between groups

- Authentic places are created over time

- The need to ==*unmake*== places so they can be remade collectively into something better or different - there is often no 'blank slate'.

- Place shaping? Place making? We can't make places. ==*Places grow or they happen*==. There is a continuous dynamic and place shaping may be more accurate where we facilitate the process.

- ==*Emotional connections*== are a critical element to placemaking/shaping. They can be different (and sometimes oppositional/conflicting) for and between users. An emotional connection "as a measure that place has occurred".

- Are we interested in going broader than cities?

- We need alternative definitions, because not everyone will subscribe to the same definition

- Friction (essence of the urban) can be productive - a source of disruption and discomfort, of creativity. Friction creates a tension that can catalyse change, for innovation, energy and constructive outcomes.

- ==*Let's feel comfortable about feeling uncomfortable.*==

Section 2- Envisioning

"If we want to make a significant impact, we need to ask 'how do we connect nature with urban landscapes?'

"Rather than just training existing professionals, why don't we also go upstream and train the emerging workforce [of the built environment]?"

- Elena Mogilevski, Myer Foundation

Aligning what we are here for:
- Capacity building in placemaking
- Not reinventing the wheel
- Connecting the stakeholders in the city to its social and ecological systems

Paradigm shift: Regenerative Development

Sharing some her own research Dominique Hes shared with the group her learning about Regenerative Development.

This was inspired in the perceived similarities between this field of knowledge and Placemaking. For instance, both fields approach design as a process that begins from a deep understanding of a place. In Regenerative Development, this begins by understanding the flows that enable a system to grow and thrive and using the potential conflict as an opportunity to improve and contribute to the system.

In her words, this starts by understanding the differences between two world views: a mechanical worldview and an ecological worldview.

- Searches for Consistent results
- Aims to use less resources to get more = efficiency
- Views the problem in isolation focusing on small scale
- Focuses on immediate solutions = Reacts to the problem
- Unstable in the long-term

- Fosters diversity to ensure system adaptability
- Learns from nature
- Considers the big-picture across multiple scales.
- Positive Contributions that improve system's environment
- Resilient

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL

GAME CHANGING

Paradigm shift: Regenerative Development

- Mechanical worldview transitioning to the ecological/systems worldview

  – The ecological/systems world view must recognise the mechanical world view as part of the system

  – Ecological world view deals with flows, relationships and changes

  – Placemaking is one of the transition tools to move from the current world view and its flaws to a new more integrated ecological mutually dependant world view.

- For each part to thrive, the whole must thrive.

- "Shifting from teaching a person to fish to teaching them to love the ocean."

Thinking in Potential

Each group then had an opportunity to identify the potential of this project for their own university, city and state.

- Potential thinking vs problem thinking

- How do we find potential? Think about the role of place in the system.

- Attending to each other – positive energy!
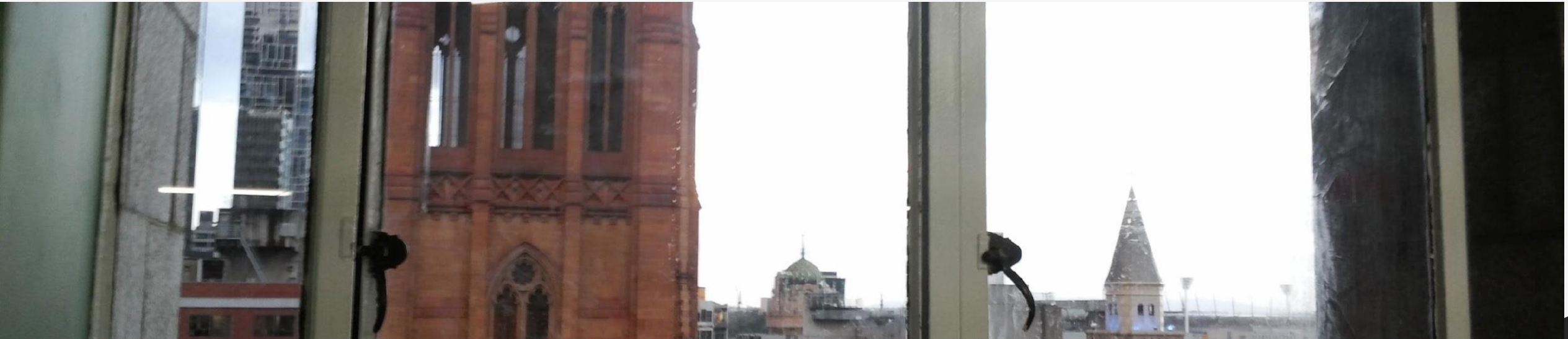
Potential of the Placemaking Sandbox:

- Focusing on <mark>potential of a place before logistics</mark> and limitations

- Re-enliven a sense of civic responsibility and engagement beyond the physical space <mark>(agency - feeling empowered to act)</mark>

- Hugs! A place where people feel comfortable getting and giving a hug

- Showing off <mark>leadership</mark>, developing leadership

- Potential of local/state government-led, and developer-led, placemaking

- Potential for <mark>universities to facilitate different and challenging conversations (voice) and collaboration (stewardship)</mark>

- Opportunities to <mark>transcend the local.</mark> Asking what is the edge between urban and rural?

