Speaker	Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith
Talk title	Serious Games
Venue	The Globe
Time	Tuesday 29 October 2019, 7.00pm

Diane Arnott

I hope you are enjoying this lovely venue and have had a chance to get a drink.

Welcome to Raising the Bar. Tonight, 22 academics, are speaking in 10 bars across Perth.

At UWA, we're excited to make education a part of our city's popular culture through transforming local city bars into a place you can enjoy a drink whilst learning about the impact that our research has in the community.

To start, I'd like to acknowledge the Whadjuk Nyoongar people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we're meeting today, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

If you're sharing Raising the Bar on social media, please tag @UWAresearch and #RTBPerth19 so we can share your posts.

Tonight's talks are being recorded and will be published as podcasts on our social media channels.

Our second speaker this evening is Anthony Duckworth-Smith. Anthony is an urban design teacher, practitioner and researcher. Through his role at the Australian Urban Design Research Centre (AUDRC) at the University of Western Australia he has developed research to tackle the challenges of growing cities. Anthony has recently developed, trialled and applied a number of innovative and engaging participatory design models and games to enable co-creation of urban plans, projects and policy.

Some really interesting work he has done to help us make our cities work better involving plastic trees even, so, I will turn it over to Anthony.

[clapping]

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

Thank you.

I am just going to sit down for a little bit but there is a dance section as well. There are models and dancing, so it will be a really entertaining talk, so I thought I would sit down to start with.

Firstly, thank you so much for coming down to listen to me speak and I was just discussing the format of this talk and I am really used to having images as a lecturer and an academic, to rely on when I talk so that I can remember what I am supposed to be talking about.

I don't have those tonight, so this could wander a little bit, so I hope you are okay with that.

Maybe that is a good opportunity to invite contributions as well if I start to trail away.

I guess tonight, I would just like to talk a little about this practice that has landed, Research and Practice that has landed on my desk and the desk of the colleagues that I work with, which has been very popular for the last three years and I think that's why I am here today to talk about.

I just want to relay … actually, these chairs are a little bit awkward … but I just want to relay a little story to you about where I happened to be half an hour ago and what my job entails.

My background is in … I was a Civil Engineer and I worked for the Main Roads Departments. I had possibly one of the most unglamorous jobs you could have as a professional but it was a very meaningful job and it was a good and I was helping the city and I found out that I wanted to learn more about the city and how we could improve the way we live, so I went and studied Architecture and after I finished Architecture, I had an Engineering qualification and an Architectural qualification. So, put those two together and it started to study Urban Design which brings those two things together, not only the function of the city but also the way the city looks.

The social dimensions of the city.

How the way we design the city impacts our lives. It impacts how wasteful or not, we are.

All the big urban challenges that we are facing are wrapped up in how we design cities and how we live in cities.

So cities are the great hope for the future but they are also one of the great challenges or problems of the future so I think that is why I have always been drawn to this idea of trying to understand that space.

Half an hour ago, I was sitting in my office and a group of three Year 6 students came in and they were enrolled in something called the "FIRST LEGO League" which I had no idea of what that was but it is an international competition for kids to come up with ideas about how to solve problems for the future.

They had come to me too and I should acknowledge that I have one of my colleagues in the audience here who won't want to be acknowledged, but Grace is a really integral part of what we do, so I just want to acknowledge her presence here as well, you can put your hand up if you want or not? Just sheepishly.

I was going through this process of talking to these kids about the challenges of the future and cities and they are trying to come up with ideas and they are in Year 6, so what are they, eleven years old?

And am going, well this is actually … even though it sounds kind of cute and fun, it's actually really important that I am able to pass on my knowledge to people of that age and to try and inspire them to solve the problems that I probably won't get to see the solutions for, in my lifetime and in fact, these will be problems which will go on for probably hundreds of years in terms of, how the city contributes or not, to issues like climate change and sustainability.

I am really grateful to be in a position where I can do that and I cannot only influence the minds of my students who are tertiary students but I also get to be involved with primary school students as well.

