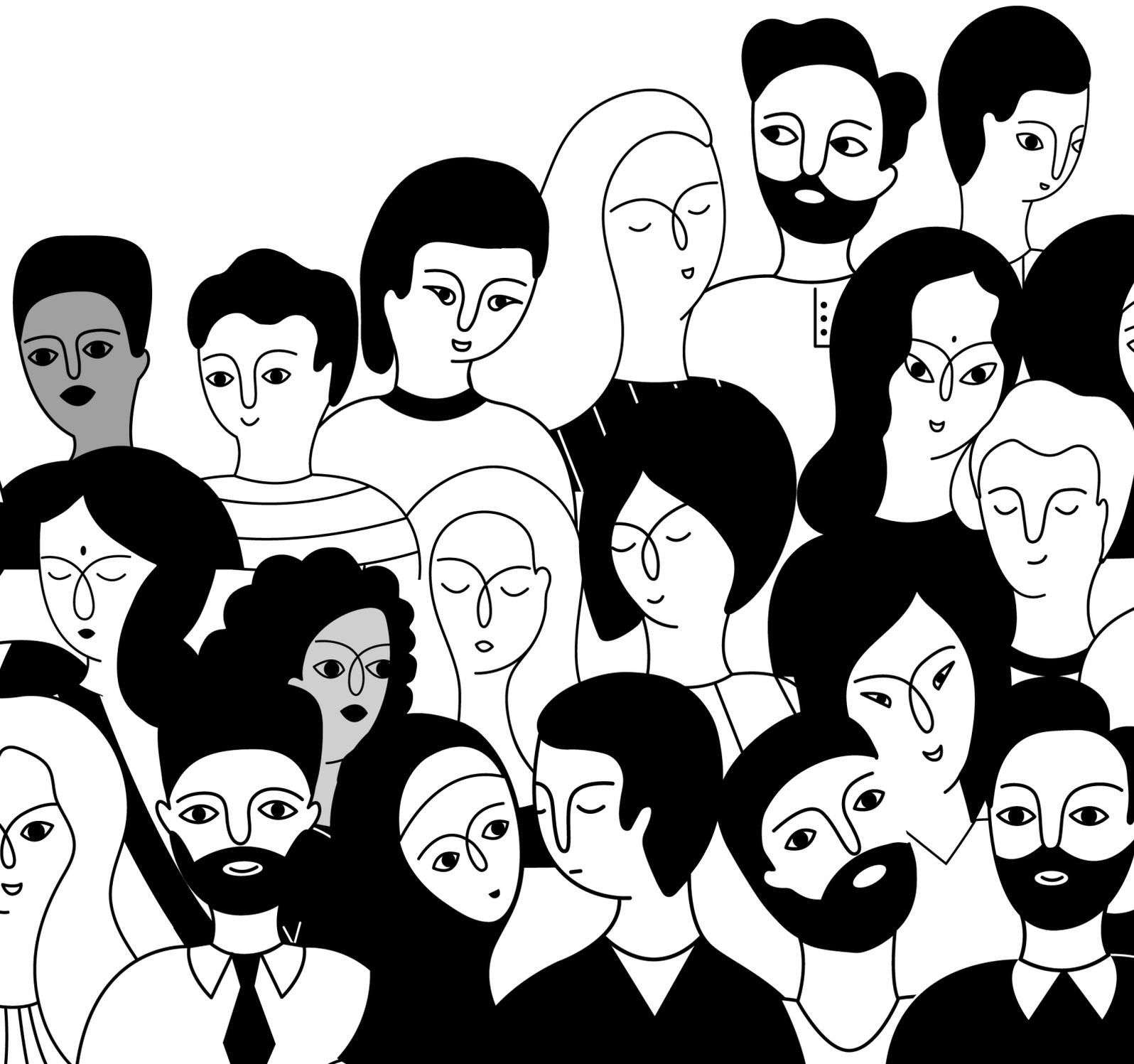


# CASE STUDY

The Evolution and Impact of the Asset Based  
Community Driven Effort (ABCDE) Learning  
Sites in Launceston's Northern Suburbs.

