

From pavement to place

An evaluation of RAC's Reconnect WA initiative



For the better

Overview of Reconnect WA

Objectives

RAC launched the Reconnect WA Initiative in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Reconnect WA Initiative sought to help reimagine and revitalise WA streets and public spaces, with three objectives, to:

1. create vibrant and active places for Western Australians to interact and reconnect with our cities and towns, and each other;
2. inspire and empower residents and business communities to co-design and drive change in their local area; and
3. lay the foundations for longer-term changes to support safe, sustainable, and connected communities.

RAC partnered with local governments to deliver **placemaking** projects which aimed to increase mobility, active travel, community safety and connection through **tactical urbanism**. The initiative was designed to enable local governments, residents and local business communities to co-design and test ideas to modify and create more people-friendly streets and inviting public spaces.

Placemaking activities transform places so they are more:

- » accessible and well connected to other important places in the area;
- » comfortable and project a good image;
- » inviting for people to participate in activities;
- » sociable environments in which people want to gather and visit again and again.

Tactical urbanism is a form of placemaking where communities take charge of their surroundings and make immediate, low-cost changes to improve neighborhoods, towns, and cities, with the aim to bring about long-term change. The key features of tactical urbanism initiatives include a bottom-up approach, community engagement and collaboration; incremental change; low-cost and temporary interventions and the testing of ideas to assess feasibility and impact.

City of Stirling
pop-up plaza



Hannay Lane Revitalisation
City of Busselton

Projects and
elements funded

Between 2020 and 2023, RAC granted over \$2.7 million (excl. GST) to local government partners to fund 15 metropolitan and 16 regional projects in WA. Additionally, local governments co-contributed over \$5.7 million and received an additional \$2.3 million from other funding sources (e.g. state and federal governments). RAC also contributed personnel time to support the delivery of Reconnect WA, and there were further in-kind contributions from volunteers, businesses and other stakeholders.

The types of elements installed across those project sites and the comparative number of installations, is shown in Table 1: Elements of placemaking.

Figure 1: Location of Reconnect projects

Legend
● 2020-21
● 2021-22
● 2022-23

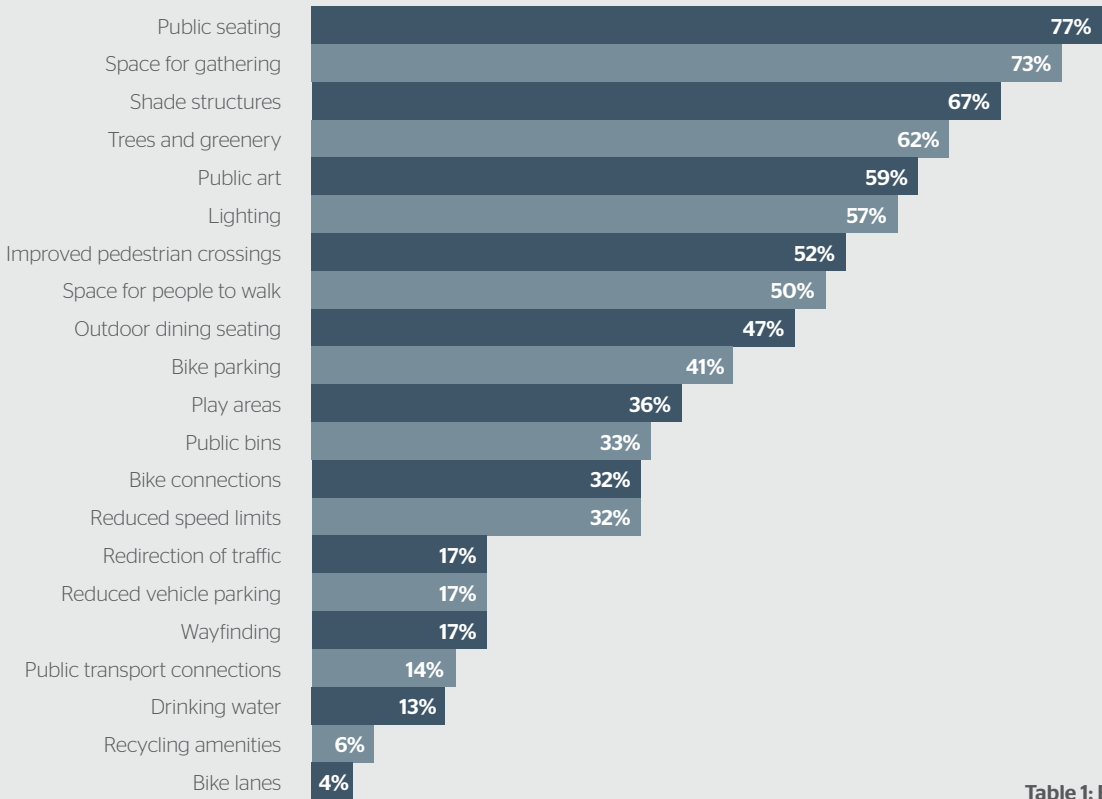
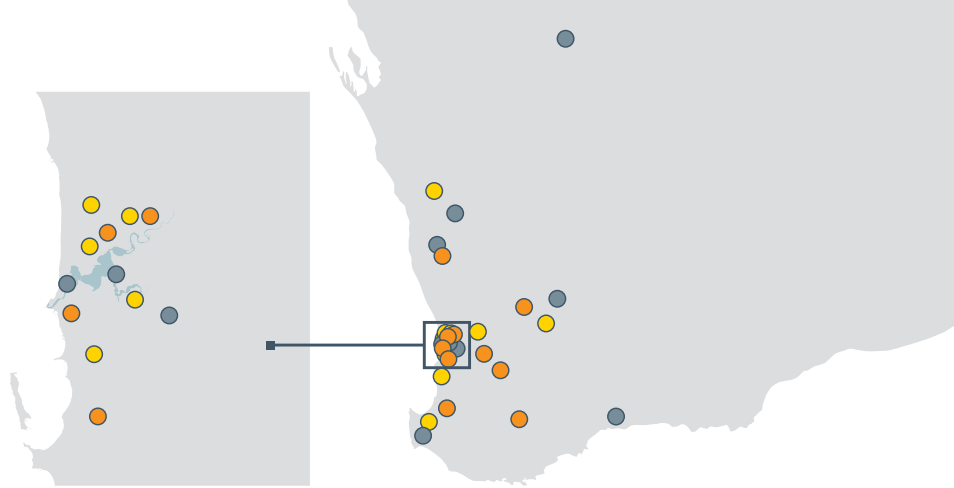


Table 1: Elements of placemaking

How each project was delivered

1: Concept design and planning and documentation

Under the Reconnect WA guidelines and project Funding Agreements, WA local governments wishing to participate had to submit grant applications that were assessed against three main criteria: contributing to the objectives of Reconnect WA and ensuring the community has access to safe, sustainable and connected mobility options; technical ability and resources to effectively deliver the project; and value for money for the community.

A project plan setting out realistic milestones and delivery timeframes to roll out the project as quickly as possible (ideally within six to eight months of funding approval) was established. This enabled the determination of project outcomes and demonstration of broader return on investment for community benefits.

Local government project partners were required to provide RAC with:

- » a monitoring and evaluation plan;
- » final designs for the project elements;
- » monthly updates on the progress of projects against agreed key performance indicators and project expenditure;
- » a final report outlining project performance against agreed key performance indicators, lessons learned from the planning, design and delivery process, and project expenditure; and
- » an evaluation report with photos, raw data, evaluation results and evidence of a before and after monitoring approach.

2: Community engagement and project development

The local government needed to set out a clear approach to involve the community, as well as broader stakeholders, across all stages.

Local governments consulted with a range of stakeholders such as local residents, landowners, local suppliers and businesses, Indigenous community members, local schools and youth.

Stakeholders were involved in all stages of Reconnect WA projects, varying from project to project. Three quarters of projects involved stakeholders at concept design and problem/opportunity identification and most projects

included stakeholders in final design decisions, installation/implementation and launch events. In some projects, stakeholders were involved in promotional support, in-kind and funding contributions, and steering committees/reference groups.

Of note, two thirds of projects had involvement or heavy involvement from both local community and local businesses and 96% of local governments confirmed that stakeholder involvement was 'important' or 'significant' to the ultimate success of their project.

3: Project delivery/installation and celebration

Local government then arranged for the installation of project elements through their own council resources, contractors and/or community members

and once the project was installed, an activation/launch event was held to celebrate the new space and to signal the change in its purpose and value.

How Reconnect WA was evaluated

The Sapere Research Group (Sapere) was engaged by RAC between April and September 2024 to undertake a program-level outcome and impact evaluation of the Reconnect WA Initiative. To conduct the evaluation, Sapere analysed and synthesised evaluation data from three sources:

1. an in-depth desktop review of documentation submitted to RAC by local government partners as part of their project reporting. This documentation included Concept Designs, Project Plans, Evaluation Plans, Implementation Progress Reports, Final Evaluation Reports, Funding Agreements and marketing and promotional materials including photographs;
2. a Local Government Partnership Survey (LGP Survey) conducted by Sapere over 4 weeks in June-July 2024 to address data gaps from project reporting.

