THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

POSTERA CRESCAM LAUDE

"I can belong to anything I set my mind to"

Participation, co-creation and the student experience

Dr Rimi Khan
Eugenia Zoubtchenko

We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our University is located and where we conduct our research and teaching. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future

Cover image credit: Tiffany Liu- New Student Precinct Gallery

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Steph Beaupark and Katie West at the Living Pavillion at the University of Melbourne, 2019. Credit: Isabel Kimpton.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The University of Melbourne's New Student Precinct (NSP) is a major infrastructure development at the Parkville campus including nine buildings and 37,050m2 of new or refurbished building and landscape space. The NSP replaces existing student amenities concentrated in Union House, and aims to provide an enhanced student experience, combining innovative forms of built design and physical infrastructure with new opportunities for cultural connection, participation and transformation. Due to open in 2021-2022, the NSP also responds to the needs of the University's growing and diversifying student cohort.

The NSP development poses the question of what the responsibility of the University is towards its students. The NSP is committed to 'co-creating' with students, inviting them to participate in the governance, design and activation of the space. A co-creation approach to precinct development positions the University as a civic actor, accountable for the governance and engagement of its student constituencies.

This report is motivated by the question of how to understand the University of Melbourne's students as a community. Students are more mobile, diverse and ambitious than before, but they are also faced with new forms of precarity and insecurity. Students today have a strong 'sense of purpose' but are less engaged with the university than in previous decades (Baik et al 2015) .

Co-creation has the potential to address these forms of insecurity and disconnection. There are currently limited opportunities for students to contribute to decisionmaking about the spaces and programs they participate in. In this respect, the NSP's co-creation strategy is an important test case for wider structures of student consultation, engagement and participatory decisionmaking across the University.

The report's title reflects a tension: students seek ways to belong to the University community, but this depends on their own resources and initiative. There is a need for structures of inclusion, participation and collaboration that better support this desire to belong. Belonging also contributes to citizenship. This research offers new ways of thinking about the University's role in creating engaged citizens in diverse communities that reach both within and beyond its campuses.

1.2 Research aims

1. To understand the current student experience, including the diverse forms of participation and belonging that contribute to this experience.

2. To examine the gap between the University's cultural and institutional agendas and students' current capacities for participation.

3. To extend current thinking about cultural diversity and social inclusion among students. What role does the University have in creating a sense of community?

4. To investigate the potential of co-creation approaches for the University's future strategies of student engagement, feedback and collaboration.

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1. Chi Baik, Ryan Naylor and Sophie Arkoudis, *The First Year Experience in Australian Universities: Findings From Two Decades, 1994-2014* (Melbourne: Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, 2015).

2. Methodology

An ethnographic approach has helped to produce a rich account of student experiences and trajectories.

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This research has adopted a mixed-methods framework to respond to the diversity and complexity of student experiences and modes of engagement with university life.

The research has comprised of:

1. 'Student experience' ethnography, including in-depth interviews (23 students), 'cultural complexity' classroom discussions (150 students), NSP Festival survey (76 students), and participant observation.

2. Co-creation activity mapping.

3. Digital and social network analysis.

4. Stakeholder and policy research.

5. Literature review on co-design, belonging and participation in the university, participation in university settings, placemaking, social network analysis and student citizenship.

Data from the student experience ethnography was analysed using NVivo. A series of 'infrastructure' codes (relating to the University's physical and institutional resources) and 'thematic' codes (relating to belonging, participation and diversity) were developed from the research questions. Additional codes were developed based on content analysis of transcripts. Codes were dis/aggregated in order to catalogue how a specific phenomenon is expressed (eg., dealing with difference > mixing, segregation, friendship, collaboration). Matrix analysis examined the intersection between one code with other codes.

A breakdown of respondents in the student experience ethnography is presented in figure 1.

Total Interviewees	23
Male	8
Female	15
Postgraduate	14
Undergraduate	9
International	12
Local	11
Access Melbourne	2
Disability	4
Mature Age	2

⌃ *Figure 1: Demographic breakdown of research participants*

3. Key findings

Co-creation and governance

The NSP's co-creation program is commendable. However, an authenitic and long-term commitment to student engagement requires rethinking structures of student feedback, consultation and collaboration across the University.

Co-creation does not just refer to the design of a physical space but the development of opportunities, experiences and services that are relevant to students.

Meaningful co-creation is challenging. While community-building is an aim of co-creation processes, the diversity and transience of the University community can mean uneven levels of engagement in co-creation. In order for co-creation processes to be effective, students need to recognise themselves as citizens within the University community.

To date, co-creation processes have helped to provide student feedback and raise awareness of the NSP. However, co-creation should be understood as more than a marketing strategy. Meaningful co-creation requires investment in relationship-development and capacity-building to ensure students are enthusiastic contributors to the decision-making process. Co-creation is an ongoing process that does not end with the installation of built infrastructure, but involves the continued development of programs of participation. The dynamic nature of the University community means that there is a particular need to ensure the ongoing relevance and useability of the NSP after it is built. Creative activations are a productive approach to co-creation but should be viewed as more than temporary placemaking initiatives.

Student experience journeys

The enormous diversity of students at University of Melbourne means there are different ways in which students participate and belong. This report identifies four modes of connection that shape students' journeys.

1. Insecurity and immobility
2. Values and leadership
3. Career and achievement
4. Balance and connection

The different modes of connection are not stable or mutually exclusive.

Students can experience insecurity and disconnection at different times during their degrees, rather than only at the beginning of their student journeys.

Transient friendships and a lack of support networks make students particularly vulnerable to isolation. There is much the University can do to help students transition out of insecurity into these more positive states.

Towards the 'Melbourne experience'

The NSP is underpinned by ambitious sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion agendas that form part of an ideal 'Melbourne' experience. It presents a vision of campus life in which students are flexible, empowered and engaged.

The reality is that students are increasingly diverse, dispersed and disconnected. The challenge lies in ensuring that students have the capacity to engage with the full range of possibilities offered by the NSP, and to become its champions.

Moving students from a place of insecurity to a more empowered position relies on four key drivers.

Drivers of the 'Melbourne experience'

Participation: There is an array of different modes and levels of participation in University life. The majority of students are likely to attend, or join in, with events that have already been organised or curated for them. This highlights the importance of both structured and unstructured activity.

Many students' participation habits reflect a form of 'inertia'. For many, being involved in one activity opens up other opportunities; participation leads to more participation. Those who find it difficult to join in activity may find it increasingly hard as study obligations and other pressures mount.

Access to information: Students' awareness of existing opportunities promoted through official University channels is low. Those who are leaders in participation and decision-making are highly motivated and proactive in seeking out relevant information, but not all students share this self-motivation. Centralised or top-down forms of knowledge-sharing are important, but do not always have the same level of engagement with students as peer-to-peer contact.

