Ripples

Australian Learning Communities Network Inc

News from the Executive
Two important regional conferences to note in your diaries

- NSW: Macquarie University Tuesday 19 September. Cassandra Goldie, CEO of ACOSS will explore the relationship of learning communities to the problem of poverty *Contact* Kath McLachlan at kath.mclachlan@mq.edu.au for further details

- Victoria: RMIT University Tuesday 28 November. Mike Osborne from Glasgow University with contribute to this workshop which will look at the development of a learning communities lifelong learning policy. *Contact* Peter Blunden at peterrblunden@gmail.com for further details

Some more ideas!
Some ideas from Cairns Library, Community Migrant Resource Centre, Parramatta Library, Constitution Hill Library and others.

Read more

Bust Regional City Myths
Geelong's relatively high creative industries score, coupled with a robust rate of business entries, provides a solid foundation for steady growth. Investing in regional cities' economic performance makes good sense. Contrary to popular opinion, new research out today shows regional cities generate national economic growth and jobs at the same rate as big metropolitan cities. They are worthy of economic investment in their own right – not just on social and equity grounds.
Read more

Mapping the Melbourne Sharing Economy
This report presents findings from an analysis of the scale and scope of the sharing economy in Melbourne. The central aim of this report is to outline the breadth of the sharing economy in Melbourne, and to identify future directions for further investigation
Read more

Inequality in Big Cities
Australia's global cities are a very large part of the nation's economic success, but they are also generating significantly unequal incomes. Our recent research found that as Australian cities have grown, their income inequality has increased.
Read more

Regional Housing Affordability Crisis
Some towns and areas in regional Australia are facing price rises and property shortages that are making them unaffordable for the people what want to live there. Joining us to discuss this matter is Professor Andrew Beer is Dean of Research and Innovation at the University of South Australia Business School.
Read more

Developing Human Capital Across Australia

Although natural resources remain a competitive advantage for regions, not least those in Australia, over the past few decades, new technology has continually challenged and altered how we work and live. There are many predictions and projections about how different jobs will be in 2030. Whatever the future of work looks like, with each new disruption there is a change in the demands placed upon people. More than ever it is the capabilities of people which are central to success.
Read more

Role of Community Education in Australian Rural and Economic development

Australian governments should increase investment in community education to address higher levels of disadvantage and unemployment in rural and regional Australia, according to this report.

The report finds that not-for-profit community-based vocational education and training (VET) providers play a disproportionately large role in rural and regional Australia, educating at least 10% of VET students in New South Wales and 20% in Victoria. This makes community providers a significant national force in providing skills to non-metropolitan Australia.
Read more

Thinking Beyond The Station

You are cutting it close, rushing to catch your bus or train. Just as you arrive to the station/stop, you hear the heart-crushing sound of acceleration. You look up, it's rolling down the line. It's gone. Now you'll have thirty long, lonely minutes to dwell on your near miss as cars careen past you. Your eyes scan the area. It's bleak, with nothing to do, no way to get out of the elements, and no one with whom to pass the time.
Read more

Vision or Hallucination

The highlight of the TJ Ryan Foundation's 3rd anniversary event was a keynote address from Dr Ken Boston, former Director-General of Education in South Australia and New South Wales, and member of the Gonski Review panel. Dr Boston spoke on the topic of 'Gonski Report: Vision or Hallucination?'

Read more

Wellbeing in the early years resource guide

The guide provides scenarios and learning activities to support engagement with key concepts of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, including the Learning and Development Outcome: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
Read more

Ideas from other learning communities

Brick by Brick

Build Your Own Capital is a travelling exhibition which introduces students to Canberra as their National Capital through an interactive activity where they are encouraged to think creatively about the future. In this programme, students are asked to design and build something that is important for them, that they would want in their capital city, using 30,000 LEGO™ bricks.

A dynamic and interactive education resource that will be located in Cairns Library from 11 April to 09 July 2017. Open Monday to Friday 12pm to 4pm.

