

TACTICAL URBANISM 4



Australia & New Zealand

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CoDesign Studio specialises in rapid community building. We are a placemaking and urban design consultancy that helps governments, property developers, schools and communities create low-cost improvements to streets and public spaces. At the same time we help local communities build the skills and confidence they need to drive long-term change.

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Street Plans Collaborative

The Street Plans Collaborative is an urban planning, design, and research-advocacy firm. We strive to create high-quality public spaces, and believe that the key to reversing the harmful effects of suburban sprawl is to promote compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. We thrive on working with our clients, partners, and other likeminded organizations to improve the quality and function of the built environment. We seek to increase the effectiveness of multi-modal transportation as a means to creating more competitive and sustainable 21st century towns and cities.

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Tactical Urbanism | Definition |

A city and/or citizen-led approach to neighbourhood building using short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions, intended to catalyse long-term change.

FOREWORD

*Mike Lydon,
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Three and a half years ago we released the first volume of Tactical Urbanism. The free and online-only booklet shed light on an emergent North American movement, one that used short-term and often unsanctioned urban actions to demonstrate the need for long-term policy and/or physical change. In many ways, Tactical Urbanism was a reaction to decades of sluggish bureaucracy, but also the more immediate economic recession, which was the worst America had experienced in generations.

Finding common ground in addressing these challenges, actors across all sectors sought ways to do more with less, while also keeping up with the demand to improve urban livability.

While initially written for a small audience of our peers, the ideas and projects presented in the first volume resonated across the globe. This explains why we have since released three subsequent versions of the guide (one of them focusing on South America) and have a full-length book on the way. Through this process we have also learned that Tactical Urbanism is as much a way of thinking as a way of doing, which includes but is not limited to three common pathways for creating change.

1) For citizens, Tactical Urbanism is a tool to circumvent sluggish bureaucracies and shine a light on the myriad opportunities to improve our neighborhoods.

2) For municipalities and developers, Tactical Urbanism allows ‘phase O’ project implementation, or placeholders that test ideas and bring benefits long before permanent infrastructure may be implemented.

3) For municipalities and organizations, Tactical Urbanism increases awareness and offers opportunities to expand public engagement throughout the municipal project delivery process.

Now, here in your hands – or more realistically, on your screen – is the fourth volume, researched and written by the CoDesign Studio team for the Australian and New Zealand context. We couldn’t have selected a better partner and hope that this latest volume inspires you to take action at the scale where it matters to us all the most: our neighborhoods.

Parks, streets, and other public spaces provide the necessary bandwidth for the flow of information between people; they are where we learn who we live with, what they look like and what they do.

– *Melissa Mean & Charlie Tims*

People Make Places: Growing the Public Life of Cities

INTRODUCTION

*Lucinda Hartley,
Co-Founder and CEO
CoDesign Studio*

For one weekend in 1985, the State of Victoria celebrated its 150th anniversary by laying 11,000 square metres of grass along Swanston Street—Melbourne’s main retail street—as a public art installation.

This car-free experiment along Swanston Street captured the local imagination, and was a major spark behind the street’s closure to cars in 1992. However, Swanston Street was a hard-won battle. It remained a contested space for two decades to come, with regular campaigns to re-open the street to cars before it was permanently closed in 2011.

Swanston Street is one of Australia’s earliest and best examples of tactical urbanism: a cheap, fast and easy urban experiment that built local support for more permanent change. In this regard, we can see that these techniques are nothing new. However, the recent proliferation of adaptive, lean, DIY, pop-up and guerrilla projects in Australia and New Zealand does point towards something new – the desire for a more democratic, equitable, fast-paced and flexible way of making cities.

Why this Guidebook?

Tactical urbanism is a citizen-led approach to neighbourhood building, characterised by short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions intended to catalyse long-term change. The Tactical Urbanism guidebooks capture a snapshot of this emerging global movement through case studies from North America (Volumes 1 and 2) and Latin America (Volume 3).

The purpose of this guidebook, Volume 4 in the series, is to explore the social, cultural, economic, physical and political factors of this city-shaping movement in Australia and New Zealand. In preparing this guide, we highlight the depth and breadth of the approach: big cities and small towns, inner urban environments and suburbs, the subtropics and temperate climates. It is not only a tool for inner urban regeneration or post-disaster rebuilding, rather it is an emerging city-building tool that has been adapted to a vast range of local contexts and is relevant to citizens, experts and municipal governments alike.

In this guidebook we use local case studies to explore 11 tactics and techniques to improve your city: turn streets into parks, vacant lots into community spaces and nature strips into productive gardens. A host of ways to get out there and make a change!

The Tactical Challenge

Australia and New Zealand are home to some of the world’s most livable cities, but rapid urban growth is turning up the pressure. Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland are among the most unaffordable cities in the world. Increased transport times, insufficient public transport and stretched public services are issues of increasing proportion.

Traditional city-making strategies are struggling to keep up. These approaches are led by experts and based on analysis, with long-term planning horizons and limited opportunities for citizen

engagement. These strategies are not flexible enough to accommodate our shifting social structures, rapid economic change, local variations or new knowledge and insights.

In this context, non-traditional city-making can fill the gaps. Tactical urbanism is one such approach. It is led by users as well as experts, based on evidence and provides immediate action.

The tactical challenge is not a question of strategic planning or tactical urbanism. Traditional planning is still relevant to large urban services such as arterial roads, rail networks, large infrastructure, hospitals and the protection of wildlife corridors. But in the detailed shaping of neighbourhoods, there is a good case for increased local empowerment. This can help shape the local identity of a place, build shared-responsibility and reduce the reliance on local-government as the sole provider of public space.

Tactical Urbanism in Australia and New Zealand

Urban planning in Australia and New Zealand is influenced by trends in Western Europe and North America. Proof is all around us, from the grid-like backbone of early British settlements to the Garden City layout of Canberra and sprawling, car-dominated suburbs.

Tactical urbanism in Australia and New Zealand also looks to Europe and North America, but our projects' motivations, leadership and politics are highly context-specific.

