

COMMUNITY VOICE A SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE

ELEVATING COMMUNITY VOICES
& STRENGTHS ACROSS GLEBE,
PYRMONT, HAYMARKET & ULTIMO

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2023

Centre for
Social Justice and
Inclusion



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We owe the vibrant communities across Glebe, Pyrmont, Ultimo and Haymarket our deepest gratitude for this work. Thank you to the Community Advisory Group and community members who worked alongside us and contributed your expertise, ideas, and passion. We thank you for going on this journey with us, for trusting us with your stories, and sharing your strengths. We have learned so much from you and we hope this report does justice to your experiences. We know the work doesn't stop here, and we look forward to our continuing collaborations.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands our university now stands and where this project unfolded. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for this land.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	3
Contents	4
List of tables	5
List of figures	5
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	6
2. APPROACH AND METHOD	11
3. SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE	20
4. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND PROJECTS	26
5. KEY LEARNINGS	35
6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS	40
References	43
Appendix	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Silicon Valley Case Study	8
Table 2. 2021 Census Data: Demographics, Families, Employment and Housing for the Suburbs of Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo	9
Table 3. Research on Ensuring Community Voice and Decision Making	28
Table 4. Research on Influencing Attitudes and Behaviours to Create a Sustainable and Thriving Environment	29
Table 5. Research on Using Public and Private Spaces Effectively to Connect People	31
Table 6. Research on Affordable and Adequate Housing	32
Table 7. Research on Improving Public Transport	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 2021 Census Data: Percentage of People Born in Australia and Top 5 Responses for Country of Birth	10
Figure 2. Overview of Approach and Method Used in Suburb Level Theory of Change Project	12
Figure 3. Suburb Level Theory of Change	23



1

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Contributing to public good is at the heart of UTS's values and vision. With social justice embedded in the fabric of its strategic direction, UTS is defined by how we support communities to thrive, economically, socially, and culturally (UTS 2027).

In 2020, it was announced that UTS would be part of Tech Central, an innovative and technology hub located in Sydney and home to leading technology firms, start-ups, incubators, a research hospital, and multiple research institutes. While bringing opportunity to the area, new infrastructure can also have negative consequences for local communities (Chappel & Jeon, 2021; Echeverri-Carrol et al., 2018; McNeill, 2016). Existing literature has found that without a robust inclusion approach, there is risk that the opportunities promised by innovation precincts will not flow across the community in equitable ways. In fact, international experience suggests that the disproportionate power held by 'tech giants' can overshadow community voice, and potentially deepen inequalities in the local community.

As a member of our local community, UTS seeks to create positive change by working for and with members of community, recognising them as the experts in what our shared neighbourhood needs to thrive. Based on this, the UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion's (CSJI) Social Impact Team sought to bring focus to community voices, experiences, and strengths to ensure an asset-based approach to practice that harnessed the power of community and avoided the potential harm and unintended consequences that have surfaced across past innovation precinct efforts (see case study 1). Using Appreciative Inquiry as an asset-based method for elevating community voice and uncovering strengths, this project worked across

Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo to capture community at its best, enabling factors for success, and potential gaps that may exist. These insights, combined with an understanding of what works both locally and globally, have provided the foundations for a suburb level vision for the future.

This report captures learnings from the project, and highlights the strengths in community across Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo. The report includes a Suburb Level Theory of Change, which outlines key areas to contribute to an increased sense of belonging in a thriving community. It also combines community insights with disciplinary and practice expertise to inform a place-based change agenda. Importantly, the report highlights how this work is being used as a foundation for continued work with the community.

TABLE 1. SILICON VALLEY CASE STUDY

Case Study 1: Silicon Valley

Chapple and Jeon (2021) found that the arrival of a tech company increases housing prices disproportionately in its immediate vicinity, with a significant price premium of 7.1% over a two-year period. Their findings also suggest that large tech campuses will have their biggest impact when located near low-income neighbourhoods.

Chapple and Jeon (2021) conclude that, well before a large tech company moves into a vulnerable, low-income neighbourhood, jurisdictions should take proactive measures to stabilise housing markets. McNeill (2016) draws attention more broadly to the dilemmas that tech-friendly city governments face in handling high-growth, high-risk firms. In an analysis of San Francisco and Silicon Valley, McNeill points out that there has been a sizeable political and cultural backlash against the impact of the technology sector on San Francisco.

There has been heated debate and activism around the city's urban cultural politics (e.g. Solnit, 2013), driven by issues such as the private "Google bus" shuttles between San Francisco and the Valley which are accused of promoting gentrification and obstructing municipal buses; the role of Airbnb listings as a tool for landlords to evict low-wage renters in the city, and a backlash against ride-sharing services such as Uber from the taxi lobby. In particular, the link between the pro-technology policies of the city's mayor, Ed Lee, elected in 2011 and again virtually unopposed in 2015, and his campaign donors have undergone critical scrutiny (Green, 2015). (McNeill, 2016: 495)

McNeill (2016) argues that technology and venture capital firms have played an important role in restructuring San Francisco as a city. As an example, Twitter was persuaded to stay in San Francisco (rather than relocate to a lower tax city) when a small area of the central city was rezoned for a differential business tax rate. In return, firms locating in this area had to sign a Community Benefit Agreement which would commit them to make practical contributions to the local area. However, McNeill (2016: 504) notes that the community contributions "were barely quantifiable" while there was a clear impact on housing affordability in the area.

1.2 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Focused on suburbs surrounding University of Technology Sydney, this project worked in partnership with community in Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo. These suburbs are located on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this area.

Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo are vibrant places, home to rich cultural diversity and have a combined estimated population of 60,265 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Table 2 below shows 2021 Census Data for Glebe, Haymarket Pyrmont, and Ultimo compared to NSW and Australia. Notably the 2021 census did not include questions related to sexuality, gender, or variations of sex characteristics and as a result the data below does not include disaggregated data around LGBTQIA+ community members.

TABLE 2.
2021 CENSUS DATA: DEMOGRAPHICS, FAMILIES, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING FOR THE
SUBURBS OF GLEBE, HAYMARKET, PYRMONT, ULTIMO COMPARED TO NSW AND AUSTRALIA

	Glebe	Haymarket	Pyrmont	Ultimo	NSW	Australia
DEMOGRAPHICS						
Male	47.8%	49.2%	50.5%	50.8%	49.4%	49.3%
Female	52.2%	50.8%	49.5%	49.2%	50.6%	50.7%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3.3%	0.2%	1.2%	1.0%	3.4%	3.2%
FAMILIES						
Couple family with children	27.3%	17.0%	27.6%	23.3%	44.7%	43.7%
Couple family without children	52.9%	68.6%	57.9%	59.9%	37.9%	38.8%
One parent family	17.3%	8.2%	12.2%	11.0%	15.8%	15.9%
Other family*	2.6%	6.4%	2.4%	6.0%	1.6%	1.6%