Link: [Read more](#)

THE REFUGEE BOOKMARK PROJECT

In celebration of Refugee Week the Community Migrant Resource Centre and Parramatta Library asked 5 refugees to design a bookmark with the aim to tell the story of the Global Refugee Crisis & to shed light and humanise the experiences of being a refugee. The result was 5 amazing bookmarks that each artist designed and included a brief biography.

Educational resources

Have you ever wondered where to find free, fun & educational resources online? Search no further, we have many free online resources available for Parramatta library members. Book an information session for parents of primary school children to learn about the online resources suitable for your child.

Make your own Boomerang (5-14 years) - NAIDOC Week

Constitution Hill Library Parramatta - To celebrate NAIDOC Week create your own boomerang using aboriginal dot art techniques to create a colourful boomerang you can take home to impress your family & friends.

Treasures of the Earth - 2nd Session (8 to 11 years)

Parramatta Library - The Children's Discovery Museum will be on hand to help you learn how to identify rocks and minerals as you assemble your own rock collection.

All Hands on Drums with Tom Harding aka 'Tom the Pom' (5 to 12 years)

Ermington Library - An exciting hands-on session exploring the skills needed by the muso's of tomorrow! Drumming generates lots of fun with listening skills, aural interpretation and musical triggers.

Wodonga City Council

Community Impact Grants program

The Community Impact Grants program aims to empower community organisations and individuals to grow ideas in an innovative and creative way, as well as looking to improve the city.

An individual can apply for a grant for less than $500 by telling the council about your idea.

Community organisations, workplaces and individuals auspiced by a community organisation can apply for grants ranging from $500 to $5000.

The grant program links to the outcomes and key priorities in the Council Plan. The program provides funding to support projects/events under the categories listed below:

Building stronger communities;

Environmental sustainability;

Community events; and

Arts and culture.

All events, activities and projects must be held in the Wodonga municipality.

Apply online by *clicking here*.

School Tackles Family Violence

Source: Star Weekly Brimbank & North West

'Students at Overnewton Anglican Community College will vanguard a new program tackling family violence. The program, based on a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, targets better education for children at a younger age in an attempt to identify and prevent family violence as early as possible.

'The college, which has campuses in Keilor and Taylors Lakes, will be one of 120 schools working on a $20,000 state government grant to run the new Respectful Relationships program, which is a key recommendation from last year's Royal Commission.'

Read more.

Learning Potential Resources

This federal government website is for parents to support their children's literacy and numeracy skills according to the Australia curriculum. Browse by children's year level or topic, and the website will suggest ideas, activities, games and videos.

Two Years are Better than One

Access to a high-quality preschool program is one of the few proven strategies for lifting outcomes for all children. Evidence shows that two years of preschool has more impact than one, especially for the children most likely to be developmentally vulnerable. This report is by Stacey Fox and Myra Geddes.

Bust the regional city myths and look beyond the "big 5" for a $378b return

Geelong's relatively high creative industries score, coupled with a robust rate of business entries, provides a solid foundation for steady growth.

Investing in regional cities' economic performance makes good sense. Contrary to popular opinion, new research out today shows regional cities generate national economic growth and jobs at the same rate as big metropolitan cities. They are worthy of economic investment in their own right – not just on social and equity grounds.

However, for regional cities to capture their potential A$378 billion output to 2031, immediate action is needed. Success will see regional cities in 2031 produce twice as much as all the new economy industries produce in today's metropolitan cities.

Drawing on lessons from the UK, the collaborative work by the Regional Australia Institute and the UK Centre for Cities spotlights criteria and data all Australian cities can use to help get themselves investment-ready.

Build on individual strengths

The Regional Australia Institute's latest work confirms that city population size does not determine economic performance. There is no significant statistical difference between the economic performance of Australia's big five metro cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide) and its 31 regional cities in historical output, productivity and participation rates.

So, regional cities are as well positioned to create investment returns as their big five metro cousins. The same rules apply – investment that builds on existing city strengths and capabilities will produce returns.

No two cities have the same strengths and capabilities. However, regional cities do fall into four economic performance groups – gaining, expanding, slipping, and slow and steady. This helps define the investment focus they might require.