Engagement with difference: The presence of international students has created the impression of an increasingly segregated student body, leading parallel cultural lives. This tendency towards separation is exacerbated by University structures. There is strong desire among students to make friendships that cross-cultural

lines and social boundaries. However, this is also perceived as difficult. The University can offer students a range of opportunities for engaging with difference, ranging from active collaboration to promoting the value of diversity. Active collaboration across difference is particularly important in culturally complex spaces, and can be the starting point for friendships, intellectual exchanges, communities of practice and networks of solidarity. Collaboration can also contribute to 'cultural intelligence', or the ability to effectively mediate across cultural difference.

Belonging: The University's complex landscape of community means that belonging among students is multifaceted and difficult to measure. It is clear that a strong foundation of both belonging and participation contributes to more meaningful citizenship. The NSP has an important role in fostering belonging that can lead to commoning and collective agency, and which supports the University's agendas of sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion.

Networks of community

Students participate in a complex variety of social, digital and institutional networks. All networks contribute to the formation of community. These networks produce collective knowledge and structures of belonging that are critical for navigating life as Melbourne student.

The student union continues to play an important role in creating community, but does not represent all students. Many students reflect a desire to connect with the University of Melbourne 'brand' but are disconnected from formal University networks or clubs.

The role of particular external stakeholders (such as churches, political parties, or cultural organisations) in shaping the University community needs to be better understood.

For many students, belonging to the University and belonging to Melbourne are difficult to separate. There is much to be learned about the relationship between students' lives on and off campus, and how diverse communities of students are shaping cultural landscapes in the city and suburbs.

4. Recommendations

Co-creation and student engagement

1. **Co-creation processes should be incorporated into the long-term governance and evaluation of the NSP.** Students should lead decisions about the use and activation of NSP spaces after they are built. Co-creation should involve a range of participatory approaches to ensure students with varying capacities are included. The existing Student Ambassador and Student Experience Advisory Groups should be extended to ensure ongoing capacity-building among students.

2. **There is a need to move beyond project-based thinking to ensure a University-wide approach to co-creation**. Many of the issues of disconnection and insecurity that students face require holistic responses and collaboration between different parts of the University. The appointment of a community development officer or similar would ensure that goals of co-creation, inclusion and participation are addressed holistically in the long-term.
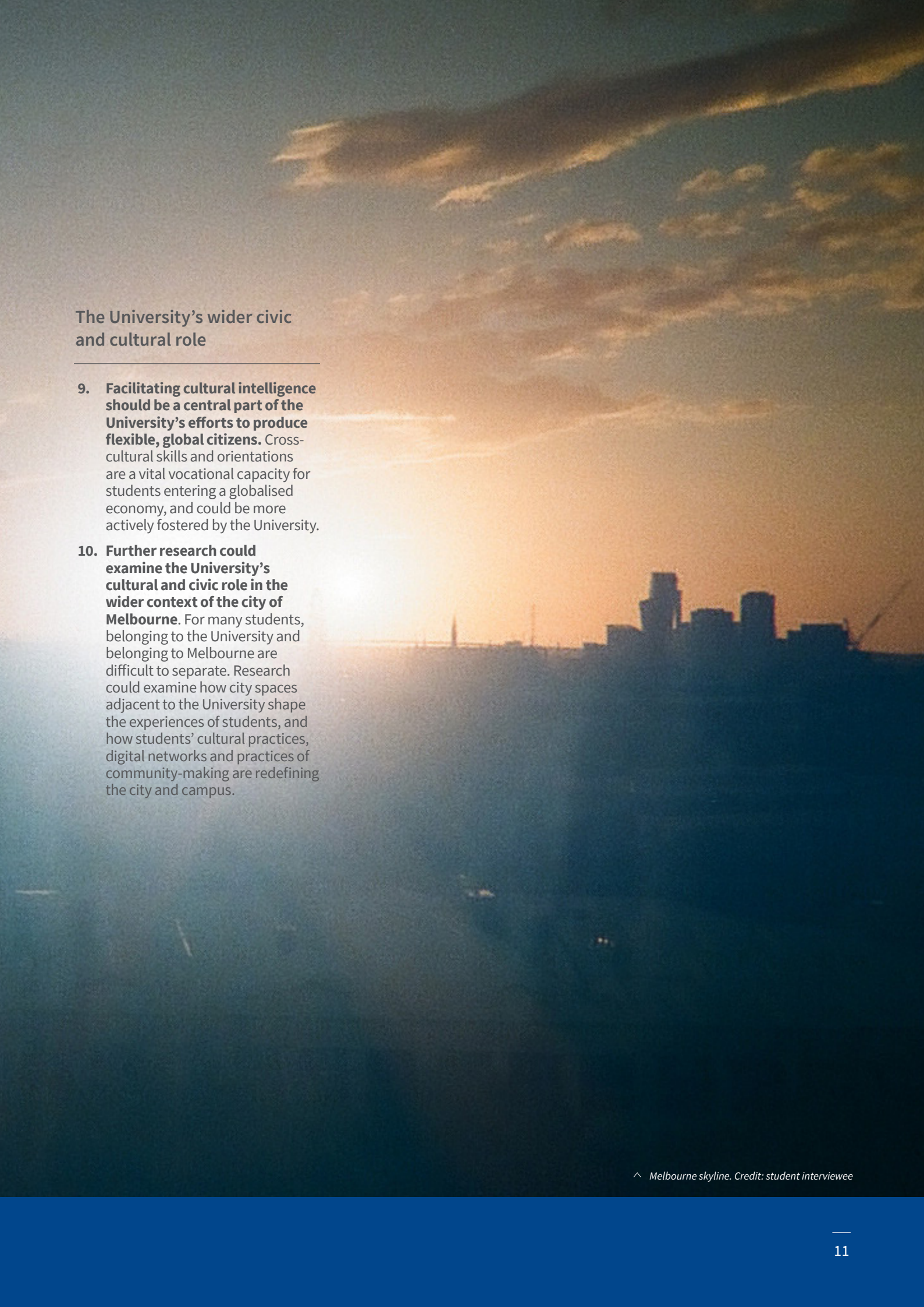
Opportunities for participation

3. **Students need more accessible information about relevant activities.** While there is a wide range of co-curricular activity taking place at the University, much of this is not visible to students. More relevant digital communication platforms should be developed in close consultation with students. Simpler solutions such as an NSP 'information desk' can also be helpful.

4. **Physical spaces of participation should reflect the diversity of student interests.** Spaces that are flexible and can be adapted to different uses are preferable to well-designed spaces with fixed uses.

5. **Professional or study-related opportunities are vital for strengthening students' post-university employability and contributing to optimism**. Schools and Faculties have a role in facilitating this activity, especially for time-poor or academically stressed students. Students could be provided with tangible recognition of their involvement in co-curricular activity, through study credit, certificates, formalised internships or paid employment opportunities.

Diversity, inclusion and belonging

6. **Student belonging should be prioritised and addressed across the University.** Belonging contributes to increased student wellbeing, satisfaction and citizenship in the short-term, and can help cultivate long-term connections and commitment to the University as students become alumni.