21 responses were received, and this data was also supplemented with Sapere's own targeted research of local government websites, social and other media;

3. one-on-one interviews with:
 - > 3 former RAC personnel to gather views and insights on the context and design of the Reconnect WA Initiative;
 - > the Town Team Movement to gather views and insights on the wider context of placemaking/tactical urbanism projects in WA local governments, the impact of Reconnect WA and opportunities and barriers to placemaking/tactical urbanism; and
 - > 9 local government partners to gain further insights on the planning, design, implementation, outcomes and impacts, and lessons learned from their funded projects.



Reconnect WA successes

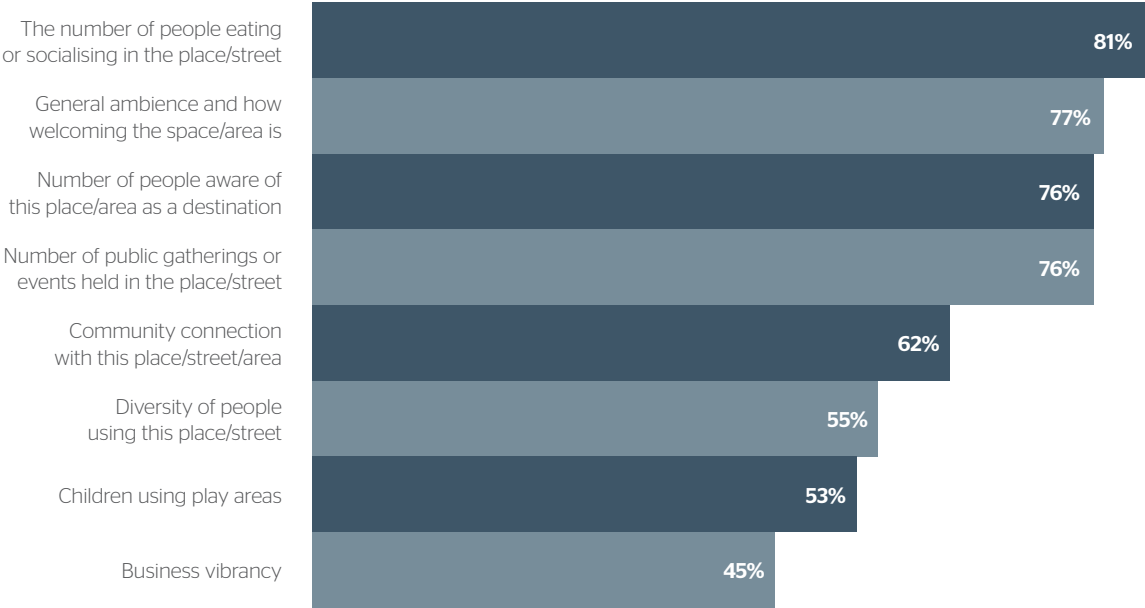
Reconnect WA had positive impacts on how people used, and travelled to, streets and places

Streetscape changes trialled through Reconnect WA had positive effects on the streets/ places, supported greater mobility and active travel, and changed the way that local communities behaved, interacted and perceived their local environment.

A summary of the types of uses of the places that have had a major or significant improvement are shown in table 2: Changes in use of place.

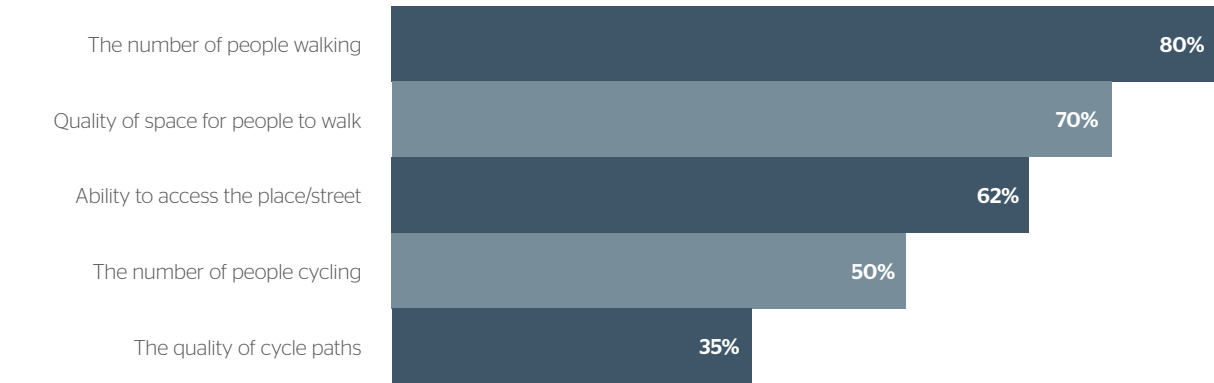


Table 2: Changes in use of place
(major and significant improvement)



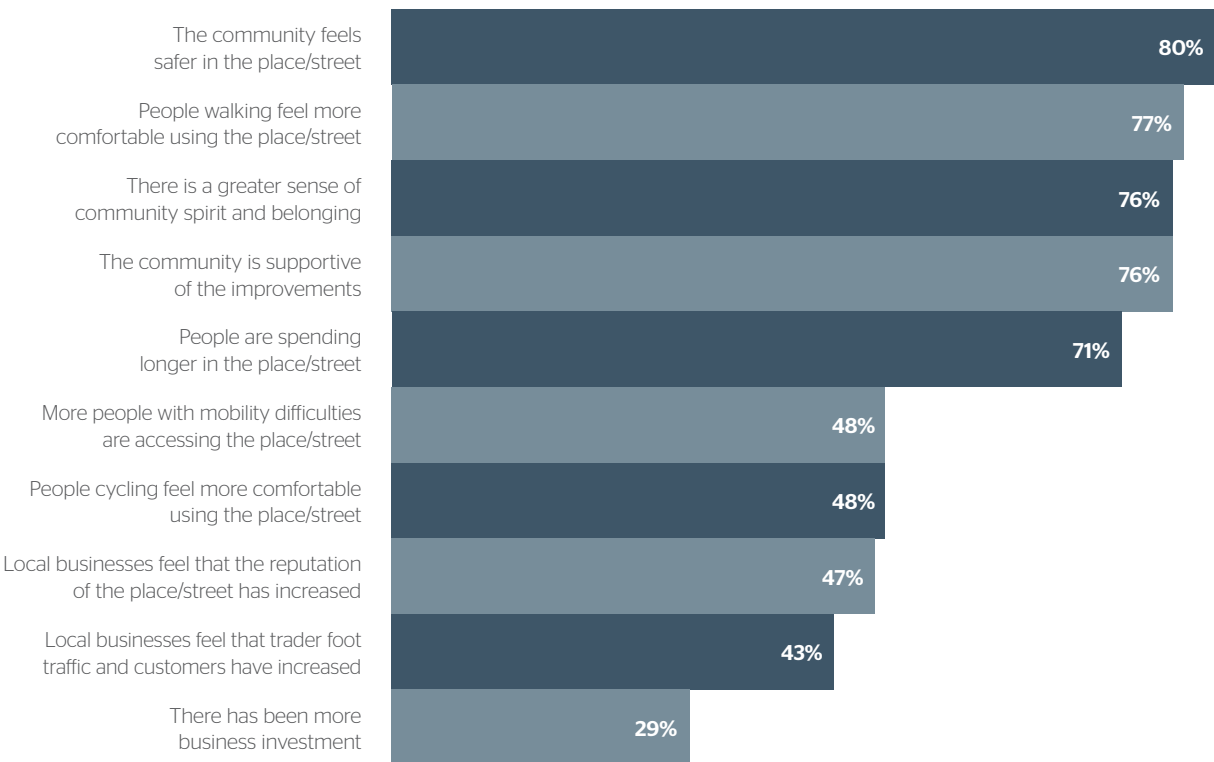
Further improvements that changed mobility or active travel behaviours were demonstrated through respondents confirming there was a major or significant increase in:

Table 3: Changes in mobility and active travel
(major and significant improvement)



A key indicator of the success of placemaking/tactical urbanism initiatives is evidence of changes in the attitudes of local communities and businesses to the street or place, with respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following attitudes and perceptions of the place:

Table 4: Changes in community and business attitudes
(agree and strongly agree)



The change in attitudes provides a strong indication that the positive effects from the projects would continue if interventions were made permanent. In addition, over 75% of respondents to multiple local government post-implementation surveys indicated they supported the improvements and/or wanted the upgrades to be made permanent.

Data collected by local governments as part of their project reporting to RAC, provided further evidence of the outcomes and impact of Reconnect WA projects (noting that local governments each had their own evaluation methods and metrics). For example, the:

- » City of Greater Geraldton (see case study on page 16) and City of Subiaco (see case study on page 36) reported that numbers of visitors to the place/street had increased by 213% and 19.7% respectively.
- » City of Gosnells (see case study on page 56) found that the number of people using the place/street had increased by 60%
- » Shire of Pingelly noted in its final report (relating to a new pocket park on Parade Street) that “park users were now a diverse mix of the community, including First Nations People, senior and young people”. Additionally, the City of Vincent saw a 26.1% increase in people in the 5-14 years age group using the street (following the installation of a new footpath and a temporary pedestrian plaza on Grosvenor Road).
- » Local governments also said that the projects had made the street/place feel more welcoming and had reduced the rate of crime and antisocial behaviour (77% and 35% of respondents indicated a major to significant improvement as a result their projects).

