



Bowden Development (Renewal SA)



Bowden Community planning session

WHEN Renewal SA commenced the Bowden Development in Adelaide in 2009 adopting exemplar engagement practices was at the forefront of many goals.

The key urban renewal project provided a unique opportunity to set new standards in urban revitalisation. The project was a crucial element in the State Government's 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide to provide higher density living choices close to services and jobs as an alternative to suburban living.

Just over a third of the way through the project, its continued success as a private/public development can also be measured by its community acceptance and support and the ongoing value of engaging early with key stakeholders and the community.

The challenge of the development was to transform a 16-hectare former industrial site on the Adelaide city fringe into a flagship higher density mixed-use development within a neighbourhood with a proud history. With a State Government investment of more than \$264 million over the 15-year life, the project aimed to create a liveable, walkable community to eventually house 3,500 residents.

Collaboration with the community and key stakeholders was a requirement of the tender to master plan and design the site won by Hassell/Parsons Brinckerhoff whose consortium included engagement specialists.

The standards set to recognise and value the involvement and input from the community, have been continued using

What went well?

Ownership and pride in the project through their involvement has seen the locals embrace and welcome new residents making extra effort to ensure they are integrated into the community blending the old and the new.

PRINCIPLE
4We start
together

Case Study – Bowden Development (Renewal SA)

a mix of traditional and innovative engagement techniques.

The project pioneered for Renewal SA the use of the innovative three-day design charrette. This involved representatives of all of the key stakeholders - local and state government, property development specialists and designers, industry and community groups ranging from resident action committees to those with heritage interests.

Critical however to getting the right people to participate in the charrette was attention to stakeholder identification, and communication with key stakeholders beforehand.

Key stakeholders including Charles Sturt Council, and the Departments of Planning and Local Government and Transport, Energy and Infrastructure were brought together in a Principal Stakeholder Group (PSG) to collaborate and support the project.

Engagement activities for the community included formal and informal briefings; meetings with representative groups; opportunities for website submissions and enquiries; information days and a range of communication materials targeting key businesses and surrounding residents.

In addition visioning and planning workshops were held to capture the memories and stories about the essence of the area, what it was like 20 years ago, and imagining what it would be like 20 years into the future. This set a standard for recognising the value that 'locals' could bring, and recognising that the development was not set in isolation of its surroundings or its history.

The charrette and workshops gave people directly affected by the project the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. Outcomes of these workshops and the design charrette were transparent



Three-day Design Charrette

being reported on the project website, via the Council's libraries and community groups.

Each of the various planning stages from initial options for the master plan, to the project plan approved by the State Government was able to demonstrate involvement and input from the key stakeholders and communities.

The early engagement standard of key stakeholders and community became a benchmark for every step of the project as it moved through site development to new residents being integrated into the community.

Another critical success factor was the early establishment of a Bowden Reference Group (BRG) in 2010 involving representatives of community groups, organisations, individual community members from other parts of the Bowden suburb and surrounding areas, and council. The composition of the BRG is reviewed annually and in 2013 new residents were given the opportunity to join and have first-hand involvement in the development ahead of moving in the next year.

BRG members have played a vital role in keeping the project team on track to deliver the critical elements of the project as agreed through the master planning process. Over the years they have rigorously participated in reviews of the master plan, and were able to influence development of the branding, public realm design, place making design and activation and indeed the engagement strategy. **BT**

What would we do differently?

The project team would provide even more opportunities to engage more broadly (face-to-face and through digital means) with the community on specific issues. This would involve inviting an even wider range of everyday residents to participate in activities such as placemaking strategies and review processes.