7. **The University has an obligation to go beyond tokenistic gestures of 'welcome', and to provide students with relevant resources and services, especially for those experiencing cultural or social isolation.** These resources should be available throughout students' degree pathways, not just at the beginning. A range of initiatives can help students move out of insecurity. Students highlighted a strong need for improved availability of health and counselling services; academic support services; and better information about cultural, recreational and vocational participation opportunities

8. **Participation opportunities should promote intercultural engagement and collaboration.** Support could be offered to activities involving more than one club or society, or which demonstrate an interest in intercultural exchange. The NSP's activation strategies could focus on bringing together diverse groups of students and stakeholders. Digital platforms that showcase students' diverse stories and creative interests can contribute to shared cultural worlds.

The University's wider civic and cultural role

9. **Facilitating cultural intelligence should be a central part of the University's efforts to produce flexible, global citizens.** Cross-cultural skills and orientations are a vital vocational capacity for students entering a globalised economy, and could be more actively fostered by the University.

10. **Further research could examine the University's cultural and civic role in the wider context of the city of Melbourne**. For many students, belonging to the University and belonging to Melbourne are difficult to separate. Research could examine how city spaces adjacent to the University shape the experiences of students, and how students' cultural practices, digital networks and practices of community-making are redefining the city and campus.

∧ *Melbourne skyline. Credit: student interviewee*

^ Melbourne University Student, Credit: University of Melbourne

5. Co-Creation and governance

Co-creation strategies are increasingly part of large urban development projects and offer an opportunity to engage diverse constituencies in decision-making.

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Co-creation as placemaking

The NSP's co-creation strategy is part of a placemaking process that reflects wider trends within the higher education sector to engage students in the development of University spaces.[2] **Placemaking approaches offer an opportunity to engage diverse communities in projects of shared meaning-making.** Co-created places not only manage existing community relations but are concerned with 'imagining and opening up future potentialities' for community-building and exchange.[3]

Co-creating with diverse communities

In a diverse and mobile urban community, people have unequal and inconsistent forms of investment in local places, and may be difficult to engage in collective placemaking activity.[4] Thus, **while the creation of community is an aim of co-creation processes, the existing diversity of a community can mean uneven levels of engagement in co-creation processes.**

This often results in circular thinking about co-creation, where 'community' is an outcome of co-creation processes, but is also a necessary precursor to successful co-creation.

This tension is particularly pronounced within the University context. The transient nature of University communities makes engagement in co-creation particularly difficult. At the same time, unlike in other urban spaces, students can be viewed as a captive community. Many are invested in making connections and gaining cultural and vocational experience during their time at University.

Co-creation as pedagogy

In many urban placemaking sites, long-term community engagement and education is required to equip individuals with the capacity to meaningfully participate in co-creation. The University context presents a unique opportunity, where co-creation and the training of students to ready them for participatory citizenship can be tied in with the pedagogical activity of the University. Incorporating co-creation activities into teaching and learning can especially help to engage time-poor students in the placemaking process.

Co-creation as awareness-raising

Co-creation has been used to strengthen student engagement with the NSP development. The NSP festival held in October 2018 was a key platform for creating student awareness of the development. In a survey of 76 students at the festival, just over half (58%) had heard of the NSP before attending the event, but two-thirds (67%) indicated that they wanted to be more involved in the NSP after the festival. The success of this event underscores the importance of highly visible co-creation activities in physical spaces alongside digital communications and marketing.

Co-creation as an ongoing process

Co-creation and placemaking should be viewed as an ongoing process that does not end with the installation of built infrastructure. Places are constantly in flux. The social and institutional meanings attached to places cannot be predicted in advance and are realised through a multiplicity of 'post-installation' practices and labours.[5] The dynamic nature of the University community means that there is a particular need to ensure the ongoing relevance and useability of the NSP after it is built. It is important to avoid a 'build it and they will come' mentality.

The ongoing tracking, governance and relevance of the NSP could be achieved through surveys and traditional evaluation methods, as well as through creative methods that capture the meanings and practices that students bring to the Precinct.

The co-creation processes can be viewed as an opportunity to test new structures of student engagement and governance for the NSP. The ongoing nature of placemaking, and the changing and diverse makeup of the student community requires the continuing input of students into the NSP.

The legacy of activations

Creative activations offer a productive approach to co-creation, and a strategy for testing future uses of the NSP site. However, the

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2. O'Rourke and Baldwin, "Student Engagement in Placemaking at an Australian University Campus", 103–16.

3. Patsy Healey, *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: Towards a Relational Planning for our Times* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp 277.

4. Kate Shaw and Geua Montana. "Place-Making in megaprojects in Melbourne", *Urban Policy and Research* 34,2 (2014): 166–89.

5. Jill Sweeney, Kathy Mee, Pauline McGuirk and Kristian Ruming, "Assembling Placemaking: Making and Remaking Place in a Regenerating City", *Cultural Geographies* 25,4 (2018): 571–587.

outcomes of temporary activations are often ephemeral, and it is difficult to trace the legacy of these in the ongoing design and use of a cultural precinct. **Rather than viewing activations as temporary placemaking events, a longer-term and strategic view of how activations will contribute to the NSP is important.** Activations could be viewed as projects that bring together students and other stakeholders into important conversations about how the site will be used after the NSP is built. In fact, **decisions about what kinds of activations are supported, how they engage with students and which communities of students benefit from them could be made by students themselves, as part of the NSP's long-term co-creation structure.**

The **Living Pavilion was a major activation** that offered a productive site to test strategies of reconciliation and decolonisation in the University context. The event involved numerous community and institutional stakeholders, artists, students and staff from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. It encouraged new forms of interaction between these groups, as well as with the physical site itself.

Consultation with students before the event suggested a significant desire to see greater acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and rights to Country at the University. The Living Pavilion responded to this desire and offered curated and semi-curated opportunities for students to learn about biodiversity, sustainability and the Aboriginal heritage of the University site, through workshops, music, dance and storytelling. Feedback from attendees and participants at The Living Pavilion suggests that more opportunities for these forms of interaction and learning should be incorporated into the design of the site. Numerous research respondents commented that the event should be a permanent one.

Mapping co-creation

Existing literature on co-creation highlights how a range of different modes of engagement can be encompassed by co-creation. The diagram below (Figure 2) highlights that ideally, co-creation should involve collaboration and empowerment rather than only information and consultation.

A timeline of NSP co-creation activities is presented in Figure 3, highlighting a spectrum of different modes and levels of student participation and engagement, against this framework.

Since 2016 there have been a diversity of activities and approaches to co-creation, but most of these have taken the form of awareness-raising and consultation. There is significant potential to empower students through more meaningful opportunities for collaboration in the future.