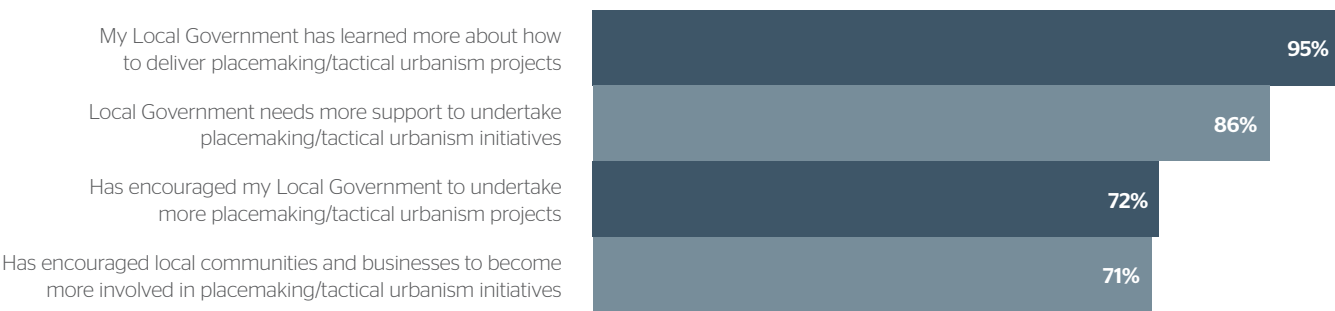
Reconnect WA helped local governments to engage with communities and improve their understanding and experience in placemaking/tactical urbanism

Local governments were the key project partners that engaged with the community and implemented the project elements.

Local governments were creative and used a variety of mechanisms to engage with their communities and businesses. This included building one-on-one working relationships with business owners and community groups such as the local Police Blue Light Disco, Men's Shed and schools. It was clear that the contributions of local communities and businesses made a real difference, with 96% of local governments confirming that such involvement was 'important' or 'significant' to the ultimate success of their Reconnect WA project.

In addition, part of realising a Reconnect WA project enabled local governments to grow their experience in placemaking and tactical urbanism, with survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their project had enabled their local government to learn more about planning and delivering such initiatives, as shown in table 5: Capabilities built through Reconnect WA.

Table 5: Capabilities built through Reconnect WA (agree and strongly agree)



Lessons from Reconnect WA

Supporting local governments to develop their capabilities further

A third of LGP survey respondents said that their local government had undertaken no placemaking/tactical urbanism projects prior to their Reconnect WA project, whilst 50% said they had previously undertaken only a few projects. 86% agreed that local government needs more support to undertake placemaking/tactical urbanism initiatives.

Respondents highlighted the types of additional resources and support that would assist them to further develop their placemaking/tactical urbanism capabilities and capacities:

- » a support network or chat group with experienced and emerging placemakers, to sound out ideas and issues;
- » educational materials, lunch and learn sessions and a list of suppliers who can assist to build placemaking/tactical urbanism capabilities both within the local government and in the community;
- » project planning and management assistance to guide the development of realistic project timelines;
- » procurement support, for example, a list of suitable suppliers/contractors;
- » additional funding;
- » assistance with marketing particularly in the development of promotional materials; and
- » project evaluation support, including data collection approaches (to gather pre and post data) and evaluation methodologies to assess the outcomes and impacts of projects.



Power to the People
Bassendean



Solomon Street Community Precinct
Mosman Park

Lessons for Program managers

Feedback on lessons learned was collected as part of the final evaluation reports submitted by local government partners, and surveys and interviews with selected local governments and other third-party stakeholders. Main lessons and points for running a placemaking / tactical urbanism project or program are:

Project delivery

- » Invest time in the early planning and design stages to drive, secure and maintain interest and motivation for the project. Establish clear project objectives, timeline and budget, and clarify the processes and procedural limitations of any potential project at the outset. Planning should allow for unexpected delays, activating projects can involve a long lead time.
- » Decision makers need to be supportive of, and open to, trying/experimenting with new and innovative approaches. Early engagement with decision makers is critical for project success. There are significant advantages in undertaking trial designs, prior to more permanent work, including cost savings.
- » Undertaking placemaking/tactical urbanism initiatives in a 'live street or car park' can be very challenging and needs more detailed planning and management.

Stakeholder Engagement

- » Developing a stakeholder engagement plan and communications plan helps to identify stakeholders and plan community engagement. It is important to allow adequate time for community and business engagement. Keep the community informed and address concerns, including adjusting the project to better suit community feedback.
- » Projects are more successful when the local community is empowered and placemaking/tactical urbanism projects occur through the community's rather than the local government's lens. It is important to involve the community from the start.
- » Tailor approaches for engaging with different stakeholders. Engage with business owners one-on-one. Engaging with community groups such as schools and community champions can be an effective way of reaching out to the community and encourage more participation.

Project funding & Reporting

- » It is important for funders to provide early notification of the funding/grant program to potential applicants. This provides local governments sufficient time to identify/develop potential initiatives ahead of the funding program opening. It can take some time for the funding application information to filter down to the relevant teams within the local governments.
- » Collection of evaluation data, pre and post the implementation of improvements is crucial. Collect good quality baseline data before interventions to assist with measuring success.

Improving evaluation planning and guidance

For any similar future initiatives, a theory of change and program logic, with a baseline set of measures, should be established and articulated at the outset, as part of program guidelines. This would then lay a path for project grant applicants to establish their own tailored project-level logics and measures.

For the Reconnect WA initiative, a set of objectives was set out, but a corresponding theory of change and program logic was not clearly established until Sapere were contracted to undertake the evaluation of the Initiative.

Tailored project-level logics and measures would effectively be a sub-set of the program-level logic and measures, with the selection of outcome and impact measures being based on the characteristics of each project. Should there be further unique elements of projects, not reflected in the program-level logic and measures, grant recipients could include additional measures. However, by communicating program-level logic and measures, grant recipients are provided with a common, minimum starting point, which should then enable greater consistency in the measurement of outcomes and impacts across projects.

Ideally, project level implementers should develop and submit their project-level logic at the start of the project. This would help to encourage project level grant recipients to consider project objectives, causal pathways and outcomes at the project initiation stage. As identified

by local government partners themselves, there is a significant need to increase evaluation capabilities in delivering these types of programs.

Additionally, the program guidelines could also include more information on evaluation in general, including terminologies and some "how to" guidance on developing a program logic, selection of evaluation metrics and data collection and reporting.

A theory of change provides a 'strategic' picture of a program and explains how and why that program is expected to lead to its intended goals. It clarifies the:

- » context for a program and the problem(s) that the program is seeking to address; and
- » 'change pathway' (or causal link) between a program's activities, outputs, short, intermediate and long term outcomes and its intended goals, and the evidence-based assumptions underpinning this pathway.

A theory of change provides the foundation for an evaluation framework and can be useful for local governments and project partners when setting their evaluation criteria. It tracks the impact that the inputs and activities have on the outcomes from the physical changes to place, to a shift in people's attitudes and finally, the impact that these have on behaviour.





City of Subiaco
pop-up square

Reconnect WA case studies

No	Local government	Project name	Page
1	Greater Geraldton	Chapman Road Pilot Project	16-19
2	Busselton	Hannay Lane Revitalisation	20-23
3	Stirling	Nollamara Neighbourhood Centre Plaza	24-27
4	Merredin	Merredin Public Piazza Pilot Project	28-31
5	Kwinana	Wellard Seven Day Makeover	32-35
6	Subiaco	Subi POP (Public Open Places): Postal Walk	36-39
7	Dardanup	Dardanup Depot Revitalisation Project	40-43
8	Bassendean	Power to the People	44-47
9	Augusta-Margaret River	Witchcliffe Main Street - A Place for People	48-51
10	Carnamah	The Big Bobtail and Nature Play Area	52-55
11	Gosnells	Activating and Connecting Lissiman Street with the Gosnells Town Centre	56-59
12	Mosman Park	Solomon Street Community Precinct	60-63
13	Morawa	Park Revitalisation Project	64-67

Chapman Road Pilot Project

City of Greater Geraldton

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The City of Greater Geraldton partnered with RAC to deliver a 12-month pilot project that tested the reconfiguration of a section of Chapman Road in the Geraldton city centre into a shared place for pedestrians and cars. This project involved both placemaking and active travel elements.

Approx. cost: \$220,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Sept 2021 – Apr 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

Chapman Road was car dominant and had instances of 'hooning'. Both made the street dangerous for cyclists and difficult for pedestrians to cross.

These issues, in combination with a lack of shade and other public amenities, had led to a tired and empty feel.

The 2017 Geraldton City Centre Revitalisation Plan had identified an opportunity to introduce traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, activate the street, encourage visitation and support economic vibrancy.

The Reconnect WA grant enabled the City to progress the implementation of this Plan. The grant funding was used to change the streetscape by reducing a section of the road from four to two lanes, and creating new pedestrian crossings to make it safer for the community to access local businesses.