Tactical urbanism projects in Australia and New Zealand exhibit five key factors:

- High levels of participation by citizens
- Temporary spaces that model a change or preferred future for a place
- Government-sanctioned or government-led activities
- Short-term duration (1 day to 12 months)
- Intention to catalyse long-term change

Behind these fast-paced, creative projects lies an adaptive critique: more city-shaping should be delegated to citizens, and government should take the role of enabler rather than controller.

In Australia and New Zealand we note an interesting paradox: while many tactical projects begin with citizens, local governments either sanction, manage or deliver the projects. There are few 'guerrilla' case studies in this book, unlike in many other regions around the world. In this regard, perhaps we have not yet seen the full potential for tactical urbanism in Australia and New Zealand.

Applications

Tactical urbanism is more than just how the city is made, it questions who is making the city. It can be both bottom up and top down.

Top Down: Local Government

Local governments want better ways to collaborate with their residents, and more effective ways to allocate stretched resources. Traditional forms of community engagement, like town hall meetings and complex planning documents, drive people to NIMBYism or apathy. This leads to blocked decisions or spending that doesn't meet residents' needs.

The benefits of government-led tactical urbanism include:

- More effective conversations with citizens
- Proof of concept before committing major resources to a project
- Stronger communities and social capital
- Rapid revitalisation of depressed areas

Large programs give power back to residents, enabling local people and businesses to organise events and projects in their public spaces. As such, government-led tactical urbanism is effective but still works within the existing urban planning system.

Bottom Up: Citizens

Citizens are increasingly taking the lead, often in partnership with local governments and experts. The benefits of community-led tactical urbanism include:

- Easier participation in the planning process
- Peer-to-peer learning
- Filling the gap left by funding shortfalls

Projects such as Why so Empty, which helps people find vacant space for rent, and 3000 Acres, whose crowd-sourced map matches underutilised land with would-be gardeners, exemplify this process of ground-up action where the government may have traditionally stepped in.

In Christchurch, citizens set up temporary projects to meet basic public needs after the earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. Organisations such

as Gapfiller and Greening the Rubble transformed vacant spaces into thriving community assets, using low-cost materials and an army of local volunteers.

What about risk?

Tactical urbanism projects inevitably come up against questions of risk. Yes, there is no denying there are risks involved. However, this should be weighed against the inherent risks in any neighbourhood improvement project. The social risks of not effectively collaborating with citizens may be greater than running a temporary experiment.

Where to from here?

Among the criticisms of tactical urbanism is the accusation that it is just a fad, and will become planning history like the garden city or modernism. Elements of tactical urbanism, such as the ‘pop up’ trend, will certainly fade. However, critical elements of the approach demonstrate a completely different way of city-making.

Tactical urbanism demonstrates how the horizontal, peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge can change and improve cities. Other major urban planning trends have relied on vertical flow of knowledge, from expert to user.

As cities in Australia and New Zealand experience rapid growth, it is more critical than ever to consider how urban environments can be improved both vertically and horizontally. We hope the tactics and the case studies in this guidebook offer simple tools to enable more livable, connected neighbourhoods, more quickly.

KEY

Improving the livability of our towns and cities commonly starts at the neighbourhood, street, block, building or micro scale. This is where social capital and creativity are most easily catalysed. The following key identifies the scale of the case studies profiled within this guidebook.

Micro



Building



Block



Street



Neighbourhood



TACTICS

STREET MAKEOVER

Purpose

To repurpose public roads into pedestrian spaces that encourage people of all ages to be social and active

Leaders

Community groups, Government, Local Business, Urban practitioners

Summary

Street makeovers temporarily repurpose public roads for car-free use. In Australia, 30% of our urban space is dedicated to roads and car parks. Reclaiming this space for pedestrians, even in the short term, can change streets into active places that contribute to health, wellbeing and environmental quality of neighbourhoods.

Tactical street makeovers encourage people to temporarily re-imagine how their roads could serve them as public spaces. Inspired communities then push their governments to adopt more permanent changes. This grass-roots tactic applies equally to individual car parks and entire parking lots and roadways.

At the smaller scale, the globally renowned Park(ing) Day project is the source of much inspiration. This project by ReBar had humble beginnings: they transformed

a single parking space into a temporary public park by simply paying the metre for a few hours. This ingenious idea quickly gathered momentum and is now a popular platform for communities to experiment with their urban environments in new and exciting ways. It also popularised the concept of ‘parklets’, where kerbside car parks are reinvented as public spaces for a day, a month, or even years at a time.

At the larger scale, temporary street closures like the Yarraville Pop Up Park, the Bondi Junction Complete Streets Project and the Better Block movement demonstrate that short-term road transformations can – and do – catalyse long-term change.



Image courtesy Waverly Council and RobertsDay

Bondi Junction Complete Streets Project

Location: Sydney, NSW, Australia

Leader: Waverley City Council, RobertsDay, Anderson Hunter Horne



Urbanist Jan Gehl has described Sydney as a city choking in vehicular traffic, where pedestrians and cyclists are at the bottom of the agenda. The Bondi Junction Complete Streets Project seeks a fairer balance between competing transport modes in the bustling urban precinct of Bondi Junction, in Sydney's inner east. Temporary installations tested different methods to provide a more liveable landscape. Among the most popular was an 'urban lounge' parklet with public seating, artistic bike racks and mobile and laptop recharge outlets. The 'urban lounge' demonstrated the potential for Bondi Junction to shift from a vehicle-oriented to a people-oriented space, and was a proof of concept for bold initiatives with minimal investment. The installations contributed to an increase in retail sales and received strong public support, resulting in an extension of the trial and prompting Council to start the first long-term, detailed design for Spring Street. While overcoming the dominance of cars in our urban environments is a major challenge, bottom-up projects like this street makeover are a model for incremental change.