For example, the report finds Fraser Coast (Hervey Bay), Sunshine Coast-Noosa and Gold Coast are gaining cities. Their progress is fuelled by high population growth rates (around 2.7% annually from 2001 to 2013). But stimulating local businesses will deliver big job growth opportunities.

Rapid population growth is driving the Gold Coast economy, making it a 'gaining' city.

Similarly, the expanding cities of Cairns, Central Coast and Toowoomba are forecast to have annual output growth of 3.2% to 3.9% until 2031, building on strong foundations of business entries. But they need to create more high-income jobs.

Geelong and Ballarat have low annual population growth rates of around 1.2% to 1.5%. They are classified as slow and steady cities. But their relatively high creative industries

scores, coupled with robust rates of business entries, means they have great foundations for growth. They need to stimulate local businesses to deliver city growth.

Get ready to deal

Regional cities remain great places to live. They often score more highly than larger cities on measures of [wellbeing and social connection](#).

But if there's no shared vision, or local leaders can't get along well enough to back a shared set of priorities, or debate is dominated by opinion in spite of evidence, local politics may win the day. Negotiations to secure substantial city investment will then likely fail.

The federal government's [Smart Cities Plan](#) has identified [City Deals](#) as the vehicle for investment in regional cities.

This collaborative, cross-portfolio, cross-jurisdictional investment mechanism needs all players working together (federal, state and local government), along with community, [university](#) and private sector partners. This leaves no place for dominant single interests at the table.

Clearly, the most organised regional cities ready to deal are those capable of getting collaborative regional leadership and strategic planning.

For example, the [G21 region](#) in Victoria (including Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe, Surf Coast, Colac Otway and Golden Plains) has well-established credentials in this area. This has enabled the region to move quickly on [City Deal negotiations](#).

Moving past talk to be investment-ready

There's $378 billion on the table, but Australia's capacity to harness it will depend on achieving two key goals.

- First, shifting the entrenched view that the smart money invests only in our big metro cities. This is wrong. Regional cities are just as well positioned to create investment returns as the big five metro centres.
- Second, regions need to get "investment-ready" for success. This means they need to be able to collaborate well enough to develop an informed set of shared priorities for investment, supported by evidence and linked to a clear growth strategy that builds on existing economic strengths and capabilities. They need to demonstrate their capacity to deliver.

While there has been [much conjecture](#) on the relevance and appropriateness of City Deals in Australia, it is mainly focused on big cities. But both big and small cities drive our national growth.

Author

1. [Leonie Pearson](#)

    Adjunct Associate, Regional Australia Institute

Disclosure statement

Mapping the Melbourne sharing economy

Download file

This report presents findings from an analysis of the scale and scope of the sharing economy in Melbourne. The central aim of this report is to outline the breadth of the sharing economy in Melbourne, and to identify future directions for further investigation.

The new services that form the sharing economy are becoming widespread and are used regularly by members of the public, both in Victoria and internationally, with many of the commercial companies that form part of this economy having a market value in the billions.

A critical understanding of how sharing occurs through digital technologies, how sharing itself is conceptualised by individual, community, and corporate actors, and the wider implications of these networks for our social and economic relations, are all urgently needed.

This report maps the services, networks and discourses around the sharing economy across Melbourne – a designated 'sharing city' (Sharp 2016). Furthermore, it contributes the first comprehensive listing of networks active and available to people in Melbourne.

Report broken link

Our big cities are engines of inequality, so how do we fix that?

Somwrita Sarkar, **Peter Phibbs**, **Roderick Simpson**
24 February 2017
Source:
The Conversation

Australia's global cities are a very large part of the nation's economic success, but they are also generating significantly unequal incomes. Our recent research found that as Australian cities have grown, their income inequality has increased.

Cities provide many social and cultural opportunities and allow large numbers of people to stay connected. But bigger is better only if we can make it better for everyone.

We propose a solution: rather than concentrate activity around a single city centre, we need to develop multiple centres of activity – polycentric cities.

Read the full article on The Conversation.