Design choices and community involvement

The City ran an 'Ideas Competition' to collect community views on potential street improvements. A total of 66 placemaking ideas were raised by the 131 survey respondents, with art, recreation, nature, play and learning ranking highly.





“If it doesn’t work then it can be removed easily with a minimal investment lost. Sounds like a responsible process to me as a rate payer”.

A Working Party comprising local business, community groups, youth representatives and council staff, collaboratively developed a Tactical Urbanism Action Plan, that incorporated responses from the Ideas Competition.

Through an initial trial of the street reconfiguration to Sept 2022, the City observed changes in vehicle and pedestrian movement. After a few months, the community was consulted on the pros and cons of the trial configuration, and this feedback was incorporated in the final design.

Core project elements included:

- » removing the median strip and restoring the road surface and line marking the road to formalise two lanes of two-way traffic.
- » painting the reclaimed street blue, green, and orange representing the ocean, botanic and outback.
- » installing bench seating and potted trees in the painted pavement areas, and creating a parklet.

Experience and outcomes

The project resulted in more people walking and cycling, reduced traffic speed, more shade and other enhancements to the public realm. For example, there was a:

- » 30% decrease in average vehicle speed. Despite a 10% increase in traffic, traffic counts from April 2021 and April 2022 show that the average road user speed decreased from 47km/h to 33km/h after reconfiguring the road from four to two lanes.
- » 213% increase in visitors, with an extra 22,295 visitors to the area in April 2022 compared to the April 2021 baseline counts, and an 11% increase in dwell time.
- » 187% increase in cyclists using the street across three 1-hour observation periods.
- » 250% increase in public seating and 22m² increase in shade.

In parallel with these positive outcomes however, a community survey identified that there was scope for further improvement of the streetscape modifications installed during the trial. For example:

- » 65% of respondents rated their personal level of support for the project as unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- » 80% of survey respondents did not think the pedestrian experience had improved.
- » 76% of business owners or workers stated they did not experience an increase in foot traffic.
- » 43% of respondents thought that Chapman Road is now less safe.

Feedback from the community was also mixed, for example:

- » “Looks good, but not sure if it’s practical for traffic.”
- » “It’s interesting the comments here are generally judging the project from the viewpoint of a car user. Shouldn’t we get out of our cars, overlord that they are, and maybe experience the multi-user concept? You know as humans on legs”.
- » “If it doesn’t work then it can be removed easily with a minimal investment lost. Sounds like a responsible process to me as a rate payer”.

In response to the feedback received, the City extended the trial by an extra 12 months to Sept 2023 to test the additional ideas suggested by the community. The trial extension allowed the City to further develop street side facilities, the streetscape and landscaping while the City conceived and designed more permanent changes in the road.

Lessons learned

This project demonstrates the value of trialling semi-permanent placemaking and tactical urbanism improvements.

Impact of placemaking/tactical urbanism

The pilot allowed the City to test the various streetscape improvements with the community to better understand which elements worked best, and what adaptations would be required. This enables more effective outcomes when the streetscape changes are made permanent.

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

The City’s other key lessons learned for future placemaking projects included:

- » “Go where the energy is”. The most successful placemaking projects start with an engaged trader or community and grow from these strengths rather than starting from scratch.
- » Prioritise community buy-in. An important learning is that volunteers make significant contribution to project success and value. Future projects must bring community members along in the journey. This extends to relationship building with traders, which must be continually prioritised rather than being “stop-start”.
- » Remain realistic about project expectations when it comes to budget and staff resourcing. Expect that physical street improvements may be more expensive than originally projected and plan for adequate resourcing to ensure staff do not become burnt out by the process.



Hannay Lane Revitalisation

City of Busselton

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The City of Busselton partnered with RAC to deliver a 12-month trial to convert Hannay Lane in the Dunsborough town centre into a safer, more welcoming and shared space for vehicles and pedestrians. This project involved both placemaking and active travel elements.

Approx. cost: \$140,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Sept 2020 - Dec 2021

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

Hannay Lane had operated as a thoroughfare for vehicles and a service lane. It was dominated by “windowless rear sides of shops, bins, large blank walls” and “expansive areas of bitumen for roadway and parking”.

There was growing interest from the community to use the laneway for community get-togethers and events. However, the laneway needed revitalisation, to give it a fresh look, improve amenities and build on the vibrancy already being created by the Djiiljit Mia Community Gathering Place on the Lane. The Reconnect WA grant provided necessary momentum to transform the laneway on a trial basis, in consultation with the community. The key objectives of this project were to:

- » Improve the attractiveness and functionality of the laneway and make it more pedestrian focussed.
- » Attract people to the area, add vibrancy and enhance laneway facing businesses.
- » Co-design the redevelopment with the local community.





“I loved this project, enjoyed the vibrant colours and designs. Very innovative, after all, Dunsborough is a holiday town.”

Design choices and community involvement

Ideas for the revitalisation were developed with the Hannay Lane Enhancement Group and over 30 community and business submissions. In response to this consultation, the City modified the design from one-way to two-way traffic and incorporated an upgrade to a section of the connecting road. The City also identified a solution for the unsightly location of bins in the area.

The re-design of Hannay Lane provided for delineated walking/cycling areas, reduced speed limits and design elements that deter vehicles from travelling at speed through the area. Public artwork, concrete planters and feature landscaping were also key design features.

Experience and outcomes

The project was positively received by the community and succeeded in bring more people to the area.

This is evidenced from responses to a post-implementation survey conducted by the City:

- » 71% said the traffic calming elements introduced as part of the trial had changed their driving, cycling or walking behaviour.
- » 81% agreed that the project adds value and vibrancy to the town centre and would like to see similar revitalisations introduced elsewhere.

Comments received on the revitalisation include:

- » “It looks amazing and has added a lot of character to Hannay Lane. These projects are vital to enriching our space and bringing community together!”
- » “I loved this project, enjoyed the vibrant colours and designs. Very innovative, after all, Dunsborough is a holiday town.”
- » “I think the work that has been done to enhance Hannay Lane looks fresh and vibrant. Although it is purely just aesthetic it doesn't really have any meaning or significance to the town of Dunsborough. I would have really loved to have seen something that talked about our environment. There was a suggestion about having the 6 seasons of the year as in the indigenous calendar. Hopefully we can do that somewhere else. Thanks for everyone's hard work.”
- » “Brilliant! Please make this long term.”

As further evidence of the project's success, it was honoured with a 2022 Local Government Award for Road Safety. Additionally, in July 2024, the City decided to explore further safety and amenity improvements to the “much-loved local laneway”.

As well as retaining the 10kph speed limit, the City said it would be reaffixing the large pot plants “to clearly delineate the pathway as a no parking area.” In addition, Council will be investigating “options for managing traffic flow and congestion, with a variety of suggestions to be explored over the next 12 months.

These include either retaining two-way traffic flow and constructing a kerbed raised footpath or consideration of one-way traffic flow with an additional loading zone, with various pavement solutions to be explored in line with this suggestion”.

These future improvements in Hannay Lane are expected to further increase safety for people walking and cycling, enable more visitation to shops and cafés and “encourage people to use the laneway to visit and enjoy the relaxed vibe at the Djiljit Mia community gathering space.”

Note: Some of the information included in this case study are sourced from: local media, City website, City survey results, Dunsborough & Districts Progress Association.



Nollamara Neighbourhood Centre Plaza

City of Stirling

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The City of Stirling partnered with RAC to trial a four-month pop-up plaza at Nollamara Shopping Centre. This placemaking project involved temporarily closing one of the Centre's entrances and replacing some carparking with a space for the community to socialise and relax under shade and browse the surrounding market stalls.

Approx. cost: \$90,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Sept 2020 - Oct 2021

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The City developed the 'plaza' initiative following surveys of the surrounding suburbs (Nollamara, Westminster, Balga, Mirrabooka and Dianella) with 40% of survey respondents wanting the City to improve public places by building plazas.

The City's Better Suburbs Strategy identified a town square as a key component of the Nollamara Neighbourhood Centre and the Neighbourhood Centres Local Development Plan and as such, the City of Stirling had already planned on introducing a pop up plaza in 2020/21. The Reconnect WA grant enabled the City to extend the project to a four-month pilot.

The objective of the Pop-Up Plaza was to:

- » Create an informal and low-cost local meeting place and alfresco dining opportunity to reinvigorate and activate a currently under-utilised area;
- » Increase economic development opportunities in the centre to support local retailers; and
- » Understand what solutions the community prefers and are workable before proposing permanent changes.





Design choices and community involvement

The City made several design choices to increase the functionality of the space:

- » creating a multi-purpose and flexible space that would be suitable for use with animals, as a playground, sport and music events, markets and outdoor cinema, through adding planter boxes, seats, Astroturf and lighting.
- » designing the pop-up plaza to incorporate two significant existing ficus trees creating ambience and shade.

Experience and outcomes

The pop-up plaza was extended beyond the initially planned period to enable Mana Markets and other traders to use the site for their planned events and better weather conditions.

The community's impressions of the place (pre-and-post-implementation) illustrate the significant improvements that resulted from the project.

