

A factsheet for Placemaking

The concepts of place and placemaking are amorphous terms where the definition varies greatly depending on who is defining and how they understand the term. In general sense, it is greatly supported in literature that it emerges from the intersection of the physical space and people (where individuals and groups of individuals are both important). As such, this intersection is normally understood as an emotional bond forged between the people and the space based on how the place is lived, conceived and perceived.

We define place as the “constellation of meanings and appropriate behaviours that define an experience in a social setting” (Trudeau 2016); as such, placemaking is “process to increase the capacity and capability of the people to invest a place with meaning” (Place Agency, 2017). In this sense, we also contest that ecological systems are critical for our wellbeing and livability, as such, place emerges from the intersection between people, space and ecology.

Placemaking as a term has multiple benefits. In particular, its purpose (creating meaning) results in place attachments demonstrating emotional bonds as well as behaviours of care towards the place. The place, possessing a unique identity -you know where you are - brings together cultural practices, activities and the environment across multiple scales. Whereas placemaking allows people to take a participatory approach to making the area reflect who they are and their values. However, to work effectively, it must part from the heart, seeking social benefit, equity and wellbeing. Otherwise, it may fall under place-masking processes resulting in gentrification (Fincher et al.2016, Shaw 2018).

As a movement, the placemaking process has developed multiple strategies to engage in place-based practice. This includes but is not limited to:

- Creative Placemaking: “partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities” (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010)
- Strategic Placemaking: “deliberate, often phased approach to change that begins with a short term commitment and realistic expectations that can start quickly (and often at low cost).” (Wyckoff, 2014)
- Tactical Placemaking: brings together tactical urbanism and Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper approach as ways of testing ideas before making financial commitments. (Wyckoff, 2014)
- Digital Placemaking: “placemaking practices which place special emphasis on, or are primarily mediated through, digital technologies” (Toland et al. 2020)
- Place branding – based on storytelling or shifting narratives of place.
- Green placemaking – sustainability brought together with placemaking.
- Regenerative placemaking (from regenerative development) Process of integrating regenerative development and placemaking by incorporating ecosystem perspectives into place, supporting positive socio-ecological relationships and applying temporary interventions to identify best ways forward towards the coevolution of the place (see [Regenerative Placemaking](#))

To understand places, we created the 5P framework. Informed by industry practices and inspired by key placemakers in Australia, we propose a 5-level structure of analysing and creating places. Each P, has a series of building blocks to be considered. When arranging the 5P building blocks in different ways it will result in a spectrum of strategies of placemaking. What the 5P framework allows, is to focus the placemaking process as a longer iterative timeframe that may use different placemaking strategies at different times as it is

responding to the overarching purpose of the placemaking initiatives in place and using the different strategies to inform the long-term change. The 5 Ps are summarised in the table below:

The 5 P 1 pager summary. From Mateo-Babiano & Lee 2020; Bush et al. 2020.

The 5 P	Summary	Key building blocks strategies applied by project to:
<i>People:</i>	Placing people at the centre to achieve social equity, wellbeing and agency. Seeking to identify what gives meaning to and gives value to place based on community. Placemakers' are <i>facilitators</i> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Trigger change 2) Give Agency: empower community 3) Creating and strengthening relationships 4) Connection with the places (giving meaning)
<i>Process:</i>	How the voices are incorporated into the project. Placemakers aim to <i>design with</i> the community or encourage designs done <i>by</i> the community. 'Solutions are not imposed but emerge through the process'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bottom-up: mobilizing community 2) Assets based: uses local knowledge 3) Purpose-driven: clear vision 4) It is dynamic, democratic, iterative, futures-focused
<i>Product:</i>	The element that is 'produced' or resulting from the process. Placemakers roles are to facilitate the <i>construction and installation</i> of designs. Need to be flexible and not seeking built outcomes only.	<p>The scale, time and implementation framework applied to deliver:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tangible outcomes permanently or temporarily modifying the physical attributes of a space 2) Narratives of place that don't modify the physical attributes of place but shift perceptions 3) Relational outcomes
<i>Program:</i>	Experiences in place. What people can see, feel, do (use and modify) when visiting. "Placemakers' assist the community to <i>plan and manage</i> the structures and processes to ensure continuity" (Bush et al. 2020).	<p>Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Activities for activation 2) Governance systems for the ongoing evolution 3) Place-keeping strategies <p>Maintenance</p>
<i>Place evaluation:</i>	Monitoring and evaluating the intervention to: Assess progress, identify moments to adapt, demonstrate benefits, help place stay relevant in changing dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes economic evaluation (see Place economics module) and • relational outcomes (see Place Evaluation module) through the four dimensions of place relational model.

References:

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