- Potential to form (and build upon existing) <mark>relationships between universities</mark> and their students, and <mark>across various disciplines</mark> within schools and in <mark>industry</mark>

- Unlock the potential of <mark>vacant and under-utilised spaces</mark>, overcoming land ownership as a barrier or obstacle

- <mark>Utilising conflict</mark> and the intimacy of leaders in their neighbourhoods who can be responsive and iterative in a tortured political environment with the potential of a creative solution emerging around the physical, shared and enduring historical love of place
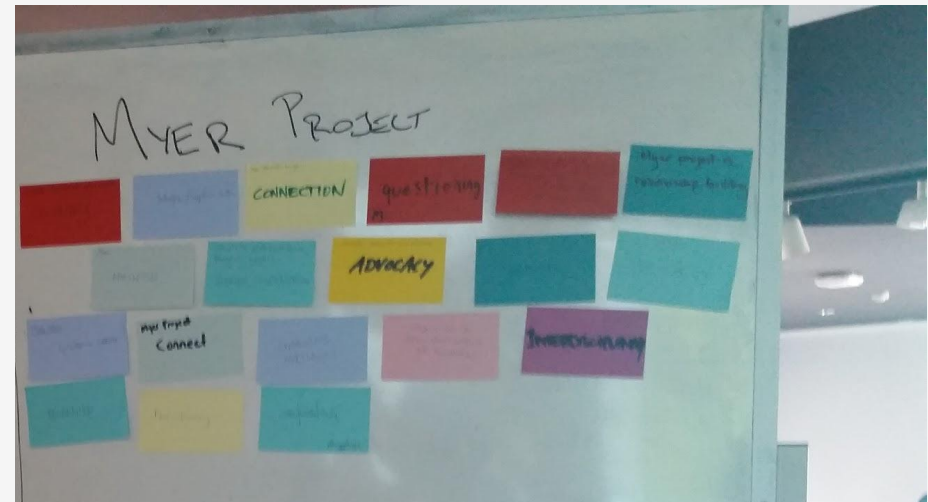
Potential of Placemaking

Words that mean placemaking to you?

A list of words was created to represent what placemaking means to the different people participating in this project.
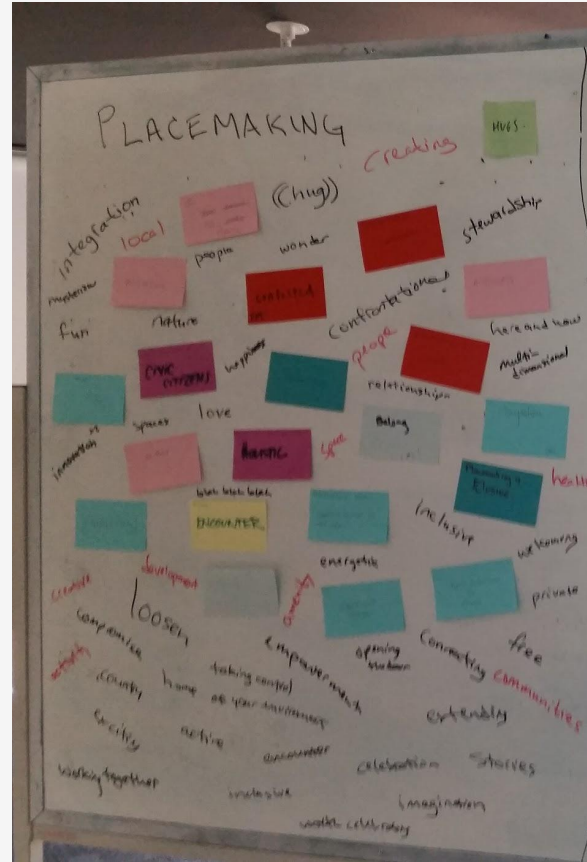

- opening the door
- welcoming
- amenity
- civic citizens
- occupation
- belonging
- connection
- inclusion/ive
- integration
- stewardship
- empowerment
- compromise
- taking control
- extending
- celebration
- openness
- loosen

- mysterious
- creative
- health
- contested
- generosity
- catalyst
- elusive
- nature
- love
- confrontational
- fun
- energetic
- happy
- wonder
- exciting
- active
- free
- multidimensional

- communities
- local
- development
- here and now
- country
- public interest/planning
- people
- spaces
- home
- private

- creating
- working together
- relationships
- activation
- a process
- shaping guided by the heart
- hugs
- blah blah blah (talking)
- innovation
- story