The Student Advisory groups and Ambassador programs should be developed as ongoing forums of participatory decision-making. By giving students a voice, these can ensure the ongoing relevance of the NSP.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

∧ *Figure 2: The "Participation Spectrum", the framework used to inform the NSP co-creation map overleaf. Copyright International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)*

^ *The Living Pavillion- Indigenous Placemaking at the University of Melbourne , Credit: Isabel Kimpton*

EMPOWER

2016 — 2017

COMMUNITY-LED PLACEMAKING / "GRASSROOTS URBANISM"

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH / "DEEP ENGAGEMENT"

CONSULTATION

"ACTIVATION"

COMMUNICATIONS

INFORM

Reconciliation week exhibition

Sustainability workshop: long-list & principles

Design studio: 'Rolling out the Welcome Mat'

Design studio: 'Designing for Heat'

Subject: 'Designing the Inclusive University'

Quantitative research survey

Alumni survey

Sustainability survey

Student engagement focus groups

Consultation workshops

Mobile engagement office & comment walls

O-week pop-up wall

Pop-up morning teas x3

NSP engagement space

Subject: 'Engineering Management'

Subject: 'Green Rooves'

'Destination Melbourne' student session

Subject: 'Procurement Methods'

2018

2019

SEAG   SEAG   SEAG

Outdoor gallery farrago exhibition

Reconciliation week exhibition

SEAG

SEAG

SEAG

Next Wave arts mentorship

SEAG   SEAG   SEAG

Reconciliation week: student artwork display in outdoor gallery, mentorship

SEAG

SEAG

Nex Wave moving image mentorships

Student art prize

Exhibition of MSD 'Landscape Materialities' projects

Student ambassador design workshops

NSP MUDFEST Event

Staff sustainability woskhsop

Co-creation workshops with Indigenous students & staff

Wayfindng audit with student ambassadors

NSP festival

Drop-in sessions with achitects

Design studio: 'Architecture as Memory'

Design studio: 'Radical Classroom'

Indigenous engagement student survey

Arup informal study space survey

Schematic design presented at open say

Informal study space survey

Gender-neutral spaces user group

Student experience survey

Accessible design survey

The Living Pavillion

Furniture exhibition

Fairfood unicycle

O-Week Monash Rd pop-up space

Subject: 'Engineering Management'

O-Week Monash Rd pop-up

Open day

GSA house-warming

Podcast episode

Subject: 'Construction Law'

SEAG = Student Experience Advisory Group Meeting

Figure 3: NSP co-creation timeline

6. Student experience journeys

The enormous diversity of students at University of Melbourne gives rise to an array of different student experience journeys. This section charts students' experiences of belonging and participation in terms of four 'modes of connection'.

6.1 Modes of connection

These modes of connection were formulated after extensive coding and analysis of research interviews with students. The four categories represented here depict different ways in which students belong and connect with each other, but they are not mutually exclusive. In many cases students moved between these different states over the course of their degree.
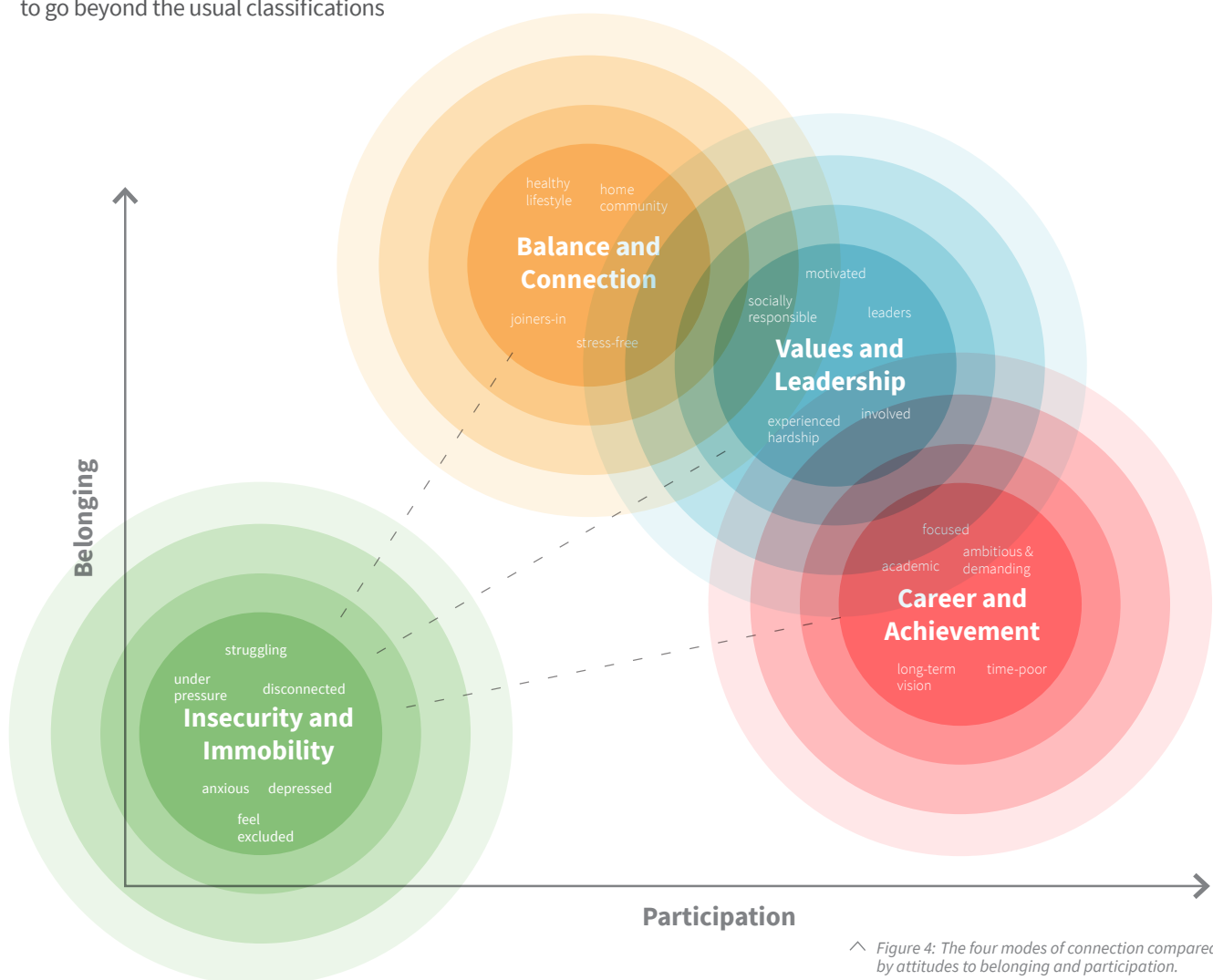
By emphasising how students inhabit different modes of connection, we seek to go beyond the usual classifications used to make sense of the student experience, such as local/international, graduate/undergraduate, dis/abled, or mature age. Students in all of these groups can be found at different stages of the journeys depicted in this section.

While local and international students may have access to different cultural, economic and institutional resources, differences between local students, or between different kinds of international students are equally important to think about.

At the same time this analysis is attentive to particular groups of students who may be more likely than others to experience insecurity. The recommendations that emerge from this section focus on what is required to move students out of a state of insecurity.

These modes of connection are explained in detail on the following pages.