One of the reasons that I think that the case is because we make these really super cute models which are also magnetic. They are able to be tilted on their side, but I have got some … my assistant, thank you. [laughing]

I want to talk a little bit about what that is, rather than it just being a cute model because everything on that model can be moved and shifted and changed and it was a while ago when I was working in design and I was designing beautiful buildings for quite wealthy clients, I was an Architect and that was my job and it wasn't satisfying me because I had these bigger questions about the city and how do we solve what we can do for the city. But, I was also not very happy that … in design there is often one person who is telling someone how to do something.

This is how we design a ….

I am the author and this is what you shall receive and you shall live in it and you will be very happy for the rest of your life.

You can understand that that didn't work in a lot of places around the world when we designed buildings that people struggled to inhabit and in fact created unhealthy environments for them.

I started to shift my design thinking from creating objects to creating tools that allow other people to tell me what they want or for communities to be able to have a voice in the design process.

At that point, it became more a question of, "What are going to be the best ways in which we can get that information from people?" "What are tools? " "What are the right ways to do that?" and I guess, I should go back a step because when I was growing up, I was clearly obsessed by Lego when I was I kid like many other kids and I made those models, I have been making models throughout my whole life, so it just was a natural extension to me to think about how can I make models which other people can use to tell me what they really value and how we, as designers, we can take those values and create the places that people want to live in.

It became an exercise of not designing places but designing models that were able to be used by people.

The first one we did was for the City of Fremantle who was trying to do a new housing policy and this is a policy which was trying to fit more houses into existing suburbs, which is a … I will just give you

a quick background to the project, but in Fremantle what they were finding was that new homes that were being built in Fremantle were all large, double story, battle-axe homes and not only was that creating problems with the environment with the suburbs in Fremantle, it was also that the people who used to traditionally live in Fremantle, the diverse, the younger populations, the single households, the share households, they were being pushed out.

The very thing that Fremantle is known for was being eroded by a pattern of development. So, in fact, it was becoming less diverse. There was less choice.

This obviously required some attention.

We came up with a policy which was about allowing very, very small houses to be re-introduced into the urban fabric, which all sounds fine and dandy until you go out to a community and you tell them that we are going to put more houses on their street because some members of the community will support that and they will understand those arguments but some members of the community will object to that and they will point out the very things that we all wouldn't agree with.

There will be more cars, you will knock down all the trees, we will lose the open qualities, the things we love about our streets. The streetscapes will change.

There is a fear of change but there is a fear of the loss of the values and the things that people really want.

What we decided to do was to go to those communities and try and get them to tell us what those values were and then get them to design the new housing or at least have a go at it so that we could include them in the design process.

So, that way, when we came to creating a policy or a set of rules by which people could introduce new homes into their suburbs, we would have listened to them but we would also hopefully reflect their values and ideas in what we were doing, because they had been able to express that to us spatially, in the terms that we understand and that need to get communicated.

The way we went about doing that was to create a model, and this is one piece of that model which allowed individual community members to come in and we said, "I want you to triple the number of homes that are on this pristine piece of the suburb."

So, you can see it is loosely based on a cottage environment which is very typical of Fremantle. It is like a "virgin" suburb and what we would do, is people would come along and they go, "Oh God, I have got to pull the trees out, no actually I need to demolish the existing house." So we made everything movable so that people could really explore what it meant to move a tree or to get rid of an existing house and low and behold, get rid of a fence, what would that do to the space?

What we ended up doing was creating these … a number of people came in and explored and experimented. Some people would walk away and go, "You know what, when I started I didn't even understand how hard it was to put additional dwellings and people in the community?"

And, if nothing else came out of this, my design was terrible but I understand that the Planning staff have got a really hard job and there was this sense of empathy and tolerance that was built and I could observe that through the way and even through the feedback we got.

We were able to level the playing field a little bit in terms of that objection. You might have some people who are extremely objective, objecting to any sort of change and then you would have people who are very much supportive of it.

We were able to bring those polls a bit closer together, just through the process of going through this.

The other thing I would say about this practice is, it is actually fun! Like its playful! And that may sound kind of cute again, but play is not … play is serious. Play is something that animals do, play is something that humans do and it's a way of learning, finding, it's also a way of building and understanding what's acceptable. Understanding social tolerances.