The community found that the place: (scored out of five):

- » has a friendly and welcoming look and feel: increased from 2.90 to 4.68
- » is a nice place to spend time: increased from 3.00 to 4.26
- » has places to sit and plenty of shade: increased from 2.37 to 4.22
- » feels safe to walk and cross the street: increased from 3.63 to 4.26
- » has too many cars and traffic is too fast: decreased from 2.18 to 1.79 (lower score demonstrates positive result)

The City of Stirling was able to establish effective collaboration with local businesses, with good rapport and working relationships fostered with the business owners in the centre, local community groups, youth and school children.

The pop-up plaza was taken down in late October 2021 with the hard infrastructure purchased for the project placed in storage to be used in future developments.

Additionally, 26 permanent planter boxes were installed in front of town centre businesses, purchased with funds reallocated from events cancelled due to COVID lockdowns.

Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » In researching/designing other pop-up plaza sites, ensure that any well-established trees on site are incorporated to utilise benefits from their ambience and shade.
- » In future projects, try to ensure that pop-up plazas do not diminish vehicle access.
- » Pop-up plazas and events work better in spring/summer as usage drops significantly in autumn/winter.
- » Engage early with the community and stakeholders to understand how they can be involved in the project, scope, delivery and promotion.



Public Piazza Pilot Project

Shire of Merredin

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Shire of Merredin and RAC partnered to deliver a three-month temporary street closure and new public Piazza. In implementing this placemaking initiative, the Shire also held several community events to activate the area.

Approx. cost: \$75,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Nov 2020 - Jun 2021

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

Redeveloping the town centre had been on the Shire's agenda for some time, and the Reconnect WA initiative provided a timely opportunity for the Shire to review its strategic and capital works planning.

The trial project was targeted towards bringing the community together after the COVID-19 lockdowns. The area chosen had been closed during the pandemic to create a safe space for people to socially distance while grocery shopping.

The project had three key objectives:

1. create an active, community space.
2. encourage increased social interaction and community cohesion.
3. support the local economy through flow of pedestrians along Barrack Street.



Design choices and community involvement

The Shire engaged with the community, through workshops and surveys, on what they wanted to see in the town centre and the Shire more broadly. The idea for the project ultimately came from this consultation. The final design encompassed closing a section of the street and installing shipping containers, lighting, public seating, turf, shade, planters, greenery and artworks including an event zone. The Shire collected feedback from the community and local businesses through the activations as well as public surveys.

Experience and outcomes

The community were very supportive of the idea of the Piazza. This is evidenced from responses to the Shire's post-implementation survey:

- » The community felt that the space was attractive, bright and created a welcoming place where people could congregate over food or for a specific event.
- > 15%+ of survey respondents indicated that the most enjoyed features were the seating, artworks, and greenery.

- » Parents of young children appreciated the safer traffic environment.
- > 31% of survey respondents indicated they most enjoyed being able to cross Barrack Street safely.

The activations were incredibly popular with hundreds of people attending the gala night, silent disco hosted by the local police, and the pop-up basketball infrastructure.

In parallel with the positive feedback however, around 200 community members (40% of 597 respondents) were concerned about their reduced access to shops in the street (e.g. people were unable to park directly in front). Many businesses also reported a drop in retail activity and became increasingly negative over the course of the trial.

Overall, there was a mixed response to the trial, and a community survey suggested that only 37% of respondents wanted to see the piazza become permanent.

Lessons learned

- » Earlier and more consultation with the community would have enabled residents and business owners to be better informed and more engaged in the design of the trial.
- » Closer community involvement would have provided an opportunity for preferences and concerns to be addressed, prior to installing the piazza. This involvement is likely to have helped overcome community resistance to the changes and encouraged broader support for the trial.
- » The scale of this project was very large for a small regional team. Seeking more assistance with, or greater outsourcing of, the design, construction and installation aspects of the project would have helped project delivery.
- » The ideal timing for a trial of this nature is during autumn or spring when the weather is more pleasant. The opportunity to meet and eat together was embraced when the area was activated. However, hot weather during some of the trial period impacted on overall community satisfaction and participation.



Wellard Seven Day Makeover

City of Kwinana

Project scope, cost and timeframe

RAC partnered with the City of Kwinana to deliver a 7 Day Makeover (7DM) of the Strand in Wellard. This placemaking initiative was defined by a strong community led approach.

Approx. cost: \$130,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: 7 days
(Jan 2023 - Jan 2024 including planning)

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The Strand, the main street in Wellard, was initially conceived as a shared space with car and pedestrian zones. However, this design was inhibited by the presence of over 100 bollards, resulting in a town centre that lacked

'soul'. It also lacked a 'civic heart' (town square) and 'linger nodes' that encourage people to stay longer.

With a local community that wanted to revitalise the street, the Reconnect WA grant provided the City of Kwinana with a timely opportunity to create a safe and vibrant streetscape with the input of community.

Design choices and community involvement

The City recognised that the community were the experts in their local area and a community-led approach was a core and fundamental element of the project.

Facilitated by David Engwicht and the team from Creative Communities International, the community, City staff, RAC volunteers, and other stakeholders



identified, discussed, voted and selected the ideas they wanted implemented.

A collaborative approach was taken to planning, building and installing the following placemaking improvements over the seven-day period:

- » Removal of dozens of bollards
- » Removal of low fences around gardens
- » A nature garden with dry creek bed
- » Play area with climbing wall and tunnel
- » 51 hexagonal seats, the taller ones to disguise bollards that needed to remain
- » Converting two car parks into a communal dining area with pergolas
- » Landscaping of all gardens around trees with large rocks to replace bollards
- » Eight wicking garden beds
- » A number of youth-led projects:
 - > Street piano
 - > The Arcade Space
 - > Wishing Well corner.

Experience and outcomes

The project was so successful that it has been recognised by numerous institutions and networks, winning four different awards. Key outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- » At least 177 volunteers participated in the makeover, many of whom attended multiple, if not all 7 days, resulting in 441 equivalent volunteer days, valued at ~\$160,000. Additionally, more than 120 participants attended the launch.
- » Residents were highly satisfied with the project, with over 80% of respondents to the 7DM Community Survey saying that they would participate again; and that the place made them feel proud of their local area, feel welcome and included and part of their community.
- » Feedback from businesses was also positive, with 75% of survey respondents saying they would participate again and that it made them proud of their local area and what had been achieved.
- » A doubling of membership of the Wellard Village People (Town Team) as a direct result of the 7DM.



The City has maintained the infrastructure and continued working with the community to develop further streetscape improvements.

Community workshops have continued since the 7DM, to maintain community momentum and demonstrate the City's continued commitment to placemaking. To facilitate this, the City has also committed \$50,000 to empower the community to continue revitalising the space and help bring future projects to life.

Lessons learned

Impact of placemaking/tactical urbanism

The 7DM project demonstrated the types and scale of sustainable benefits that can be achieved through "ongoing, consistent, and transparent communication and collaboration" with the community.

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

To ensure that project design, planning and implementation went smoothly, and was not hindered by unnecessary 'red tape', the City adopted a cross-functional approach and established comprehensive framework for undertaking placemaking projects, compliant with City regulations.



Public Open Places (POP) Postal Walk

City of Subiaco

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The City of Subiaco partnered with RAC to deliver a contemporary placemaking improvement of the public realm in the heart of Subiaco, bringing life to a town centre precinct that was previously unwelcoming, and celebrating Subiaco's postal history.

Approx. cost: \$630,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Jan 2022 - Oct 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