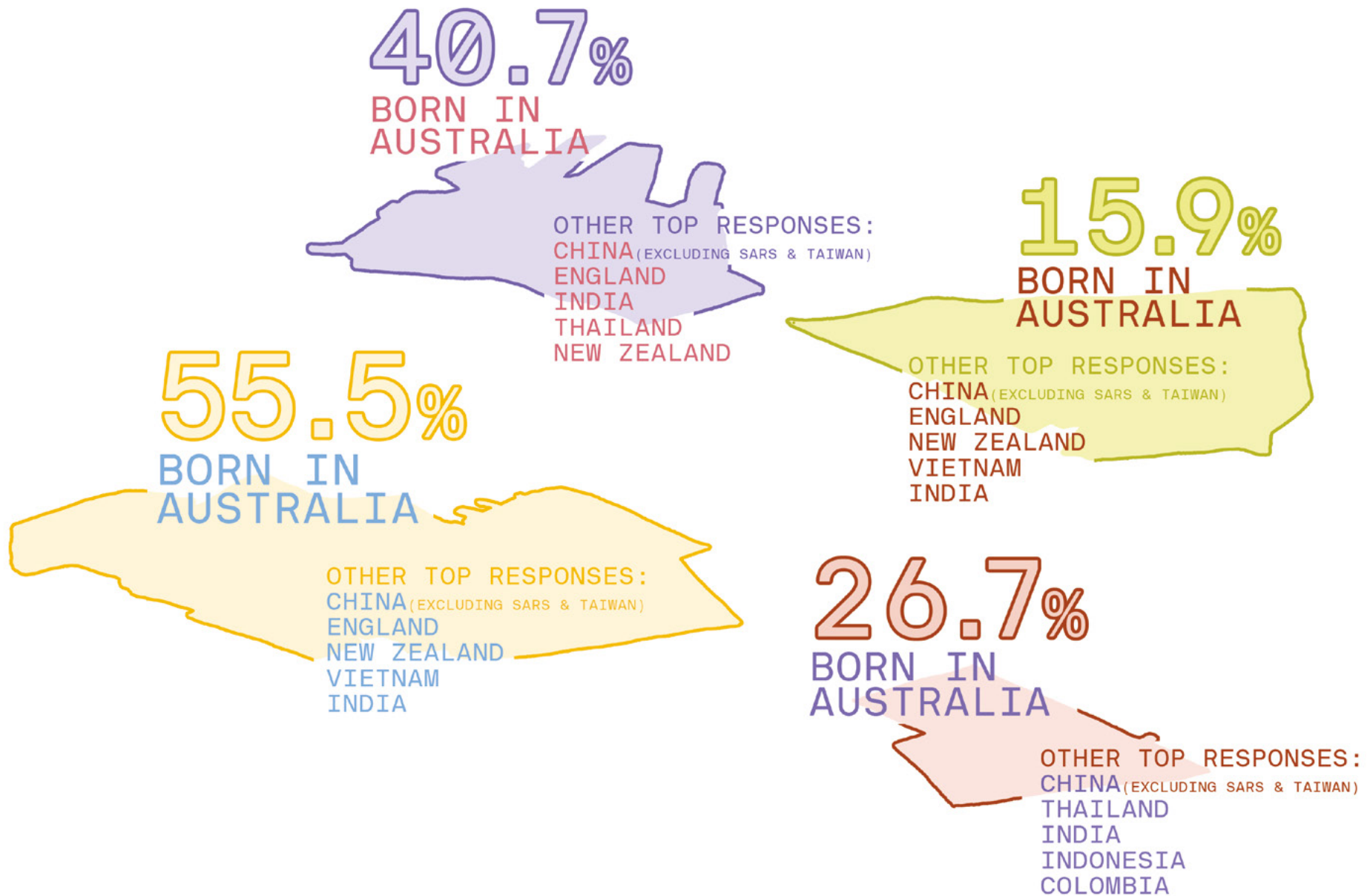


FIGURE 1. 2021 CENSUS DATA: PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE BORN IN AUSTRALIA AND TOP 5 RESPONSES FOR COUNTRY OF BIRTH