What's new, or not new, about Placemaking?
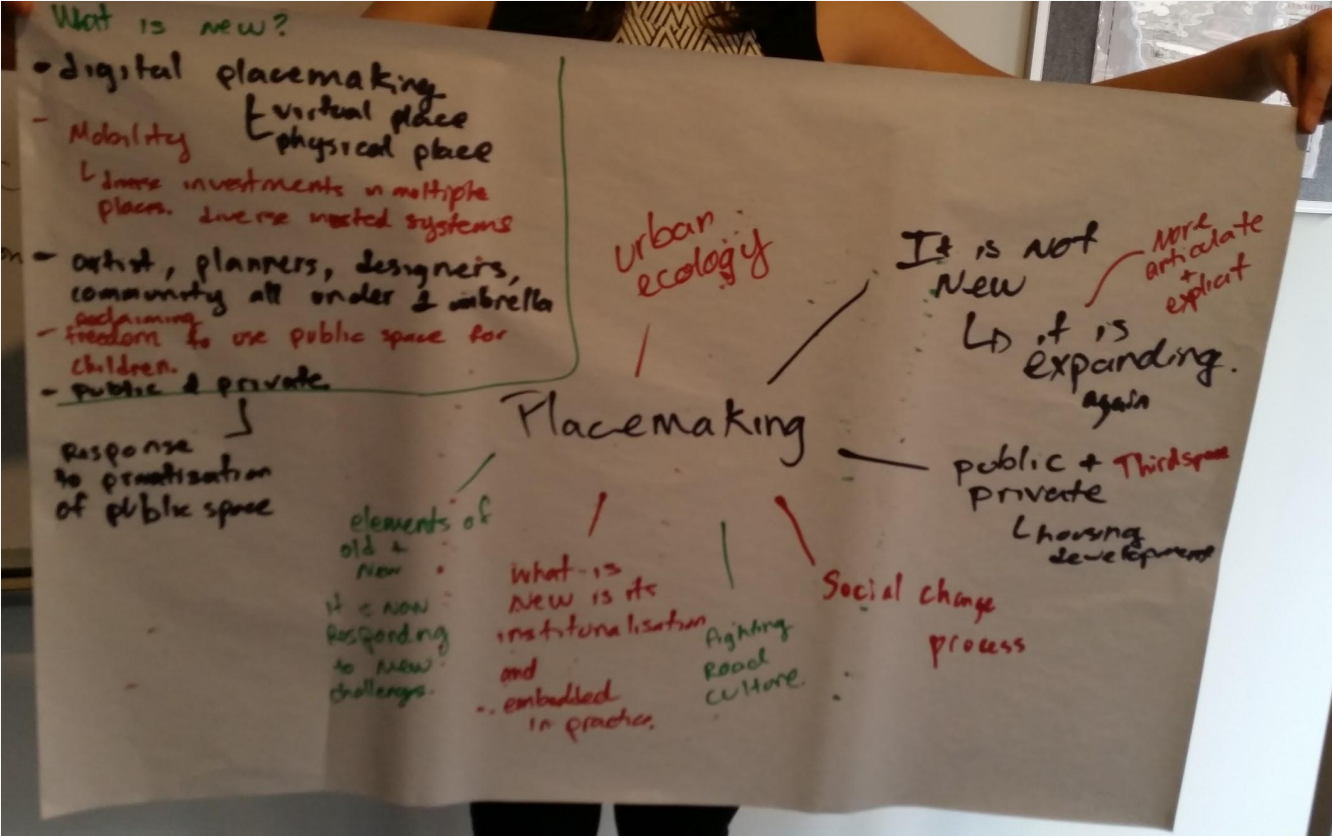
Section 3 – Current Practice Gap Analysis

The voice of the councils and developers

What is the value of placemaking for your organisation?

What is the value of placemaking for your community?

The voice of organisations which supporter the Sandbox Project were brought into the project through a procurer survey circulated before the workshop. Through a brief presentation, their comments were brought into the discussion setting the agenda of the whole project. This discussion was preliminary as a report is being prepared with further insights into the procurer survey results.

What Should Placemaking Be?

Placemaking practitioners and academics split up into 7 groups to come up with their own definition of placemaking, taking into account all that had been said so far in the workshop.

Each group pitched their definition and then a process of dot-voting (or "dotmocrocy") ensued.