I might … and I have seen this happen in our workshops as well, where people come in with a very, very strict idea about what they think is right and what they think is wrong in terms of change in their neighbourhood, and after they've … and I call it socialising their ideas, this practice makes them sit down with other people and talk about what their values are and what their ideas are.

A lot of people do things that their ideas are representative of a larger group of ideas and what they find is often they are not and they have to moderate their behaviour and they have to understand that there is a broader group of people in the room.

It's a way of socialising … it's like socialising your pets or your dogs … we had dogs before, right? So this is relatable.

You take your dogs out to meet other dogs and that dog is really badly behaved and you go, "Oh God, I have really got to work on my dog, that's not acceptable in this environment."

The same thing with your ideas, I think. You take your ideas out and they are not representative or they need to be moderated to meet a community. To me, that's a more collective approach to change.

So, it's overcoming some of those really strong individual preferences which might be restrictive to the kinds of changes we need to ultimately create sustainable cities and places because that's why we do it.

We do it for the climate.

We do it for the future.

We do it for the generations of the first LEGO League kids that I was talking to half an hour ago. So there is a responsibility in our work.

That was the first one we did and we did it in Fremantle.

You can attest anything different, you know, Freo is probably the right place to do it, right?

We got a pretty response from people, they were engaged with the models. We ran it over a weekend and what I found … or what we found was that there was really just two … I am just conscious of time because I can just go on forever … there are two approaches.

People either don't change it, they do very fine small changes, they are reluctant to break rules and to break systems and they are reluctant to remove fences, they are sort of constrained by a pattern that I believe is unchangeable and then there's a whole other side to that which is almost the polar opposite, which is when people come in with the models and they essentially wipe them clean and they start again and they recreate environments which they think, and structures of living which they think are more suited to the way in which we need to live or should be living the future and they often are very community centred living environments.

They involved central spaces and courtyards where people can meet.

They involve a discussion about caring for people.

Discussions about older people and diversity and living in together and they believe that those are the kind of things that traditional patterns don't really support, moving forward. And also, like single houses or single parents or people who need … building trust structures and connecting with people, there is a strong, strong desire for people to be physically connected and in fact, the model, itself allows people to physically connect with other people, if they play it in a collaborative manner, so they are able to talk about what they want.

We have been asked … and I am rambling a bit but hopefully it's coherent. I had a lecture in mind and that has gone, so it's just sort of talking generally but the … I just think the way in which the model allows people to look at each other and to express small, tacit communication, which is body language, which is human to human, communication which is something, if I worked this into a digital platform, which there has been a lot of pressure, but then there has been lot of talk about, "When are you going to put it online? When are you going to make your models into a web page or an interactive 3D thing?" and I am really super cautious about that, because I can see the qualities of that human to human communication and I am not going to do it but I think we need to know how to do it to preserve those qualities and we need to understand those a bit better and that's not our first line of work, because we are designers, we are not psychologists, so we are trying to understand why it works and sometimes we go, "Did you see that guy who came in and he left smiling?" [laughing] and I think, "What was that all about?" How did that change someone so markedly?

That was the first one and that policy … we had the community support, the policy went through and the policy was gazetted by the State Minister in a small way but it was gazetted as a Planning Policy for Fremantle.

When we receive that letter, we literally do, do a dance because it's like, "Wow, our research created a policy, it created a change!" and if it's a small change it doesn't matter because it's a change and

that change could get a lot bigger and it might need to get revised but we have actually, legally got some of those ideas into the system.

That was just this year and we started that project in 2014, so that took us five years to go from talking to the community, or probably four years from talking to the community to getting something actually physically written and put into an active law.

That was probably … that's our success story but other success stories, I can't bring the other models we have done, but ever since we did that, we have just been overwhelmed with requests from particularly local governments to engage their communities in this manner, using these physical and community-based techniques of special models and they are all to scale. It is like playing a little bit with a train set. Everything is to scale and then it's all very carefully, carefully designed and the colours, we all think about this very deeply.