Regional housing affordability crisis

Andrew Beer, **Amanda Vanstone**
13 February 2017
Source:
Counterpoint
Owning Institution:
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Source:
ABC Radio National
Owning Institution:
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Some towns and areas in regional Australia are facing price rises and property shortages that are making them unaffordable for the people what want to live there. Joining us to discuss this matter is Professor Andrew Beer is Dean of Research and Innovation at the University of South Australia Business School.

Guests

Professor Andrew Beer, Dean of Research and Innovation at the University of South Australia Business School

Credits

Presenter: Amanda Vanstone

Human capital index- developing human capital across Australia

27 Mar 2017

Regional Australia Institute
CREATORS
Regional Australia Institute
DOWNLOAD RESOURCE
Link to Resource - hosted externally
Human Capital Index (link is external)

Description

The concept of Human Capital describes *the skills and capacities that reside in people that are put to productive use*. It represents the value of the skills, knowledge, talents and abilities of people and their potential to drive innovation and economic growth.

Although natural resources remain a competitive advantage for regions, not least those in Australia, over the past few decades, new technology has continually challenged and altered how we work and live. There are many predictions and projections about how different jobs will be in 2030. Whatever the future of work looks like, with each new disruption there is a change in the demands placed upon people. More than ever it is the capabilities of people which are central to success.

The World Economic Forum has even gone so far to say that 'a nation's human capital endowment …can be a more important determinant of its long term economic success than virtually any other resource'.

 Developing a region's Human Capital is therefore critical to its future. The capacity to respond to challenges such as those identified above is founded in the development of people in early childhood, through the formal education system, in the transition to work and in the continual development of skills once in the workforce.

This update of the Regional Australia Institute's [In]Sight Human Capital Index focusses on development through the lifecycle, firstly during early childhood, the acquisition of foundational skills of literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary school, completion of high school, and attainment of further skills in technical and university-level qualifications. This update to [In]Sight also provides a measure of the extent to which young people are

learning or earning, and a measure of adult learning. Finally, for each region, an overall assessment of the skill level of the engaged workforce is provided.

As this report clearly shows, it is regional areas that exhibit lower measures of Human Capital development. There are higher rates of children who are considered 'developmentally vulnerable' in regional areas. Analysis of the 2009, 2012 and 2015 *Early Childhood Development* Census shows that the rate is 2 percentage points higher across regional local government areas - 12.4 per cent compared to the metropolitan average of 10.4 per cent. The foundation for continued learning and higher-skilled employment, teaching of *literacy and numeracy* in schools is critical for development of Human Capital. The 2015 NAPLAN test results show clearly that outcomes remain significantly poorer in regional Australia.

Rates of **high school completion** have increased tremendously over the past several decades, however the improvements have not been evenly distributed. Standards of schooling and parental characteristics are significant determinants of whether a child complete high school, however accessibility of high school campuses is an additional burden for regional families, particularly in smaller communities. Dramatically low levels of *'learning or earning'* - participation in either education or the workforce for youth (15-24 years) – are a significant problem for many regional communities: 91 of the lowest 100 LGAs in terms of youth engagement are Heartland Regions. Although youth disengagement may be a considerable problem in some communities, the problem of disengagement is not confined to school-leavers: there is substantial evidence that a large number of older Australians are dropping out of the workforce.

In regional areas it is likely that the decline in net workforce requirements for relatively low skilled roles within traditional rural industries (such as agriculture, mining and forestry) may be resulting in significant numbers of older workers becoming disengaged. For such people, opportunities for re-skilling are likely to be particularly limited in regional areas. The problem may be exacerbated in regional areas where long-term decreases in the requirement for low-skilled labour in traditional rural industries, poor access to opportunities for re-skilling, and remoteness from alternative employment combine to result in disengagement of a significant number of older workers.

There is a significant differential in achievement of *technical and university qualifications* between metropolitan and regional Australians. High school completion and levels of higher education have improved markedly since the 1970s, however once the initial post-school education is undertaken in late teens and early 20s, rates of *adult learning* across Australia are below 10 per cent for the over-30s. Rates of attendance are highest for those in the CBDs and decline from there by remoteness. Again, the accessibility of educational opportunities is likely a significant problem. Access to quality, industry-relevant training – potentially delivered online – may be important, yet ultimately the regional economies will also need to develop their opportunities for higher-skilled work to lift demand for adult learning as well.