Balance and Connection

healthy lifestyle
home community
joiners-in
stress-free

Values and Leadership

motivated
socially responsible
leaders
experienced hardship
involved

Career and Achievement

focused
academic
ambitious & demanding
long-term vision
time-poor

Insecurity and Immobility

struggling
under pressure
disconnected
anxious
depressed
feel excluded

Belonging

Participation

Figure 4: The four modes of connection compared by attitudes to belonging and participation.

Insecurity and immobility

These students are largely disconnected from University life. They speak of finding it difficult to meet people or participate in co-curricular activities because they feel socially anxious or are stressed about academic performance. Some of these students feel pressure to succeed academically, or experience financial guilt that makes it difficult to prioritise social life and cultural participation.

Transient friendships and a lack of support networks make students vulnerable to isolation. However, in some cases students are able to break out of insecurity by joining a community or through creative activity.

International students are at particular risk of isolation. While many find community on arrival to Melbourne, these networks can be fleeting, for example, as friends leave Melbourne, or as students move between different accommodation options. International students also contend with language barriers, navigating an unfamiliar city, and understanding new cultural norms and expectations.

There are other groups of students who are susceptible to insecurity. Students with disabilities may become isolated because opportunities for participation are not accessible. Students from low SES backgrounds or who do not live in the city spend less time on campus and can become disconnected from University.

> " *I'd like to get involved in more uni stuff. I think I'll regret not being as involved, like my mum's always going, 'You should do this at uni,' but it's just I'm not the kind of person to go to something by myself.* "

> " *I don't go for tutorials... I guess in social situations panic attacks can be present so I will avoid them totally... Unless it's a group of people that I'm really familiar with. If not, I wouldn't interact.* "

> " *My experience as a mature aged student has meant I face some kind of ageist based social exclusion each week.* "

∧ *Parkville Campus. Credit: University of Melbourne*

Balance and connection

Many students value balance, and find connection by cultivating a range of interests and prioritising health, exercise, family and friendship over academic performance.

Students may participate in activity outside the University, such as in sports clubs, religious communities, or in a part-time job. This participation can limit the need to be involved with activity on campus.

On campus students may join in with events or clubs but do not necessarily feel pulled to leadership roles or motivated by social or political values.

healthy lifestyle   stress free

Balance and connection

joiners-in   home community
belonging-in-place

" I'd like to be doing something that's meaningful but that doesn't take up my whole life. The best thing I learned is balance. "

" I think previously it would be like, 'I need to graduate by this certain time. Get a job by this certain age.' But I think right now it's more of a laid back attitude of just being needing to be resilient for whatever happens across the years ... like if things happen with family, I need to spend more time on that. "

" So when I go back [home at the end of the day] I'm usually focusing on other things like hobbies, or chatting with my family, or anything else other than study... I kind of feel like that's my balance. "

^ NSP Gallery exhibiting artists. Credit: Tiffany Liu.

Values and leadership

Some students find belonging and connection through a commitment to leadership and creating change on campus.

These are often highly motivated students who are actively involved in a range of activities, including employment on campus, professional development, volunteering, clubs and societies. They may participate in decision-making and assume leadership roles within groups.

These students spend a lot of time on campus; University is central to their social and cultural life in Melbourne.

Some students who begin their University journey experiencing hardship may develop a capacity for leadership. They may be motivated by their social values and a desire to create change.

motivated

socially responsible

leaders

Values and leadership

cultivate belonging

involved

experienced hardship

" *I wanted to make UMSU a better place...I needed to be elected to make big change happen to the things I loved, that had helped me when I was in such a bad place.* "

" *So yeah so that's my interest in terms of people who are struggling with illness or disability comes from my own experience.* "

" *I guess I love teaching...so that's how I feel like I help others, and for me to finally be able to help people here, that could be what sort of enhanced that sense of belonging.* "

⌃ *FairFood UniCycle, a student-led initiative to reduce hospitality waste on campus. Credit: New Student Precinct Project, University of Melbourne*

Career and achievement

Career and achievement

focused
academic *ambitious & demanding*

Career and achievement

long-term vision *strategic* *time-poor*

Some students' primary connection to University life is through a focus on career and achievement. Students may be motivated to participate in activities that will help them pursue their career goals such as faculty events, discipline-based student groups and internships, or industry-focused volunteering. A focus on achievement means these students may be more likely than others to form close connections with their classmates or have positive relationships with University staff.

This is an important mode of connection. However, the pressure to achieve can also create stress, and can be exacerbated by financial pressure or family expectations.

> " *I have very long term career plans...I think if I can publish several papers, it will give me a higher possibility to get a position in...the young professional program for some international organizations.* "

> " *I just like to take some responsibilities. It also keeps me motivated to study. I feel like I am on the board of this [club] so I have to be on top of everything.* "

> " *I found with all my subjects that I did last year there's such a wonderful like micro intellectual community that evolves as the subject goes along...So by the time I see it the semester -I was really sad.* "

⌃ *Open Day. Credit: University of Melbourne*

6.2 Student trajectories

The diagram below charts students' trajectories over time. It highlights how finding belonging and spaces of participation can be a gradual process for many students.

For many students insecurity is a temporary state of disconnection that occurs either at the beginning of their student journeys, or at various points throughout their degree, as study and other pressures mount.

Long-term tracking of students reiterates these shifting pressures that occur throughout degree pathways.[6] The flux of student experience reflects how students' support networks develop and diffuse over time. As a consequence, there is a need for the University to provide support and inclusion throughout students' journeys, rather than at the beginning at orientation or 'welcome' events.