I think I have counted up, we have done forty-two workshops in the last three years, which, do you know how long it takes to do a workshop? One a month is a lot and we have probably really deeply engaged about 1600 people, which doesn't sound like a lot, but when you are working with someone at this scale, it is about deep engagement as well. It is not so much just about, they came along, they read something and they left.

It's like, no, let's sit down, let's talk about your values. They have to be facilitated. It takes a lot of energy I have discovered, it takes a lot of our energy to actually work this process through. But we are committed to it because we believe in it.

Just to wrap up, because I was given half an hour, so I have got four minutes, nine minutes.

I want to talk to you a little about another project that came out of this.

We have been working really hard creating these models, working with Bassendean, the Town of Bassendean, working with Joondalup and doing often, quite tricky problems with communities that are resistant and we are trying to change that so that we can create a city and place that is reflective of people's value and is sustainable into the future.

This is fun story, but maybe a significant story, another academic from UWA who worked in Anthropology and I have never worked with anyone in Anthropology, I have always gone, "That sounds so cool, you just look at people and try and understand what they do and why they do what they do and how they build things, and he was working in Africa, he had been working in Uganda for fifteen years, helping the communities in Uganda.

Uganda has just received a lot of investment but they are trying to develop urban populations there, because they have got, like anywhere in the developing world, they have got large numbers of young people moving into cities at a phenomenal rate, literally walking into the city every day and they don't have the infrastructure, they have very weak strategic planning systems.

This Anthropologist, Dr Richard Vokes from UWA had been exposed to these models somehow and he said, "I think this might in Africa as a way to get citizen and community-led planning around the new cities that are emerging?" Because the other way of doing it is to go to a firm in London and just get them to come over and tell us what our cities should be.

He wanted to get more of a community and citizen lead approach to planning in Africa, particularly because these cities are on the cusp of massive growth, so you can go about it two ways. You can get an external consultant to come in to try and figure it out or you can generate this bottom-up thing which is what we do.

Ask … why don't you just ask people and we will design the tools which will help them do that because that's what we do.

I can't bring that one in, because, one, we left quite a lot of it in Africa when we were there in June, but we designed a citywide model to talk about urban planning for a new city called Gulu in the north of Uganda.

This is the highlight of my career when you get a call and they say, "Are you going to come to Africa and do a city … it's like, "What?" but it was amazing. We did an enormous amount of work to try and understand, remotely, how to do that in a culture we didn't really understand and to be sensitive and to give people the flexibility to be able to do what they need to do.

We went to Africa and we went to Gulu and we ran workshops with the community there and some of the decision-makers and our games were very … I call them tools but I also call them games, because they have rules.

That is why this is called "Serious Games". I probably didn't elaborate on that very much, did I?

Serious Games are these things, they are games with a meaning and games with a purpose. It doesn't mean there is a winner … five minutes … but there is a structure to them and we have to design that structure as well.

It is like this, you need to achieve this many new homes in your city and here are the pieces that will let you do it and we will give you the open spaces and the parks and the hospitals and the things that you need but you need to place those in a way that tells us why you are placing them.

The Gulu City, Uganda job was really tough because we didn't know if it would work, it was a totally new culture, I have never been to Africa, I have never been exposed to a culture like that, but it actually worked really well.

The communities were so happy that they had a way of engaging in the strategic planning of their city and they could reflect their values, rather than the very conventional way was an external expert coming in or alternatively, a much more *hierarchical* decision-making structure in their own culture, particularly around gender and the way in which decisions are made in those places and so, I will just finish on one of the most really rewarding moments for me, in that environment and what made

me think that this project could really help people, was when … I don't know if people know much of the history of Uganda … there is a terrible, terrible civil in the North of Uganda, awful and that has created a lot of cultural divisions in the city, which for someone coming, three days from Perth to try and understand it, is impossible, impossible!

The Vice-Mayor of Gulu City was a woman and she sat with the model pieces and she had captivated people because she was using the model to describe the recent history and the cultural importance of settlement in different parts of the city, which we would never … you can't ask someone that … there was level of knowledge that was being … and you could see the men in the room listening, really closely because they didn't really get it either. This was another level of information and I just thought was a beautiful democratising of knowledge going on in that room where people were able to express themselves because they were sort of, engaged in a game and they were, sort of, playing and it wasn't really serious but it was a Serious Game.