Images courtesy Waverley Council and RobertsDay



Image credit: Planning Observer

Yarraville Pop Up Park

Location: Yarraville, VIC, Australia

Leader: Maribyrnong City Council



Every summer since 2011, a park has popped up in Melbourne's eclectic Yarraville Village, transforming a major street with moveable objects like synthetic turf, potted plants, picnic tables, deck chairs and umbrellas. The three-month closure provides fresh public space for locals and visitors to connect, while generating extra foot traffic for local traders. When the future viability of the project was in doubt, local traders spearheaded a community campaign to lobby for its return. The pop up park was so popular that the local government proposed a permanent park in its place, restricting traffic and fulfilling the need for more complete streets in the area.



Image credit: COUNCIL

BETTER BLOCK

Purpose

To promote liveable streets and vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods

Leaders

Community Groups, Local Advocates, Local Business, Government

Summary

Better Block temporarily activates public space and vacant storefronts with neighbourhood-building street parties. The Build a Better Block movement had humble beginnings, but grew into a major force through the use of social media.

Before its spread around the world, Better Block began in the Dallas, Texas neighbourhood of Oak Cliff. Local community group Go Oak Cliff harnessed volunteers and cheap or donated materials to transform an underutilised city block: food

vendors and cafe tables provided meeting places, native landscaping and street furniture gave a sense of place and painted “New York-style” cycle tracks slowed traffic.

A key lesson of the Better Block initiative is the useful role of social media. By communicating online, organisers attract both local participants and global attention, inspiring other communities to follow suit. A How To Guide is available at the Build a Better Block website.





Image courtesy Suzette Jackson



Image courtesy City of Moreland

Geelong Better Block

Location: Geelong and North Geelong, VIC, Australia

Leaders: Innate Ecology, Geelong Better Block, City of Greater Geelong, Two and Five Inc.



Organised by Innate Ecology, the first Australian Better Block project attracted more than 700 visitors to Little Malop Street in June 2013. Located in the heart of Geelong, the event was a catalyst for likeminded community groups to explore ideas for activating the city, from safer pedestrian access to sustainable living, efficient housing, safe cycling access and growing food in the city. This inspired further Better Block projects, including North Geelong Better Block in the suburb of Norlane. Musicians, artists, children’s activities, a pop up craft stall, food and edible garden projects contributed to Labuan Square’s transformation into a “colourful, vibrant piazza.”

Brunswick Better Block

Location: Brunswick, VIC, Australia

Leaders: City of Moreland, Victoria Police, Department of Justice



Brunswick’s Wilson Avenue is an important thoroughfare between the suburb’s main street and local railway station. Volunteers transformed it into an inviting public space with a program of events ranging from skateboarding to massages, food demonstrations and performances. A new mural was unveiled, honouring the area’s Indigenous heritage with a depiction of the Kulin Nation’s creator spirit Bunjil the Eagle. The project was funded by the state government’s Community Crime Prevention Program, highlighting how tactical urbanism techniques can meet policy objectives while also making cities more inviting – crime in the area dropped by 40% following the event.



Image courtesy Clovelly Better Block

Clovelly Road Better Block

Location: Clovelly, NSW, Australia

Leaders: Clovelly Road Better Block



Clovelly Road Better Block was Sydney's first Better Block event. Approximately 3000 people joined in the festivities, which quintupled the green space in an area that was almost exclusively paved. This success inspired community members to form a group called Park to Pacific. Park to Pacific aim to transform Clovelly Road into a complete street with greenery, outdoor seating, kerbside dining, cycle paths, thriving businesses, parklets, community gardens and places for children and the elderly, in order to increase a sense of community.



NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDENING

Purpose

To repurpose underutilised spaces for edible gardens

Leaders

Community Groups, Property Developers, Government Agencies, Local Advocates, Local Business, Not-For-Profit Organisations

Summary

Neighbourhood gardening is a growing movement to improve access to locally-grown food in the city. Tactical neighbourhood gardening involves making simple, low-cost improvements to streets or underutilised spaces, making them available for growing food. This can involve everything from street-side planter boxes to community gardens and food forests in public nature strips (verge planting).

Neighbourhood gardening's key benefit is that it improves access to healthy food. This is especially important in areas where fresh produce is hard to find or too expensive for some to access.

While less prominent in New Zealand, nearly 90% of Australians live in urban environments and are increasingly embracing neighbourhood gardening in collaborations between community groups, councils and property developers. Repurposing underutilised land for food production not only means more locally grown food, but improved social and physical wellbeing, skill development, street activation and local economies.



Nine Smith Street

Location: Fitzroy, VIC, Australia

Leaders: 3000 Acres, Neometro



Not all vacant land is available for long-term reuse – temporarily vacant spaces pose a particular challenge. With this in mind, Melbourne-based organisation 3000 Acres connected with property developers Neometro to create a temporary community garden on the site of a future housing development. With support from University of Melbourne horticulture students, 3000 Acres transformed the site into a temporary urban oasis with 22 garden plots and a compost station to recycle food and garden waste from on and off the site. Located on a former industrial site, however, the soil wasn't safe for growing food. The problem was solved by repurposing interim bulk containers (IBCs) to create self-irrigating raised wicker beds. These modular beds mean the whole garden can be relocated within the community when the site is ready to be developed. This project is a strong example of how communities, businesses and governments can unlock temporarily vacant spaces for neighbourhood gardening – a tactic covered further in the Placeholders chapter.



Images courtesy 3000 Acres



Image credit: Sustainable Chippendale



Image credit: Northcote Library Food Garden

Sustainable Chippendale

Location: Chippendale, NSW, Australia

Leader: Sustainable Chippendale, City of Sydney



Mobilised by a love of gardening, “cool roads” and sustainable living, environmental consultant Michael Mobbs set up Sustainable Chippendale in 2009. While the organisation has a wide scope, one of their major projects is transforming nature strips from grass into productive landscapes; the City of Sydney got the ball rolling with a donation of 200 fruit trees and educational resources. Fruit, herbs, vegetables, leafy greens and native edibles now line two main streets in the suburb. The community established a shared garden shed with a roster for weekly maintenance. Sustainable Chippendale also created a blueprint for overhauling the entire suburb, with a focus on sustainable transport, stormwater harvesting, heat-reflective roads, food growing, greening buildings and businesses and incentives for participation in sustainable living. The initial nature strip planting catalysed enormous community momentum, setting a precedent for transforming other areas of redundant land for urban agriculture.