2

APPROACH & METHOD

FIGURE 2. OVERVIEW OF APPROACH AND METHOD USED IN SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE PROJECT

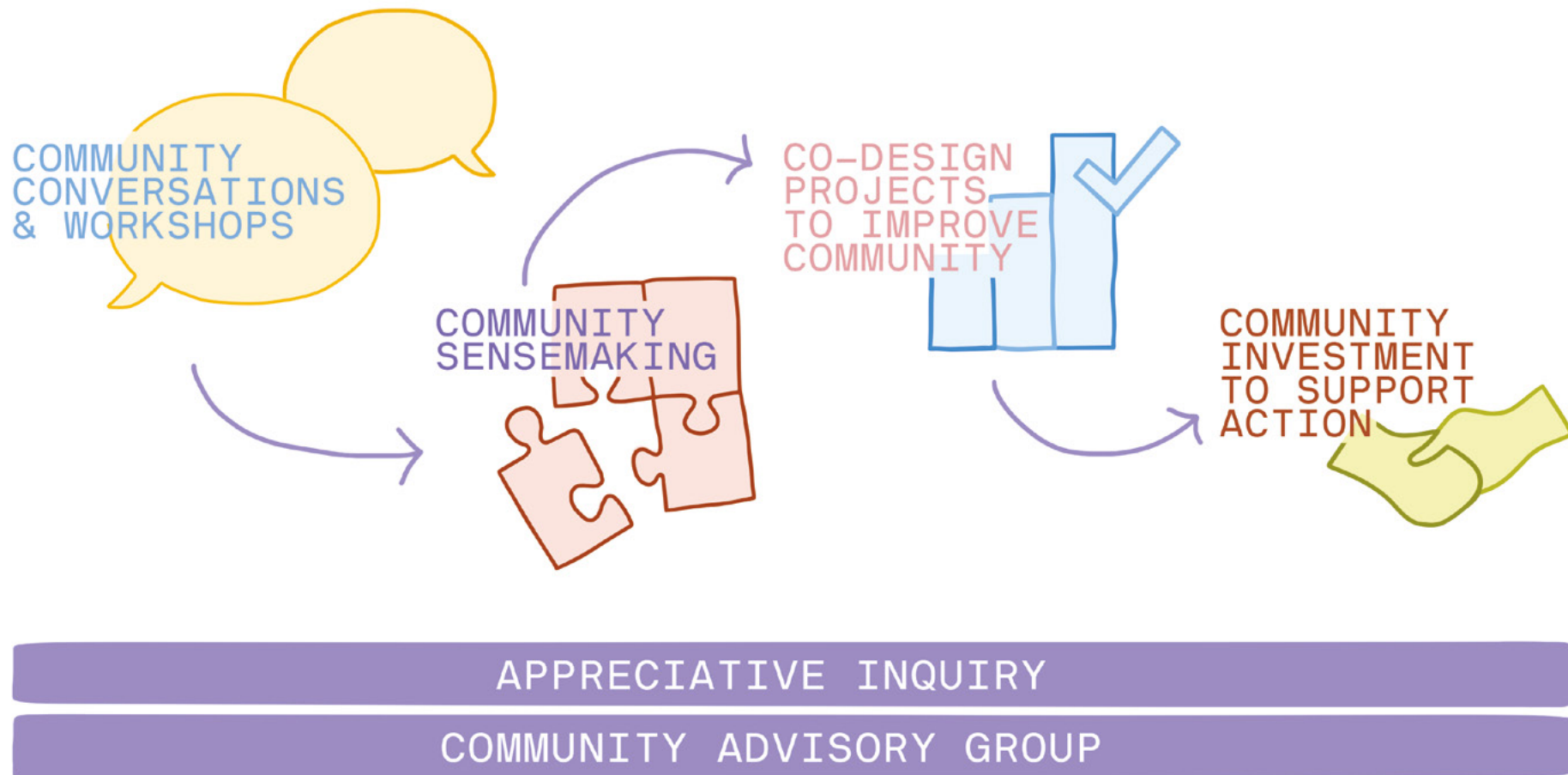


Figure 2. above shows a high-level overview of the approach and community engagements undertaken during the development of the theory of change and community investments. This section provides additional detail about this approach.

2.1 APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The project was underpinned by Appreciative Inquiry. Originating from the field of organisational change, Appreciative Inquiry brings an asset-based approach to problem solving. A narrative rich and collaborative process is used to uncover the strengths across the system. The process assumes the questions most often asked by institutions set the direction in which they move. Shifting the dialogue from the deficits to strengths, therefore, is believed to result in positive asset-based narratives that lead to transformational change. Rather than looking at a context as a problem to be solved, the approach uncovers assets and uses these as foundations to build upon.

The model uses a multi-step process that begins with an inquiry into ‘the best of what is, in order to imagine what could be’ (Bushe, 2013, p. 41). Informed by this process, our approach for this project weaved iteratively through:

- Establishing partnerships and setting the foundation for engagement;
- Project design;
- Community conversations; and
- Community-led Sensemaking.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY EXPLORES ‘THE BEST OF WHAT IT IS, IN ORDER TO IMAGINE WHAT COULD BE’ (BUSHE, 2013)

2.2 COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP: ESSENTIAL IN CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

The Suburb Level Theory of Change Advisory Group was comprised of community leaders across Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo. Prior to the commencement of the project, the Advisory Group met to consider whether the project was needed in the community and how to best move forward. The Advisory Group met monthly and played a central role in shaping the project's directions and connecting the project team to community members. The Advisory Group contributed their expertise through providing feedback on the overall program and process. The group was vital in developing an effective theory of change.

See Appendix 1 for a sample agenda from the Community Advisory Group meetings.



2.3 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS, WORKSHOPS, & SENSEMAKING

Data to inform the theory of change was generated through a series of community conversations, workshops, sensemaking, and co-design held in 2022. As detailed above, these engagements were designed from an Appreciative Inquiry lens and with input from the Community Advisory Group.

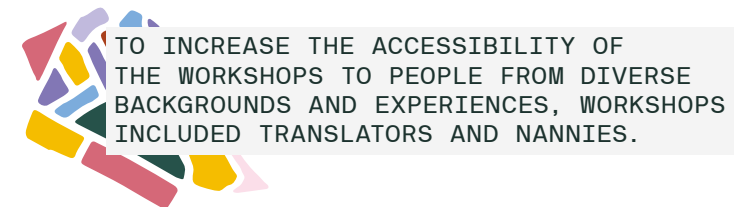
2.3.1 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Held in September 2022, the Community Voice workshops sought to bring community members together to explore when community connections and strengths were at their very best. Four workshops were run in total – one facilitated during the evening and the others during the day to accommodate different availabilities. Two of the four workshops were held in community with community groups. To build inclusive processes into the project, conversational interviews were also conducted one on one through pre-existing community group gatherings. This provided opportunities for those participants who were unable or unwilling to attend a workshop.

Who we heard from:

Approximately 100 community members shared their stories as part of the community voice workshop, ranging from 18-95 years old. Of those who identified the community they were connected to: 38 nominated Ultimo, 17 Glebe, 15 Pyrmont and 3 Haymarket. Community members described their ethnicities as:

- Chinese
- Aboriginal
- German
- Japanese
- Caucasian
- French
- British
- Fijian Indian
- Indian
- South African
- Colombian
- Bangari
- Irish
- Persian



To increase the accessibility of the workshops to people from diverse backgrounds and experiences, interpreters and nannies were incorporated into the project.

During this process, participants were asked to share a story of when, being part of the community, made them feel fulfilled, safe, well, and alive. Participants were then engaged in a conversation about what enabled these moments – including personal strengths, contribution of others and systemic enablers. These engagements also included an opportunity to explore visions for a future. In this exercise community members were asked to imagine a future where such stories of strength were the norm and consider what needs changing to reach this optimistic vision of the future.



IMAGE 1. COMMUNITY VOICE WORKSHOP WITH PARENTS GROUP (ABOVE)

2.3.2 UTS INITIAL SENSEMAKING

Prior to the community sensemaking workshop, members of the project team at UTS met to analyse data and create a draft theory of change. Team members developed a set of themes from the data and used this to guide the development of a preliminary theory of change model.

2.3.3 COMMUNITY SENSEMAKING

Following the community conversations and community voice workshop, a sensemaking session was held in October 2022 with 36 community members. The purpose of this session was to involve community members in the data analysis process by seeking their input on the preliminary theory of change model.



A COMMUNITY-BASED SENSEMAKING PROCESS FACILITATED COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE. THIS ENABLED COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON KEY AREAS THAT WERE MISSING AND TO REVISE LANGUAGE TO BETTER DESCRIBE LIVED EXPERIENCES, STRENGTHS AND NEEDS.

The session began with a recap of the project's journey so far, highlighting the intentions of the project and providing a demographic overview of who had participated in sharing their stories. After a presentation on the draft theory of change, community members were asked to individually interrogate the model, identify what was missing and review the language that had been used in the model. Following this, participants moved into small groups to discuss

their reflections, which were then shared with the wider group. From this process, community members were able to provide input into shaping the theory of change. The sensemaking workshop also included an exercise for community members to identify key priority areas and to discuss what success looks like for each of the areas. Details from what emerged in the sensemaking process are included in section 3 of this report.



IMAGE 2 (RIGHT) AND IMAGE 3 (BELOW) COMMUNITY SENSEMAKING

2.3.4 CO-DESIGN

In November 2022, a co-design workshop was held with community to collaboratively develop project ideas focused on priority areas which emerged during the sense-making process. Twenty-three community members and 4 UTS researchers attended the session. The workshop included opportunities for participants to develop a shared understanding of the project space, ideate potential solutions, develop a project prototype and refine their ideas based on collaboration and feedback from other participants.