Thank you.

[clapping]

Diane Arnott

Thank you, Anthony, that was really interesting, especially the Africa story. Very eye-opening.

I would like to open up to any questions but I have been told because we are recording, I actually have to chase you down and give you a microphone if you have a question, so, I can go in a nice neat order, just kidding, ask wherever.

Audience

Just to continue with that last story, did you come up with a solution for Gulu City?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

No. [laughing]

I will talk about that, because … and I mean "No" deliberately and the games are often or the systems are open-ended and deliberately so.

There is no sense of arriving or that someone has achieved something, it's more a case of, in the very first instance, in those initial workshops, its more about getting people comfortable, with just expressing and talking and communicating.

Often, when we have tried to do collaborative planning in the past, we might do something like put down a sheet of tracing paper and then give people pens and say, "Can you please just draw what you want?" So, my problem I have with that, half the people can't draw and don't want to draw and immediately go, "I am not going to draw anything because that will just look terrible." Once you put

a line on a page, it stays on a page, so they are fearful of being put into a contract in some ways, whereas this movable, changeable thing, actually makes people much more comfortable about starting the discourse. In that instance, it is about starting the discourse.

It doesn't mean that it can't be used for that but in that particular instance, it was very much an enabling tool for communication more than, "This table over here got, congratulations!" Thank you.

Audience

I was just wondering if different cultures responded to different model types or if, that model was used in Africa, or was it very different?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

I don't think we have done enough cross-cultural work to be able to answer that question in any sort of honest or meaningful way. I know when Grace and I were trying to design the African model, we would be sort of, second-guessing the culture, … it was ridiculous in way because we didn't have any context, so I would say in some ways my limited experience of different cultures, even within Perth and working with different communities and ages, in particular, is that everyone gets it, they know how to engage with it and they know what they are supposed to do, so I think the act of having a physical … everyone has played a game … not everyone's drawn a plan … but everyone's played a game, so it is inclusive in that way.

As much as I can say it's inclusive but into the finer points around the cultural, specificities and suitabilities, I wouldn't really feel comfortable saying that. We haven't really engaged in any way with say, an Indigenous community or anything like that, it has been mostly around suburbs which are fairly … they are … privileged isn't the right word but there is a consistency to the issue in Perth when you work in Perth.

So, Africa for us … that was very different. But I think the play worked really well, it really was … that element was understandable and translatable.

Thank you.

Audience

If you got in on the ground floor, say in Africa, that you would actually give them exposure to that sort of design and how to plan things, that you would actually … so when they come … say someone does come in to do a Master Plan … say that actually happens, it might make them a little bit more resistive to just accepting some more traditional….?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

Decreed from on a higher type of solution?

That's a really good point.

I would really hope that. We gave the people capacity to … because they have already started the discourse … we started the discourse and I actually, in the … what's interesting in that project in Gulu City is that just this week we received a Tender that was written for the [inaudible 32:35] Officials, Strategic Planning of that City and … did I share that with you … have you seen that … sorry [laughing] a little bit of admin [laughing] and it is written for a very high powered international consultant and part of my impulse was "we should be doing that, we have got a better way of doing it" the other part of me was "don't be ridiculous, that Tender is enormous, you will never be able to put it together anyway" but I was conscious of how could we continue the discourse into that project, because it would be real shame if we couldn't, but maybe we have started it and I am hoping there will be a way that we can continue it and it should be through research and the University, not as a commercial … we shouldn't sub-consult to a big organisation, we should be able to maintain our independence in the practice if we can.

That's a topical question, thank you.

Audience

Just coming back to the work that you have done around Perth, do you see much variation, I guess, between local Government areas, Councils, suburbs or whatever between what community want in those areas. You know, Fremantle opposed to Bayswater or whatever?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

Mostly no.

There is a high degree of consistency in terms of the way people in existing suburbs in those kinds of, what we call "middle ring" suburbs in Perth where mostly where our work is but even into more, sprawling areas, is people value the same things and they are concerned … well, they have witnessed those things not be preserved or respected, so this is a way for them to re-establish that value.