2017 - 2020



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# Index

- 3 Background
- 4 The Learning Sites
- 5 What are Community Assets?
- 6 Mowbray Asset Map
- 7 Ravenswood Asset Map
- 8 Rocherlea Asset Map
- 9 Big Ideas
- 10 What Went Well
- 10 A Learning Curve
- 11 The Development of the ABCDE Learning Sites
- 12 What we Learnt
- 13 Where to From Here
- 13 Conclusion



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# Background

## Purpose

The purpose of this Case Study is to provide an overview of the Asset Based Community Driven Effort (ABCDE) model, a snapshot of the past three Learning Sites in Launceston, Tasmania and the lessons learnt to inform future work. The intent is to provide the reader with a broad understanding of what is a Learning Site, why the City of Launceston has chosen to use this model to engage and mobilise local communities in our local government area and what we are learning to inform our future work.

## What is an ABCDE Learning Site?

The ABCDE Learning Sites originated in the UK, created by Cormack Russell and brought to Australia by Peter Kenyon from Bank of I.D.E.A.S. The approach enables a community to identify their assets, build connections and create change in the heart of a community focusing on what's strong, not what's wrong. The community decides what's important and are given the tools for transformation.

## Overview

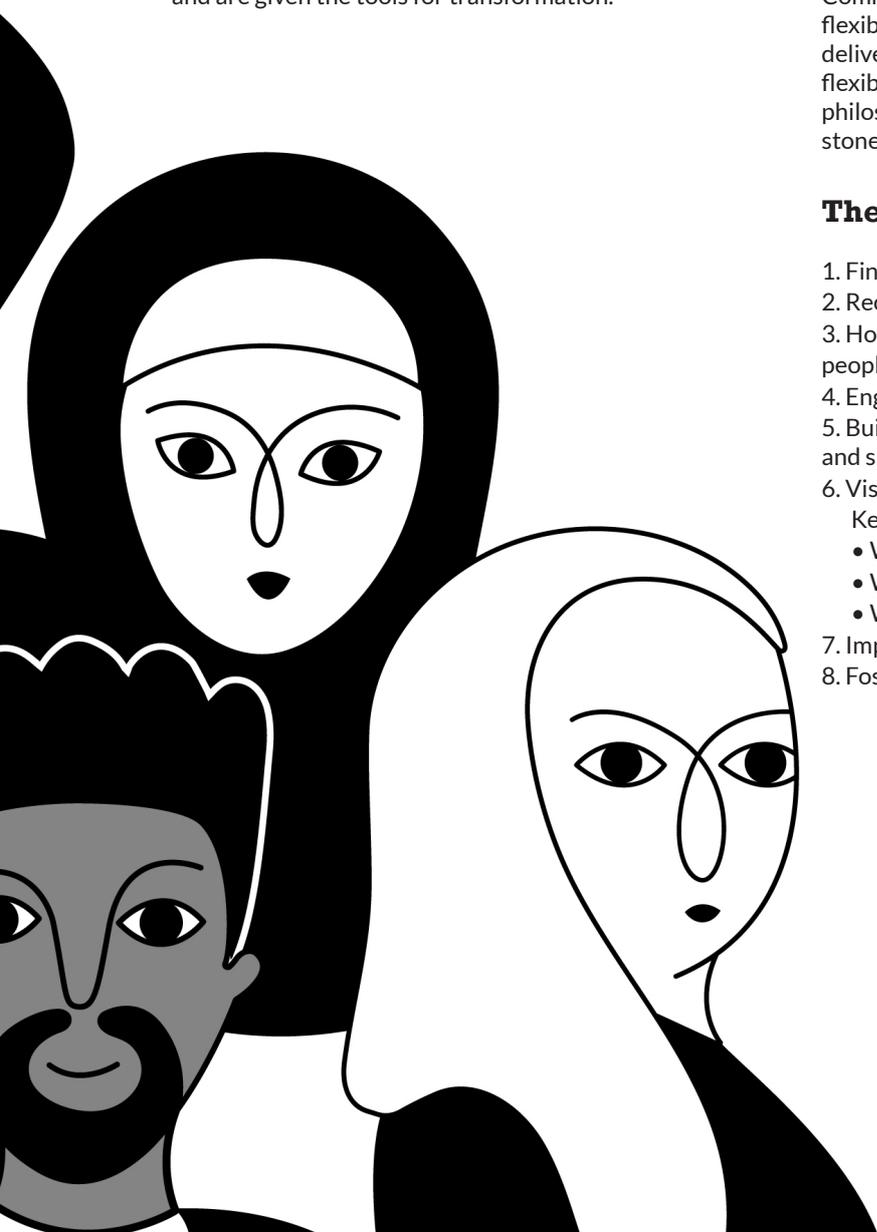
The City of Launceston has collaborated with Bank of I.D.E.A.S to deliver three ABCDE Learning Sites in the northern suburbs of Mowbray in 2019/2020, Ravenswood in 2018 and Rocherlea in 2017. Council has worked with local leaders within Launceston's Northern Suburbs to identify, connect and mobilise their assets in order to take action, make positive change and directly shape their community's future. The City of Launceston is one of the first local governments to embrace the ABCDE Learning Sites in Australia, leading the way in developing sustainable communities. Of the 67,449 people who live in the City of Launceston approximately 32% of these live within the Northern Suburbs.