Participants used a project canvas to plan out project aims, resources, funding and key dates for their chosen ideas. Community members were then invited to submit their project ideas to the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion. Community members who participated in previous phases of the project and did not attend the workshop were also invited to submit project ideas. The Social Impact Team collated projects, which were then available for community members to vote on. Community voted for the 3 projects they thought would have the most impact and these received a \$5000 investment to jumpstart their project. Information about these projects is detailed in section 4.2.



IMAGES 4 (LEFT) AND IMAGE 5 (BELOW) CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP



IMAGE 6 (LEFT) CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP.

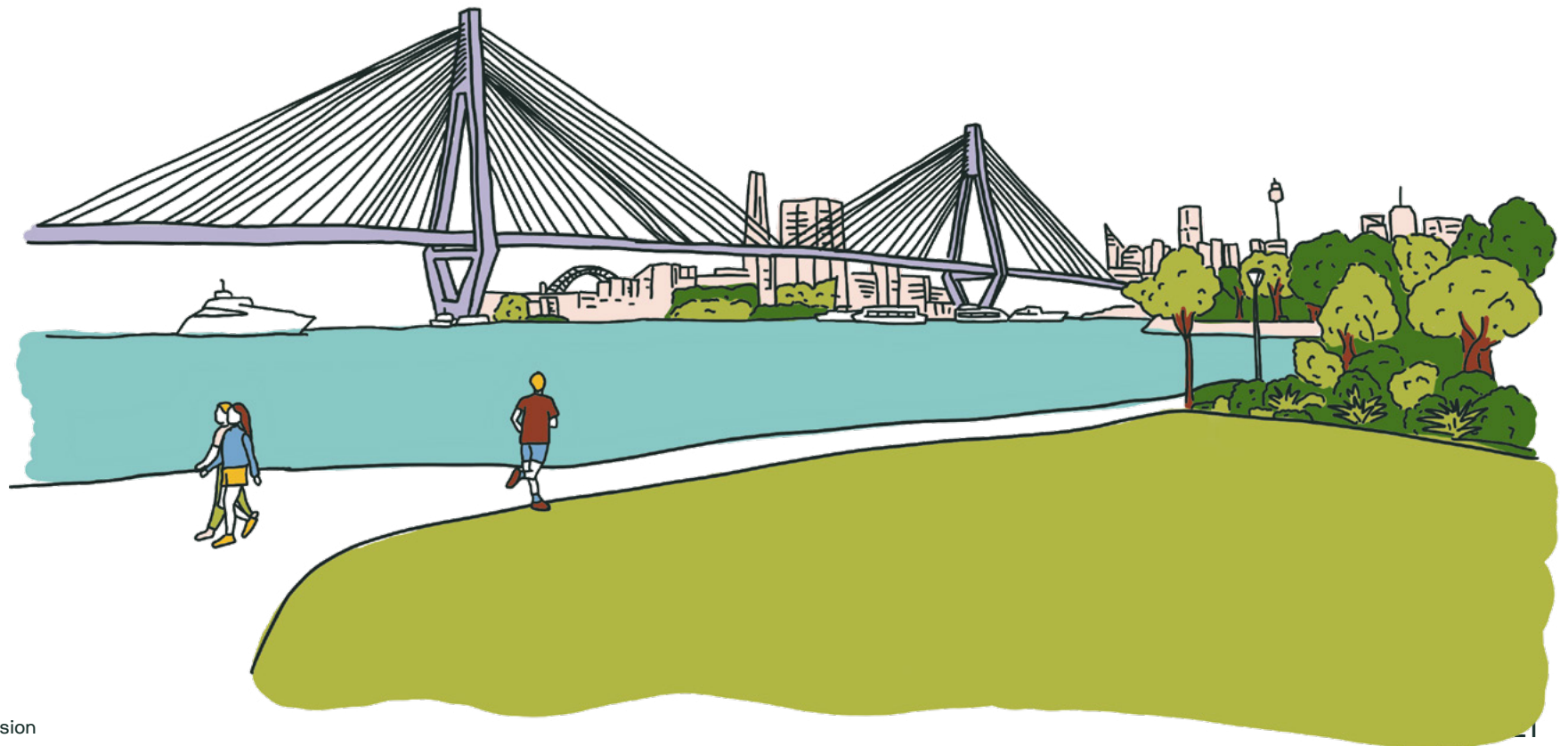


3

SUBURB
LEVEL
THEORY OF
CHANGE

3 SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE

Data generated from the conversations, workshops and sensemaking were used to develop a theory of change for Haymarket, Glebe, Pyrmont, and Ultimo, representing key insights on a vision for the future. These insights, and the resulting theory of change are detailed in the section that follows.



3.1

SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE

Figure 3 below depicts a visualisation of the Suburb Level Theory of Change developed through this project. At a high level, a theory of change provides a conceptual framework for social change and the conditions required to create such change (Clark, 2019). In developing this framework, stakeholders collectively articulate a long-term goal and the preconditions which must exist for this goal to become a reality.

This theory of change captures a community vision for an increased sense of belonging in a thriving community. It is based on the understanding that change is not linear, but complex and requires interconnected actions driven by community strengths, perspectives, and ideas. This interconnectedness is represented through the arrows in the theory of change visualisation.

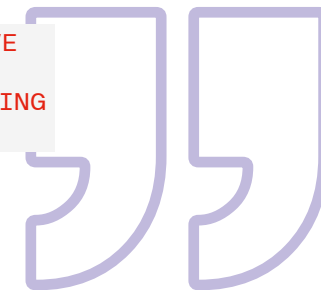
Collectively, the following underpinnings play an essential role in community vision:

- a. Community services, governments, and organisations which are responsive to community needs
- b. Community voice informing decision-making, programming, and advocacy, and
- c. Increased levels of safety in place.



