



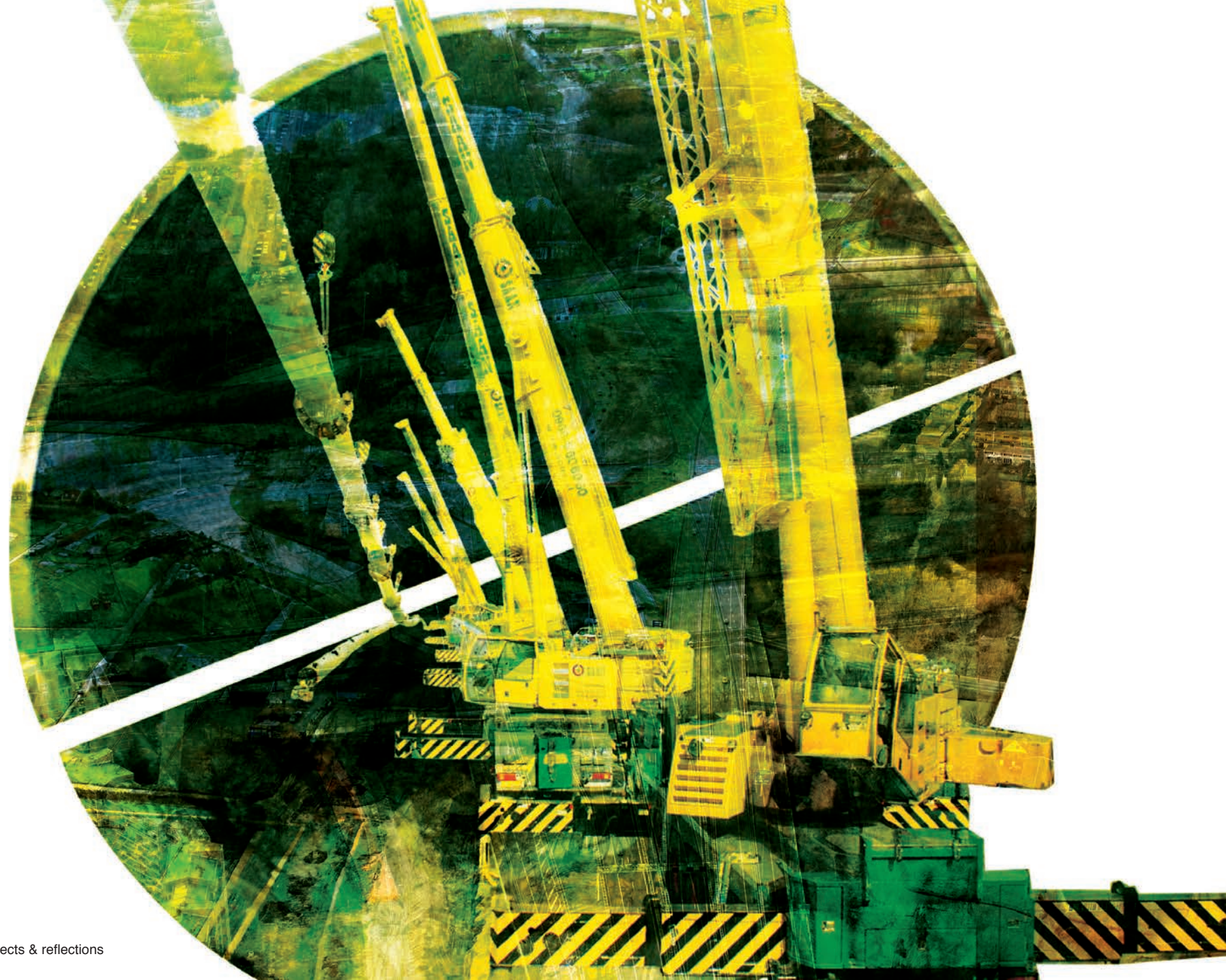
Introduction

The projects in this section of the book are a small selection from more than 140 projects undertaken by the team at the Designing Out Crime* research centre in Sydney, and our international collaborators. All projects have been supported by partner organisations (the ‘problem owners’) who have been seeking a different way to approach the problems they face.

These projects have always served multiple purposes. First and foremost, they have aimed to solve societal problems. Secondly, they have tried to help partner organisations find alternative ways of approaching these problems, and learn something new in the process. And thirdly, every project has helped us develop our practice, and the methods and tools that structure a way of working.