People love trees, people love trees! And they don't, they won't … and the problem is, as soon as we do what we call infill or put new homes on a block, the first thing to go is the trees because of our construction practices and the way we design homes, so we have broken the trust of the community because the thing they love the most is the first thing, the Planning laws don't actually foreground, they love open space, they want to be able to see the sky. They want gardens, they want green, they want … it's actually when you look at what happens on the ground, it's kind of the opposite of what we are doing, so that's the rich territory.

I would say in terms of … there is one aspect which varies across communities and that's communal spaces for community and for sharing and a sense of creating the opportunity for community and social interaction. It does happen a lot, but there are some groups in some areas which are not really that focused on that, but of course when you work in Fremantle, like I said, half the people just created like a Utopian community settlement on their piece of model and they looked pretty cool, to be honest, but they required wholesale change the way we think.

In other areas, the idea of community was on the street.

I would say community comes through strongly but it's not, there is a bit of variability, depending on where you are and some people have strong individual interests in their property and they hold onto that and I have noticed that which is understandable as well and valid.

But overall, yes, consistency, yes.

Audience

How do you envision the community being involved at all stages, so at your stage, it is very grassroots but as soon as it turns into Policy, it's a top-down approach and people are automatically resistant to that.

How do you convince people that this is based on what they wanted?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

The easy answer to that question is, let's demonstrate how it should be done.

So, not only do we set policy and the rules but then we illustrate what can be done by actually building something or developing something and showing what that kind of space or place should be like, but it's also about helping people beyond writing the policy and walking away from it and that's a piece of research that we are looking at now which is about being able to provide … so you might as a landowner, look at the Policy and go, "well that's great but it's pretty hard, I don't really understand it," so, what if for instance you had a catalogue of examples that you could refer to which would show good practice for doing that, that's just from a design point of view.

That's something we did … we have done in the past in Australia, back in the 50s, I think and the 60s, we had a small home service which allowed people to choose designs, which were designed by Architects which were good places to live.

The risk of writing a Policy which restricts things, is you end up with bad outcomes if you are not careful.

We need that next step.

That next step was supposed to be part of the project but it didn't go, but we are pushing ahead with it anyway.

I think the idea is that you need to be able to understand how to implement a Policy as well as create the Policy and that is where we are at with that project.

It's a good question.

It needs continual support and funding.

It's great there are so many questions.

Audience

I guess just building on that research aspect, what do you see as the research priorities or your research interests that are coming out of this work?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

Yes, so one of the … and I will be brutally honest here, but one of the challenges of doing this work has been the amount of "doing", "making", "engaging" and "finding the time" to get back.

It is the opposite I think of a lot of academic work, maybe?

It's like doing fieldwork I suppose?

We have been doing fieldwork for three years and I keep saying, "when are we going to pull back, we need to pull back and think about what the research priorities are?"

We have only just really started doing that and one of the things just relates exactly back to the last question which is, "How do people implement Policy, in this space, around the world, how have they done it?" We want to make sure that it gets one well.

The research priority for us is we have just pitched a research project around that, which is going to find out, "how do we develop a system to help people do the right thing?"

That's about creating a service or a space to connect a whole bunch of people rather than necessarily designing what people should do, it's actually more about a service.

That's one of our research priorities.

The next research, with the Africa stuff, we realised it should be aligned with the UN workaround UN habitat and sustainable development goals, so we need to get smarter about that, so it is about taking that to the next step as well. [aside talk]

Those are big enough, to be honest, they are massive projects.

Where I work, we don't just do this, I should say. A lot of our work is around health now as well.

We have had relationships between urban environments, housing and health, particularly mental health and well being. There is a lot of research at our Centre around that which is really fascinating. Environments that either support or don't support us, as humans.

It sounds like the 1970s because that's … a lot of that work came out of that period as well and people challenging designs.

There are a couple there which are more related to this.

I am also looking at just … this idea of play and the role of play in our psychology and in terms of how it helps us engage and communicate, that's more of a theoretical piece of research that I am doing as well.

Thank you.