Northcote Library Food Garden

Location: Northcote, VIC, Australia

Leaders: City of Darebin



The City of Darebin wanted to promote neighbourhood gardening and sustainable gardening practices, so it set up the Northcote Library Food Garden in 2011. Planting began in July 2011, and three large growing beds now overflow with edible annuals and perennials and beneficial companion plants. A food forest with fruit trees, edible shrubs, berries and herbs mimics the canopy, mid-layer and ground cover of natural forest. After the project was up and running, Council set up a community management model; experts provide community workshops, and volunteers are welcome regardless of gardening experience and time commitments. Three years on, Council and members of the community have created a sustainable and inclusive garden that demonstrates how a small, 160 square metre space can be leveraged to promote community togetherness, health, sustainability and education.

LOCAL ECONOMIC RENEWAL

Purpose:

To promote economic development and revitalise streets by filling vacant retail space with short-term, low-cost occupations

Leaders

Creative Industries, Community Groups, Government, Not-For-Profit Organisations, Property Owners, Urban Practitioners

Summary

Ideas of local economic renewal are often limited to pop up retail, where companies create an event-like atmosphere in vacant shopfronts for a limited time – sometimes just for one day.

In Australia and New Zealand, however, local economic renewal has evolved beyond a purely commercial tactic to become an effective community revitalisation technique. Common locations include laneways, car parks and main streets with vacant shop fronts. These locations act as local incubators for a seemingly endless number of temporary or permanent commercial and community uses.

This tactic is a useful tool for urban revitalisation and local capacity building. For example, the success of the Renew Newcastle movement in revitalising Newcastle's CBD

led to the establishment of Renew Australia, empowering communities across the country to revitalise their suburbs and towns. Technology is also key in connecting would-be economic renewal projects with vacant space, illustrated by Spacemarket and Why So Empty in Perth.

Importantly, the interest and public exposure generated by these temporary economic renewal projects are a powerful tool for long-term change. Successful stores often earn the right to stay, creating a win-win for the property owner, occupant and neighbourhood.





Image credit: Renew Australia

Renew Australia

Location: Australia-wide

Leader: Renew Australia



Renew Australia is a national social enterprise designed to catalyse community renewal, economic development, the arts and creative industries across Australia. It works with communities and property owners to take otherwise empty commercial and public buildings, shops and offices, and make them available for short-term use by artists, creative projects and community initiatives.

Renew Australia is based on the intellectual property and experience of Renew Newcastle, an enormously successful low-budget DIY urban renewal scheme. In less than two years, more than 70 new creative businesses and initiatives were

established in Newcastle, leading to global media attention and a Lonely Planet listing as one of the top 10 cities in the world to visit in 2011.

Renew Australia has expanded beyond the urban model of Newcastle. Empty Spaces Project took on the rural and regional settings of Creswick, Clunes and Talbot in Victoria, while Greensborough Comes Alive and Renew Leichhardt are suburban examples. The former industrial area of Melbourne's Docklands is being revitalised with Docklands Spaces. Renew's projects follow a similar model, but by involving communities each project produces unique outcomes that create more connected and characterful neighbourhoods.



Image credit: Spacemarket

The Rocks Pop Up

Location: Sydney, NSW, Australia

Leaders: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Arts NSW, NSW-based Creative Individuals, The Rocks community



The Rocks Pop-Up is an initiative of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority to find creative uses for temporarily vacant buildings, attracting new visitors to Sydney's historic heart. It provides creative workers with access to affordable space to produce and showcase original work, incubate businesses and host unique events while a long-term tenant is secured. In its first year, The Rocks Pop-Up participants hosted more than 200 events and attracted more than 70,000 visitors through 10 spaces. Currently in its third year, the program will continue to bring NSW's most innovative emerging creatives into The Rocks to activate temporarily vacant properties and bring activity into the precinct.

Spacemarket and Why So Empty

Location: Perth, WA, Australia

Leaders: Spacemarket



Pairing disused spaces with useful people is Spacemarket's mission. Spacemarket repurposes underused and opportune pieces of the city like upper floors, ground floors and basements, then connect the spaces with artists and businesses. Spacemarket differs from a real estate agency as its main focus is to support and advocate for sustainable tenancies, rather than making a profit. Why So Empty is a smart phone application which enables users to directly send reports to Spacemarket about vacant and disused spaces, and offer suggestions for their future use. By harnessing technology, Spacemarket and Why So Empty illustrate how the traditional relationship between real estate agents, landlords and tenants is being reinvented to provide meaningful changes to the city.

ROAD REPAIR

Purpose

To provide a safer and more engaging public environment for pedestrians and cyclists

Leaders

Community Groups, Government, Local Advocates

Summary

Road repair makes streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists through simple and low-cost physical changes. Transport policy and urban planning in Australia and New Zealand often prioritises car use at the expense of walking and cycling. As a result, many streets are unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians, or lack easy-to-use crossing points. Road repair is a direct response, with communities taking the lead to make streets safer and more attractive.

Temporary road repair projects are popular in Australia and New Zealand, partly due to cycling's growing popularity as both a recreational pursuit and form of commuter transport. Sydney alone has seen a 230% increase in cycling over the past four years.

Equally, streets and landscapes need to work harder as population density increases. Road repair's small but influential changes have made roads safer for sustainable transport methods, thereby encouraging a wider variety of use.