We will now present 21 projects that exemplify the breadth of the problem contexts we have worked in, the versatility of the approach we use and the great variety of solutions that have emerged. Some are products, while others are policies, services and systems, and they are informed by a whole range of discipline areas. These projects are interspersed with reflections – lessons we have learned along the way or discovered by looking backwards. All together these reflections make up a set of principles that we hope will be useful to you.

* The Designing Out Crime research centre was founded in 2008 as a partnership between the New South Wales Department of Justice and the University of Technology Sydney.



Tunnels & visions

The A9 highway around Amsterdam is one of the busiest roads in the Netherlands. To provide for better accessibility to the city, improve air quality and reduce sound levels around one of the bottlenecks of the road, a new 12-lane tunnel will be built, with a park on its roof. The planned construction work will take about 5 years, and these works will impact heavily on the environment – mainly on the adjoining residential neighbourhood, the Bijlmer, a multicultural district of 80,000 people from 186 nationalities.

* Based on a text by Vera Winthagen

Retail sales are made through proximity and connection between a would-be consumer and a product. The easier it is for a customer to personally examine an item for sale, the more likely a sale will result; accordingly, every effort is made by the retailer to make products accessible to shoppers. At the same time, a product within reach is easier to steal than a product under lock and key. The classic loss-prevention dilemma is how to reduce opportunity for theft while encouraging sales, when both sales and theft are enabled by the same mechanism.

Having been asked to look at this problem by a leading supermarket retailer, Designing Out Crime undertook an audit of frequently stolen items, the stores most susceptible and the modus operandi of thieves. While there is great variation among the products that are commonly stolen – everything from fresh meat to electronic goods – the most vulnerable products are small, expensive and suitable for resale online. Retailers have reported that stolen batteries, razors and cosmetics can appear on e-commerce sites within an hour of leaving the store. CCTV footage has

revealed shelf-sweeping to be the most popular tactic used by offenders. The thief stands with their back to the CCTV camera and with a quick movement of the arm ‘sweeps’ dozens of products at once into an open bag lined with foil (to avoid tag identification at the exit). Shelf-sweeping wreaks havoc on stock replenishment systems because stolen items do not register as having ‘gone’ (since they have not been sold), meaning that the product stolen is not available to legitimate customers until a staff member finds it missing from the shelf.



The traditional role of store security is to reduce theft by warning potential offenders of the likelihood of getting caught (via signs and CCTV) and apprehending those who try. This defensive approach may catch crooks but can also counteract sales goals. All things considered, it can be tempting for retailers to turn a blind eye to theft. Clearly this problem is very stuck.

The approach adopted by Designing Out Crime sought to frame the crime problem from a positive standpoint, and to theme solutions around sales objectives. In the retail context, sales priorities heavily outweigh

security concerns; thus, solutions that encourage sales are more likely to be adopted than those focused squarely on loss prevention. The Designing Out Crime anti-theft shelving design satisfies both aims.

Features of the shelf include a product information strip (engaging customers to increase sales); a transparent flap that needs to be lifted with one hand before a product can be removed (requiring the use of both hands and making shelf-sweeping impossible), and a light that both illuminates the product and gives the signal that sensors have been triggered.

Given positive customer feedback and early indications that theft decreased through use of the shelf, the supermarket initiated the development of a second version of the shelf to undergo more detailed and prolonged assessment. This project created a new product that wasn't a simple compromise between the two opposing forces of loss prevention and sales, but shows how both can be seamlessly incorporated into a single design.



Radical generosity

Some years ago we were approached by the local council that is responsible for an area of Sydney that includes ‘The Gap’ – a spectacular cliff near the entrance to Sydney Harbour that unfortunately has a reputation in the city as a place where people go to suicide. The problem that the council presented to us was basically that Don Ritchie was getting too old to walk his dog at twilight...

Don Ritchie lived in one of the last houses next to the nature reserve that includes The Gap. He used to walk his dog at twilight, and approach people who were looking distressed, asking them “Why don’t you come in for a cup of tea?” Over the years he chatted with hundreds of people at his kitchen table, and saved many lives (the estimate is about 400).

Now that Don was getting on in years, what should the authorities do? They realised that putting an emergency phone at the spot was probably not going to do the trick – too deliberate, too institutional, too obvious, too authoritarian and, despite good intentions, also too inhumane. The

fact is that Don’s kind deeds, emanating from basic human goodness, cannot be organised at all without losing their essential power.

Human goodness and generosity are incredibly powerful forces in our lives. All the real quality of the projects presented in this book comes not from the cleverness of the methods used or the funky visualisations. Real quality comes from the fact that somewhere along the way, somebody involved in the project (a designer, a local council member, a social worker, a student – whoever) was personally inspired to bring his or her own force to bear on the problem.