The two with the most votes were the one pictured to the right, and a haiku. All 7 nominated definitions are included here.
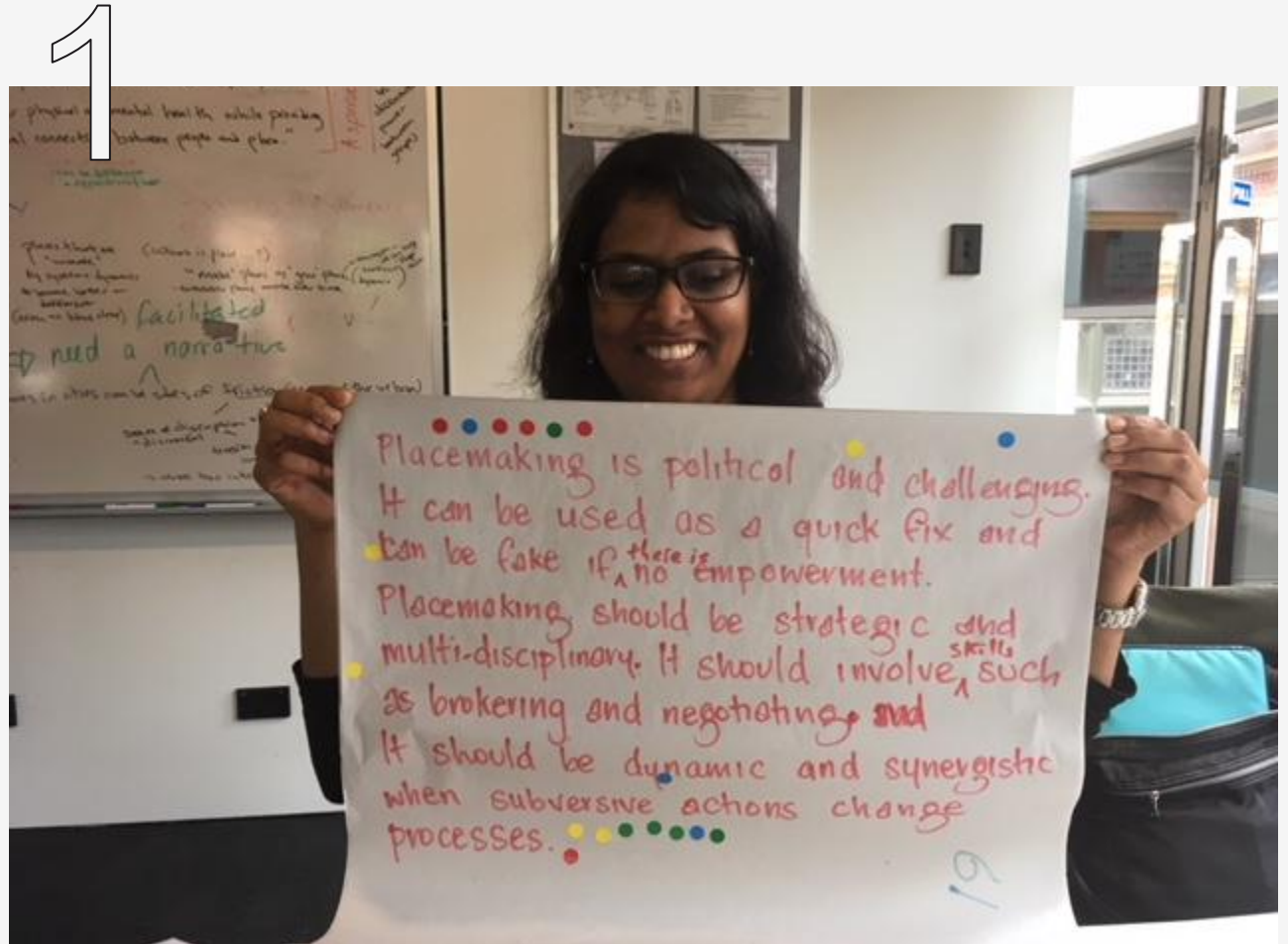
2

"Enabling affect,

Investing space with meaning

Process, people, place."

3

"A collaborative craft to co-create space that responds to local need for emotional and meaningful connection and experience."

4

Place - "The shared cultural and natural values and spaces of a group of dwellers."

Dweller - "People who know, feel and remember a place.

Placemaking - "A philosophy and a process to facilitate and create place."

5

"A process of collaboratively creating a place that enables life."

6

"Place-making is an enabling public process to make and un-make civic space and relationships."

7

[Network | Ecosystem | Communication]

- **An enabling environment**
- **Human flourishing need & capacity**
- **Positive social & environment outcome**
- **It is a process but you have to define the outcome**
- **It is a discussion / a lot of talking must be done - it is a connection**

Outcome | Process | Culture

What the Placemaking Sandbox is about

"Creating the capacity for people to invest space with meaning."

Evaluating success of placemaking

Jenny

NORMAL SCOPE OF A PROJECT

PROJECT EVALUATION

Inputs → Activities (Action Plan) → Outputs → Short-term Outcomes → Intermediate Outcomes → Impact (The ripples)

Evaluating success of placemaking

How to develop tools:

- Need to be operational at, and integrative of, different scales

- Need to deal with inclusivity; explicitly with separate focus

- Need operational guidelines for both practitioners and citizens

- Need to consider account for long-term ripple effects, not just outputs and short-term outcomes

NORMAL SCOPE OF A PROJECT

PROJECT EVALUATION

Inputs → Activities (Action Plan) → Outputs → Short-term Outcomes → Intermediate Outcomes → Impact (The ripples)

Evaluating success of placemaking

So far, we have compared 11 different tools, during the workshop we also identified some new tools to add into the tool comparison analysis.

- Culture counts' (tool in WA, Perth)
- Neighourlytics
- Gehl Public Life Data Protocol
- Greenstar – Communities rating tool
- Well – Rating tool
- 'Transform City' online tool
- Community Rating Tool (South Australia)
- Measurement tools - vacancy rates, traffic data, headcounts, health and wellbeing. Allows tracking over time, return business as proxy for success
- Places for people - public life – Gehl's method
- Collaborative website – saving stories and plotting on google maps. (Cremorne project with Helaine Stanley
- 'Mapping frictions' – website of stories at western Sydney.
- 'Women in cities: logical plans

Success- What make projects great?