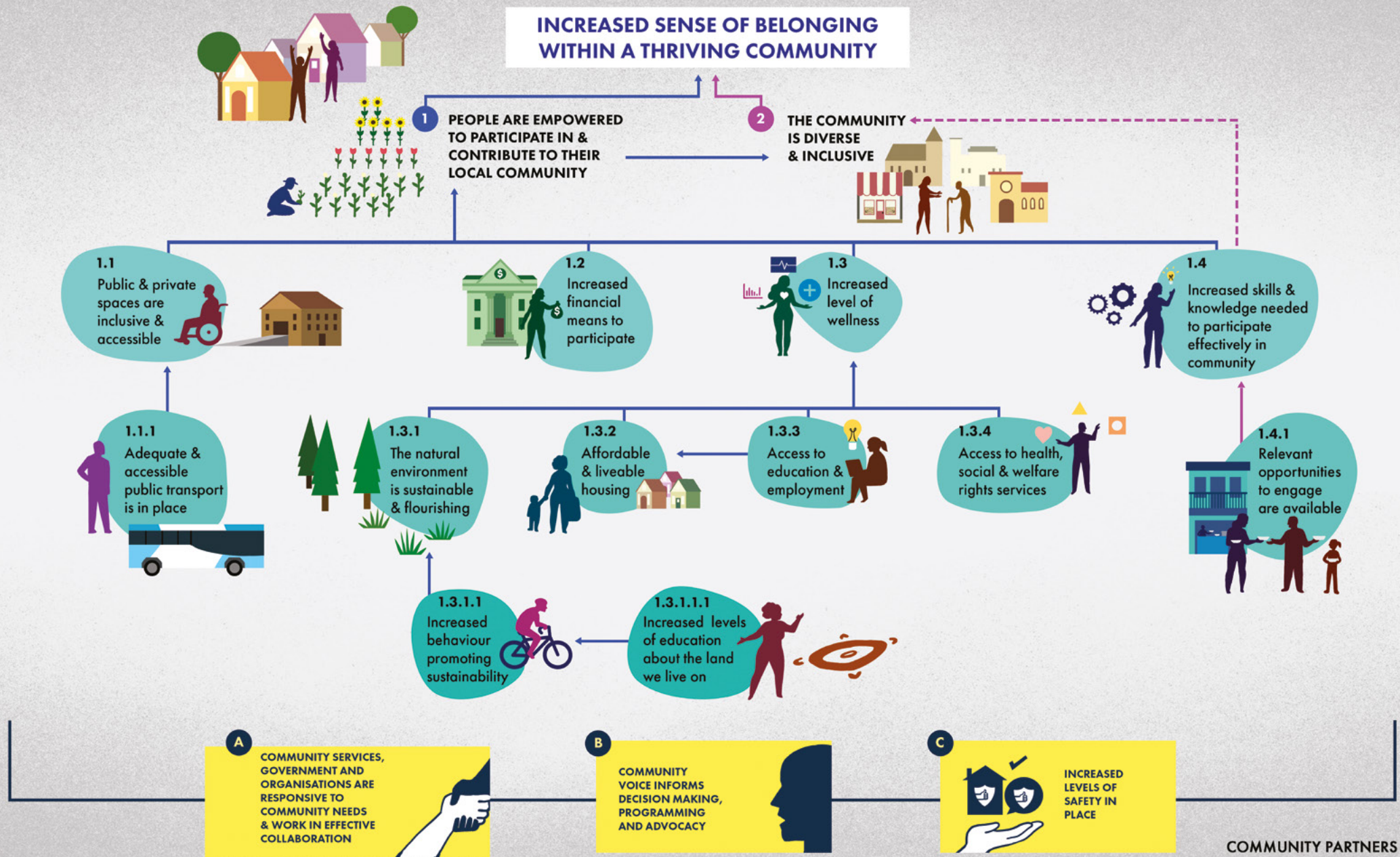
TALK WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, THEY ARE THE ONES THAT KNOW THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

COMMUNITY VOICES (PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK) NEED TO BE HEARD MORE. CONSULTATION PROCESSES ARE BECOMING MORE TICKER BOX SYSTEMS.



SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE

INCREASED SENSE OF BELONGING WITHIN A THRIVING COMMUNITY



Two key outcomes emerged as important in shaping an increased sense of belonging within a thriving community. These outcomes, and their associated pre-conditions are described below.

OUTCOME 1: PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO PARTICIPATE IN OR CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY

In order for people to feel that they are empowered to participate in or contribute to their local community the following must be met:

- 1.1 Increased financial means to participate
- 1.2 Public and private spaces are inclusive and accessible
- 1.3 Increased levels of wellness
- 1.4 Increased skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively

For public and private spaces to be inclusive and accessible (1.2), adequate and accessible public transport must be in place (1.2.1).

Increased levels of wellness (1.3) are achieved through the following areas:

- 1.3.1 The natural environment is sustainable and flourishing
- 1.3.2 Affordable and liveable housing
- 1.3.3 Access to education and employment
- 1.3.4 Access to health, social, and welfare rights services

In order for the natural environment to be sustainable and flourishing (1.3.1), increased attitudes and behaviours in support of sustainability (1.3.1.1) and increased levels of education about the lands on which we live (1.3.1.1.1) are needed.

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE IS WHERE PEOPLE GATHER, SPEND TIME AND DO ACTIVITIES. IT IS NOT ONLY A PHYSICAL SPACE WHERE PEOPLE MEET AND DO LEISURE ACTIVITIES, IT IS ALSO SOMETHING THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE TOGETHER.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITATES MORE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE AREA AND EASIER ACCESSIBILITY TO THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW THE AREA.

GLEBE IS MADE UP OF A STRONG CONNECTION OF SOCIAL HOUSING.

I FELT MOST ALIVE WHEN I FIRST CAME TO SYDNEY AND IT WAS PRE-LOCKDOWN. WHEN THE HOUSING GOT TOGETHER TO SHARE RESOURCES AND FOOD AND GROCERIES.

PUBLIC SPACES, LIKE THE FORESHORE WALK, ARE REALLY IMPORTANT. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH OF A FORESHORE, PEOPLE CAN STOP ALONG THE WAY AND ENGAGE.

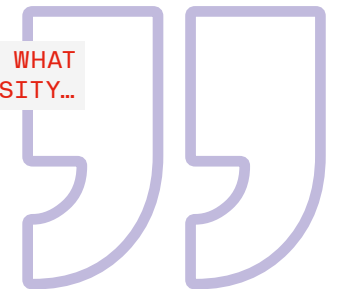
OUTCOME 2: THE COMMUNITY IS DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

This area is informed by people being empowered to participate to contribute to their local community (1). For community to be diverse and inclusive, community also need increased skills to participate effectively (1.4) and relevant opportunities to engage (1.4.1).



THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND INCLUSION IS WHAT WE ALL ASPIRE. THE COMMUNITY CENTRE IS A GOOD PLACE WHERE WE CAN ENJOY OURSELVES.

THERE IS AN ENERGY IN GLEBE. WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT IS ITS DIVERSITY...



4

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & PROJECTS



4.1 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES: WHAT WE HEARD AND KEY RESEARCH

Through the process of developing the theory of change, community identified five priority areas for immediate action. These priorities areas included: ensuring community voice informs decision making, influencing attitudes and behaviours to create a sustainable and thriving environment, using public and private spaces effectively to connect people, ensuring affordable and adequate housing, and improving public transport.

The first part of this section investigates what community members shared about the 5 community identified priority areas and presents existing literature in each of these areas. The second part of this section provides information about community projects, based on these priorities.

4.1.1 ENSURING COMMUNITY VOICE INFORMS DECISION MAKING

WHAT WE HEARD:

COMMUNITY VOICES (PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK HERE) NEED TO BE HEARD MORE. CONSULTATION PROCESSES ARE BECOMING MORE TICKER BOX SYSTEMS.

Ensuring that community voice informs decision-making is one the underpinnings of the theory of change and was identified as a priority area for community. This was seen as critical and community members talked about the importance of community voice being embedded into decision-making about the local community. One community member talked specifically about how consultation processes can feel like 'tick the box' exercises and that they would like to see decision-makers engage more deeply with community.

NO ONE IS LISTENING. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE A SAY.

Notably, Indigenous community members also reflected on the importance of First Nations inclusion in decision-making and specifically reported that within Glebe, Aboriginal people do not have say in local decisions, programming, or opportunities.