Opera House, swarming with millions of tourists year-round, lacks public activities that make you want to come back to it and renew your acquaintance. And unfortunately, the parts of the public space around the building that are now closed off for security reasons would exactly be the places where one could organise small events and create the sense of the intimacy required for locals to develop and sustain a 'love affair' with this special place. The theme of 'sensing' referenced the idea that the senses that should be delighted by the Opera

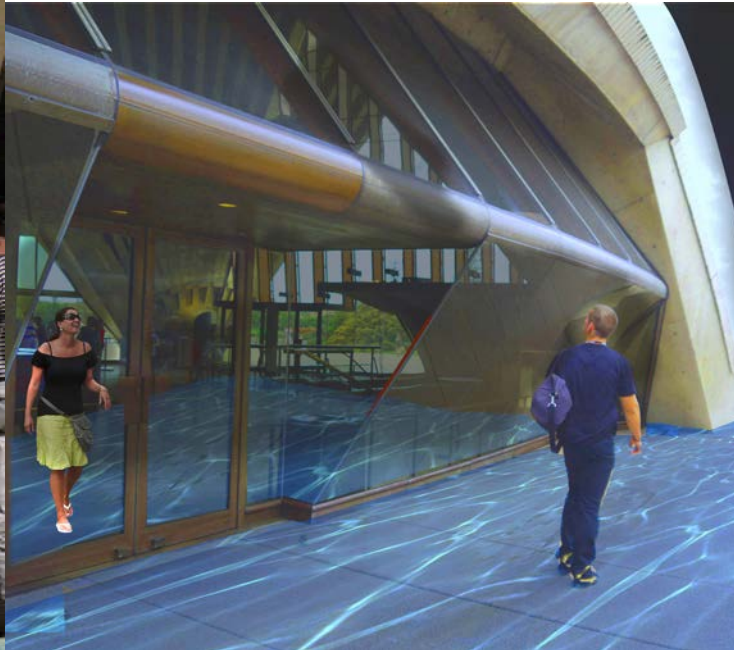
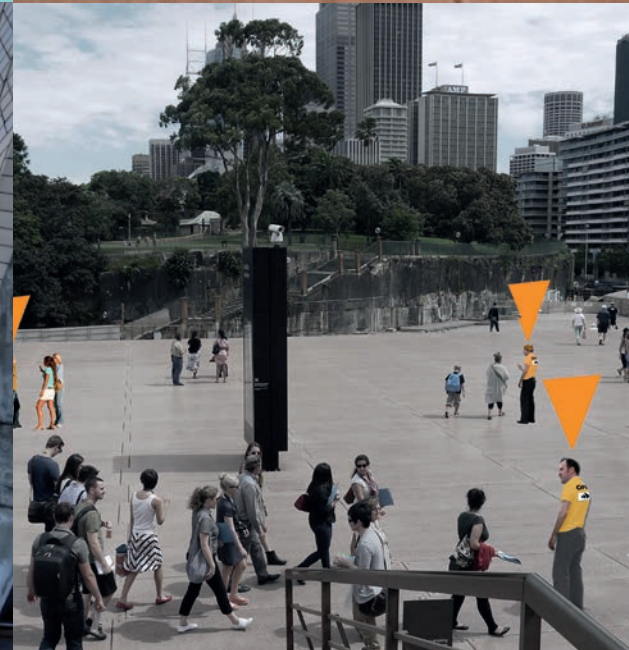
House. It is a spectacular spot to experience the elements (sun, water, wind, silence) and achieve the 'spiritual uplift' that the architect envisaged.

This led to many ideas on how to help locals cultivate closer ties with the Opera House. These include a volunteer team of cheerful, local ambassadors to provide information and direct visitors; and curated events on the forecourt that cater to locals, such as yoga at sunrise.



One could try to create a sense of dematerialised lightness, or weightlessness, in tune with Jørn Utzon's original sketches for the Opera House (in which the white shells have an open, cloudlike structure). Similar projections on the floor inside the foyer and on the paving outside can be used to blur the boundary between inside and out, visually creating the sense of lightness the architect envisaged in the original drawings. Thus, the podium could be a fluid landscape, which locals return to often to drink in the new experiences.

The infrastructure of sensors and lights that supports such events also doubles as a subtle security measure. These would increase the number of 'eyes on the shells', while giving Sydney people the chance to re-experience and feel at home at the Opera House.