- Making things together
- It feels good
- People get connected
- People start caring about and learning about the non-human place
- It connects to and supports what's already happening
- The people involved go on to other projects (in other & same places)

- A catalyst for change in the beginning (usually conflict or tension)
- Something imposed on the community can generate community backlash, then community (and others) come together
- Depth of consultation must not be tokenistic. Must listen.
- Ability to take everyone on the journey.
- Critical political buy-in.
- Good relationships with council across so many levels
- Practitioners balancing between being educator, facilitator and listeners.
- Being dynamic and flexible (needs a lot of experience to do so)
- Inclusive design as an agent
- Connection leads to surprise and surprise can lead to support, which can lead to great projects
- Challenging the status quo
- An empowering idea that clicks (e.g. "The heart of Melbourne is its laneways.") can survive changes of government and financial situations over many, many years. It may not succeed right away but eventually it will succeed.

Lessons from failures

- Start where you are. Series of interventions and opportunities

- "Going back or letting go?" -> continuation

- Improvisation

- Is it ok/accepted if the impact is elsewhere (deviation)? Flexibility. Valuing enduring impact even if different to expectations

- Great place project v. great place

Lessons and <mark>needed capacity</mark>

- Clear communication from the beginning

- We need to protect our commons (not solved)

- Need to engage with politician's language

- Who has power and who has money? Knowing when to and not to engage or take projects

- Job needs to be matched with organisations with the right capacity and position to make decisions

- Personality and personal wishes of decision-makers matter

- Change of leadership. Exposure to "democratic" process and decision-making

- Discomfort (so you have to acknowledge it)

- Managing community fatigue

- Mechanisms and robust ideas that weather changes in government and the economy

- Transparency and accountability of what happens to community input (when community doesn't know where their input end up, it is very frustrating).

Capacity Needed

For:

- Students
- Designers
- Placemaking consultants
- Developers
- Academics
- Community
- Council/government
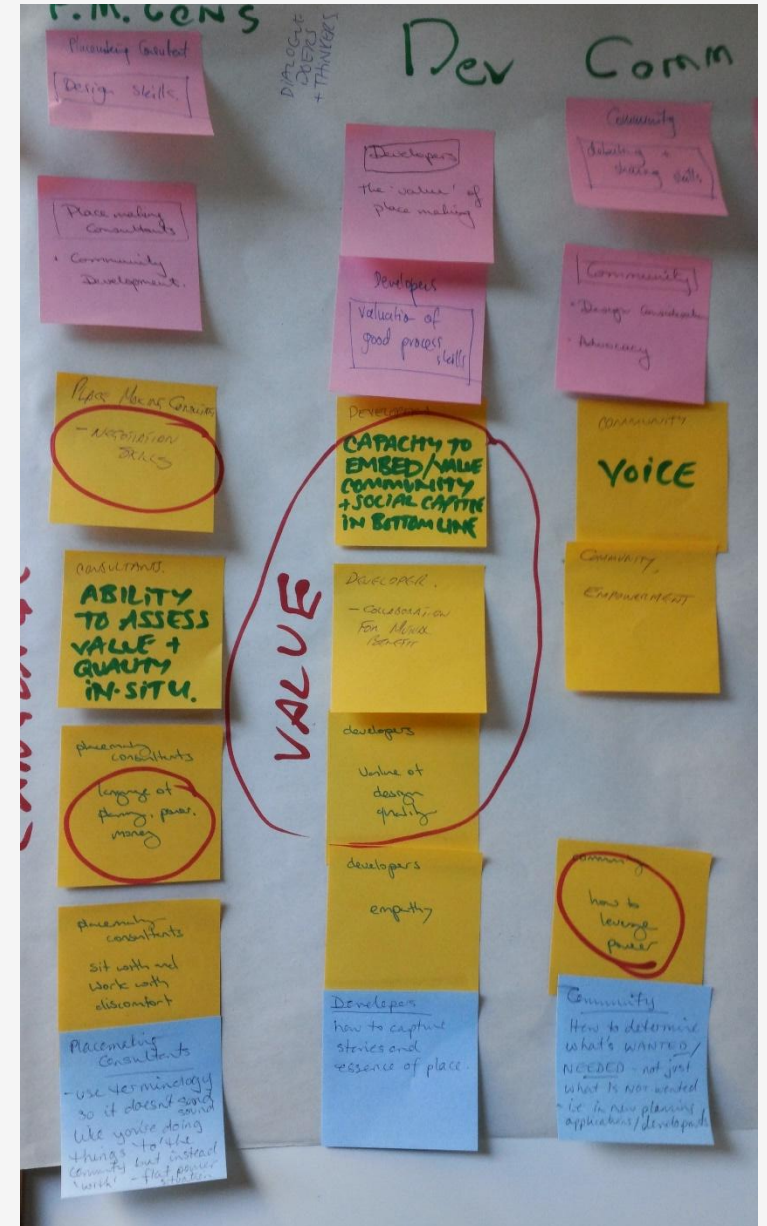
Section 4 - Capabilities

45 participants:
3 academics from each University,
15 practitioners,
and other stakeholders

250-300 capabilities and capacities translated into the 9 key modules to be taught at university and to develop industry capacity for and with, plus an additional 2 modules being developed for placemaking studios