The summary *workforce skills* indicator provided within this release of [In]Sight reflects the structure of regional economies – their industry strengths and the labour requirements of those industries. Continued out-migration of young people creates a much sharper problem for regional development. This brain drain – the pattern of young people leaving to access post-school education in large metropolitan areas sometimes never to return – has become one of the biggest factors in the shortages of skills and knowledge across regional Australia. This spatial redistribution of Human Capital out of the regions creates an environment where it is increasingly difficult for regions to fully realise their potential.

The role of community education in Australian regional and rural economic development

Don Perlgut
7 February 2017
Source:
Community Colleges Australia

Australian governments should increase investment in community education to address higher levels of disadvantage and unemployment in rural and regional Australia, according to this report.

The report finds that not-for-profit community-based vocational education and training (VET) providers play a disproportionately large role in rural and regional Australia, educating at least 10% of VET students in New South Wales and 20% in Victoria. This makes community providers a significant national force in providing skills to non-metropolitan Australia.

Participation rates in VET courses are 50% higher in rural and regional Australia than in metropolitan areas. A much larger percentage of rural and regional VET learners also study lower level qualifications: Certificate III and below – just those qualifications that community education providers excel in, with their focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.

This report shows how community education is crucial in providing skills and in driving economic development in rural and regional Australia, and includes numerous examples of 'bottom-up' innovative community-based approaches. Community education providers are uniquely positioned to act as 'passing gear' vehicles, accelerating new ideas and helping our regions to prosper.

Governments have not been investing enough in community education, particularly in high need, disadvantaged rural and regional areas where youth unemployment remains stubbornly high. Australia has not seen any national infrastructure investment in community education since 2009. On top of this, Australia lacks a coherent national statement on the role of community education in VET. This policy vacuum makes it difficult for community providers to operate effectively.

The report makes a number of key recommendations, including that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments should:

- Boost funding for community education, including providing more support for infrastructure, professional development and staff training, pilot funding programs, and community service obligation activities.

- Utilise regional and rural community education providers to engage with vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, particularly young people.
- Develop a coordinated national-state-territory policy statement on the value and place of community and adult education.
- Examine VET funding programs to ensure community providers are not disadvantaged by unnecessary regulations.
- Collect and publish annual data on regional and rural student outcomes and provider comparisons.

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Thinking beyond the station

You are cutting it close, rushing to catch your bus or train. Just as you arrive to the station/stop, you hear the heart-crushing sound of acceleration. You look up, it's rolling down the line. It's gone. Now you'll have thirty long, lonely minutes to dwell on your near miss as cars careen past you. Your eyes scan the area. It's bleak, with nothing to do, no way to get out of the elements, and no one with whom to pass the time.

Far too often this is the scenario that typifies the transit experience. Yet, memorable and enjoyable stations and stops that create value for neighborhoods are perfectly attainable. In fact, a transit station or stop can serve much more than a transportation function; it can be a setting for community interaction, a place that fosters a diversity of activities.

Through Placemaking, stations and stops become focal points in a community, especially if there is an associated plaza or public space. Even the station building or the bus shelter itself can be thought of as place. That is, the use of it can be expanded, in partnership with the local community, to serve other public purposes. The potential uses are boundless, from a café to an art gallery to a venue for performances and markets. In this way, a great station or stop adds value to the surrounding neighborhoods and increases the viability of commercial districts by connecting businesses to commuters and new customers.

Thinking Beyond the Station is a both theoretical and applied concept crafted by PPS to guide the activation of stations and stops as well-connected, multi-use destinations. We integrate transit stops into the communities they serve through supportive urban design, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, architecture, cultural programming, public art, and innovative space management. Our Placemaking process links transit to community institutions and cultural assets and seeks out citizens that may not have been considered or may not have considered themselves as transit stakeholders and engages them in discovering creative solutions. In addition, we jump start implementation through Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper techniques, evaluating outcomes and adjusting recommendations for greater effectiveness.