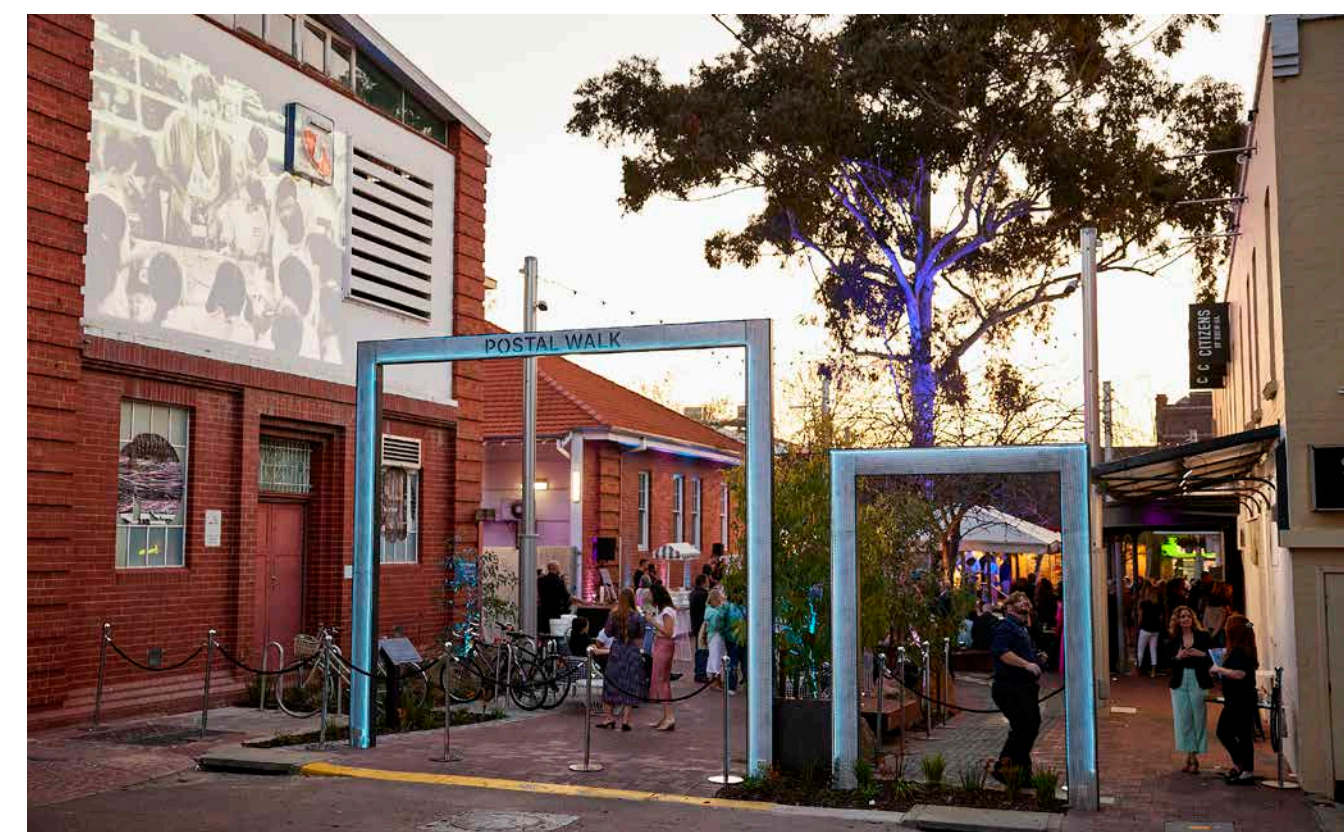
This project responded to the community's desire for more seating and places to connect in the town centre. The area was underutilised and had become a safety hazard with uneven paving and exposed tree roots.

The project's three key objectives were:

1. visit – enhance functionality and visitor experience through improved pedestrian movement and accessibility.
2. stay – find reasons to stay in Postal Walk through activations, increase seating and vibrancy.
3. connect – feel connected to the place by building relationships with the local community and forming a sense of community.

Design choices and community involvement

The Postal Walk project included introducing new decking and seating zones, preserving an existing Indigenous artwork, reinterpretation of sections of artwork with community significance, and newly commissioned artworks.



The City of Subiaco engaged with the local community and businesses to co-design the Postal Walk improvements and ensure that they would meet the needs of a growing community.

Experience and outcomes

The Postal Walk project led to increased patronage, with an average of 2,500 pedestrians per day. The maximum dwell time of pedestrians increased from 28.5 minutes to 46.5 minutes prior to, and after the installation.

The City has received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from the community, for example:

- » “I like all the native plants they’ve put in. The access to the Post Office is improved with the ramp. Aesthetically fantastic with all the lights.”
- » “It is more accessible, and it is much more visually pleasing. More accessible to prams and wheelchairs. In general it looks fantastic and is really beautiful.

I like how it preserved the artwork and makes Subiaco feel special and more community orientated.”

In a survey of community members undertaken soon after the launch:

- » 79% of respondents thought the upgrades had improved the space.
- » 55% of respondents made specific comments regarding their appreciation of the feel/aesthetic of the space.
- » 33% of respondents stated they are more likely to use the space since the upgrade.

The project was awarded the AILA WA Landscape Architecture Award for Urban Design in 2024. The area continues to be maintained by the City with further activations of the area. Activations have included:

- » Live music, busking and street trading
- » Christmas decorations and events
- » Floral installation for Mother’s Day.

Lessons learned

Postal Walk is the first of three, pedestrian zone upgrade projects planned by the City of Subiaco. The City is applying lessons learned to improve future project delivery:

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » Activation needs to happen immediately and/or be frequent enough to initiate and encourage ongoing community participation and interest in the place.
- » More community participation is essential to develop a sense of ownership over time.
- » The importance of co-design and having community ‘buy-in’ for placemaking ideas and the benefits. Some felt goodwill surrounding the co-design process diminished over time, given a gap between initial consultation and project delivery.
- » The value and appeal of art in public spaces.



Depot Revitalisation Project

Shire of Dardanup

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Shire of Dardanup partnered with RAC to design and deliver a placemaking initiative to enhance the town's public space. The project involved re-purposing the former depot site into an inviting and vibrant place for the community.

Approx. cost: \$390,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Jan 2022 - Feb 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

Community workshops held in 2017 identified the need to create innovative public spaces in the town to help facilitate community connection. The Dardanup Community Facilities Plan of 2018 highlighted the lack of pedestrian networks and also the opportunity presented by the depot site.

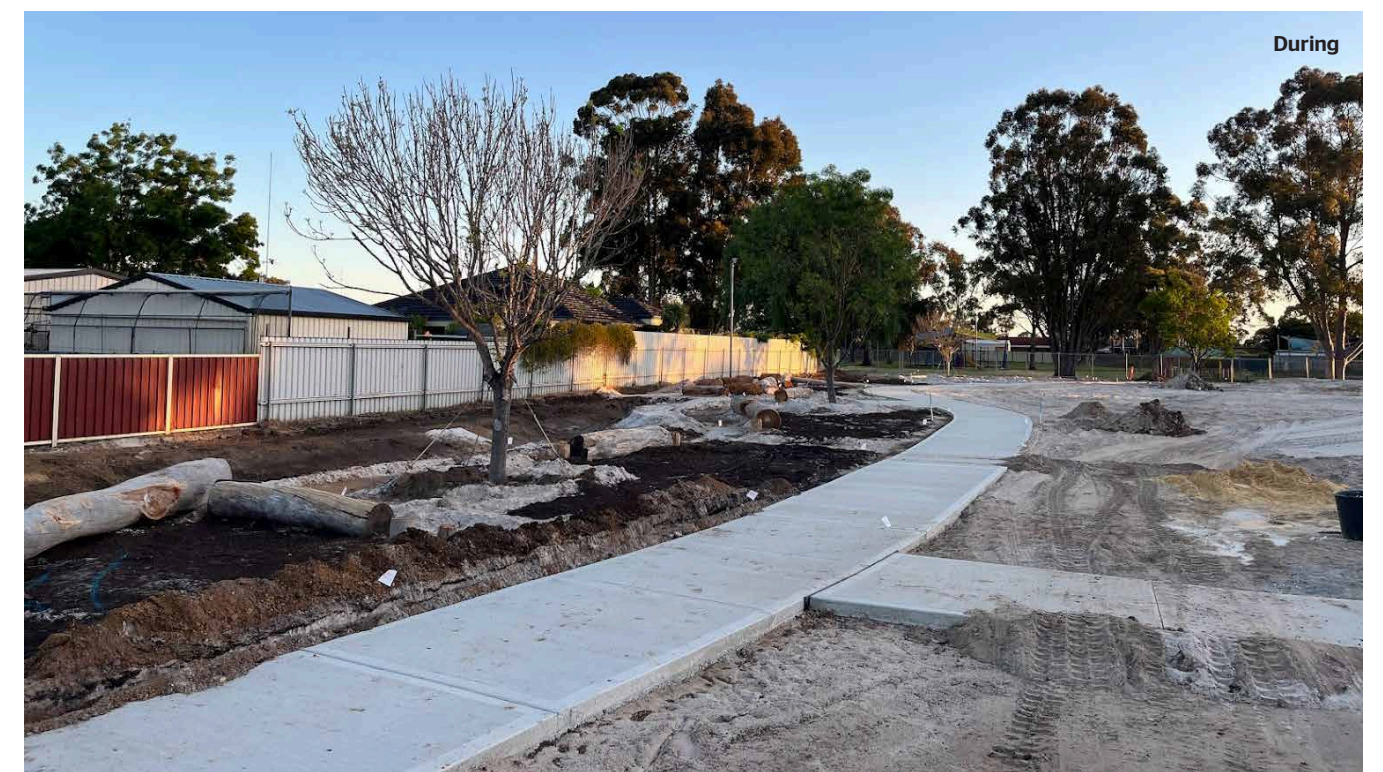
The Reconnect WA grant enabled the Shire to progress the implementation of this Plan, and was considered a 'pivotal moment for the community'.

Design choices and community involvement

Critical design elements of the space include flat areas (allowing for stall and food vendors), a mixture of surface, and raised mounds to create 'natural stages' used for performances. Other elements include seating, a play trail, and arts panels.

Various stakeholders played specific roles in the project and most notably, the community was closely engaged and active in the planning and design.

The Shire provided regular updates and there was a high level of community excitement and expectation due to the project's strategic location.



Experience and outcomes

The launch event was significant as it ignited people's interest in the space, and inspired them to use it, discover it, and take ownership.

- » Shire staff have observed a growth in the number of people using the space, including for yoga, walking their dogs, and children cycling and scooting in a vehicle free area.
- » The outdoor art gallery enables local artists to showcase their artwork. In addition to fostering community interaction, exploration and discussion, the gallery also helps to support the growth of local art business.
- » Community connection has increased as local businesses and resident associations hold more activities (e.g. festivals, a centenary event) in the space. The play trail has also enhanced the range of activities that can occur in the space.