Putting two and 2 together

When trying to make sense of a problem situation, relying on a single data source can easily lead to a superficial understanding of a problem. This will likely lead to a solution that treats the symptoms of the problem, rather than the underlying syndrome.

Government departments regularly release reports that show their latest understanding of a problem, and lay out the rationale for their current practices. It is less usual, however, for separate departments to be aware of what is happening in other departments, even when they deal with the same user groups. Given this, it can be quite revelatory to combine multiple sources of information at once.

In the 'License to Drive' project (p.62) we saw through analysis of data from the courts that people were being sent to prison for the relatively minor offence of driving without a license. Next, researching the licensing procedure managed by the roads and traffic authority showed us how convoluted and unintuitive the process was. Overlaying this official information with interview data from the experiences of people who had been charged with driving without a license revealed that people were stumbling on unfriendly technicalities and bureaucratic requirements.

Putting data from these different sources together provided a completely new view of the problem and set a different direction for solving it.





Changing lanes

Ashfield is a rapidly evolving, multicultural inner-city suburb well known for its Chinese culture and restaurants. The dynamism and vibrancy of the town centre is played out on a physical stage built predominantly in the 1880s and 1890s, with two-storey shop buildings set cheek by jowl along a 'high street' that was originally designed to accommodate horse-drawn carts and trams. But the high street of yesteryear is today a major highway that bisects the town centre, a swollen river of cars, trucks and buses that overwhelms the friendly, small-scale ambience of the commercial strip.

A network of lanes links the main street with the train station. Every day, many thousands of people use these lanes on their way to and from the trains, shops, library, town hall and the many restaurants. In spite of relatively high pedestrian activity, the lanes convey a strong sense of under-use; disconnected from the vibrancy and hubbub of the main strip, dingy and forgotten, the lanes seem fit for rats, garbage bins and, one might imagine, back street deals. Robberies and assaults have taken place in the laneways.

* Based on a text by Nick Chapman



Integrated living

Traditionally, the government policy in Holland, as in many other countries, was to house people with an intellectual disability outside society. They were cared for in institutions that were often beautifully positioned in wooded, secluded areas of the country. While society took pride in the quality of the care that these institutions provided, the people in them were also hidden from the general public.

Recently, this policy has been reversed: the contemporary wisdom is to encourage intellectually disabled persons to live their life as 'normally' as possible. The translation of policy into practice has included rehousing the intellectually disabled to live independently in towns and cities, with some support from a network of caregivers. This new ideology has had huge and often disastrous consequences for the intellectually disabled. Although their physical isolation ended when they entered the world of 'normal' people, mental isolation has persisted; the bodily relocation from institution to private apartment does not assure inclusion in society. They have trouble integrating into their neighbourhoods and struggle with the pace and character of city life. Their neighbours generally ignore them, lacking the time and patience in the frantic rhythm of their own busy lives to take the extra trouble to interact. This leaves people with an intellectual disability stranded in their apartments, desperately lonely.

What do you know?

WHY: The latest published knowledge will tell you what others know, and can help you contextualise what you have learned from other research methods.

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” — Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!

