

Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Planting citizenship: lessons for invoking sustainability via children's civic voice

2. Format:

Written paper + presentation

3. Author(s) Name:

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

1. University of Melbourne, Australia + Red Road Consulting, Australia

2. University of Melbourne, Australia + Victorian College of the Arts, Australia

5. Abstract (300 words):

The nexus of 'sustainability' and 'citizenship' is an increasingly theorized space but what does it take 'on the ground'? How can communities be assembled and resourced to teach and learn, to listen and be heard, to lobby and to act, to have and to respect agency and, ultimately, to collaborate on realizing a sustainable and exciting shared future?

More challenging: what if the citizens we are interested in assembling include children? Citizenship, as developed from childhood, is both a powerful precursor/determinant and a powerful outcome for a person's engagement with the social, cultural and

physical world they live in and for people's abilities to contribute to solutions and ideas in response to changing social and ecological environments.

Children's participation in decision-making, however, has traditionally been a problematized (or simply absent) space, despite the oft-cited concerns that poor sustainability decisions made now are going to impact on children most intensely. Excluding children from 'citizenship' also curtails the development of skills and agency they will need in regard to future participation in critical discussions about social, cultural and environmental resilience. As planting and nurturing a garden is a set of skills and knowledge learned best by doing, so too is active citizenship.

This paper will explore recent and current examples of applied research and practice to address these questions, using children's active citizenship as an anchoring point (given children's particular stake in the future of built and natural environments). Lessons from the case studies presented in this paper will focus on tying together concepts and practices that strengthen active citizenship while tackling questions of eco-sustainability and resilience and present ideas for active citizen participation in sustainability that are more than just hot air.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Andrea Cook is an early career academic fellow and practicing urban planner, specialising in strategic and community planning. Andrea has taught and researched at the University of Melbourne since 2000 and has been the Director of Red Road Consulting, a small planning consultancy firm in Melbourne Australia, since 2004. Prior to leading her own consultancy, Andrea was a public servant with State and local governments in Australia. Andrea's PhD ('Citizen kid': The relationship between children's independent mobility and active citizenship) was conferred in late 2014 and she has worked to a wide range of briefs and projects as a consultant, including urban renewal, participatory precinct and city planning, restorative justice/practices, engaging with marginalized communities (including CALD, aboriginal, disabled and young people) and in-country international development work. Andrea has also made a significant contribution in the area of community planning methodology for engaging with communities in urban change processes, with several award-winning publications to her credit. Andrea's current passions in urban planning include rights and access to the city, participatory urban design, planning ethics, teaching and writing about planning, and seeing plans into action.

Dr Tanja Beer is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Melbourne exploring the intersection between theatre, sustainability and social practice. Working across artistic and scientific disciplines, and academic and community contexts, her practice-led research explores the potential for creative engagement tools to catalyze ecosystem restoration, community vitalization and systems healing. As a stage designer

and theatre maker, Tanja has more than 15 years professional experience, including 60 designs for projects in London, Cardiff, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Vienna and Tokyo. Her research projects seek to re-think traditional theatre practices to align with ecological principles. She has received numerous grants and awards, and was 'Activist-in-Residence' at Julie's Bicycle (London's premier arts and sustainability consultancy) in 2013/2014. Tanja is the co-founder of the Ecostage Pledge (www.ecostagepledge.com), a global initiative that places ecological thinking at the heart of creative practice. Her current work explores new forms of science communication through theatre and participatory place-making.