Thinking Beyond the Station strategies in turn provide value to the transportation function. Great experiences in great places attracts people, more people means more ridership. Likewise, the sense of pride and community presence translates into less litter, graffiti, policing, and upkeep.

Several key principles illustrate the Thinking Beyond the Station approach:

START WITH A COMMUNITY VISION

If the goal is to create a great place, it is essential to start with a clear understanding of the activities that are going to occur in the space. Design and management decisions then easily fall into place to support these activities.

Thinking Beyond the Station brings together transit professionals, board members, elected officials, designers, developers, and the public to solidify a shared vision for the role that transit facilities should play in the community and what that program of activities should be. Afterwards, the entire community can get behind the value of transit – whether they ride it or not – because it has been articulated as a key ingredient in the great places and visceral experiences they desire.

When the needs of less privileged, less empowered communities are not clearly articulated, explicitly voiced and defended, and when planners and transit agency officials do not have the tools to effectively listen, concerns are not addressed. It is an enormous challenge, but the robust bottom-up engagement behind Thinking Beyond the Station opens up long-lasting channels of communication between the community, professionals, and officials.

Under contract with the Federal Transit Administration, PPS developed the Tools for Transit Dependent Communities. A research team consisting of PPS, the UCLA Department of Urban Planning, and the Latino Urban Forum created and tested public engagement tools

specifically designed to encourage stakeholder participation in on-site and off-site assessments of transit stop environments. Focused on transit as a community development mechanism, the toolkit facilitates the community visioning process.

CREATE COMFORTABLE, IMAGEABLE STATIONS AND STOPS

Once a shared vision has been established, design considerations come into play. Stop and stations intuitively placed and complemented with amenities are the crux of Thinking Beyond the Station. Stop placement should be intuitive but rarely is. The stop should be located so it is highly visible, easy to find, convenient for riders to access, with lines and directions of service clearly indicated.

> Corporations already advertise on transit facilities, why not take a single purpose poster and create something interactive and fun. Whether it be a skateboard ramp on the side of a bus shelter or the illusion of aliens and asteroids, these adverts do as much if not more to encourage sociability as they do to sell their products. (Agency: Saatchi & Saatchi, Copenhagen, Denmark)

Yet even when transit agencies are adept at stop placement, they often fail to layer in the features that elevate stops from mundane structures that provide protection from the elements to enjoyable – even attractive – public amenities. A place to sit or lean is paramount. Technical information like route maps and timetables should be complemented with suggestions about what to do in the place: wayfinding, events calendars, and nearby businesses and attractions that a passenger can visit before or after completing their trip.

Co-locating postal collection boxes, newsstands, and similar conveniences strengthens the perception of the stop as more than *just* a stop. Yet, Placemaking truly begins when you go a step further. Engaging the riders and neighbors often reveals latent interest in clever, imaginative amenities. Swings, vertical gardens, and interactive art are all examples of community-driven improvements to existing stop designs.

MAKE SAFE AND CONVENIENT CONNECTIONS

Fixed route transit is almost never door-to-door and location efficiency can only provide so much proximity to service. Good transit systems need safe and convenient non-transit connections to local destinations. After all, destinations whether they be for – work, errands, or enjoyment – are what drive transit trips in the first place.

The interface between the on-board experience and the last mile always occurs at the stop and as a pedestrian. As such, a sufficiently wide and appealing pedestrian realm, where paths and crossings follow desire lines, is absolutely essential.

To extend the service area beyond a typical ¼ to ½ mile walkshed, Thinking Beyond the Station layers other transportation facilities on top of the stop. For example, bikeshare or carshare locations can be sited nearby. Likewise, bikeways, bike parking, and bike maintenance stations are great for linking transit and cycling trips. Again, the goal is to add functionality beyond boarding and alighting and to consider the rider's experience from origin to destination, not just stop to stop.

At rail stations or commuter bus stops, this approach eliminates some private automobile trips and thus reduces traffic and parking demand. Traffic and parking not only make the station less attractive as a destination, but they also make the surrounding area less livable and less attractive to development.