Audience

You say that Local Government is inviting you and your team and I wanted to ask if Local Government is participating in these Workshops and if their perception is changing a lot and how do you invite people like residents to the Workshops?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

So, you mean whether the Local Governments themselves or do they just stand back and let us do it? Is that what you mean, kind of?

Yes, mostly the latter.

I mean there is a long answer to that question which is about engagement and how Local Governments engage with their communities and to be honest, communities, you would think that everyone wants to be engaged, but people complain when they are not engaged but a lot of people don't actually want to be engaged [laughing] they couldn't think of anything worse to do, like than to get involved in a discussion about the Local Planning Scheme.

Part of actually doing this work is to try and attract people into that conversation simply because it's fun and it's colourful and it's playful and it's inclusive.

We often will work with Community Engagement Consultants who have very specific ways of … what do you call it? … like a scattergun approach, like focus groups, interviews.

They do a whole number of things and we do this as part of that, so, in terms of … there is this idea of how many people you can get to, there is also how deep you can go with them.

This is smaller and deeper but there are other ways in which you can engage communities as well and I guess this provides us with one way of deep engagement with people.

Do you think I have answered your question?

[inaudible 44:57]

Yes, mostly they ask us to come because it requires quite a lot of facilitation and knowledge but in saying that there is no reason why not.

I think because we research, we tend to just … we kind of hold onto our things a little bit, but the idea of sending this out and making a pack and sending it to a Local Government, would be an

interesting research project in itself, but at the moment we have been doing it all, because we want the results, we want to know what's happening.

Mostly we are facilitating it and doing it.

I think it's more like, "should it be an open platform in a way", should it go toward that a little bit.

I think that's a really … I hadn't thought about that too much but I think that's an interesting idea.

Thanks.

Audience

Just wondering whether there have been any surprising outcomes from all of your game scenarios with both local and Fremantle and your African experience and whether they have changed or challenged your perceptions as to architecturally and in an urban design sense, I guess that the principles that you may have been taught at University or your expectations that the community would probably, most likely, want this, have you had any surprising outcomes?

Diane Arnott

Question two.

Audience

Not really?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

We are open … look we are surprised because of what people do.

One of the surprising things is that half the population approximately is willing to reconfigure the entire suburb. It is basically that structure is not right for the future because it's all about individuality and it's all about proprietary interests and there are people who want something grander.

So, I was surprised by the number of people that do that.

In terms of my own values and my own kind of aesthetics and things like that, one of the things I think, doing this work is that in some ways, everything has been … this is not a word … de-aestheticised … we have stripped back the kind of idea of style and ornament and it's become a planning issue first.

You can't win that other argument. It is highly variable. Personally, as an Architect I had what I thought was a kind of my own aesthetic style and I would say, over the years, I don't know if this is just a sign of ageing actually, but over the years, I have become more tolerant and I think maybe just being involved in community work has made more tolerant because I understand I am socialising my own ideas as I do this work as well.

I don't want to be too specific, but I used to think you couldn't design a building with anything other than a five-degree skillion roof and now I see variety an diversity in design and I understand that's a value and that's an expression of culture and there shouldn't be a single author or a single style.

Things should be done well, things should be built well, they should be very liveable and very solid but I think I have come down to creating the best conditions for people to express themselves, rather than wanting to go too far with that expression.

So, sort of hovering in the middle a little bit.

I am surprised by other people … I am not really surprised … I am surprised by myself as to how less of a design dictator I am nowadays.

This is the most questions I have ever had and …. [laughing]

Audience

With your own degrees and interest in architecture, do you find yourself weighing peoples design process or are you completely unbiased?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

[laughing]

Audience

[inaudible 50:23]

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

No.

Its prompts more than anything else and the prompts are … I think we are very good at actually not … at remaining unbiased and I think actually that is a skill of facilitation, more than anything else.

It's being able to guide people but not to force an aesthetic or a direction, I actually do think that is a skill of facilitation and that's not … not everyone has that or it's something that takes a bit of time to develop.

We say things like, "every tree can be removed but it takes a long time to grow a tree, so you make a choice". We make the magnets on the trees just a little bit harder [laughing] whereas the houses are quite easy to pull off because they are a little bit old now, so there are some subtleties in there.