Image courtesy City of Sydney



Image courtesy Mt Hawthorn Hub



Wayfinding Stencils

Location: Mt Lawley and Mt Hawthorn, WA, Australia

Leader: Beaufort Street Network, Mt Hawthorn Hub, City of Vincent



Wayfinding Stencils promote healthy, sustainable and activated communities by highlighting easy walking and cycling routes. Community groups in Mt Lawley and Mt Hawthorn, dismayed by the local dominance of cars, set out to challenge perceptions of convenience by stencilling walking and cycling directions on the ground between popular spots. The site-specific stencils build a better understanding of local attractions, contributing to a sense of civic pride and local identity. The understated wayfinding stencils also pique curiosity, giving the sense of stumbling across a piece of information that no one else knows. The stencils not only promote walking and cycling, but also encourage people to spend more time in their town centre – a boon for residents and traders alike

Guerrilla Bike Activism

Location: Sydney, NSW and Canberra ACT, Australia

Leader: Anonymous



Guerrilla tactical urbanism is almost unheard of in Australia and New Zealand, but frustrated cycling activists have started to take matters into their own hands to push for safer shared streets. While participation in cycling continues to grow, infrastructure and social awareness have largely failed to keep up. Activists challenge this by changing existing infrastructure and making eye-catching statements. Examples include placing ghost bikes as memorials to cyclists that have been killed riding, boldly highlighting hazards that authorities have failed to address, and stencilling bike lanes on the road. Their unsanctioned work raises awareness and legitimises the presence of cyclists on the road, making cycling safer and more enjoyable in the absence of strong government action.



Image courtesy City of Sydney

Rainbow Crossing

Location: Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia

Leader: City of Sydney



Inspired by the Rainbow Crosswalk in West Hollywood, the City of Sydney installed a temporary rainbow-painted crossing in celebration of the city's LGBT community and Mardi Gras festival. Council received approval from the State Government's Roads and Maritime Services to trial the crossing, which if proven to be safe was to become a permanent installation. It was installed in early 2013, with bright, non-slip paint spilling across the road at Taylor Square on Oxford Street. The crossing was an immediate success, becoming a popular destination for both tourists and local residents and bringing more life and business to the area. Many people, including

the Assistant Police Commissioner, argued that it increased pedestrian safety. Although the crossing was removed following the six week trial, 15,000 members of the public signed a petition calling for it to remain. Its legacy lives on, however, as it inspired the painting of more sanctioned and unsanctioned Rainbow Crossings in other parts of Sydney and New South Wales.

CO-TRADING

Purpose:

To incubate new businesses and sustain existing ones through the co-location of mutually supportive uses

Leaders:

Creative Industries, Entrepreneurs, Government, Local Business, Not-For-Profit Organisations, Urban Practitioners

Summary

Co-trading, also known as micro-mixing, is a simple concept: inspired by the rise of co-working and shared office space, traders decided to share retail space too.

This is not a new tactic – bookstore cafes are a classic example. In Australia and New Zealand, however, unconventional co-trading is making a positive impact on communities.

In Christchurch, co-trading restored retail space to the earthquake-shattered CBD much earlier than expected. In Brisbane, Winn Lane is a creative hub for designers, artists and retailers to test new ideas in a flexible and unique space, while also revitalising an underutilised laneway. In Adelaide, the mobile Fork on the Road project supports food startups and brings creative events to different parts of the city.

With clever merchandising and efficient space planning, underutilised spaces can be

quickly adapted to handle multiple users or businesses. In this way, co-trading spaces in Australia and New Zealand play a unique role in supporting small businesses while also contributing to urban renewal.



Magazines, Books, Art

Künstler



Winn Lane

Location: Fortitude Valley, QLD, Australia

Leaders: Brisbane City Council



In Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, Winn Lane houses a vibrant community of first-time retailers including boutiques, bookshops, salons and cafes. This was made possible by its location in a formerly disused laneway with low rent. This mix of creative energy allows new ideas to be tested, while also attracting people to a space which would otherwise be neglected. Winn Lane's success saw it host events like St Jerome's Laneway Festival, and inspired further incubator projects in Bakery Lane and California Lane. Winn Lane is a model example of how co-trading can have tangible impacts on the built environment and support the local economy.



Images courtesy Winn Lane



Re:START Mall

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand

Leaders: Re:START



The Re:START shipping container mall was born from the need to breathe new life into central Christchurch following the devastating earthquakes. The mall was the first part of the shattered city centre to reopen to the public, providing a gathering spot, a morale boost and much-needed services including shops, restaurants, cafes and banks. This was made possible by the use of repurposed shipping containers. While creative containers are now a common sight in Christchurch, the idea was considered a wildcard when Re:START was first proposed. Re:START's success demonstrates that fast-paced urban renewal is possible in disaster zones, providing the community with accessible services and acting as a placeholder while reconstruction continues.

Fork on the Road

Location: Adelaide, SA, Australia

Leaders: Fork on the Road, Splash Adelaide, Government of South Australia



Based in Adelaide, Fork on the Road is a mobile celebration of local food and culture. Fork showcases Adelaide's best new food trucks, vans, pop ups, carts and bikes in one spot, supported by young South Australian musicians and entertainers. Fork events pop up in different locations on different days, turning mealtimes into an event, and social media fosters a relationship between vendors, artists and the community. Fork in the Road demonstrates how co-trading can accommodate for both entrepreneurial and creative pursuits without the need for a fixed location. However, most importantly it demonstrates how open spaces can be used in a more people-friendly way.

OPEN SPACE MAKING

Purpose:

To increase the supply of permanent public open space by reclaiming underutilised land

Leaders:

Local Advocates, Government,
Urban Practitioners

Summary

Many of our neighbourhoods reinforce sedentary behaviour and car dependence. Large open spaces that encourage physical activity are hard to find in urban neighbourhoods, and most tactical urbanism projects provide public open space at a smaller scale.

Open space making is a direct response to this challenge, deploying scaled-up parklet techniques where communities, business and government work together to create new urban parks on underutilised land.



Image courtesy Creative Communities International



Make My Park Pop

Location: Penrith, NSW, Australia

Leaders: Penrith City Council, Place Partners, The Lot, The Street Plans Collaborative, University of Technology Sydney (U.LAB)



Using best-practice tactical urbanism – short-term action to create meaningful long-term change – Make My Park Pop is an open space-making project with a twist. At an intensive workshop in late 2013, three multi-disciplinary teams came together to take on the challenge of designing and delivering a trial one-year park installation. The brief was to provide the city with a greener and more attractive gateway, allowing locals and visitors to enjoy activities while producing an economic and recreational hub to redefine Penrith’s retail core.

