

Collective Innovation for Cities: SOUP & Big World Homes

Dr Joanne Jakovich¹

¹ The Strategic Open Urbanism Platform – SOUP, joanne@soup.city

With its fragmentation and demographic complexity, Sydney faces a major disconnect between actors and citizens in the making of our city. This not only costs millions of dollars in stalled resolutions, but fails to harness the creative, collaborative capacity of the greater urban population. What if we could redesign our interactions, and provide a productive focus for emerging ideas? What if we could nurture connectedness and new forms of leadership and ownership?

Strategic Open Urbanism is a high-collaboration and high-strategy approach to collective innovation for cities. It aims for targeted urban change through the vehicle of collaborative ventures. A collaborative venture is a highly leveraged, network-incentivised project that uses the power of urbanism — place, community, co-location, diversity, culture — to solve the very problems that cities perpetuate.

The methodology connects communities, strategic players, decision makers and experts at the front-end of innovation prior to the decision making process. The techniques generate collaborative and original thinking on complex urban challenges that cannot be solved by a single entity or single community. This ensures a willing-and-invested advocacy group of diverse early investors and adopters, as well as a strategic commitment and advisory from important partners.

The journey to develop SOUP - the Strategic Open Urbanism Platform - is described, and the founding collaborative venture, Big World Homes, a flat-packed affordable housing initiative, is introduced as a case study of how this model can be implemented.