ACTIVATE THE EDGES

The area around any public space is as important to its success as the design and management of the space itself. This holds true for stations and stops as well.

> The Garnett MARTA Station in Atlanta, Georgia is a transfer point to Greyhound, but the surrounding area is marred by blank façades, barren plazas, and dismal surface lots. Such an unglamorous space does little to promote transit or to challenge negative stereotypes of transit use.

A blank wall contributes nothing to the activity of the street. Many façades conceal the activities going on within a building. The activity inside should spill out and blossom in the public realm. The reason why Atlanta's Garnett Street MARTA station is devoid while Denver's 16th Street Mall is vibrant has a lot to do with the edges: parking garage entrances vs. sidewalk cafés.

Thinking Beyond the Station looks to these existing edges and figures out how to bring the ground floor uses out to blossom into the public realm. Unique perpendicular signage and sandwich boards announces what's there. The smell of food through open windows or a retractable façade entices diners in for a meal. A sidewalk sale beckons passersby to peruse for a bargain. An artist studio with artwork outside stirs the senses. Even if a station or stop is afflicted with a retaining wall or blank wall, fun aesthetic treatments can be applied to transform it into something productive and attractive.

The 16th St. Mall in Denver, Colorado provides the entire downtown with shuttle bus circulation and high quality pedestrian access to Union Station. However, its success as a place has to do with it's edge uses, over 300 shops and 50 restaurants that line the Mall with cafés, window displays, and buskers.

ANCHOR A MULTI-USE DESTINATION

Rail stations function as the center of many communities, often with thousands of people passing through them on a daily basis. Likewise, bus stops are frequently at the heart of a neighborhood, located at important nodes or along a main street. This relationship presents immense potential to anchor successful multi-use destinations with stations and stops.

For a station or stop to anchor a multi-use destination, there must be a critical mass of activities and those activities need to be triangulated. To achieve this critical mass – what we at PPS call the Power of 10 – places must offer many things to do and reasons to be there for many different audiences at many times of day. Triangulation is then clustering those activities to be complementary such that the destination becomes much more valuable than the sum of its parts.

The Atocha Station is the stop for the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid and houses its own 4,000 square meter botanical garden. Travelers can stop and amusingly watch turtles in their sanctuary, find sanctum of their own on a bench amongst the flora, or shop and dine under the gorgeous architecture.

Thinking Beyond the Station carefully crafts a mixture of permanent and temporary uses in buildings, kiosks, and mobile carts or trucks, paired with amenities, art, and a robust programming schedule, all centered around the stop or station. Because this mixture is in internal harmony, triangulation occurs. Chance interactions and serendipitous discoveries then become commonplace. The station or stop is thought of fondly as a label or brand for the district, and the association of all those concentrated attractions with transit encourages visitors to take it to and fro, increasing ridership and revenues. If that revenue is used to make the destination even more attractive, a virtuous cycle is formed.

CULTIVATE A CONDUCIVE POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT

When transit operations are siloed and separated from other government agencies and departments, the policy environment tends to inhibit Thinking Beyond the Station. In contrast, a place-centric mindset sets off policy changes and cooperation, accelerating

projects, unlocking new funding sources, and merging individual single-purpose projects into fewer and less costly multifunctional ones.

For example, a parks department with a constrained budget and a rundown public square offers up a corner of the square for a new transfer center it knows the transit agency has Federal funds for. In exchange, the transit agency incorporates needed renovations to the park as part of the capital project. The nearby public library then qualifies for a grant to host a pop-up reading room over the summer in the rejuvenated park. Now, while transit riders wait in the shade of trees, they can check out a book to read during the ride, and their children are entertained by story time during the transfer.

This installation for the Victoria Bug Zoo in Canada created by Rethink Canada gives passersby and awaiting riders a view of the world through insect eyes. The installation is but one of countless ways that cultural institutions can elevate and enrich the transit experience.

Thinking Beyond the Station also includes policy initiatives such as value capture, development incentives, zoning changes, shared parking, and so forth. More importantly though, it expands the operations paradigm to include place-management: making connections, forging partnerships, populating the space with programming and amenities, and maintaining a well-kept appearance to project a sense of ownership and volunteerism. Citizens respond with a favorable opinion of transit and an understanding of its importance in the community.