## How does it all work?

The Launceston ABCDE Learning Sites take place over a 12 month period based on the Bank of I.D.E.A.S eight touchstones. The City of Launceston engages a place based Community Connector to guide the community through a flexible process. Over the past three years, Council has delivered this community development project based on a flexible approach, not a firm process. The Bank of I.D.E.A.S philosophy is to implement the Learning Site stepping stones in an order which suits a community.

## The 8 Touch Stones

1. Find a community builder team
2. Recruiting a community connector
3. Hosting conversations to discover assets and what people care about
4. Engaging local groups and associations
5. Building connections through social interaction activities and shareable community opportunities
6. Visioning and planning
  - Key Questions:
    - What can we do?
    - What do we need outside help with?
    - What do we need outside agencies to do for us?
7. Implementing change (doing and reviewing)
8. Fostering celebration



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# The Learning Sites

## Rocherlea Learning Site 2017

The City of Launceston's Community Development team launched the first ABCDE Learning Site in the community of Rocherlea in 2017. The community of Rocherlea is about a ten minute drive north from the Launceston CBD with a population of 1117. Local assets within the area include a community shed, two churches, football club, various industries and a take away shop.

The Rocherlea community had built trust and strong bonds over a long time with the Northern Suburbs Community Centre. There was a mixture of intrigue and hesitancy from community members who told Council Officers they'd "been consulted a lot before". One of the main aims for this Learning Site was to not replicate what had already been done in Rocherlea so the community didn't feel over consulted

Peter Kenyon and his team visited several times to kick off the first Learning Site by meeting the community and leading conversations and workshops alongside Council staff. The key message from Bank of I.D.E.A.S was that there was no "cookie cutter way of doing it", as long as the eight touchstones were followed. The Northern Suburbs Community Centre and Council Officers took on the unofficial roles of Community Connector as this was determined the most appropriate approach by the Rocherlea community.

Relationships needed to be formed quickly to build trust to join Council Officers on the 12 month journey. The crucial message to the community was to ask questions, have conversations and allow people to discover what's important to them. Council's role was to guide the Rocherlea community to focus on all their wonderful assets and assist in utilising these to develop projects. It wasn't about Council coming in and telling people what to do.

## Ravenswood Learning Site 2018

Ravenswood was Council's second Learning Site and presented a completely different project to Rocherlea. Ravenswood is a larger community with 3585 residents. Local assets in the area include a primary school, health centre, a shopping precinct and other businesses and facilities.

Like Rocherlea, Ravenswood has created a tight knit community through a strong need to stick together.

The Starting Point Neighbourhood House is a central heart of the community and a place where people felt

safe and could bond with others. The Men's Shed and community gardens are also established programs building community capacity.

Peter Kenyon visited Ravenswood and took key workshops with community members, young people and at the local school. For this Learning Site, the City of Launceston engaged a Community Connector through a contract with Community Housing Limited (CHL). The Ravenswood community embraced the Learning Site and led a number of projects.