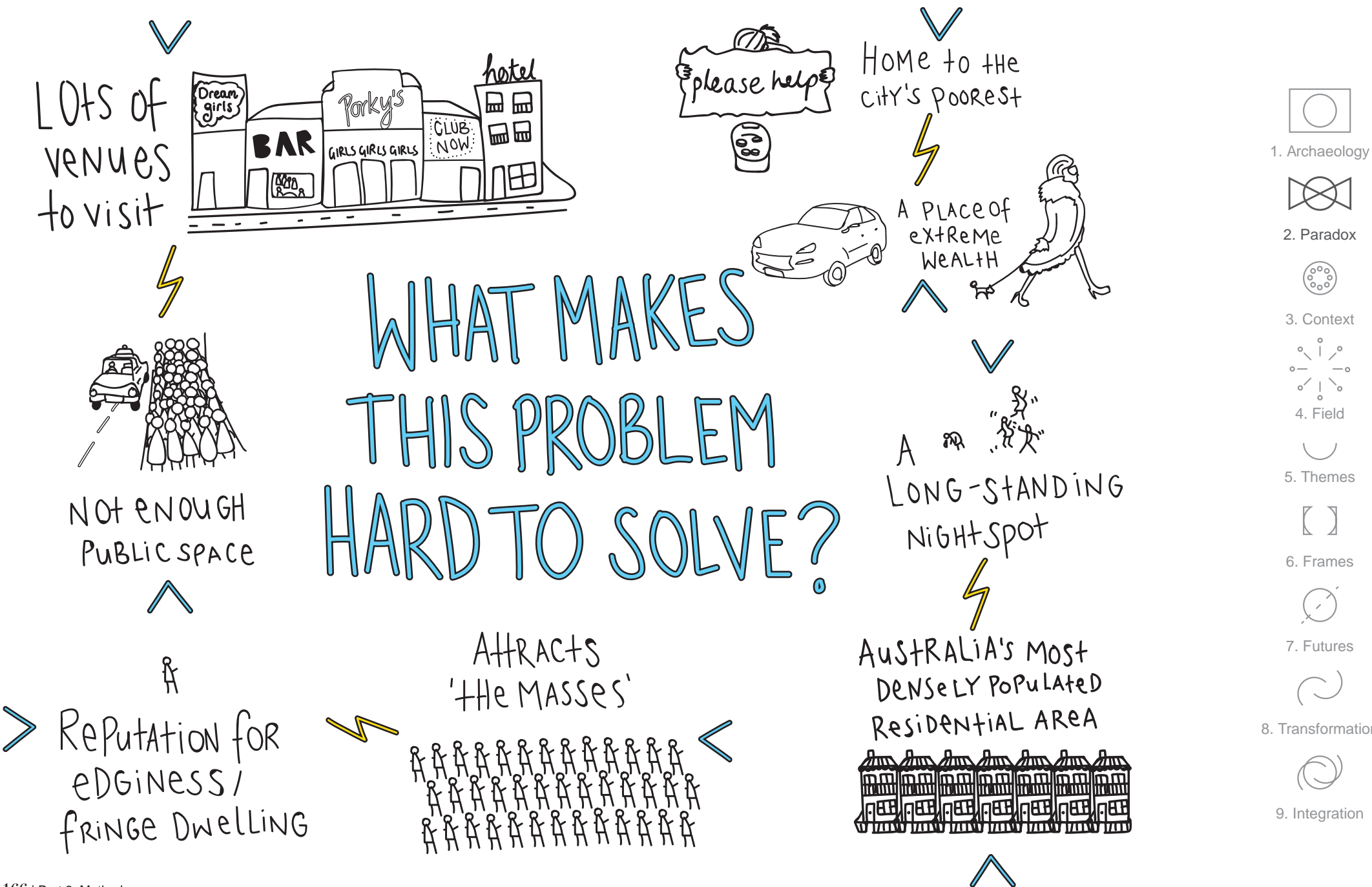
HOW: This method involves reading across a topic, reflecting on what you’ve read and then writing up your findings.

An environmental scan is the quickest version of this, while a literature review is typically a more in-depth piece of work and will take longer.

Environmental scan – Identify key pieces of research (journal articles, conference papers, industry papers, &c.), list them and briefly summarise their findings. Mine the references from popular publications to

help you locate relevant research. Conclude with a discussion section that identifies patterns among the research you have read.

Literature review – Explore themes that are relevant to the problem within a body of work/ discipline area. Identify and meticulously record search terms, set a target number of citations based on the time you have, identify important authors and publications, and read. Take note of emerging theories and hypotheses, and what methods authors have used to gather information. Write up your findings to include an introduction, discussion and conclusion. Share it and get feedback from peers.



1. Archaeology
2. Paradox
3. Context
4. Field
5. Themes
6. Frames
7. Futures
8. Transformation
9. Integration

Frame creation:

Clarifying

In a complex problem, there are usually many pairs of oppositional forces that confound attempts to solve it. In the frame creation workshop we refer to these oppositional forces as 'paradoxes'. Identifying the paradoxes, then setting them aside, is an important early step in the workshop process and is done with the plenary group of participants.

Duration: 15 minutes

QUESTIONS: What makes this problem so hard to solve? What are the opposing forces in the problem context?

ACTIONS: One facilitator asks the questions, while another writes the responses on a whiteboard or flip-chart. Responses to the first question (what makes this hard to solve?) should be noted down and discussed, and when the responses begin to flow, facilitators can guide participants to reformulate their answers into statements of opposing forces.

Some examples of these pairs of opposing forces are described below using the example of Kings Cross in the project 'Growing Up In Public':

For a place to be vibrant, there needs to be a critical mass of people

vs.

If a place is vibrant and popular, and attracts large numbers of people, it can become unpredictable and hard to manage

and

Young people get in trouble when they go to Kings Cross

vs.

Kings Cross's reputation for edginess and danger makes it attractive to young people