The trial is a cost-effective blueprint for creating new public open space in an established city, particularly in a manner that reflects local identity, heritage and community values. The park has already hosted a number of community events, increasing opportunities for socialisation and building community capacity. At the time of going to print, the trial’s success is being measured with a number of tools including behaviour mapping, business owner engagement and traffic studies. At the end of the trial the results will inform the brief for a permanent park.



Greening the Rubble

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand

Leaders: NZ Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA), Lincoln University, Canterbury University, Christchurch City Council



Greening the Rubble Trust is a volunteer community project that responds creatively to the damage caused by the Christchurch earthquakes. Volunteers transform derelict city sites into parks and colourful gardens, encouraging activity in areas that might otherwise be left to deteriorate. Experimental design combines with a sustainable approach to deliver projects made from recycled materials and incorporating biodiversity principles. These sites are only temporary, until owners are ready to redevelop – anywhere from six months to a few years later – but they make a long-term difference to the community spirit.



Image courtesy Creative Communities International



Image courtesy CoDesign Studio

Horotutu – Our Place Paihia Waterfront

*Location: Paihia, Bay of Islands, New Zealand
Leaders: Paihia Phantom Placemakers, Creative Communities International, Focus Paihia Community Trust, Stephenson&Turner, Far North District Council*



Horotutu - Our Place is a community-funded and community-built project that transformed a large car park near Paihia's waterfront into inviting public open space. The new park provides a relaxed destination for locals and visitors to enjoy the waterfront, incorporating seating, plants, grassy spaces and a water feature. As a consequence, hundreds more people are now spending time on the waterfront, with the added benefit of increased foot traffic for local businesses. The name was chosen by a public vote. It is the largest project undertaken by the Paihia Phantom Placemakers since the adoption of the community-developed Paihia Masterplan in 2011, facilitated by the Focus Paihia Community Trust, and contributes to Paihia's long-term renewal.

Launceston City Heart

*Location: Launceston, TAS, Australia
Leader: Launceston City Council, CoDesign Studio, University of Tasmania*



Launceston City Heart is a collaborative project to re-energise the centre of Tasmania's second city, based on community consultation and prototyping. Local government, urban practitioners and architecture students worked together on the project, forging strong local relationships in the process. First, community consultations identified key themes such as the need for more meeting and gathering places, seating and shelter, art and culture, greenery and connectivity. Solutions were then prototyped for Civic Square and Brisbane Street Mall. Prototyping is a way to test ideas in a live environment, generate feedback to further refine ideas, build community support and demonstrate action. It is a powerful tool that allows placemakers to trial and measure the potential success of new infrastructure without having to commit to costly permanent fixtures. Prototyping is therefore a means to inform development priorities, allowing communities to take an active role in improving their neighbourhoods' liveability.

PLACEHOLDERS

Purpose

To temporarily activate vacant sites

Leaders

Property Developers, Government
Not-For-Profit Organisations, Urban
Practitioners

Summary

This tactic involves repurposing temporarily vacant land for community use. The end result is the creation of public markets, art exhibitions and studios, community festivals, urban agriculture, micro-retail opportunities and other temporary programs on sites that would otherwise sit empty. These examples focus on development sites; during the planning, approval and financing stages, vacant spaces earmarked for construction can provide low-cost community-building and economic opportunities. These placeholder projects facilitate the transition from an inactive parcel of land to a fully redeveloped and programmed addition to the city's urban fabric.

Tactical improvements to vacant spaces allow owners and developers to generate

revenue for the land, raise community awareness about a site's long-term potential, and build community capacity while supporting local entrepreneurs.





The School of Life Pop Up Space

Location: Collingwood, VIC, Australia
Leader: CoDesign Studio, School Of Life, Small Giants



Milk crates. Lots and lots of milk crates. They were a key secret behind the success of a 2013 project that transformed a derelict warehouse into a thriving community asset in a gentrified pocket of Melbourne’s inner north. For three months the transitional site became home to The School of Life, who offer a program of classes and events to help people “live wisely and well”. Clusters of recycled milk crates were bound with cable ties and configured to create a community seating area and a thriving vertical garden, with an impressive amphitheatre and new terraced area to house a “bibliotherapy” space, cafe and bookshop. This project is a great example of how collaboration between landowners and urban practitioners or other interested groups can lead to transitional spaces that facilitate new and interesting uses.



Image credit: Testing Grounds

Testing Grounds

Location: Melbourne, VIC, Australia
Leader: Arts Victoria, These Are The Projects We Do Together



Testing Grounds provides free public space for new works of art and creative ideas to be developed and shared. Situated in the heart of Melbourne’s Southbank arts and cultural precinct, the plot of government-owned land had been vacant and underutilised for around 30 years. The project acts as an alternative to the more traditional large-scale dedicated arts buildings that surround the site. Since opening to the public in October 2013, Testing Grounds has hosted exhibitions, performances, rehearsals, a continuing artist-in-residence program, collaboration with universities, chefs, artists, illustrators, tattoo workshops, foundries and more. This exhaustive list of pop ups are accommodated on site by reclaimed wooden pallets and 20-foot shipping containers, with reused car stereos and a mobile film projector also helping to bring this engaging transitional space to life.



Image credit: Guy Jansen

Pallet Pavillion

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand

Leader: Gap Filler



The Pallet Pavillion was developed by Gap Filler in response to the 2010 earthquakes that devastated Christchurch. The Pavillion quite literally ascended from the rubble as an answer to the city's demand for new event venues, after so many were lost. Driven by community resilience and a desire for interesting temporary architecture, more than 80 volunteers and 40 businesses gathered to create a new public space on the site of the former Crowne Plaza Hotel. Materials were reused and salvaged, including over 3000 pallets and the wreckage of nearby buildings. An important element of this

project was that unskilled volunteers were involved in all phases of the project, from construction to activation and deconstruction. As a result, the local community has a strong stake in the project. Pallet Pavillion was created on private land, and was designed as a temporary activation to attract people back to the city over one summer. An extraordinary crowd-funding campaign generated support from all corners of the globe, raising \$80,000 in 29 days to extend the pavillion for another season. This success was testament not just to the support for Christchurch's rebuild, but to the connection people felt to the project. By recycling materials, harnessing volunteer power and thinking outside the box, projects like Pallet Pavillion demonstrate that the power to regenerate our urban environments does not have to be solely dictated by large-scale development. Temporary, low-cost and people-centred approaches have an important role to play in shaping our cities too.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Purpose

To strengthen community ties and share skills, perspectives or stories

Leaders

Community Groups, Local Advocates, Local Business

Summary

Knowledge exchanges build strong community ties; programs are often led by locals, for locals, and celebrate sharing and collaboration. Book exchanges are the most prominent example, promoting literacy and collaborative consumption. Stumbling upon hidden bookshelves or micro-libraries also provides moments of surprise and delight in the busy streetscape.