## Mowbray Learning Site 2019/2020

Sticking to the Northern Suburbs, the next Learning Site took place in Mowbray. Mowbray has a population of 3916 with the highest proportion of multicultural residents in Launceston from communities such as Bhutanese, Nepalese, Chinese and Myanmarese. There is a large business district and diverse population in Mowbray including many UTAS students. Alongside Rocherlea and Ravenswood, Mowbray also rates one of highest proportions of unemployment in Launceston.

Mowbray is another completely different community. Community assets in the area include two large schools, a racecourse, a branch of the Northern Suburbs Community Centre and many organisations and businesses. It's a hub, a main thoroughfare to the city and a place where people from diverse backgrounds meet.

As part of the evolution of the model, Council decided to directly employ the Community Connector who was housed at Community Housing Limited in Mowbray for most of the Learning Site. This place based arrangement enabled the Connector to experience life like others did in Mowbray and to get to know the community.

More resources in facilitation and community support meant more engagement and community projects. Peter Kenyon visited again and led workshops with the Connector also delivering workshops.

To view the Mowbray, Ravenswood and Rocherlea Learning Site Reports and watch the community films visit:

<https://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/Community/ABCDE-Learning-Sites>

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# What are Community Assets?

Community assets are the resources which individuals and communities have at their disposal, which can be used to develop effective solutions to promote social inclusion and improve the health and well-being of local community members. These assets include organisations, the environment, businesses, the culture and local people.

One of the eight touchstones of the ABCDE Learning Site is to host conversations to discover assets within the community and find out what people care about. By asking people about their community assets they begin to focus on what's strong, not what's wrong. Each of the following categories make up a community's asset map.

- People's passions, skills, wisdom and experience
- Institutions
- Social networks
- Physical assets
- Economic assets
- Cultural assets, stories, traditions, roots, heritage

Each suburb creates their own asset map in the style they choose.

*“You don't know what you need, until you know what you've got” - Peter Kenyon*



# MOWBRAY LEARNING SITE ASSET MAP

developed by the Mowbray community in 2019

## PEOPLE'S PASSIONS, SKILLS, WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE

Angela Cantten, Best friends, Bilingual opportunities, Breakfast Club LCGS, Builders, Bus drivers, Butcher, Carers, Charity, Chinese food workers, Colin Bryce, Cousins, Dad, Daniel Geale, David Boon, David Warren, Denise Delphin, Darcy Rogers (Plans), Doctors, Dr Harry, Ebony T, Family, Fast food workers, Fire man, Friends, Game shop staff, George Bailey, Government, Health food shop guy, Hungry Jacks workers, International students, Isaiah Corin, Ivan Dean, Jodie Jacobs, John Keedy, Kids, Kim, Leanna V, Lily L, Lucy, Belinda, Wendy, Cilla, Mayor, Mindy, Miss Aktins, Mowbray coffee, Mr Geale, Mr Hall, Mrs Glachan, Mrs Airey, Mrs Charms, Mrs Robson, Mrs Sheedy, Mrs Symes, Multicultural community, Mum, My brother, Myself, Nan and Pop, Ned Maynard, New students that we welcome, North Launceston, Eagles, Parents Paster, Peter B, James, Faulkner, Police, Principal, Rev. Grayton (breakfast club), Richard Soule, Ricky, Punting, Rosella, Rose, Salvation Army, Sarah McCormack, Shop employees, Shop owners, Siblings, Sports teacher, Surya, Teachers, Vet, Volunteers and staff of organisations and businesses, Young people

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

After school care, Angicare CFC Mowbray, Basketball, BMX, Bowls Club, Breakfast Club, Bus service, Capital Chemist Mowbray, Church, City Mission, Community garden, Community house, Cricket, Croquet club, Dance Fever, Dancing schools, Darts club, Dog walking group, Drama club, Duke of Edinburgh (LCGS), Eagles Soccer Club, Football, Friend's place, Girl Guides, Golf club, Grammar, Gymnastics, Hockey Club, Horse racing, Japara Basketball Club, Jockeys/horses, KFC, Lawn Bowls Club, LCGS sport teams, Little athletics, Mowbray Cricket Club, Mowbray Eagles, MRC Hall - orchestra, Netball, New Horizons, Northern Bombers Club, Optus and Telstra (online contact), Park run, Race Course, Recycling Centre and Tip, Red Cross, Roller derby, Rugby, SFC, Schools, Scouts, The Shed, Soccer, Soccer at UTAS, Sports, Swimming, Turf Club, Uni Mowbray footy club, UTAS, Vinnies, Youth club

