



THE PROJECT: MosaicLab were engaged by Surf Coast Shire Council to undertake the engagement for the development of a Precinct Structure Plan for the Spring Creek Valley in Torquay, Victoria.

THE ISSUE: The future of the Spring Creek Valley had been the subject of considerable controversy for some years. While designated as a 'future investigation zone' for potential future growth in the local planning scheme for 30 years, all planning work for this land since 2008 has involved significant community opposition to Spring Creek becoming urbanised. A council attempt to undertake precinct planning in 2008 was abandoned in the face of 2,200 submissions and the vast majority of local people opposing the development (approximately 3,000 protestors descended on Council Offices in 2009 with support from singer Xavier Rudd). With the decision of development already decided by State Government, the Council were the ultimate decision maker for the precinct structure plan.

THE PROCESS: First a clear remit or purpose was defined by Surf Coast Shire in collaboration with MosaicLab. It was decided to define the remit as: **How do we design urban growth that is in balance with the surrounding environment?**

A 'people's panel' was recruited that included 50% from developers, landowners and local activists groups (Stakeholders) and 50% from the general residents and ratepayers of Torquay, Jan Juc and Bellbrae.

The reasons for deciding to do an 'unconventional' and intense process such as the 'People's Panel' was because of the level of local interest, the potential for further and increased outrage, the history of the project and the passion the local community has for the environment.

The promise from SCS Council was 'to give serious thought and consideration to all of the recommendations and make a formal response to the panel'.

The panel met for 3 full days with a follow-up evening session to walk-through their final report.

These days included:

- A bus trip around the site
- Discussion around issues and opportunities for the site
- Speakers (of the panel's choosing) in urban growth planning, creating a community hub and environmental considerations
- Deciding on key principles and recommendations for the development of the precinct structure plan

TOOLS TO ENSURE THIS PROCESS SUCCEEDED:

- Agreeing to objectives while keeping the focus - constantly coming back to **what are they here to do.**
- A clear set of **ground rules**/commitment to how they work together
- Clarity around levels of agreement and how decisions would be made



- 80% supermajority must feel like they could ‘live with’ a recommendation in their report for it to ‘make it’ into the report
- Panel prepared their report starting from a blank page and wrote it collectively
- The panel presented their report directly to Council and council provided a special briefing to the Panel on what was done with their report

OUTCOME:

95% of all recommendations of the panel were included in the draft Precinct Structure Plan for exhibition.

today there are still about 10 key people unhappy with the outcome. This is significantly less than the original 3000 and the front spokespeople are predominantly not those people who were involved in the panel

FACILITATOR THOUGHTS:

This project was very successful, and worked well to move from outrage to collaboration. The Community are pleased with the process and outcome (Stakeholder Jury member “the process was very good at clarifying what was acceptable to most if not all”).

There are still some activists working to ‘stop the development’ altogether, but they are far fewer in number and not generally the same people (at least in the forefront) as they were before.

KEY LEARNINGS:

MOSAICLAB TRISIGHTS		
Facilitator insights:	Participant insight:	Client insight:
<p>‘Having all stakeholders (landowners, developers, activists and the general public) in the room and the same time ensures the process considers all the views and highlights the differing perspectives.’</p> <p>Nicole Hunter Co-Founder MosaicLab</p>	<p>‘The process ensured we all had a chance to build the plan the way we wanted it. Everybody had the opportunity to feed in. We know there will still be people not happy but we achieved an enormous amount’</p> <p>Panel Member</p>	<p>‘I didn’t realise how important the media is in processes like this. The importance of ensuring the broader community can see and hear what is going on is key to creating greater ownership in the outcome’</p> <p>Kate Sullivan General Manager, Environment and Development Surf Coast Shire</p>