Sharing knowledge builds cohesive and collaborative communities, leaving them better equipped to work together for change in their cities. These initiatives can make significant physical contributions too, by creating shared public gathering space in busy urban centres.

A wooden bookshelf filled with books, with a chalkboard sign in the foreground. The bookshelf is made of dark wood and has several shelves. The books are arranged in rows, with some standing upright and some lying flat. The background wall has vertical stripes in blue and white. The floor is covered with a red patterned carpet. The chalkboard sign is in the bottom left corner and has the text "THE LITTLE LIBRARY" and "BORROW A BOOK RETURN IT, OR" written on it.

THE
LITTLE
LIBRARY

BORROW A BOOK
RETURN IT,
OR



Image courtesy Fremantle Outdoor Reading Room

Book Exchange

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand and Chippendale, NSW, Australia

Leader: Gap Filler, Sustainable Chippendale



Phone booths, old refrigerators and beat-up eskies are receiving new life as public book exchanges, springing up in communities across Australia and New Zealand. In Christchurch, book exchanges activate vacant space and provide a much-needed service in communities whose libraries were out of operation as a consequence of the earthquakes. In Sydney, the Chippendale community implemented their book exchange as part of a wider project to promote sustainable living through recycling and community togetherness. Both initiatives use the “take one, leave one” policy, allowing community members to share works that have impacted their lives. This creates a sense of ownership within the community and a shared local story.

Fremantle Outdoor Reading Room

Location: Fremantle, WA, Australia

Leader: Fremantle City Library, MANY 6160, King’s Square Working Group, Fremantle Press, Love 2 Read - National Year of Reading



The Fremantle Outdoor Reading Room takes the library outside, with books, newspapers and magazines available to read free of charge in a comfortable corner of King’s Square. It blurs the boundary between the physical library and community space, and book sales, a poet’s breakfast and live readings encourage public participation. During cooler months and the reconstruction of King’s Square, it moves indoors to the Many 6160 co-trading space. The Outdoor Reading Room is the result of a community placemaking workshop, drawing inspiration from pop up libraries and book exchanges around the world. The project not only creates a positive atmosphere, but promotes an informed community, highlighting how tactical urbanism techniques can facilitate lifelong learning.



Image courtesy Little Library

Little Library

Location: Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Leader: Melbourne Central, GPT Group



The Little Library at Melbourne Central shopping mall is a free book exchange, established by property owners GPT Group. In its first month of operation the Little Library exchanged over 500 books. The concept is simple: borrow a book, read it, and either return it or bring another book in its place. Intended as a community-building initiative, it promotes reading and encourages people to share their love of books with each other. It also provides a free, quiet place in Melbourne's CBD to escape the hustle and bustle. The Little Library highlights how knowledge-sharing initiatives can also work in privately-owned spaces.

VISUAL CATALYST

Purpose

To improve the visual quality of public spaces through changes to existing infrastructure

Leaders

Community Groups, Local Advocates, Local Business, Government, Not-For-Profit Organisations

Summary

Visual catalysts are visual improvements that humanise run-down public spaces. There is a wide scope, from the painting of blank walls through to the installation of artworks in vacant and unused spaces. What distinguishes visual catalysts from other forms of public art is their ability to act as stimuli for further, long-term change in the public realm. They can facilitate community discussion as seen with Doorways, provide a backdrop for new social and economic activity as is the case with PUBLIC, and act as a precursor for further revitalisation as highlighted by Moving.

In addition to long-term improvements, visual catalysts pack an immediate punch. They reclaim boring, underutilised public spaces to make our environment more interesting and appealing. They stimulate conversation and social interaction, create interesting destinations for locals and visitors, reduce vandalism and build a sense of ownership within the community.

Visual catalysts account for some of the only guerrilla tactical urbanism in Australia and New Zealand. Activists are coming out of the shadows, however, as small businesses, community groups and governments increasingly commission them. This highlights a growing recognition of the need to have inviting, engaging, and interesting public spaces. Visual catalysts provide the impetus for further positive development in the public realm, whilst quickly making unpleasant urban environments more conducive to our well-being.





Image courtesy Doorways

Doorways

Location: Glenroy, VIC, Australia

Leaders: Pollen Studio, City of Moreland



Part art installation, part engagement exercise, Doorways transformed an underutilised laneway in the Wheatsheaf Road shopping precinct into a vibrant hub of art and community discussion. Brightly painted doors, letterboxes and planted canopies lined the laneway, turning the formerly unattractive and underutilised space into a destination. As part of the installation, local traders were asked to consider the potential of other underperforming spaces in the area and share their feedback with City of Moreland in the laneway's letterboxes. The installation changed over time to reflect the ideas collected. Doorways not only improved the visual quality of the laneway, but also encouraged further activation and empowered local traders to take ownership of these transformations.

Moving

Location: Ringwood, VIC, Australia

Leaders: Village Well, Maroondah City Council, Victorian Government



Moving was a response to the growing number of vacant shops in central Ringwood. To activate empty store windows and connect with the community, these spaces were offered to local artists as temporary exhibition and studio spaces. The excitement of the project, combined with the use of local artists, promoted a sense of belonging within the community and improved the overall feeling of safety in Ringwood. The first Moving ran from late 2009 to early 2010, attracting an extraordinarily positive response from the artists and community before extending for a second round. The event's success highlights how community-driven creative projects can transform the physical environment and build more cohesive neighbourhoods.