## PHYSICAL ASSETS

AFL, Amazing views, Bank Club, Basketball courts, Bike lanes, tracks, trails, Birdview Avenue (popular insta spot), Board walk, Boat club, Bridge linking LCGS and the rowing shed, Bus stops and network, Bush, Church, Coles facade, Community garden - Dover St, Cricket shield, Dominos, Food, Golf club, Grammar oval and pool, Grayhound racing, Gun club, Gym, Half Street green strip, Heritage building, Heritage Forest, Home, Horse race track, Hungry Jacks (Invermay road), James Nelson Buildings, Mountain Bike trail (schools), Mowbray pub, Mowbray Sports n Skate, Nature strips, New community hub, New Horizons space, Oval, Parks, Playground, Race cars, Race course, Railway Line, River, Running tracks, School, Shops, Soccer ground, Sports club, Sports ovals, Subway, Takeaway shop, Target gym/oval, Unique trees, UTAS complex, Tip, Veggie gardens in back yards, Walking track linking LCGS and UTAS, Walking trails, Zap gym

## CULTURAL ASSETS, STORIES, TRADITIONS, ROOTS AND HERITAGE

Aboriginal Childcare Centre, Aboriginal dance group, Afghanisthan community, Anglican school, Asian grocer, Australia, Bento, Bhutanese, Chinese, Coles faces, Community lunches, Daves Noodles, David Boon, Different cultures, Dr Love Joy, Fairs, Family fun day, Food, Food shops - Indian and Chinese fusion, Gallery, private home, Grammar, Harmony Days, Hawthorn, Heritage Park, High level migrant community, History (trams, post war migration), Holl/Nepali cultural festival, India, Indian grocer, Indonesian, James Faulkner, Japan, Korean, Launceston Cup, Launceston Grammar - uniforms/history, Migrant Centre, Migrant community bringing flair, knowledge and skills, Mowbray grandstand, Mowbray Heights Primary School, MRC, Museum, Nepal people and food, New Horizons Inclusion Leaders, New Zealand, Off season - rides/circus, Parents n Friends at Schools, Philippines, Poimena Art Gallery, Readers theatre, Restaurants, Ricky Punting, Ricky Punting Oval, School assembly, School fair, South Korean, Star Theatre, The cricket meme "nice one Gary!", The Gingerbread Man, Tonga, Visitors from other cultures, Walkathon

## INSTITUTIONS

Able Australia, AFL, Aged Care Home, Australian Maritime College, Baptcare, Bowls club, Breakfast Club (Mowbray Primary), Charity shops, Chemist, Child care, Church, City Mission, City of Launceston (Council), Coles, Cricket shield, Defence Force, Dentist, Doctors, Dog and cat shelter, Dover St Neighbourhood House, Dr Hampson, Friends, Golf club, Home, Hungry Jacks, Immunisation Clinic, KFC, Kindergarten, LCGS (Launceston Grammar, Grammar School), Library (UTAS), Macca's, Migrant Centre, Mowbray Heights Primary School, MRC Childcare, NDIS Neighbourhood, New Horizons, Next door neighbours, Op shops, Oral Health Services, Pathology, Physio, Police, Race cars, Salvation Army, Shops, Soccer, Social Housing, Sport n Skate, Subway, Supermarket, TACCA, Tale, Teachers, Tip, Tipstop, UTAS, Vet, Vinnies, Woolies, Youth

