

COOLING THE COMMONS

Dr Louise Crabtree
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

Design for a warmer world

What will it be like to live in Western Sydney in the near future and how can human and non-human wellbeing be ensured?

Series of research projects:

1. Completed pilot project in 2016
2. Current partnership with Landcom
3. Proposed ARC Linkage with community housing providers



Sydney, Melbourne urged to prepare for 50°C days by mid-century Lewis et al., 2017.

1. Pilot project

- Found people have varying levels of knowledge about how to keep cool
- Also varying ability to act on that knowledge – e.g., may know that exterior blinds on West-facing windows would help but cannot make additions to their rented home
- Found three types of commons
 1. Residual – knowledge and skills passed down from generations. E.g., hanging damp towels in doorways for evaporative cooling
 2. Transgressive – using spaces for purposes for which they were not intended. E.g., teenagers swimming in the water feature of a nearby suburb
 3. Aspirational – how residents would like a cool city to be. E.g., shaded walkways to accessible and swimmable rivers



1. Pilot project

Air con, CARS & 'The commons'

Air conditioners and cars have produced formats for living that suppress and negate *the commons*:

Commons are places, resources, practices and knowledges shared (and cared for) by a community.

(Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy, 2013)

- so how can commoning provide a framework for providing shared cooling spaces and practices?

1. Pilot project

Cooling. Not just technical solutions ...



An 'ideal' urban landscape transformation. Urban Cooling Guide. CRC Low Carbon Living, 2017.

...But Socio-Technical Relations

1. Pilot project

Analysing a commons



Signage outlines terms of access, use and care



Redfern Park

Lotus Line water sculpture by Fiona Foley

2. Cooling the Commons project with Landcom

STAGE 1 literature & cases

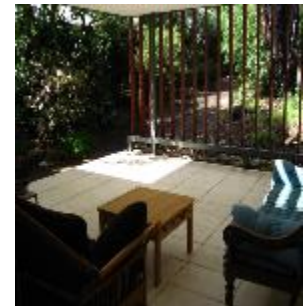
We reviewed literature and cases to identify patterns that support cool commons:

- *Recurrent spatial compositions*
- *Built forms*
- *Micro-environments*
- *Architectural features and devices*
- *Governance practices*

Water
places



Outdoor
room



Community
places



2. Cooling the Commons project with Landcom

Stage 2 site analyses



Front garden, Airds Bradbury



Main Ridge Park, Macarthur Heights.
Student Project 1



Green Square Plaza. Student
Project 2

A way of seeing: the practice of *recognising patterns* is just as important as *prescribing* them.

Our pattern book aims to provide a **design grammar for cool commons** to improve our collective intelligence about how to live well in a hot city.

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Student Project 1

How to think coolth in relation to other design concepts and planning concerns.

Cohort: 40+ Masters of Planning, Engineering, Social Sciences, and Research students

Framework: Conduct a site assessment of Macarthur Heights and assess how the group's theme would intersect with community strategies for keeping cool on hot days. Create a presentation for an in-class subject assessment (20% of subject assessment).

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Student Project 1

Group themes:

1. Walking routes
2. Public transport
3. Universal access
4. Cycling
5. Women's safety
6. Child-friendliness

Format: 10 minute presentation to class, Cooling the Commons team members (University and Landcom), and other Landcom staff

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Macarthur Heights



Experiencing the site

Signage promotes public transport, but the station walk takes nearly 20 minutes, most unshaded. Paths aren't continuous.

I wish it had been a hotter day, but the students still felt the heat coming back up the hill and said they'd never walk it on a hot day.

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Macarthur Heights

SEPTEMBER 2017



Child-friendliness

Trees:

- High exposure to sunlight
- Vertical growing, not providing outward canopy
- Not positioned to cover pathways or playground equipment
- Planting of trees is a long-term solution, inadequate for cooling now
- Trees positioned to shade only morning sunlight

Group slide: Child friendliness. The park is a night park intended for star gazing, but there is no signage to indicate that.

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Student Project 1

Outcomes

- Parameters of a consultative process for thinking about what kinds of communities could be designed?
- Provoked a conversation about responsibility and ‘handover’ and how to do it properly – e.g., council handover, space earmarked for future development
 - Also, how to establish and maintain ethic of commoning while site is under development?
 - Community liaison officer as a potential channel?
 - Difficulties of commoning while physical and social infrastructure is still under development
- 2018 student cohort will provide feedback on site in 2019 via consultation
- Opportunities for 2019 student cohort with Landcom: beginnings of co-design? Options for co-governance?

2. Cooling the Commons project with Landcom

Current work

Student Project 2: Design Pattern Language | Interdisciplinary Design @ UTS

Pattern Book Prototype Workshops completed

Development of pattern book underway...

- Not just what to design, but how to design, when and with whom

3. Pending Cooling the Commons proposal with community housing providers

Activating residual and aspirational commons

- How can low-moderate communities in social housing develop community-based cooling strategies?
- Watch this space...

Thanks

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