At this point, as a transit patron, you no longer look out of place waiting at a transit stop. You are just another participant in an exciting civic realm. You may miss your bus or even show up a little early so you can grab a cappuccino at a coffee shop, scarf down a taco truck burrito, pick up your prescription, find flowers for your sweetheart, or pet a passing puppy. Transit is a component, but by no means the extent, of your memorable experience in this place.

Author: David M Nelson
Date Posted: May 9, 2014

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Vision or hallucination? Some relfections on the Gonski Review

Keynote address to the TJ Ryan Foundation 3rd anniversary symposium
Ken Boston
14 February 2017
Source:
TJ Ryan Foundation

The highlight of the TJ Ryan Foundation's 3rd anniversary event was a keynote address from Dr Ken Boston, former Director-General of Education in South Australia and New South Wales, and member of the Gonski Review panel. Dr Boston spoke on the topic of 'Gonski Report: Vision or Hallucination?'

The key messages from his address are:

- Neither the "last two years of Gonski funding", nor reducing overall funding to the wealthiest schools, will solve the real problem facing Australia's schools. Nor will cosmetic changes to Commonwealth/State governance and funding arrangements about education;
- Any long-term solution must be based on the assessment of the needs of individual schools – treating government, Catholic and independent schools in the same way;
- The most recent iteration of the My School website gives detailed information on government recurrent funding for every school in the country. This information is validated by schools and systems, accurate, and available online. No longer need we rely on broad statements, averages or generalisations about school funding, from the Productivity Commission, the Commonwealth Government or other sources. We are now in a position to make evidence-based statements about the funding of schools, based on publicly available data at the level of the individual school;
- While the existence of Catholic and independent schools might be justified on other grounds, they can no longer be justified on the grounds that they are saving taxpayers' money. Catholic and independent schools are now receiving virtually the same amount of government funding as government schools serving similar SES communities;
- Five years after Gonski, Australia has two virtually government-funded systems. One is open to all, takes students from all sections of the community, and has several accountabilities to government. The other – state-funded to nearly the same extent – sets and charges fees; has a selective enrolment process; has a statutory exemption from certain anti-discrimination provisions; can borrow money, and because the high-level of government funding covers their recurrent teaching costs, can apply their fees to servicing loans on major capital works;
- In suburbs and towns across Australia, adjacent schools receiving similar levels of taxpayer support now operate under quite different conditions, in facilities of sharply differing standards, and with clientele deeply divided on the basis of class, ethnicity and income;
- Both the Rudd/Gillard Government and the Turnbull Government failed to implement Gonski. Radical change - along lines I will discuss – is now urgent.

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Wellbeing assessment resource

Link to Resource

The recently released Wellbeing Practice Guide, developed by the Victorian Department of Education (DET) and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is designed to inform a greater understanding of wellbeing and its place as both a prerequisite for, and an outcome of learning. Together with the *Assessment of Wellbeing in Early Childhood Education and Care: Literature Review* (University of Melbourne, 2015) it forms a Wellbeing Assessment Resource for early childhood professionals. The *Wellbeing Practice Guide* includes information about the Victorian Government Child Safe Standards, with links to the DET Respectful Relationships Initiative (2016).

The guide provides scenarios and learning activities to support engagement with key concepts of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, including the Learning and Development Outcome: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Its purpose is to:

- strengthen early childhood professionals' understanding of the importance of wellbeing
- support practice that strengthens children's dispositions for wellbeing learning
- promote practice that strengthens children's knowledge and self-awareness of their own wellbeing and sense of identity
- guide assessment practice decisions of early childhood professionals working within and across early years services and in the early years of school
- highlight the importance of birth-to-three-years in establishing a strong foundation for subsequent and lifelong wellbeing.

This guide is useful for leaders working across early years services and settings. It presents ways to place wellbeing at the forefront of professional practice, using the theory and pedagogy that underpin day-to-day practice of early childhood professionals.