The Shire has continued to receive positive feedback from the community, for example:

- » "such lovely artwork. I do hope there is to be another set of panels celebrating the settlers who laid the foundations for the Dardanup that we know and love today"
- » "thank you, Shire of Dardanup for providing a morning of yoga...the weather was very kind and it was lovely practising yoga in Carramar Park".

Improvements delivered through the project have been both maintained and further developed. As the community began to embrace the space and how it can be used, residents have wanted more features to be added, such as additional tables and a BBQ area.

The project has created a clear pathway to ongoing change as the community is more understanding of the value of placemaking and its benefits. Since the project was completed, the Shire is being constantly asked for more projects and spaces to be developed like this.



Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » Community involvement was key to the success of this project and is a learning the Shire will carry forward into future projects.
- » Engaging the community created a sense of pride and ownership that was evident during the launch and is still witnessed in the community's interaction with the space since the project was completed.

"Such lovely artwork. I do hope there is to be another set of panels celebrating the settlers who laid the foundations for the Dardanup that we know and love today."



Power to the People

Town of Bassendean

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Town of Bassendean partnered with RAC on a pilot activation to reimagine the west end of Old Perth Road and demonstrate how the high street in the Bassendean town centre could be activated as a pedestrian only space. This project involved both placemaking and active travel elements.

Approx. cost: \$100,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Mar 2022 – Sep 2023 including planning

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The 'Power to the People' project was developed following extensive community consultation conducted

as part of the development of the Bassendean Town Centre Masterplan which outlines a strategic vision for the redevelopment of town centre over the next 20 years. Community feedback revealed 85% of residents desired a vibrant, active, and walkable town centre.

The Reconnect WA grant provided an opportunity for the Town to further progress the implementation of its Masterplan by trialling a 'pedestrian only zone' (POZ) along one side of Old Perth Road from Wilson Street to Guildford Road. The project enabled the Town to experiment with changes to the built environment, with community involvement, and help determine the future layout and use of the precinct that would best suit the community's needs.





“They should keep the street like that, more pedestrian friendly with only one side open to traffic”.

Design choices and community involvement

Core elements of the project included:

- » Creating a pedestrian-only zone with one lane and one direction of vehicle access, street art and concrete soak wells.
- » Installing garden beds, play elements, street furniture and marquees.
- » Trees were brought in, planted within planter boxes.

Over the 2-week activation period, around 50-plus events, workshops and activities were designed and delivered by Town staff.

The trial POZ was heavily promoted by the Town in the lead up to the activation period to encourage community participation. The Town used a mix of both online and traditional marketing formats to maximise audience reach.

Experience and outcomes

Despite the Town choosing not to make the POZ permanent and repurposing the infrastructure across the town centre, the community actively participated in the pilot and most were receptive to the streetscape changes.

A community survey conducted by the Town during the activation received 596 responses from businesses and residents. The survey highlighted that:

- » 78% of respondents wanted the POZ to be made permanent in the same configuration as the trial or with some changes. Residents said they enjoyed the increased walkability and safety of the space, the activations run, and how great it was to have access to additional space for kids to play and adults to socialise.
- » Business respondents however appeared to be less supportive, with 43% of respondents suggesting that they did not want the trial to become made permanent. A key reason cited was that the lack of parking impacted their foot traffic and trade.

Community feedback was mixed:

- » “They should keep the street like that, more pedestrian friendly with only one side open to traffic”.
- » “The pedestrian only street unfortunately is a bad idea to keep businesses in Old Perth alive”.

Town staff commented on the effort and resources involved in constantly keeping the space activated and felt that a shorter one week activation period may have been more manageable. Town staff also noted that while all the events and activities were well attended, the space was not utilised as much as they had expected when there were no Town-run activations.

Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » The importance of clarifying the aims of the project and the desired outcomes upfront.
- » Undertake early engagement with community and business. It is also important to recognise different stakeholder groups and communicate ‘what’s in it for them’.
- » It is beneficial to trial placemaking and tactical urbanism elements before making permanent changes. However, such trials can be resource intensive and require a dedicated local government team for project delivery.
- » Undertake targeted promotions to maximise audience reach.

Note: All of the photos and some feedback included in this case study are sourced from the Town of Bassendean.



Witchcliffe Main Street – A Place for People

Shire of Augusta-Margaret River

Project scope, cost and timeframe

RAC partnered with the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River to trial several tactical urbanism installations in the main street of Witchcliffe. The placemaking and active travel project sought to improve access for people walking and cycling and encouraged people to spend time in the village, whilst retaining and promoting Witchcliffe's unique character.

Approx. cost: \$65,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: March 2023 – May 2024

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The Witchcliffe town centre is dominated by a highway and is car centric. The streetscape had functioned as a place for people to stop, get coffee and stretch their legs. The vibrancy of the main street was impacted by minimal street furniture, informal parking and uneven pedestrian paving.

The Shire had developed a Streetscape Plan to revitalise the area, amidst a growing population. Reconnect WA grant funding enabled the Shire to trial activation elements and connect with community on some components of this Plan.



After



Before

Design choices and community involvement

Key project elements included the installation of temporary designated pedestrian crossing points, gabion seating, landscaping, public art and festoon lighting. Attention was given to materials that retain the character of the streetscape as rustic and rural. Where possible, the Shire sourced the infrastructure locally, for example, a local blacksmith created the bespoke bike racks.

The Shire encouraged Witchcliffe locals to be involved in the design, planning and implementation of the streetscape changes, through various channels. The Shire was also receptive to the community's ideas, making adjustments in response to feedback. For example, the Shire did not proceed with a proposed mural because it lacked community support.

Experience and outcomes

A community survey conducted after the installation suggested that:

- » 100% of respondents wanted the gabion seating to be kept;
- » 82% of respondents were supportive of the bespoke bike racks being retained;
- » however, only 59% agreed that the pedestrian crossing points should be kept.

Feedback regarding the pedestrian crossing points was mixed. Some members of the community felt they were useful, others were either confused about their use or were opposed:

- » "I am in a wheelchair so it is great to see a crossing that is far more accessible. I can now cross this road without assistance."
- » "I had no idea the pedestrian crossing was even finished. It isn't a pedestrian crossing, it's a dip in a curb, where's the white lines and signs?"
- » "The pedestrian crossing is not clearly visible. Perhaps some striped bollards at side and a central pausing area. This [highway] is really busy and hard to cross all at once for those citizens that are less mobile."

The Shire will continue to work with community to develop a village streetscape that is functional and supports local uses and users. Recreational facility upgrades are currently being designed, and liaison continues with Main Roads to make improvements to drainage and parking in addition of a water fountain and recreational infrastructure in surrounding areas.

"I can now cross the road without assistance."



Lessons learned

Impact of placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » The Shire felt that tactical urbanism was a good way of working collaboratively with community that are passionate about enhancing the sense of place.

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » The co-design process was useful in giving the community a sense of ownership over the process. It also helped highlight the constraints and level of scrutiny required of local government projects.
- » Co-design involves more staff time than is usually allocated to project design. Hence appropriate resourcing is necessary when conducting similar processes.



The Big Bobtail and Nature Play Area

Shire of Carnamah

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Shire of Carnamah partnered with RAC to develop a family nature play area, featuring 'Big Bobtail' climbing logs. This placemaking project forms part of a wider program of planned works to develop a Youth Space in Carnamah's main street.

Approx. cost: \$65,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Jan 2023 - Oct 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The project responded to the community's need for more youth facilities, spaces for gatherings and events, and a desire to increase the vibrancy and accessibility of the area.

A community consultation and concept design report for a Youth Space in Carnamah had been adopted by the Shire but no funding had been allocated. The Reconnect WA grant provided an opportunity to implement elements of the proposed Youth Space and trial this with the community.

Design choices and community involvement

As the local youth community were a key driver of the project, they were heavily engaged in the development of a concept design for the space.

The Shire outlined a budget and eligible project components and consulted with Carnamah District High School students and members of the broader Carnamah community including families with younger children, to identify the types of design features that were desired.



There was overwhelming support for creating a nature play area to enhance the space, including elements such as swings, climbing frames and Big Bobtail climbing logs to represent the local First Nations groups.

Experience and outcomes

The development of the nature play area has been well received by the local community and there has been an uptake in the use of the space which has added some vibrancy to the main street.

- » An increasing number of younger students have been observed using nature play area (with parental supervision). Several parents were observed to walk (rather than drive) to collect their children so they can spend time at the park before heading home.
- » A community survey indicated that the area is seen as a safe space for young people and families. Most people said they spend between 30-60 minutes in the area when visiting.
- » Tourists have been observed accessing the park to take photographs with the Bobtails and using

the table and chairs for picnics. Social media also indicates that word has spread regarding the area, resulting in more visitors to Carnamah.

- » The space has also become a meeting point for locals to access travelling medical services (e.g. counselling, dietitians etc. when conducting informal meetings especially parents of young children).