Section 5 – Subject Modules

How we brainstormed the content of the 9 modules: each person spent 5 minutes adding their thoughts to each module.
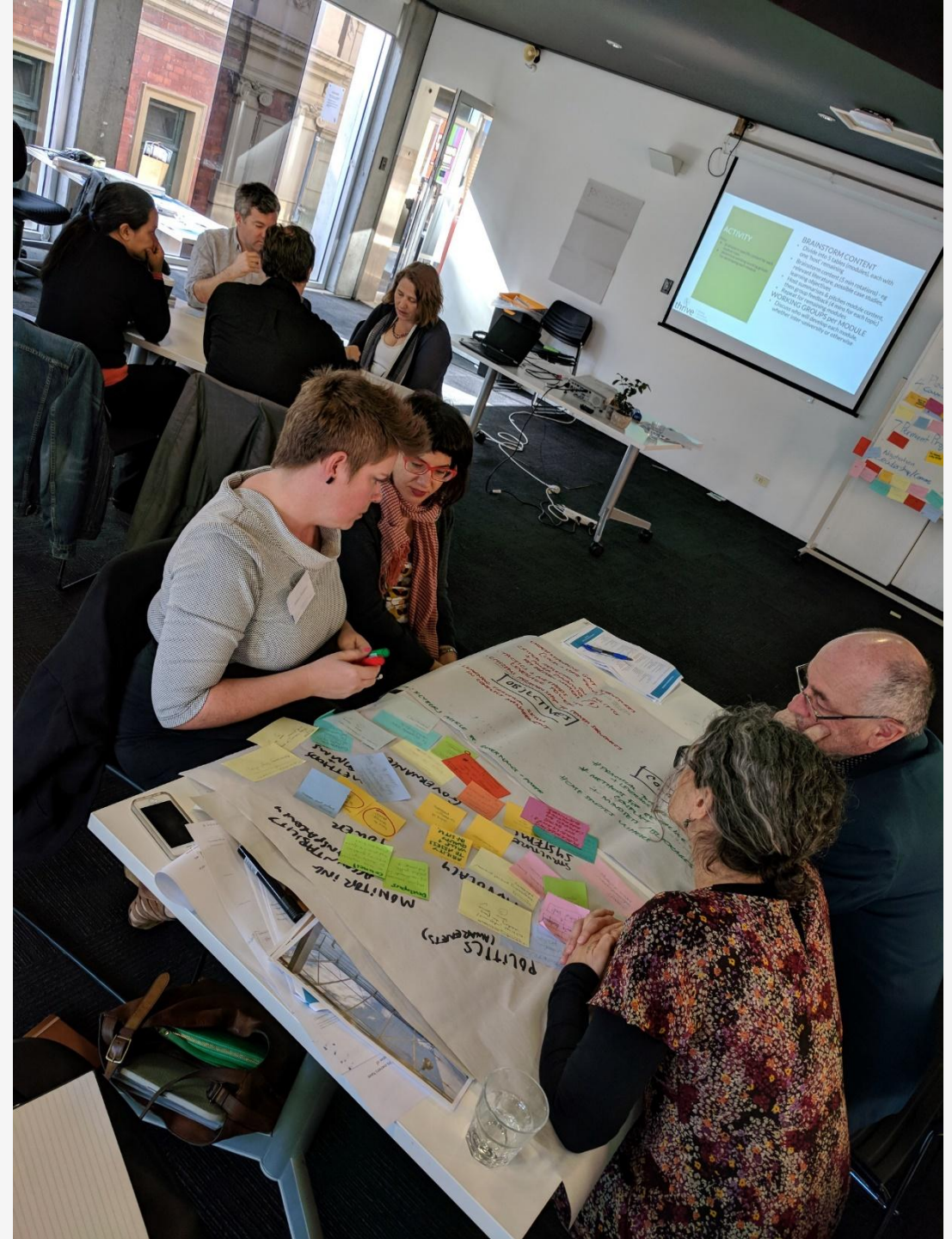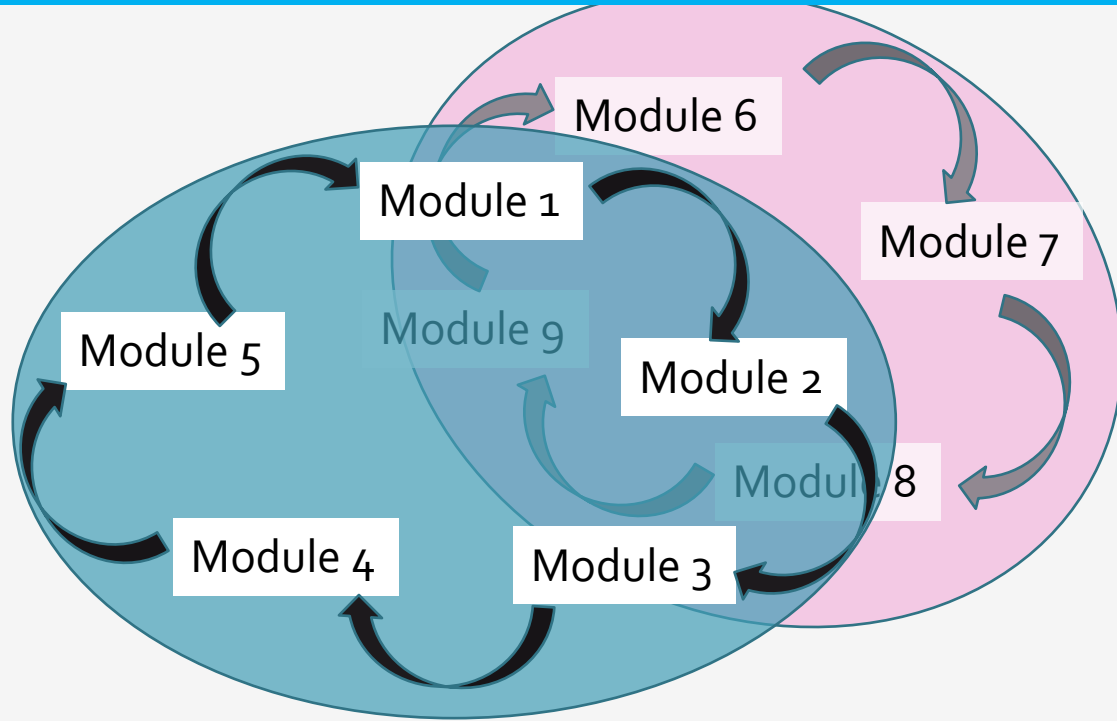
10 Modules