Sarah and Lam's journeys on the following pages show how students transition into and out of different modes of connection over time.
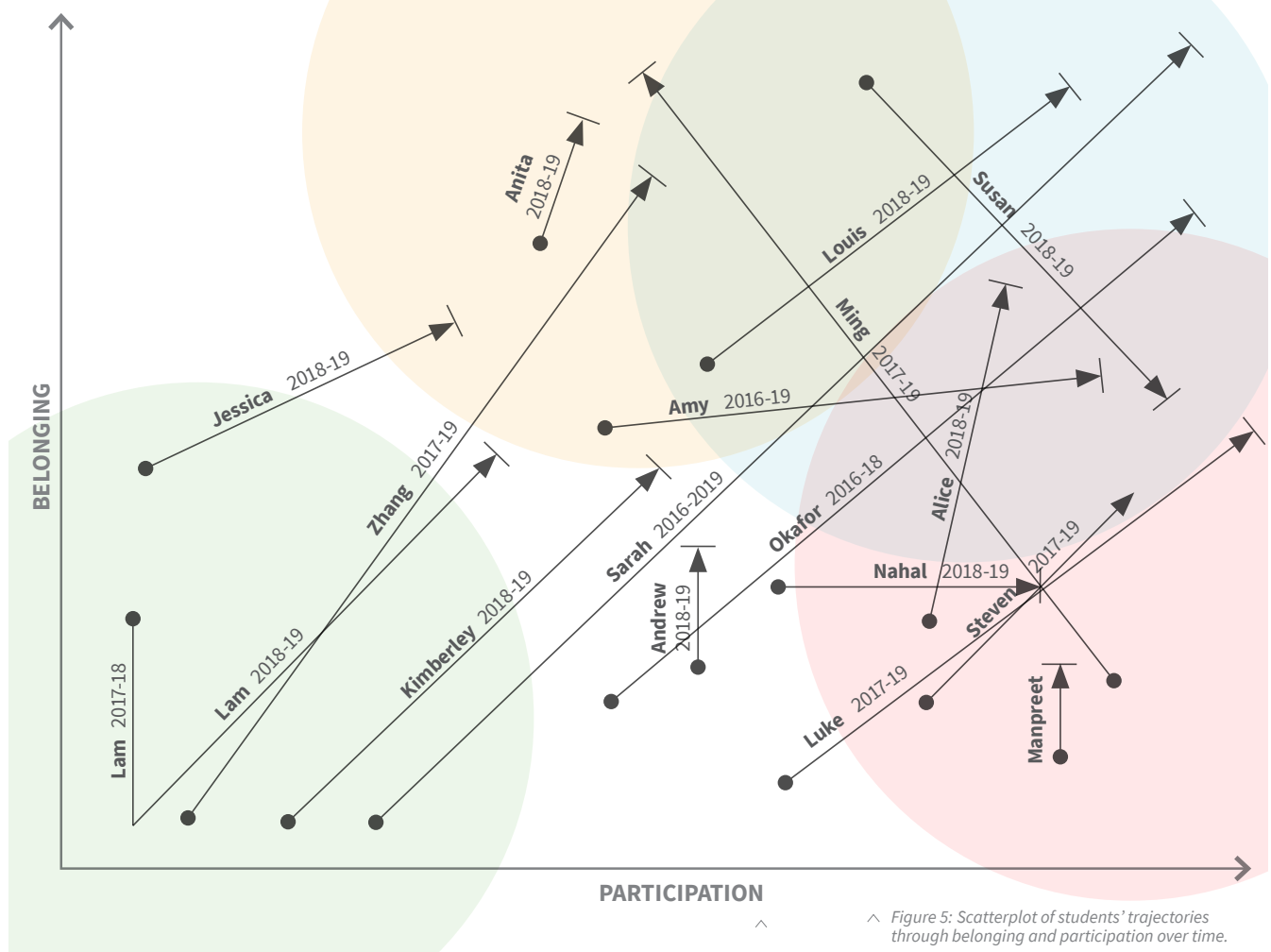
Figure 5: Scatterplot of students' trajectories through belonging and participation over time.

6. Mark Holton, "Adapting relationships with place: Investigating the evolving place attachment and 'sense of place' of UK higher education students during a period of intense transition", *Geoforum* 59, (2015): 21-29.

Sarah's journey

2019

" I think it also goes back to the early days of knowing I was coming in through the Access Melbourne scheme, at the same time as there was Chancellor's Scholars. Brings in a lot of fear, a lot of anxiety…While I was attracted to the heritage of the buildings and the prestige, there's that, 'Am I good enough? Am I worthy enough? Why have they let me in? Has there some kind of a mistake? Will I get called out?' They're not going to call " me out because I belong here. And I can belong to pretty much anything I set my mind to.

2019

" Getting to be involved in the big decisions, getting to sit on committees…It's given me so much more confidence.

I try to welcome the first years. I'll find that person who looks the most afraid and talk to them…I'm established enough that it doesn't matter if I'm the weirdo. No one will look down on " me because I've been involved and earned the senior people's respect.

2018

" I wanted to make UMSU a better place…I needed to be elected to make big change happen to the things I loved, that had helped me when I was " in such a bad place.

2017

" I really put myself out there, and I still didn't find it easy to make friends. I think that's why volunteering became such a big part of my life. It was that connection with another person. Just being friendly wasn't really enough.

Like it was solely getting involved in Christian Union and volunteering that changed things for me. If I hadn't done that, if I hadn't had people welcome " me…

2016

" I'm the first one in my family to go to university…I was accepted through the Melbourne Access Scheme…I'm from a lower-CS background, first in family, semi-rural, all that kind of made university a bit harder…my transition to starting uni was very difficult.

I can imagine there must be a lot of students who go through the same anxiety and perhaps don't come out of " it so well.

Lam's journey

2017

"
When I first came over here, I did not know anybody.

I stayed in student accommodation, it was pretty much like where everybody from different countries staying together and all that. Of course they were the first people I would talk to, and we always went out partying and drinking...I became really close to them.
"

2017

"
It was pretty good until like my second semester. You know when friends keep sort of asking you to go out when you're so busy with study and you have FOMO and all that, and you're like 'I'm just going to go party'. But after that you're like oh I feel bad. I shouldn't do this.

I failed a couple of subjects and everything started to go downhill.
"

2017

"
Because of me struggling with my studies, I kind of distanced myself [from my friends], you know, tried to focus on my studies.

And I guess they were kind of unhappy with it. Their responses were like 'Hey don't be like that, come on, have a break' and every time I see them, I'm like 'what do I do?' I felt bad. Like really bad...
"

2018

"
I didn't go back [to Taiwan] for the entire year, did the winter course and all that. I was under a lot of stress, so I got sick so often.

I [also] worried about my parents. Because there were some family issues and I wasn't there, and my brother was there....I felt pretty left out, from my family.

And I think that's when I sort of like fell into a depression. It was then that made me feel like... I was feeling really bad. I was so down. I was literally just M.I.A from everyone. I would just stay at home, stay in the corner and not do anything. I couldn't eat, couldn't bathe. Everything was too hard. I was contemplating suicide.
"

2019

"
Its so different now. I'm trying to cope with like my studies and my mental health and all that.

The counsellor told me; was there anything before that you particularly enjoyed, like a hobby or anything. And I told her, like; photography. I would always use my film camera to take shots.

And so I did, like when I go for walks, and that... I guess that allows me to see what I enjoy in Melbourne. And it pretty much made me happier.

And I guess like photography was something that connected me to [my friends]. And now I feel much closer to them because they know what I like, and I know of what they like and like we click on that.
"

2018

"
So when the semester started I had to go to school. So I pushed myself and went and saw my friends, it was another group of friends, the not-so-party ones.

I started seeing a psychiatrist. I started medication. After a few months I sort of started to feel like at least a tiny motivation.

I went back to Taiwan for an internship. When I went back it was like... it was pretty new. I never knew my parents could be so kind to me! I came back and I looked....happier, It sort of reset everything.
"

2018

"
My best friend from Taiwan [called me on Skype] and was like 'are you OK', or 'what happened to you'. She just knew something was up. I told her I couldn't do this any more. I don't even feel like I can leave [Melbourne].

So that gave me the push to seek help. It was then that I realised I should seek counselling.

When my brother came back he found the entire place was dark, and messy... He literally did like cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, everything.
"

6.4 Breaking out of insecurity

As these students' journeys demonstrate, participation and belonging are mutually-reinforcing.