Overall, participants felt that using community experience and perspectives to drive decision-making would lead to better outcomes. Community members described this approach as shared problem solving, demonstrating the view to work collaboratively across the local area to help shape a thriving community.

COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES:

- Ensuring community voice informs decision making.
- Influencing attitudes and behaviours to create sustainable and thriving environment.
- Using public and private spaces to effectively connect people.
- Ensuring affordable and adequate housing.
- Improving public transport.

FUTURE

WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:
 ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE
 LISTEN TO INDIGENOUS VOICES
 COMMUNITY VOICES TO BE HEARD

TABLE 3. RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY VOICE AND DECISION MAKING

In a systematic review of literature focused on community voice and community voice strategies, Petiwala et al. (2021) indicate that strategies for community voice fall on a spectrum between passive and active approaches. Passive forms of community voice required less involvement from community and were found to transfer less power to community members compared to active forms of community voice (Petiwala et al., 2021). Active approaches of community voice are often described as “meaningful” or “authentic” and are typically understood as the ideal approach of engaging with community voices (Chandanabhumma, 2020; Hunt, 2019; Petiwala, 2021).

Pennington and Corcoran (2018) highlight that successful joint-decision making can enhance local conditions, improve health and wellbeing (at individual and community levels), and improve social relationships. However, they also indicate that joint decision making processes done poorly can have negative impacts on local communities such as increased frustration and loss of trust (Pennington & Corcoran, 2018).

4.1.2 INFLUENCING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

WHAT WE HEARD:

“SUSTAINABILITY IS REALLY KEY – WE LIVE IN A THROW AWAY CULTURE

Community members identified influencing attitudes and behaviours to create a sustainable and thriving environment as one priority in the local area. Community members talked about the value of local events, such as SecondHand Sundays, which bring community members together to recycle, repurpose or sell preloved items.

Related to this, community members also highlighted the importance of green spaces to build connection to nature and increase understanding of the local environment.



WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

EDUCATION ON SUSTAINABLE LIVING

NORMALISE SECOND HAND

ATTITUDE CHANGE

4.1

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES: WHAT WE HEARD AND KEY RESEARCH

TABLE 4. RESEARCH ON INFLUENCING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

According to the United Nations 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas (UN DESA, 2018) by 2050. This change is expected to impact the amount of waste that urban areas will be required to process, and the amount of money invested into Municipal Solid Waste Management Systems (MSWMS) (Hoorweg & Bhada-Tata, 2012). This forecast has implications for human health and the environment due to the emissions generated in landfills during decomposition. There is also concern about the space occupied by landfills, as they tend to fill up quickly and pose spatial problems. Such is the importance of waste management, that The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) qualifies it as a “basic human right” since this entails the reduction of greenhouse gases.

According to the World Economic and Social Survey 2013, investment in strategies to reduce waste production, improve waste collection and establish recycling systems is needed in most cities (UN DESA, 2013). In this regard, quality recycling systems are already being implemented in countries like Belgium. In this country, garbage bins are systematically rejected when there is no consistency in recycling (Euractiv, 2015). This case exemplifies very well the responsibility that citizens have and also the challenge that this system entails at the level of citizen awareness. It is very common for citizens to throw garbage into buckets that do not correspond.

Therefore, there is an unavoidable social dimension in MSWMS, and if we want to find feasible solutions to the challenges posed by WM around the world, great importance must be given to the social factors that influence household waste separation behaviour. Furthermore, they should be included in public WM measures. Some of the actions that are crucial, without the following being an exhaustive list, are: having a citizenry involved with the separation of packaging waste from its origin, the existence of an efficient and transparent local WM infrastructure and legislation that supports it and that is consistent with international laws on WM.

4.1.3 USING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES EFFECTIVELY TO CONNECT PEOPLE

WHAT WE HEARD:

PUBLIC SPACES [LIKE THE FORESHORE WALK] ARE REALLY IMPORTANT. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH OF A FORESHORE, PEOPLE CAN STOP ALONG THE WAY AND ENGAGE.

The second priority area identified by community was using public spaces to effectively connect people. Community members talked about public spaces that are integral to the local community, including the community square, libraries, schools, churches, cafes, pubs, and parks. Community also said that increased building development can impact on the ability to connect, citing that new developments have cut off public access to Chinatown making it feel further away and more isolated now.

QUARRY STREET IS SORT OF UNIQUE. THINGS THAT ATTRACT COMMUNITY ARE ALONG THAT SPINE WHICH IS WHY THINGS GO OFF THERE.

Community members also talked specifically about Quarry Street, located in Ultimo. They described Quarry Street as an important area, anchored by a park, church, school, and community centre. They also highlighted that there is a one-way street, with speed bumps which sends the message that it is mainly for walking.

PEOPLE CONNECT SO EASILY AS THERE ARE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS THAT ALLOW FOR COMMUNITY. PUBLIC SPACES ALLOW FOR COMMUNITY, I CAN SEE HOW THE COMMUNITY IS CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL AND VICE VERSA.



WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

MORE ACCESSIBLE PLACES TO CONNECT

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO JOIN COMMUNITY

TABLE 5. RESEARCH ON USING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES EFFECTIVELY TO CONNECT PEOPLE

The importance of public places became particularly evident during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic. During lockdowns in Sydney, outdoor public places became the only space for leisure, relaxation, and social connections outside of the household. A large-scale survey by the NSW government has found that this love of public spaces has remained since COVID-19 lockdowns, and their recent Public Spaces during COVID-19 survey found that even ‘as restrictions eased, people’s love for public spaces remained strong’ (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020). Perhaps as a result of this, the NSW Government appointed the first Minister for Public Spaces, Rob Stokes who helped to initiate the NSW Public Spaces Charter in 2022. This charter has 10 principles for public space in NSW and was created through discussions with Aboriginal people, state agencies, councils, non-government organisations, community, environmental and recreational groups. Organisations across NSW are encouraged to become signatories to this charter and promise to embed the 10 principles when they design or manage public spaces. The 10 principles include being open, accessible and safe for all, as well as fostering local culture and connection to Country (Iverson 2019; NSW Government 2022). These 10 principles for public space in NSW can be seen in practice through the two case studies below.

While public places enable a range of activities, the primary underpinning of public places is their capacity to cultivate social connections. Researcher on public places, Purnell (2019), argues that spaces actually become public places through their capacities to inspire connections between people. Other researchers in this area also agree that it is the connections between people, as well as the qualities of these connections, that make a space a public place (Bastomski & Smith 2017; Ceccato 2016; Cilliers & Timmermans 2016; Davison & Rowden 2012; Karimimoshaver et al 2021; Oranratmanee & Sachakul, 2014). The qualities of connections between people in public places are ideally egalitarian, voluntary, informal, and often spontaneous.