## ECONOMIC ASSETS

Two driving schools, AFL Footy, Andy's Salvage, Asian Market Place, Banks, Bento, Chemist, Child care centres, Chinese shop, Coles, Cunninghams, Daves Noodles, Dentist, Dogs Home, Dominos, Fast food places, Food, Gyms, Hungry Jacks, James Nelson Factory, Kebab shop, KFC, Launceston Cup, Launceston Waste Centre, Mowbray Milkbar, Mowbray Hotel, Mowbray Pizza Hut, Multicultural grocers, Newsagency, Ob Games, Op shops, PCYC, Pharmacies/doctors, Post office, Red Cross, Reject shop, Shiploads, Sport n Skate, Sport shop, SRC, Subway, Sunday market, Take away, Target, Tattoo Studio, The hotel/restaurant, Tip shop, Turf club, Vernachi Contractors, Vet, Vinnies, Woolworths, Zap Fitness



# Mowbray Asset Map

# Ravenswood community

## – jump on board the Asset Bus

The Ravenswood community has a wide network of services, education providers, businesses, social groups and made up of lots of amazing people from qualified professionals, talented artists, hardworking volunteers, caring residents and many more. The community Asset Bus will help us to recognise what we have and how we can work together to take our community into the future.



A key stage in the Ravenswood ABCDE Learning Site throughout 2018 was to ask the Ravenswood community about their assets to help plan, build and grow for the future together.

The assets identified by the community are listed on the bus and will change and grow as the community focuses on what's strong.



Supported by the City of Launceston, the Ravenswood Community have adopted the ABCDE Learning Site to help the community grow together.

## Ravenswood Asset Map



Rocherlea Asset Tree

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# Big Ideas

In each of the Learning Sites Community Connectors asked the community to share their big ideas and if they could do anything what would it be? All sorts of ideas came about such as building a skate park, getting together to collect litter and deserted supermarket trolleys, a paddock-to-plate café and installing fairy lights in neighbourhood trees. Over the past three Learning Sites hundreds of ideas have been collected. When a community comes up with ideas, they can take ownership and lead their projects. The Community Connector's role is to investigate the ideas with the community and ask three questions:

1. What can you do?
2. What do you need a little bit of help with?
3. What do you need an outside agency to do for you?

The big ideas project development takes time as projects need brainstorming as part of the process. Some projects eventuate and some don't which is totally acceptable and part of the learning as the community is empowered to investigate their ideas.

Here are three projects which the community wanted and made happen:

## Mowbray Dover Open Oval



Dover Street Mowbray residents were keen to host an event on their nearby reserve. A community celebration of Dover Reserve and the Mowbray ABCDE Learning Site took place. Dover Open Oval was a fun family event in February 2020 on Dover Reserve in Mowbray.

## Ravenswood Sign



A long-time resident had always wanted a sign to welcome locals and visitors to Ravenswood so a new piece of public artwork was designed to instil a sense of pride. The sign was unveiled in front of over 100 community members who participated in the project.

## Rocherlea Mural



The Northern Suburbs Community Centre (NSCC) consulted with the Rocherlea community for many years and coordinated regular small projects. NSCC worked with Pastor Joseph from the House of Prayer Bible Fellowship International to paint community murals on the side and back wall of his church. Chris from the Purple Op Shop was consulted about the sunflower design for the back of the Op Shop.

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# What Went Well

- Council's commitment to the ABCDE Learning Site approach;
- Evolution of the Community Connector role, based on the experiences of the Learning Sites to date;
- The open invitation for anyone from a site to be involved at no cost;
- The community's understanding, acceptance, participation and trust in the model;
- The professional development of Council staff and other community leaders;
- The partnership with Bank of I.D.E.A.S as a reputable community development driver;
- Partnering with the Community Connector host organisation;
- Achieving a Learning Site in 12 months;
- Not focusing on the end product but rather on the process;
- Being led by the community and listening to them in a flexible process;
- Cross Council collaboration on small projects;
- Mentorships and student placements; and
- Acknowledgement of Council working to collaborate on a grass roots level.

# A Learning Curve

- In the first two Learning Sites, the role of Community Connector was a casual position and not a Council staff member. There were challenges associated with the role being externally appointed and not in a full time capacity. These difficulties were mainly related to the limitations of developing Council's direct relationships with the community and therefore assisting the community to sustain the Learning Site work. Figure 1 is a representation of how the Community Connector role has evolved through the City of Launceston's commitment investing in the role.
- The sustainability for communities to maintain the strengths based approach is being continually developed with the community as Council learns about the model.
- In the first Learning Site, a significant amount of work was needed to educate the community on Council's role, and reassure them.