I think we are quite good at framing it.

I don't know, I always find myself when I am facilitating, saying things to people … like you get kids doing it and the kids … the kids are amazing because they don't care but they will do things like this, the classic when you go to the high school, they put house on the tree and they think they are so

cool, but I am like, "so how do you get up there?" and then they start having a conversation about it.

So, it's not about saying structurally that will never work, you are just wanting a treehouse, right?

You think a treehouse would be good, who doesn't want to live in a treehouse, what a great idea.

I think the language and the way we remain neutral is very considerate and I would hesitate to say we are quite sophisticated at it now and we guide.

Diane Arnott

Time for a few more questions, one from you and one back there if …

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

I am certainly earning my money here! [laughing]

Audience

I am curious when people from [inaudible 52:42] people from the community come and do this, how many of the standard urban design principles show up or when they don't know the book, is it a whole new book?

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

I would say I would go back to what I said previously with that 50:50 split where we get people who respect the principles, to the point where they can't do anything almost.

Even though a principle is just a higher-order thing, I get that, but in terms of reconfiguring streetscapes, for instance, or just overcoming the restrictions of a suburban individual planning arrangement … that's an interesting question because even though people will break that arrangement, they often will adhere to some principles, like they are almost like innate in people, which is, "oh we need privacy" and we need to respect separation between buildings, "oh it's not really clear how I am going to get in here?".

Things like legibility come into it as well.

I would say the high level and we guide that too, I must say, we do bring those principles into some of it to go back to the previous question which is why we do talk about principles because there is an opportunity actually talk about them and to get some learning in the community about them, why they are important.

I would say on one level, yes, they are ingrained but you want to see what happens when people change conventional understandings of those principles and that's about actually adhering to the principle but not applying convention which is the next level down.

I think that for me is sort of, the treehouse, for example, or the way in which people will deal with scale and massing on a site. They might like to concentrate everything together and it is about trying to understand what they are getting at. "Why are you doing that?"

If you do that with kids … one kid created just … we gave them all the blocks, they just made one tower, a massive tower! And they had the whole model open. They had a racetrack on there but that was about an understanding of the relationship between scale, density and open space and what that affords, so they were able to learn about that.

Then we were able to talk about, well, tall buildings, what's the kind of … how is that going to work for people to live in. Does everyone want to live in that environment?

The principles of diversity came back into the conversation, so, we will talk about those because that's our bread and butter, in a way.

Thank you.

Audience

You were talking about principles …. Just about environmental, do you talk about those sorts of aspects in regards to water use, facing north for the Sun and how heat impacts, are those the kind of principles that you talk about before you start this process with the community or you don't …

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

So the underpinning principle or the underpinning idea that we used from the start was about … was more socially driven. It was much more about households and people and accommodating them.

That's the kind of overarching one.

The pieces that we give them allow people to create their own responses, in terms of what they understand as being important.

Orientation … it's interesting because not everyone will take an environmental approach like some people will take much more social approaches but we give them the means to do both and then we are able to understand what their priorities are as well.

To be honest, the models are always much greener when they have finished so I think people really are conscious of that type of performance in terms of the environments and they always ask me for trees.

There is a really strong idea about ecology and biodiversity and what role the urban areas should take, so that's strong but we don't drive much with people, we let them … it's all about letting them … giving them the pieces and tools and then allowing them to be able to express what they want.

It's in there, they can and they do.

Diane Arnott

I think we are probably out of time if there anymore burning questions are you happy to stick around for a few minutes and answer questions? Great!

Will you all please join me in thanking Anthony for an interesting talk.

[clapping]

I would also thank the people who have been behind the scenes tonight.

We have got Matt on sound here, we have got Hannah and Amanda who checked you all in and we have got Tash at the bar, so thank you to all of them as well.

[clapping]

These talks will be podcast and out in about the next month or so and if you have signed in, we will send you an email with information for that.

I hope you have really enjoyed your evening and enjoy the rest of and please feel free to stick around for another drink if you would like.

Thank you.

Dr Anthony Duckworth-Smith

Thank you.