Participation in campus life is often the first step to overcoming insecurity. Getting involved builds social networks and opens doors towards other opportunities. However some students face greater financial, academic, cultural or psychological barriers than others to participation.

Students highlighted the need for:

- Improved support services. The most insecure students need financial, psychological, health or academic support to lessen the stressors that prevent them from particiating. Other initatives to improve student life are unlikely to succeed until these basic services are accessible, affordable and timely.

Respondents suggested access to affordable sports facilities are highly valued, that wait times at university's counselling service are prohibitive and students do not know who to turn to for academic support.

- Centralised, accessible information: So many opportunities for participation exist on campus that there is something for everyone. However, many students are unaware of relevant information or suitable opportunities.

- Organised & accessible opportunities to meet new people: Many students might have difficulties striking up conversations with strangers and can benefit from organised activities. Running activities similar to Orientation Week throughout the year can

ensure these students have ongoing opportunities to participate.

- Paid positions: Financial stress can make it difficult for students to participate in unpaid extra-curricular activities. Paid participation opportunities can help connect students to the University, building a sense of agency and belonging on campus.
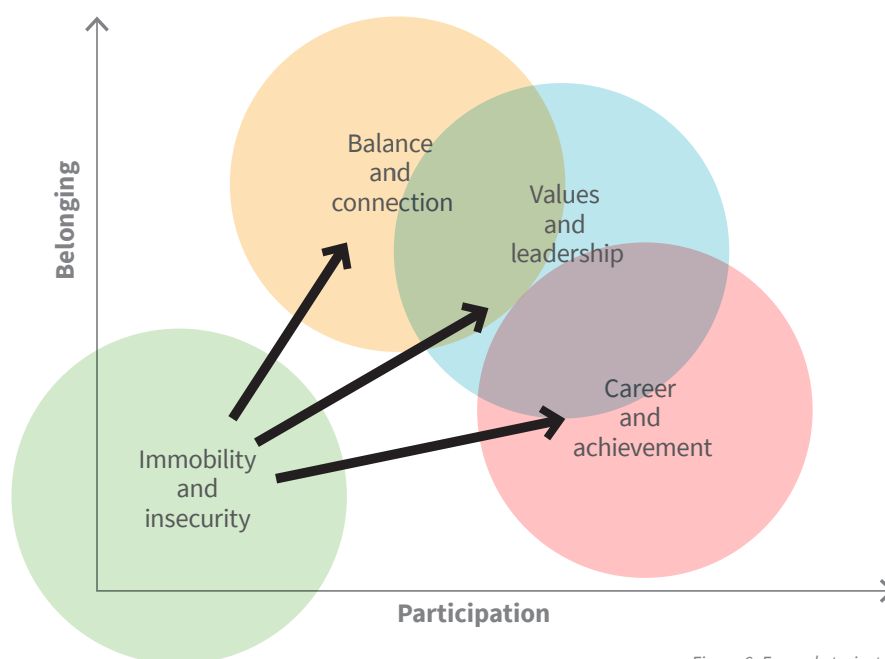
∧ Figure 6: Example trajectories from insecurity to other 'modes of connection'

∧ *Melbourne University Farmers' Market. Credit: University of Melbourne*

7. Towards the 'Melbourne experience'

A disconnect exists between the engaged, empowered student envisaged by the NSP and many students' current reality of insecurity.

The idealised experience

The New Student Precinct imagines a vision of campus life in which students are flexible, empowered and engaged.

Its co-creation approach assumes that students are self-aware, self-directed and committed to working collaboratively towards the creation of spaces that reflect collective interests and aspirations. Ideally, students will have a cosmopolitan and civic-minded outlook, be ready to embrace diversity, make new friendships and contribute to cross-cultural understanding. Students in the New Student Precinct are curious, creative, enterprising and autonomous. They have the time and motivation to engage with, and lead, campus activations, as well as participate in University decision-making.

While there are many students who fit this profile, and who have already been engaged in the NSP's co-creation process, there are many others who do not.

In addition, **the Melbourne student is imagined to be highly engaged with the NSP's institutional goals of sustainability, Indigenous reconciliation and social inclusion.**

The NSP aligns with the University's high level sustainability values and embeds sustainability principles into its design, construction and cultural activations. The NSP offers a pedagogical opportunity in relation to sustainability; through innovative design and communication it can raise awareness of sustainability issues.

The NSP is also a signature project of the University's Reconciliation Action Plan. The Precinct aims for 'transformational change and deep cultural engagement' through the embedding of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives to its built design and placemaking approach.[7] The Living Pavilion was a major placemaking project and arts-science collaboration that activated the NSP site for three weeks in May 2019, and reflected this commitment to University-wide reconciliation. This followed other Indigenous arts and cultural activations (the Outdoor Gallery and Next Wave program) that have taken place on the NSP site. While these present significant platforms for Indigenous students and artists to tell their stories and shape the University's cultural landscape, their temporary nature raises a question about what a long-term commitment to Indigenous knowledge-making should look like in the NSP.

This conversation needs to include Indigenous students, staff and stakeholders in order to be meaningful and accepted by the wider Indigenous community.

The NSP's cultural and institutional ambitions are significant. The challenge lies in ensuring that students have the capacity to engage with the full range of possibilities offered by the NSP, and to become its champions. The following sections of this report reflect on what is required for students to fulfil this ideal of meaningful participation, autonomy and connection.

The lived reality

The NSP responds to a rapidly transforming student body that is becoming both more diverse and dispersed. There are approximately 60 000 students currently enrolled at the University of Melbourne. Over one-third (37%) of students are enrolled as international students, and postgraduate students now exceed undergraduate students.[8] There are also increasing numbers of students from regional and remote areas, and efforts to improve access to domestic students from a Non-English Speaking Background.

Significantly, the current student cohort reflects unprecedented levels of global mobility, and is a transient and disconnected cohort.[9]

At an individual level, reports of mental health issues, including stress, anxiety and isolation, are on the rise.[10] This reality of disconnection and insecurity has also been reiterated by internal reporting on the student experience.[11] These forms of insecurity relate to the many adjustments and reorientations that take place as students begin life at university, including; living independently without family support, financial insecurity, cultural insecurity, and uncertainty about academic ability and future life and career pathways.

These experiences of insecurity impact students' ability and motivation to participate in University life. Many students feel the pressure of attending a prestigious university – either as a local or international student – and the need to make the most of the opportunities available to them while they are here. For some students,

7. University of Melbourne. *Social Inclusion Barometer* (Melbourne: Chancellery, University of Melbourne, 2019).

8. Ibid.

9. Ruth Fincher, Paul Carter, Paolo Tombesi, Kate Shaw and Andrew Martel. *Transnational and Temporary: Students, Community and Place-Making in Central Melbourne* (Melbourne: School of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, 2009).

10. Chi Baik et al. Enhancing Student Mental Wellbeing: A Handbook for Academic Educators. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2017.

11. University of Melbourne, 2019.

opportunities are experienced as burdens.