Each module should include elements of change: How do planning and design processes need to change to enable placemaking beyond engagement?

| UTS	Adelaide	UQ	Curtin	Melbourne
Site evaluation - Reading a Place	Place-based community engagement	Economics of place	Place-based council and developer engagement	General information
Governance, power and empowerment	Design for adaptability	Implementation and making change happen	Negotiation, leadership and communications	
(extra slot) Digital place-making	(extra slot) Digital place-making		(extra slot) Digital place-making	Embedded into Studio: ● Project Evaluation ● From theory to practice (achieving place design)

Section 6- Studio Framework

5 Studio Presentations:

-What are the key themes and attributes of each of the presentations?
-What works and what less so?
-What are the learning outcomes for each studio?

Studio Themes & Attributes

- We're trying all kinds of cool things; beware of trying to do too much in a small space

- Be concise about what we want to teach; be clear about what we expect (eg in design brief)

- Not just about public space but the whole precinct

- Preserving the identity of the place and what works

- Research and analysis of site, context, flows. Learning to work with constraints and potential (context). Walk together - immerse in the site - meet the community

- Facilitating the move from an individual vision to a group one

- Importance of being able to visually present ideas

- Involving the local community (from engaging in public meetings to inviting public juries to assess student work)

- Go beyond the design – giving students the opportunity to find out if their design will actually work

Section 7- Summit Celebrations and Capacity Building
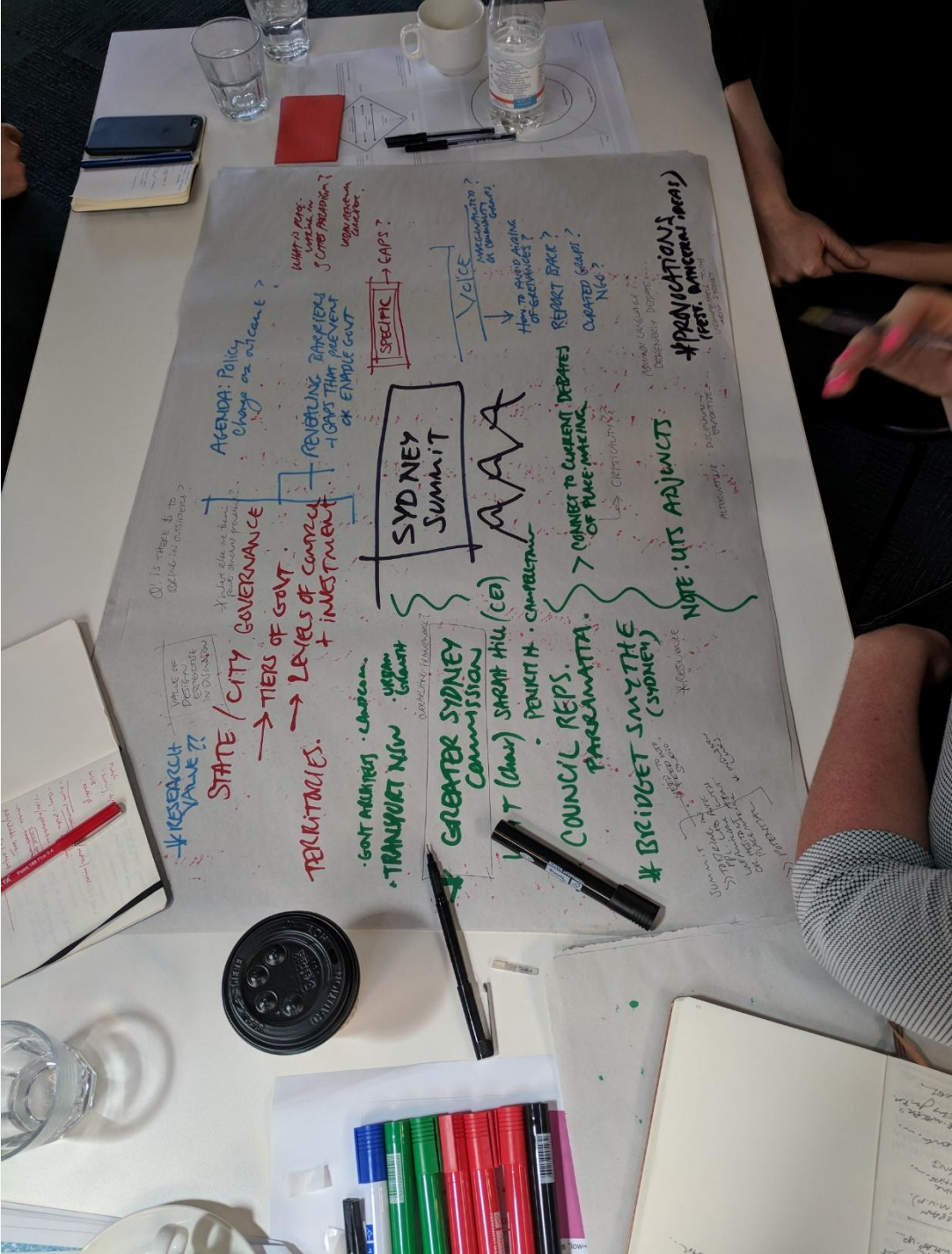
Summit guidelines