Public places have a casual quality that encourages feelings of relaxation and a dissolution of everyday social hierarchies. Public spaces are ‘informal, relaxing’ and enable people to connect in non-hierarchical ways (Oranratmanee & Sachakul, 2014, p.227). Researchers who write about the use of public places in Thailand tell that ‘being out in public is always associated with shopping, eating and watching activities in an informal, relaxing and modest manner’ (Oranratmanee & Sachakul, 2014, p.227). It is this relaxing, outdoor nature of public spaces that enable people to connect in specific ways. For example, those who pause to chat in a dog park are more likely to talk about their dogs’ breeds and habits than their income levels and social backgrounds. Social connections enabled in public places foster egalitarian communities that relate beyond divisions of class, gender, age, ability, religion and politics (Purnell 2019).

Community connections can be strengthened by public places, but in order to do so, these places must be safe and free from danger. When planning public places, designers must be aware of how gender, sexuality, race and disability can impact upon people’s capacity to engage in public places (Ceccato 2016; Lampe et al 2022). Researchers looking into survey data from the 2005 Everyday Life Incivility in Australia (ELIAS) project found that women limited their use of public places due to sexual harassment or ‘public incivilities’, such as pushing and cursing (Bastomski & Smith 2017). Women are therefore ‘situationally disadvantaged’ in public places (Gardner in Bastomski & Smith 2017, p. 73). Trans and gender diverse people also feel a ‘spatial stigma’ and threat of danger when they move through public places (Lampe et al 2022). In order for public places to be places for positive social interactions and thereby improve the health and wellbeing of communities, as is promoted by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (2020), public places must pay attention to the safety needs of all users.

4.1.4 ENSURING AFFORDABLE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING


WHAT WE HEARD:

The fourth priority area identified by community members was ensuring affordable and adequate housing. Community members discussed the impact of having affordable and liveable housing and that these played an important role in overall wellbeing and success for the local area.

GLEBE IS MADE UP OF A STRONG CONNECTION OF SOCIAL HOUSING.

Community members also highlighted the positive impacts of connections that came from social housing, and specifically named Bridge Housing as a facilitator for community connection in the local community. One community member also talked about how the people in housing came together to share resources, food, and groceries and that this not only fostered connection for her, but helped to reduce anxieties around basic living necessities.

BRIDGE HOUSING - ALLOWED ME TO USE THE COMMUNITY ROOMS AND SPACES FOR FREE



WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:
 AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 SAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS

TABLE 6. RESEARCH ON AFFORDABLE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING

<p>Access to quality affordable housing is essential to human health and wellbeing, with adequate housing having been recognised as a human right (United Nations, 2014). Importantly, affordable housing is more than just a shelter that house people. In fact, it also provides features to support its residents’ health and well-being, such as healthcare and childcare services (Meyer, 2015). Moreover, a successful program named Affordable Rents for College Students (ARCS) in Portland State provides assistance to college students who experienced homelessness, housing and food insecurity.</p> <p>Based on the result of an ARCS survey, most students highly rated this program as it has created better living experiences for their campus life (Allen, 2021). More importantly, Kottke et al. (2018) suggested that housing affordability can possibly reduce hospital visits and promotes health and well-being. This can be achieved by clinicians’ referral of their patients to necessary supportive services aiming to mitigate housing insecurity challenges.</p>

4.1.5 IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

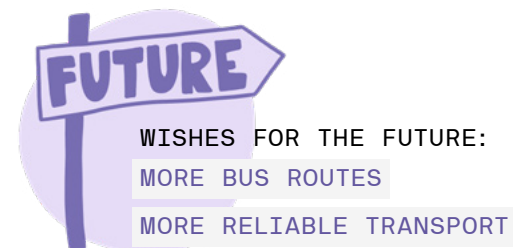
“WE DO NEED TO CHANGE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. IT WAS NERVE WRACKING DRIVING AROUND THE AREA. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITATES MORE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE AREA AND EASIER ACCESSIBILITY TO THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW THE AREA.”

Many community members discussed the importance of public transportation and identified that making transportation more accessible and reliable were key features of improving public transport. As part of this, community members also indicated that more bus routes were needed in order to access parts of the community. Some also reflected on increased traffic in the area, making it difficult to get to community activities and events. Community members also specifically raised that transportation at night is a significant gap in the local area.

“WE NEED MORE TRANSPORT IN THE AREAS. THERE IS A LACK OF BUS STOPS.”

Table 7. Research on Improving Public Transport

Public transportation is key to ensuring people can access opportunities in a local area, and has been identified as the mode of transportation which exerts the least monetary pressure on users (Hernández, 2017). Research from the UK has found that the quality of transport infrastructure and the adequacy of transport services directly affect health, such as reducing road accidents and harmful emissions (Mihaylova, 2021). Additional research from the UK has also found that people who rate public transport as ‘good’ are almost three times more likely to access public services such as health care, food shops, and education than those who rate it as ‘poor’ (Chatterjee et al., 2019). They are also slightly less likely to report feeling under strain, dissatisfied with life or experience poor mental health (Chatterjee et al, 2019).



4.2 COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Members of the community were invited to submit a brief project proposal on an idea that would make an impact in one of the five priority areas identified. Many of these were developed through the co-design workshop. Seven project proposals were submitted, and community voted upon the 3 projects they felt would have the most impact. These projects received a \$5000 investment. Three successful projects included Pymont Indigenous Garden, Community Voice, Community Stories and Upcycle to Recycle.

The Pymont Indigenous Garden aims to create a space through which locals can learn about and tend to native plants. By clearing a chosen site in Pymont and working with local Aboriginal Elders, the group plan to create a collaborative space that contributes to the local area. Once complete, the garden will provide a space for community members to connect and collaborate as well as provide education on First Nations solutions to sustainability in the local environment.

The Community Voice, Community Stories project aims to build a sense of self-efficacy by providing a platform through which collective voices can be heard on issues that matter to the community. These community stories will be showcased at local community events and shown via videos, photography and banners. The stories will offer an opportunity for community members to find common ground, experiences that resonate with them, and the power in speaking out.

The final project that received funding is 'Upcycle to Recycle' which with a focus on sustainability, provides community with skill development to repair and upcycle their items rather than contribute them to landfill.

The impact of these projects will be monitored during 2023 and funding recipients will provide a brief overview of the impact achieved and how the funding was spent.





5

KEY LEARNINGS

5.1

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The application of Appreciative Inquiry at the community level was an effective process to develop a theory of change in a participatory, place-based way. Through the participatory nature of the process, community were not only engaged through workshops and interviews but were also key in making sense of the data collected. The process allowed the team to understand community needs using community voice. This resulted in an improved understanding of lived experience and contextual knowledge for the purpose of informing a social, economic and cultural change agenda.

Unexpected benefits of this approach included the development of connections between community members resulting in new initiatives, partnerships and better use of existing skills and knowledge within the area. Furthermore, the participatory nature of this process ensured that the approach was not of pure extraction of knowledge but rather placed community as co researchers.

One community member commented that they liked appreciative inquiry because of the 'The discourse of engagement by the participants from a mixture of diverse backgrounds and experience through community. This allowed great opportunities for discussion on positive approaches from our working groups for developing Community base projects.'