Image credit: Bewley Shaylor

PUBLIC

Location: Perth, WA, Australia

Leaders: FORM



FORM, a not-for-profit arts organisation, rose to the challenge of activating Perth's dormant spaces with PUBLIC. The PUBLIC arts program transformed underutilised public spaces through street art, installations and creative events; over the course of a week, 35 blank walls in the heart of Perth were transformed into works of art by 45 artists from around the globe. Not only did the artworks give the walls a renewed purpose, but the events program also engaged the public with the space. This was achieved by showcasing the creation and installation of the artwork by the artists, establishing pop up design installations, hosting DJs and opening a

temporary bar and cafe. The program led to lasting change and ongoing activation in some areas, helping to create a stronger sense of identity for Perth and its people.

URBAN GAMES

Purpose

To provide public activities that build and strengthen communities

Leaders

Community Groups, Government Agencies, Local Advocates, Not-For-Profits

Summary

There is some debate about whether games are truly tactical urbanism, as they are not always implemented with strategic, long-term benefit in mind. Used tactically, however, games are a useful way to build healthier and more cohesive communities with a sense of place. We believe they have a place in any urbanist's toolkit.

Public open spaces have hosted sport and group activities for millennia. We are brought together by the moments of passion and excitement that can come from a surprise victory, heart-breaking loss or astonishing feat, even on a local scale. These urban games bring life to open space, create local history and bring the community together. In the case of Christchurch, they also boosted morale and encouraged people to re-engage with the city centre following

the tragic earthquakes.

These games' small and informal nature is also a benefit, as they can easily spread throughout communities. This brings sport and recreation closer to people's homes and workplaces, and promotes a sense of place at the hyperlocal scale. All in all, urban games create a hub of localised activity by providing a place where groups of people can gather to play, socialise and build community.



Image courtesy Gapfillers



Image courtesy Gapfillers



Image courtesy Gapfillers

Gap Golf

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand
Leader: Gap Filler



Cast-off synthetic turf, timber off-cuts and empty baked beans tins don't sound like much, but in 2012 Gap Filler transformed these materials into an eight-hole mini-golf course to brighten the mood and landscape of central Christchurch. This cheap, simple project created a journey in and around the CBD, reacquainting residents with their post-earthquake city. Each hole included a photograph of the building which once stood in its place, providing a tangible reminder of the history of the land. Gap Golf added not only a much-needed sense of playfulness, but by empowering specific community groups to participate in the design and construction of the course, the project encouraged discovery and acceptance as golfers traversed from hole to hole.

The Dance-O-Mat

Location: Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand
Leader: F3 Design, Gap Filler



The Dance-O-Mat was one of Gap Filler's first initiatives following the Christchurch earthquakes. It was developed in consultation with the local dance community in response to a lack of dance venues post-disaster. A converted washing machine was connected to stand-mounted speakers around a mirror ball-bedecked dance floor, allowing anyone to connect their music device, insert \$2 and start dancing. The first iteration of the Dance-O-Mat saw approximately 600 hours of dance, from salsa to flamenco, swing, ceroc, belly dancers and break dancers. As of 2014, the Dance-O-Mat has moved to four locations around Christchurch and is used by professional dancing troops, dance schools and those with a love for an impromptu boogie, reflecting a practical yet innovative response to a need in the community.



Image courtesy Giant Games

Games Night

Location: Brisbane, QLD, Australia

Leader: Giant Games



Games Night is a monthly event at Brisbane’s King George Square, where people socialise and play life-sized (and regular-sized) games like chess, Connect Four and Jenga. The event has grown significantly since it began in 2012, reinvigorating an often maligned open public space and allowing people to make new friends. Games Night was a winner of the 2012 Brisbane Lord Mayor’s Australia Day Awards, its ongoing success illustrated by the subsequent establishment of the Giant Games rental service for social and corporate events.

Public Outdoor Ping Pong

Location: Australia-wide

Leader: POPP



POPP (Public Outdoor Ping Pong) set up in Australia after discovering public ping pong tables in Berlin. POPP make free-to-use, permanent, weatherproof ping pong tables for parks and open spaces, teaming up with local artists to bring the tables to life and give a sense of community ownership. The tables have several benefits: they encourage healthy activity, function as public art, activate passive urban spaces and unify communities. POPP’s tables are installed across Australia, including urban Fremantle, WA, suburban North Fitzroy, VIC and tourist destination Rottnest Island, WA, illustrating the flexibility of this tactic across environments.

SOURCES

Street Makeover

Parking(ing) Day
RobertsDay
Waverley City Council
Maribyrnong City Council

Better Block

Better Block
City of Greater Geelong
Geelong Better Block Facebook Page
Innate Ecology
Park To Pacific

Neighbourhood Gardening

Urban Agriculture Australia
Michael Green
202020 Vision
Food Alliance
Northcote Library Food Garden
3000 Acres

Local Economic Renewal

Renew Australia
Renew Australia Facebook Page
Renew Newcastle
Docklands Spaces
The Rocks Pop Up
The Rocks Pop Up Facebook Page
Space Market
Why So Empty iOS Application

Road Repair

NSW Now
Heart Foundation
CoDesign Studio
City of Sydney

Co-trading

Winn Lane
Winn Lane Facebook Page
Re:START
Re:START Facebook Page
Fork on the Road
Fork on the Road Facebook Page

Open Space Making

Penrith City Council
202020 Vision
Greening the Rubble
Future Christchurch
Rebuild Christchurch
Focus Paihia
Far North District Council
Stephenson&Turner
Creative Communities
Launceston City Heart

Placeholders

Pallet Pavillion
Creative Spaces
The Projects
Arts Victoria
The School of Life
CoDesign Studio

Knowledge Exchange

Gap Filler
John O'Callaghan
City of Freemantle
Freemantle City Library
Melbourne Central
The World Loves Melbourne
Melbourne Places

Visual Catalyst

All City
Projects for Public Spaces
Pollen Studio
FORM
ArchitectureAU
Village Well
Maroondah City Council

Urban Games

Gap Filler
F3 Design
Giant Games
Cvent
Games Night
Public Outdoor Ping Pong

