

Anti Poverty Conference – Mayoral Speech – Tuesday 25 October 2016

- Good morning everyone, and thank you for the invitation to speak at this fantastic forum.
- Today I'll be talking on the principles of place making, and I'll also touch on what we're doing at the City of Charles Sturt to foster these principles and empower our communities.
- I've been allocated 30minutes but that is a long time to talk so what I'd like to do is speak with you, and then take some questions.
- Firstly, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage and relationship with the land.
- Place making is a process, underpinned by true collaboration, where local communities, businesses and other stakeholders work in partnership to deliver sustainable revitalisation of shared spaces and the public realm. It is a multi-faceted approach to the design and management of our public spaces.
- 'Places' are locations that are important to us.
- They are more than spaces. They have meaning and identity to our local community members, property owners, businesses and visitors. The difference between a space and place is like the difference between a house and a home.
- By empowering our communities to shape their own places, we build civic pride and responsibility which in turn creates happier and more connected citizens.
- By tapping into existing local assets, inspiration and potential, we can create public spaces that promote health, happiness and wellbeing within our communities.

- Place making is not a new idea. It originated in the 1960s, when American urbanists like Jane Jacobs offered forward thinking ideas about designing cities that catered to people, not just to cars and shopping centres.
- ‘Project for Public Spaces’, a not for profit of dedicated to delivering place making and creating public places that build communities, was founded by Fred Kent in 1975. The organisation still functions as an international leader in the area.
- The City of Charles Sturt has been on a place making journey since 2014, and we’ve learnt a few things along the way.
- The following principles have been derived from conversations across the organisation and from those promoted by ‘Project for Public Spaces’

Observe your existing public spaces

- It’s important to spend time observing how public spaces are currently being used by your community – or not used, as the case may be.
- Find out what people like and don’t like about them. What makes them work, or not work?
- Through observing and talking to the people in these spaces, it will become clear what types of activities or facilities may be missing, and what might be incorporated to improve the amenity of the space.
- This leads me onto the next principle, and one I use with Elected Members as we seek to govern: **Collaborate**
- Find the organisation, the business or the person with energy, the spark, the idea and the drive and foster them to be your ambassador.
- Local businesses, community or resident groups, artists, schools and sporting clubs all provide opportunities for partnership.

- Vested interests create incentive.
- Taking a collaborative approach engages the local community, encouraging them to develop a sense of pride and ownership over their parks, streets and other public places.

Our community is our biggest asset

- Only people who inhabit a place will fully appreciate its unique local heritage, character, culture, strengths and opportunities.
- Our local community know their streets, parks, laneways, squares and footpaths intimately, and tapping into this local knowledge provides a strong foundation for place making opportunities.
- Inclusivity during this process will ensure your community are with you on the journey.
- Place making in existing places can be challenging, as the community may have an emotional attachment to what is already there. Engage with them early and genuinely. Listen, collaborate and encourage people to take ownership.

Developing a strong vision can help us achieve this.

- Work with a community to create a vision based on the strengths of the space. Having a shared vision will help harness energy, build relationships and work towards achieving a common goal.
- Essential to a vision for any public space is:
 - an idea of what kind of activities could happen in the space
 - the view that the space should be comfortable and appealing
 - the space should be a place where people want to be
- The vision should instil a sense of pride in the people who live, work and spend time in the surrounding area.

- It's also important to be **flexible and resourceful** in our approach to place making.
- When facing roadblocks, be resilient and resourceful. Maintaining focus on 'how can we make this happen?' will assist in finding creative solutions to the inevitable obstacles.

Create a place, not a design

- Great places are more than the sum of their parts. An underperforming space can only be turned into a vital 'place' by introducing physical elements that make people feel welcome and comfortable.
- This could be achieved in a number of ways, such as seating, landscaping, altering the pedestrian path or developing more productive relationships with surrounding businesses.
- Create a place that houses a strong sense of community and unique identity.

Great places are sustainable

- Decisions to renew or upgrade a public space, and the degree of intervention proposed, will have sustainability implications. Great public spaces that respond to needs and changes within a community require ongoing attention.
- Issues such as long term management and responsibility for ongoing maintenance and repairs must all be taken into consideration during the planning stages of any successful place making undertaking.
- These projects will never be finished.
- **Pause**
- As Local Government is the tier of Government closest to the community, we are well positioned to deliver place making

projects through partnerships with local businesses, community groups and other stakeholders.

- This can be achieved by encouraging the community to do more by decreasing red tape, installation or upgrade of facilities, or through the provisions of funding and support for new endeavours.
- Charles Sturt is currently a leader in the area of local government placemaking. Staff in our Urban Projects team play key roles in broader industry leadership, with involvement in organisations and groups such as Place SA and the Place Invaders Local Government Placemaking Network.
- You don't have to invest huge amounts of time and money into a successful place making project, involve the community in the creation of a veggie garden, or work with a local business owner to have a mural painted on a blank wall.
- Our staff worked with a local café, school and community members to deliver a place making project in Woodville Park. This quiet little corner block of shops regularly suffered from vandalism and graffiti, but it is now a colourful, thriving local community hub.
- This fantastic little project has also stimulated further activities in the area.
- Through the Westside Place Makers Grant program we invite the community to submit their ideas for activities in local spaces. Funding proposals must contribute to Charles Sturt's vision for place making, be easily implemented and have high impact.
- An example of projects and activities funded to date include
- A neighbourhood water balloon fight was held to bring local community members together at an underused local reserve. People in attendance were of a diverse range of backgrounds and ages, all drawn together by the opportunity to meet neighbours, make friends and enjoy a fun afternoon in their local park.

- Painting of a mural on the side of Stella Restaurant at Henley Square to brighten up the car park area
- A Little Library free book exchange was built by local community members in a Flinders Park playground, with reading spots and creative signage by a local artist.

How do we recognise place making success?

- While it can be difficult to tangibly measure success, some measures include
 - Participation rates in activities
 - Co-contribution from stakeholders
 - Increase in people occupying places
 - Changes in user behaviour
 - User satisfaction surveys
 - Decreases in vacant properties
 - Evidence of 'guerrilla' ownership – secret place making initiatives by local community members, such as yarn bombing and guerrilla gardening. These are good indicators of communities claiming ownership of 'their patch'.
- Meaningful places are those that people love. They reflect the needs of the local community, sustain the businesses that operate within them, and capture the hearts of the people who visit them.

Thank you.