

RP3017

# ADELAIDE LIVING LABORATORY: CO-CREATION METHODOLOGY

## Research Question

What are the optimal co-creation models for enabling innovations in product and service delivery to support low carbon living, and how can these best be applied in the case study sites of Tonsley and Bowden, and the model emulated across Australia?

## Defining co-creation

When dealing with the concept of co-creating low-carbon urban environments, it is important to understand the complex web of terminology that exists within this field. Terms such as co-design, participatory design, and co-production are often used interchangeably with co-creation, and other, less related terms, like consultation, are also confused.

There are a number of overarching definitions offered by the literature (including figure 1), and some distinctions are drawn about the level of user-participation and control over the process. However, for this research co-creation is being defined as an overarching philosophical and methodological approach to solving a problem, rather than a specific event, process, or tool.

*Co-creation is a verb,  
not a noun.*

We are using co-creation as a verb while other associated terminologies remain as nouns. By defining co-creation in this way, instances of co-design,

participatory design, co-production and even consultation can happen within the process, without compromising the goal of co-creating products, processes and services.

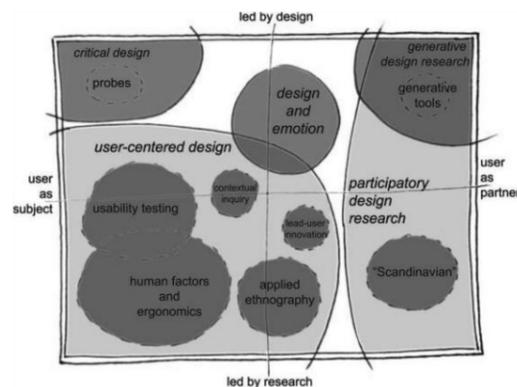


Figure 1: Types of human-centred design. (Reproduced from Sanders & Stappers 2008)

## Key Challenges

### 1: Users

In the case study sites for this project, at the time of design, 'users' are a hypothetical construct. This creates a paradox where it becomes necessary to seek user-input without there actually being any users. The researchers are exploring both sampling and proxy methods to overcome this and to define 'users' for these projects.

### 2: Risk

Companies in the construction industry, and governments are often highly risk-averse. Financial risk in construction projects is of course huge, but a recent workshop was able to demonstrate that involving a broad cross-section of users in the design process can detect significant errors, saving the project many thousands of dollars.

### 3: Power

Power-struggles in decision making processes are somewhat easy to map, but a far more nuanced approach is required to understand the power-relationships that support behaviour change. The research team are exploring how to conceptualise low-carbon behaviour change beyond carrots and sticks, and exploring how the benefits of co-creation are distributed among stakeholders.

## PARTICIPATION

Sherry R.

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...deadline reading public, it is simply be  
...answer to the critical *what question is*

Figure 2: Translation: I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, those people participate, they profit (Reproduced from Arnstein 1967).

### 4: Language

Many of the tools and techniques associated with co-creation are aimed at levelling discussions so that everybody can contribute equally. However, when terminology is used by one group that is not accessible to all others, tension and frustration are quick to erupt.

When designing urban environments, the drawings and models created can also be a barrier when they are beyond the comprehension of most user groups.

This research is testing a number of ways of overcoming this barrier, from the traditional approach of hand drawings and conceptual diagrams, to immersive virtual reality environments

## Outcomes

One case study has been completed with the opening of a new community garden adjacent to the Bowden development. The reports on the process document an example of combining co-design, consultation, and participatory design strategies in a co-creation process.



Figure 3: Adelaide Parklands Community Garden launch

## Further information

**Further information about this project can be found via the CRC for low carbon living website or by contacting the research team via the details below.**

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