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# The Development of the ABCDE Learning Sites and the Community Connector Role

## Rocherlea

- First site
- Not specifically funded
- Relying on the reputation of the model
- Developing community trust in the model
- Learning from the community responses
- Testing the model for sustainability
- Community Connector - *Manager Northern Suburbs Community Centre*
- No allocated funding
- Support from Council staff
- Low level of control over the process

## Ravenswood

- Second site
- Part time externally funded position
- Developing our own model
- Earning community trust
- Optimistic about a positive community response
- Developing a sustainable model
- Community Connector - *Community Housing Ltd*
- *Starting Point Neighbourhood House*
- No allocated funding
- Support from Council staff

## Mowbray

- Third site
- Full time internally funded position
- Further developing our model
- Building on community trust
- Receiving a positive community response
- Now a sustainable, embedded Council program
- Community Connector - *Council staff member*
- 1.0 FTE funding allocated
- Part of the community development team
- High level of control over the process

**Figure 1**

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# What We Learnt

## Approach

- Learning Sites need to be implemented with a flexible and adaptive approach.
- It needs to be inclusive of all community members and their backgrounds, age, ability, status with those who have a connection to the Learning Site.
- The community is invited to be involved, provided with the necessary information about the approach and can choose to participate.
- Learning Sites are a cultural shift for communities as they work with local government at a grass roots level to support people in what they want to do, not what Council thinks they should do.
- The Learning Sites' grass roots community work increases the positive reputation of local government as a result of its investment in involving the community.
- It's important to allow the community time to engage with the approach, to learn to trust it and get involved.
- The speed of trust is determined by the community, trust cannot be hurried by the Connector or by the supporting organisation. It is essential that relationships are formed in an authentic way and are not governed by KPIs.
- Learning Sites are not about producing big projects, they are a year in duration and the end product comes from the community.
- By simply having and sharing conversations about what communities want and need in their suburb can positively benefit and impact others.
- There are many learning opportunities for internal and external communities to develop communities from this strengths based approach.

## Unique Communities

- Each Learning Site community is very different and this needs to be considered in the approach.
- Getting to know people, making connections and forming trust in the early stages takes time.
- There may be a history of challenging community relations which unveil themselves through the Learning Sites and need to be managed respectfully.
- Managing community expectations is important and can be managed from the outset. Council is not there to do it all.
- The Learning Site results are considerably different between sites and need to be determined by the community.

## Community Connector

- It is vital that a dedicated place based Community Connector is resourced to lead and drive the Learning Sites in the community.
- The Community Connector forms connections in the community by getting to know people and the characteristics of the place whilst facilitating others to connect.
- The Community Connector often supports and mentors participants to build their skills, gain confidence and become more connected in what they are passionate about.
- The Community Connector will play a varied role and sometimes brings partners together to collaborate on a project of interest. It is important the Connector is transparent about their role e.g. facilitator, manager, leader or simply to bring partners together.

## Evaluation

- Stepping back and asking the right questions to enable residents to take action is a powerful tool.
- Empowering communities to make positive change builds trust in local government and within communities to start to work together more.
- There is a need for robust evaluation by monitoring the Learning Sites and making decisions based on the overall progress.
- Documenting the Learning Sites with quotes, photos and videos leaves a legacy.
- The sustainability beyond the official end time of the Learning Site needs to be discussed with the community throughout the year.



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# Where to from here

## Measures of Success

The measures of success for the Learning Sites are based on implementing the 8 Touch Stones, community participation and self-evaluation, testimonials and project outcomes which all demonstrate the value of this model.

The City of Launceston is committed to continuing this neighbourhood based approach to community development into the future. Youngtown is the Learning Site for 2020/21 and taking into account Council's strategic plans, the locations for future Learning Sites are being considered.

## Conclusion

The City of Launceston's investment in the past three Learning Sites is an indication of its commitment to local grass roots community development. This type of community work is important and achievable with benefits for many people from all walks of life. One of the major benefits is that the community is learning and feels empowered as it goes through a journey to focus on what's strong not what's wrong.



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