Following the installation of the Nature Play area and the level of uptake and excitement this created in the local community, the Shire decided to prioritise further development of the Youth Space and has allocated additional funding towards this. Planned future developments include a cricket oval, BBQ areas, skatepark and a pump track.

Additionally, local community groups such as the Men's Shed and the local Police Blue Light Disco who assisted with the building of the infrastructure (e.g. bike racks) and planning events, have expressed an interest in continuing to help activate the space.

Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » The development of the Youth Space and the Nature Play Area was a great journey for the community. Many members of the community were involved in the discussions and decision making. In particular, it was important to involve the school and youth in community decision-making, empowering them into the future and hopefully fostering future leaders.
- » Stakeholder consultation and engagement through this project has created and/or strengthened relationships between the Shire of Carnamah, the District High School, Men's Shed, and suppliers and local contractors.
- » Preparing a planning document that outlines a clear vision for the space is useful when seeking grant funding and gives strategic direction for the project.
- » Ensure there are contingencies in the project timeline to account for delays and ample resources to handle the additional workload.



Activating and Connecting Lissiman Street with the Gosnells Town Centre

City of Gosnells

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Lissiman Street Activation project involved the temporary transformation of a vacant block in the Gosnells City Centre into a safe and welcoming community space with connection to the nearby Gosnells Train Station. This project involved both placemaking and active travel elements.

Approx. cost: \$330,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: March 2023 – July 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The City wanted to attract more people into the Gosnells town centre, after plans to commercially redevelop the site were postponed due to market conditions. The key objectives of this project were to:

- » Improve access for people walking and cycling travelling between the Gosnells town centre and train station by creating a safe and inviting transport link.
- » Encourage community members to spend more time in the Gosnells town centre, connect with others, support local businesses and use more active transport.



After



Before

Design choices and community involvement

The installation included 'ChillOUT trees' providing shade, device charging and ambient lighting at night, café style and cube seating, coloured concrete path, hero ping pong table and pram ramp. New trees were also planted in the space. The City engaged the community to inform design of the temporary activation.

Experience and outcomes

The site has been well used by the community as evidenced by:

- » Increased foot traffic activity – hourly pedestrian counts on a given day increased from 96 people to 228 people after the installation. Anecdotally it was observed that pedestrian counts were higher than this in the morning and afternoon.
- » Increased socialisation and interaction at the site – a survey conducted prior to the project indicated there were no people dwelling in the space, whilst a post-survey showed 144 people spending time there on a given day.

- » A community survey confirmed a 52% increase in the ability to use the space for a range of uses, with the rating increasing from 2.2 to 4.6 (out of 5).
- » 17 businesses were engaged in several activation events (including a Community Fete and Festival of Football), these major events attracting between 1,500 to 2,000 visitors per event.
- » A survey of business owners indicated overwhelming satisfaction with the decline in antisocial activity, the improved appearance of the space and the resulting impact on the town centre. Organisations located near the site have also commented that the installation has created 'community ownership' of the space.
- » A range of community organisations such as the local church have continued to utilise the space, hosting their Christmas Carols in 2023 and also booking the site for numerous events in 2024.

The future of the activation depends on the permanent development plans for the area which are outlined in the City's Lissiman Street Improvement Plan Visioning Document. Given the success of the temporary



transformation, the activation projects and community satisfaction, it is likely that the installation will remain for several years until market conditions change.

Lessons learned

Impact of placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » Temporary pilots enable local governments to respond to the opportunities and challenges of underutilised and unattractive sites.

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » In testing options for these sites, don't be afraid to try different things and importantly, work with the community on the design and ongoing activations.
- » Establishing a clear methodology for surveying potential users and businesses is important for gaining insights into the use of the site and informing future projects.



Solomon Street Community Precinct

Town of Mosman Park

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Town of Mosman Park partnered with RAC to transform Solomon Street by linking two separate path networks and creating an area for the community to connect.

The placemaking project included eight days of infrastructure and neighbourhood activations and a month-long trial of the shared path connection.

Approx. cost: \$45,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Jan 2023 – May 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The area in Solomon Street was frequently used by people walking and cycling but it was also a high-traffic area with parents using it as a school drop-off / pick-up point. The community thought the street was unsafe given the number of cars and wanted the place to be

safer, especially for children. The key objectives of the trial were to:

- » Create a precinct prioritised for pedestrians and cyclists.
- » Enhance the attractiveness and functionality of the public realm to encourage people to visit and stay longer.
- » Engage, inspire and help empower residents and businesses to get involved in shaping and driving change in their local area.
- » Test the impact of the various project elements (shared path, place enhancements and relocation of parking spaces) to inform the future design of the precinct.

The community were consulted on how they would like to get around the Town and their active travel preferences. A letterbox drop of 250 letters and social media promoted the project and activation.



Design choices and community involvement

There were three design elements:

1. installing a cycle path to facilitate the continuation of Solomon Street. This involved a new permanent path linking two streets and a temporary, painted path.
2. temporary closure of Solomon Street with pop-up community events such as bike maintenance and servicing, bike riding lessons, pump track, skate ramp and demonstration, mini golf, bicycle parking, and local trishaw "tours" by Cycling without Age. The second activation day focused on sustainability with the Western Metropolitan Regional Council promoting waste education and a bike repair station.
3. town staff created a 'community café' which provided residents a free coffee for those that filled out a survey. The area was set-up with benches and planters repurposed from another RAC initiative (Youth Led Placemaking Project).

Experience and outcomes

- » The project has been so successful that the Town is developing the space to make it a permanent pedestrian only area.
- » Over 800 people visited the activation space during the 2-day event period with most visitors walking or biking.
- » A Great Public Spaces Audit conducted by the Town showed a 275% increase in the number of cyclists and an overall increase in community rating from 2.5 to 4.6 (out of 5) following the installation.
- » Community feedback highlighted that the green path has made drivers more conscious of pedestrians sharing the road.
- » The Town engaged with small and local businesses in person to explain the activations. Four local businesses helped to promote the event by putting up posters and displaying flyers, and a nearby business reported increased foot traffic during the activation.

- » Other feedback collected verbally and from 272 survey respondents suggested that the local community viewed the activation as an exciting, healthy and low cost way to engage youth make the area safer.
- » As there were two RAC supported projects running in parallel, there was some confusion and many people thought the installation was all part of one initiative.

Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » Project leads in local government departments should meet regularly to ensure there is a shared vision and buy-in, clear roles and responsibilities and oversight of key issues.
- » As weather can have a severe impact on the number of people participating in the events, they are better scheduled in March/early April than in May.
- » The importance of engaging with local schools and businesses.
- » The letterbox drop was found to be the most effective form of promotion.



Park Revitalisation Project

Shire of Morawa

Project scope, cost and timeframe

The Shire of Morawa partnered with RAC to design and implement a placemaking project that involved redeveloping an underused public park in the town centre into a gathering place for residents and visitors.

Approx. cost: \$100,000 (ex-GST)

Timeframe: Nov 2022 – Dec 2023

Opportunity or challenge being addressed

The public park space was mostly used by the local high school community as a shortcut to reach the town's retail area. It lacked public amenities, seating and shade. The Shire had identified the need to redevelop the space, but the project had not been prioritised or funded. The Reconnect WA grant provided the necessary momentum to improve the space, with community input and engagement.

Design choices and community involvement

The project involved the installation of footpath artwork, seating and bike racks. These were designed using recycled, reclaimed or natural materials.

The re-development sought to make the space more welcoming, embracing the local Widi people of the Yamatji Nation and their culture. Ongoing guidance was sought from this community group throughout the project.

The local community participated in art events during the implementation stage, which was critical for creating project awareness and fostering community 'togetherness'.



Experience and outcomes

In community feedback collected by the Shire, residents said they found the space to be “much more inviting and vibrant” and offering “much needed shelter”. The feedback also highlighted that the “footpaths have brightened up the students walk to school”.

Other key outcomes were:

- » Community surveys also showed that utilisation of the space has increased significantly. Prior to the installation, 75% of respondents said they rarely used the space and 25% said they only accessed the space monthly. After the project was completed, 11% of respondents said they used the space daily, 28% weekly, and 11% said monthly, with 50% using it rarely.
- » An increase in perceived safety with almost 50% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they felt safe to walk and bike across the street.
- » Local community satisfaction with the area has significantly improved with 55% of respondents rating the space as being 7 or higher (out of 10) after project completion, compared with just 25% prior.

The Shire has continued to maintain and develop the space, installing EV chargers in the adjacent carpark

to further channel interest and usage. Additionally, the Shire plans to host future events, such as movie nights, youth centre and tourism-based activities, in the space as the weather cools.

Lessons learned

Implementing placemaking/tactical urbanism

- » Commence design works and finalise core design elements as early in the project as possible to better estimate budget and installation timelines.
 - > Being regionally based can significantly impact manufacturing and installation lead times.
- » Commence community engagement/working groups early in the project to encourage community support, and continue this engagement throughout the project.
 - > Booking all work group sessions well in advance can be helpful.
- » Given regional local governments typically have limited resources, coordinating with internal stakeholders well in advance to ensure there is capacity to undertake designated tasks.
 - > Consider engaging a contractor early in the project to assist with coordination and delivery.



For more information or to contact RAC
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