General framework
- Ideally 2 summits per state
- Aligned with stated vision for the potential of the Myer Project
- Will feed into studios
- Will be adapted to each context
- Used to showcase
  - students work
  - practitioners work
  - national and international best practice

Additional considerations
- May potentially share key note speakers across 5 states.
- Use as strategy to report and communicate across the consortium

Research Agenda

- Participants rapidly identified research questions related to the project and their established areas of expertise. We then worked together to group these questions. Over the coming weeks we will build on the network created at this workshop to contact each other about topics of interest and to collaborate on projects. Already four intersecting nodes of interest are emerging around evaluation and measurement; how we do placemaking in Australia; method and methodology; and the theory and ethics of placemaking.

Evaluation and measurement of placemaking

- What are the property value impacts of placemaking? (Neil)
- Does place design quality influence urban economic performance? (Jon)
- How do you evaluate the outcomes of place-making? (Sebastian)
- Evaluation Lovability Index (Cristina Garduno, Dominique Hes)
- How to monitor and assess the studio's outcomes and impact in it's post-implementation phase? From different perspectives: standards, councils, developers ... (Eliza)
- Placemaking's impact on wellbeing (Hillary)

Australian Placemaking Practice

- What is the state of placemaking in Australia? (Sebastian)
- Place-making in outer suburbs (Carolyn)
- How to sustain placemaking efforts/energy? (Courtney)
- What short-time / temporary urban activations have the best capacity to create long-term results? (Tanja)
- How do we better integrate the ecological with the social dimensions of placemaking? (Andrew)
- Youth engagement in placemaking (Jillian)
- Is placemaking gendered? (Derlie)

Method and Methodology of placemaking

- Is there a place for disciplinarity in place making? (Rhys)
- How can a multi-discipline approach be taught? (Lara)
- Contemporary art as place-making tool (Julian)
- How can digital technology integrate with project management theory and practice? (Julian, Jane Matthews-Curtin)
- The link between placemaking and regenerative development (Dominique. Robyn)
- Placemaking methods: co-design, creative practice, …? (Robyn)
- Reading urban places and spaces (Francesco Mancini-Curtin)

Theory and ethics of place and placemaking

- What is place? (Laurel)
- What drives place shaping? (Derlie)
- Placemaking without gentrification? (Carolyn)
- Complex placed based systems change (Joanne)
- How is power experienced in place? (Laurel)
- How does state/local ownership/governance impact citizen rights to public space? (Jillian)
- How to engage mobilities and trajectories placemaking thought? (Julian. Robyn)

Parting Thoughts from Michael Myer

Great placemaking will challenge the conventions.

Great placemakers will challenge conventional wisdom.

- It is so important to be teaching students to ==think outside the box== and to ==work across scales== - from granular (tactical urbanism) to village to building a whole new town.
- [Studio takeaways:] ==Do cool things==. Do seriously cool things. ==Be bold. Take risks.== This is not ordinary sh!t. Business as usual does not work. Don't do cookie cutter placemaking. Think across disciplines. Be bold.
- MONA as metaphor - a beautiful building that completely changed the city and the state.
- ==Break the rules. Change the rules.== Move the goal posts. Break the mold. Write a new rule book. You can do anything.

Next Steps

- Agreed timeline for module creation.
  - Curtin suggested delivering their modules on early march
- EOI template to receive prospected projects for studios (Unimelb to update and share)
- Continued discussion on studio framework (Unimelb with input from all)
- Agreement on reporting Processes (Unimelb with input from all)
- Expectations and information required from each studio leader (To be determined after web strategy)
- Expectations and information required from each state-based summit (To be determined after web strategy)

Thank you!