5.2 CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP EVALUATION

To understand what worked well and what could be improved in future sessions, participants were invited to provide feedback on the co-design session. The evaluation also asked participants to share their key learnings from the day, how the workshop assisted them in developing a project idea, and to rate the workshop overall. 19 participants completed the co-design evaluation.

Insights from the day included reflection on:

- Being able to learn what other members in the community thought were important issues
- The role of community-driven ideas and projects
- Challenges related to seeing an idea take shape into a project, and the associated decision-making process
- Hearing other people's ideas and opinions
- Sustainability and inclusiveness being common themes throughout the groups
- Feeling that the workshop organisers care about ageing residents in local community

Participants were also asked to reflect on how the workshop assisted them in developing a project idea. Most responses to this question focused on the collaborative elements of the workshop, and that they felt inspired by hearing other people's ideas and stories. Additional responses included that while they felt inspired by the ideas, the process also made them realise how much is involved in project planning. As one participant wrote, "We were inspired at first but reality hit later in the day". Adjustments to the workshop

structure, particularly around providing more time to develop project ideas and explorations around project management capacity building could help to address this in future sessions.

In identifying what worked well in the workshops, participants noted that the session was well facilitated, with strong foundations at the outset around the importance of listening to other people's ideas with compassion and respect. Participants also reported that the conversations and opportunity to discuss project ideas with other people worked well, including an activity called "I wish, I like" which aims to provide a format to provide feedback in constructive ways. Participants also thought the combination of knowledge and interests in the room was valuable, as well as the involvement of community members in developing project ideas.

For improving in the future, participants suggested that more time was needed to discuss projects and the project planning resource that was provided. This suggests that in future iterations, the agenda for the day could be revised to allow more time for community to develop projects together. There was also feedback that suggested additional stakeholders, such as the City of Sydney, be invited to the session.

15 participants responded to the question asking them to rate the workshop overall, on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 10 (very good). The average rating based on these responses was 9.



5.3 OVERALL PROJECT DESIGN

There were a number of factors that contributed to the success of this engagement. Firstly, the team was strategic in designing ways to ensure all community had the opportunity to contribute to the project. Examples of how the team ensured that diverse community members could access the project included:

- Translation of materials into relevant languages
- Use of interpreters at events
- Access to childcare
- Accessible spaces
- Use of scribes to ensure that participants were able to fully engage, and that English literacy was not a barrier to participation.
- Financial remuneration in line with ethical considerations that provided value to community knowledge and time.
- Multiple ways to engage with the project to suit community needs. This included workshops at various times of the day, one-on-one interview options and conducting interviews during existing community get togethers.

The participatory approach to the project was critical both in the design of the project as well as implementation. A project advisory group made up of self-selected community members was formed and met regularly to guide the design of the project. This ensured that the project was community driven throughout the process.

To build upon this further, partnerships were central to the project. In order to develop and maintain relationships in the community, CSJI team members attended and contributed to existing local community meetings including monthly meetings with Pymont Ultimo Network of Services (PUNS) and COG (Coalition of Glebe Groups). The project also built new partnerships between UTS staff and community members. This included 4 researchers from CSJI, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Climate Change Cluster, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences who participated in co-design alongside community members.

Upon reflection of the project, there are key areas that the team will consider in future iterations of this work. These include:

- **PROJECT TIMELINE:** due to requirements of funding expenditure by end of 2022, the window the project could operate in was limited. This placed undue time pressures on the project which impacted the quality and volume of research produced to support implementation. Time considerations should be responsive to project needs rather than financial requirements.
- **ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT:** We were unable to have academics attend our collective sense making workshop to provide expertise in key areas. Further consideration to underlying reasons is needed however time was likely a factor.
- **CONTINUOUS REVIEW:** The theory of change represents community needs at that point in time. This demonstrates that an effective mechanism in engaging community should be continuous. The theory of change should be reviewed annually together with communities involved.
- **PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT:** Gaps in the diversity of participants exist. Future iteration should work to ensure that more groups have access to the project.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COMMUNITY LED PROJECTS:** To support implementation of projects in the community, capacity building in spaces such as evaluation, grant writing, project management and communications would support project leads.
- **FORMAL GRANT PROCESS:** To overcome difficulties in sourcing a community auspice to hold funds for community project owners, future project investment should form part of the existing UTS Social Impact Grant process.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

6 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Suburb level Theory of Change will form the foundation of place-based, community-driven work by the Social Impact Team and local community. The project findings, research and the theory of change outlined in this report will be disseminated and discussed with community organisations and practitioners, contributing to social impact in the local area.

To build upon the theory of change and provide a framework for implementation, success indicators will be developed with community so that the theory of change can be effectively applied. By supporting community to use the theory of change, resources can be applied where they are most needed.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion (CSJI) intends to use the theory of change to direct research and projects in 2023 and beyond. Focusing on community identified priority areas of need, the CSJI will use a similar process outlined in this report, to uncover community voice and best practice research in these spaces. Using key insights uncovered, co-design will be used to create effective solutions.

The UTS Social Impact Grant program will be extended to include local community grants that members of the community can apply for in partnership with UTS experts. This will provide an avenue of action for co-designed solutions. To support this, further capacity building will be offered to support project implementation and evaluate the impact of community projects.

In addition, UTS student interns will also be engaged to support community led action in curriculum aligned spaces such as research, communications and design. This supports both student experience and outcomes as well as providing valuable resources for social impact.

Redirecting its resources towards the shared vision of the community is one aspect of the role our university can take up. As an institution, UTS holds a certain level and type of power. It is also our responsibility to use this position for good. By exerting influence on those that sit alongside us, we can support a deeper engagement with community across our landscape. There is significant implication to this. The review of the development of innovation hubs in urban districts indicate the cost of unintended harm. It is important for us to learn from this history and ensure we are strategic and aligned in respect to the public good that we can achieve as a collective.





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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 1 AGENDA

Meeting 1 Agenda: 28 July 2022

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Background to the project
4. The proposed project – shared for your input and articulating the asks:

Systematic review of place based investments and initiatives

- What data should we be looking at? What can you share?
- Facilitated community conversations: Story of strengths, sharing of data, visualising a future
- 2 workshops. \$100 per person budgeted for community participation (120)

Support inclusion of diverse stakeholders

*Support the development of the workshop and the shaping of the questions.
Time requirement: Meeting 2 – 1 hour*

Attend the workshop

Sense making workshop and co-designing the Theory of Change Workshop

*Support making sense of the data and co-design the next step: Meeting 3:
Half day*

Theory of Change workshop

- Involvement of 40 community members and 20 UTS staff. \$100 per person budgeted for community participation (40)

Attend the workshop

Sense making workshop

*Support making sense of the data from the Theory of Change Workshop:
Meeting 4: Half day*

Mapping and Identifying indicators of success

- Co-designing responses with partners
- 3 x \$5,000 grants that can be applied for by those engaged in the project

Attend the workshop

5. Agreement to partner



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Social Justice and
Inclusion