"I think there was a period of time in uni where I was trying to do as much as I can. And I felt very burnt out... I'm always kind of looking to the next person or friend. And they always still seem to be doing double what I'm doing. So, it's like, 'Is that what I'm meant to be doing right now?'".

Dealing with insecurity involves navigating conflicting information about what they should be participating in. Such pressures account for many students' desire to find private, 'secret', or 'quiet' spaces on campus. There is a strong desire among students to 'switch off', and escape obligations to connect and participate.

The realities of social and cultural insecurity underpin the wider challenge of ensuring an inclusive and socially cohesive campus experience. The 'transnational and temporary' nature of the student community means that traditional approaches to increasing connectedness and engagement require rethinking.[12] Older notions of community are becoming less applicable for understanding contemporary forms of intercultural encounter and attachment.[13] As students become increasingly mobile, they seek out a range of more fluid attachments and identities, and the communities they produce are porous and unstable. These new forms of community give rise to a multiplication of difference and increasingly complex dynamics of cultural diversity.[14]

In the University context, **it can no longer be assumed that students will share common cultural interests, aspirations, political persuasions or points of reference.** New approaches to community-building are needed which respond to this multiplicity, and which offer a range of entry points for engagement with, and participation in, different forms of student life.

There is a growing body of literature on how these forms of cultural complexity might be managed through new approaches to urban planning.[15] **These propose developing belonging and collective agency through collaborative forms of cultural participation and knowledge production.**[16] This report draws on these perspectives to consider what the potential of existing cultural activity among students might be, and how the NSP might support this activity.

Drivers of the 'Melbourne experience'

Our research identifies four drivers of the idealised 'Melbourne experience'. Each of these drivers are explained in more detail in the following section.
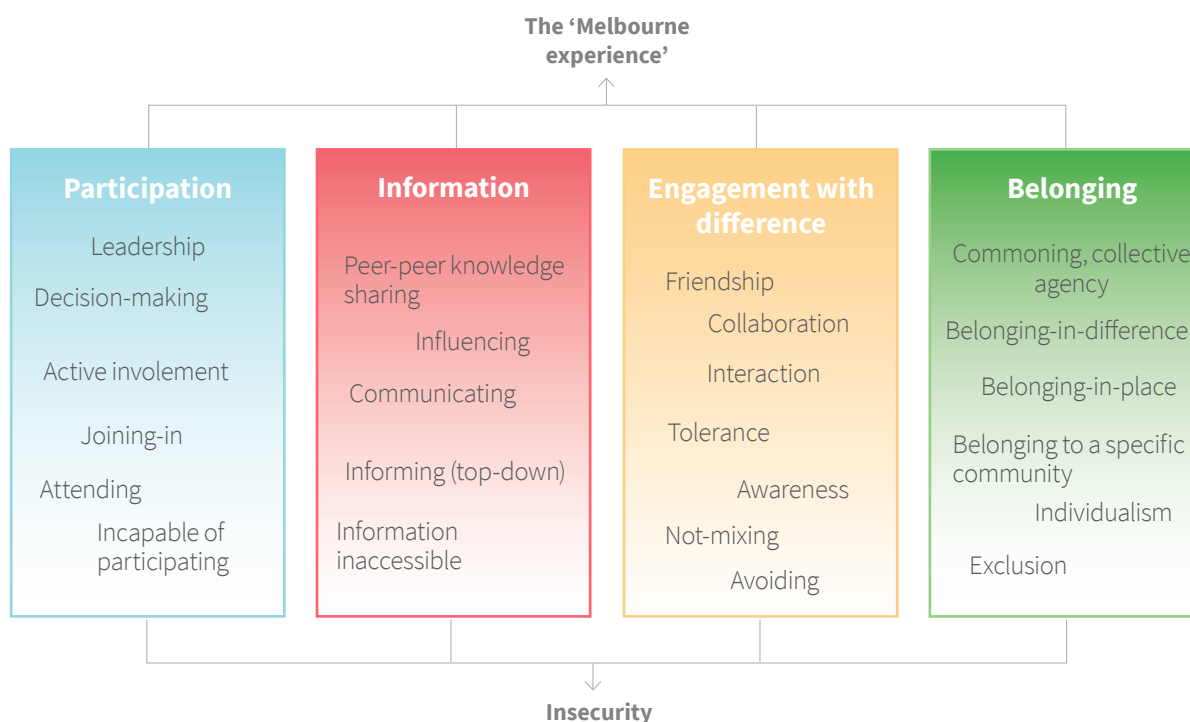
The 'Melbourne experience'

Participation	Information	Engagement with difference	Belonging
Leadership	Peer-peer knowledge sharing	Friendship	Commoning, collective agency
Decision-making	Influencing	Collaboration	Belonging-in-difference
Active involement	Communicating	Interaction	Belonging-in-place
Joining-in	Informing (top-down)	Tolerance	Belonging to a specific community
Attending	Information inaccessible	Awareness	Individualism
Incapable of participating		Not-mixing	Exclusion
		Avoiding	

Insecurity

Figure 7: The four key drivers that contribute to the 'Melbourne experience'.

12. Fincher et al, Transnational and Temporary, 2009.

13. Jonathan Rowson, Steve Broom and Alasdair Jones, Connected Communities: How Social Networks Power and Sustain the Big Society (London: Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 2010).

14. Noble, Greg. "'Bumping into Alterity': Transacting Cultural Complexities", Continuum 25,6 (2011): 827-840.

15. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, Seeing Like a City (Cambridge: Polity, 2016); Chloe Brown, Anastasios Noulas, Cecilia Mascolo and Vincent Blondel. "A Place-Focused Model for Social Networks in Cities".
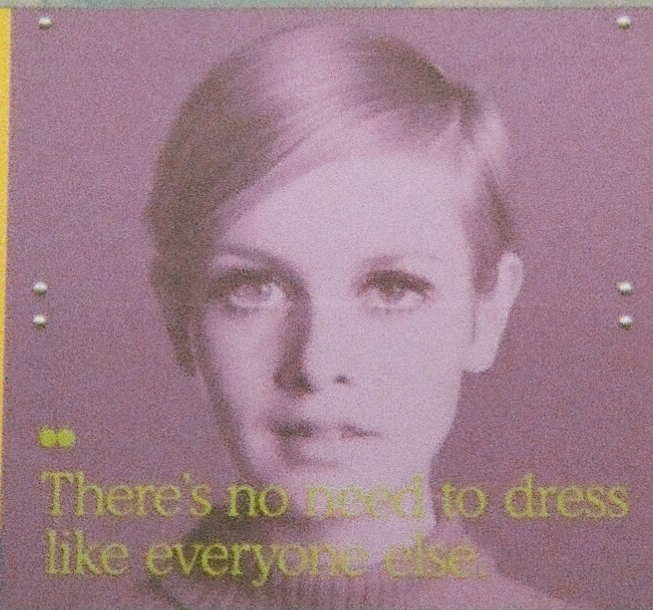
International Conference on Social Computing, (2013) pp. 75-80.

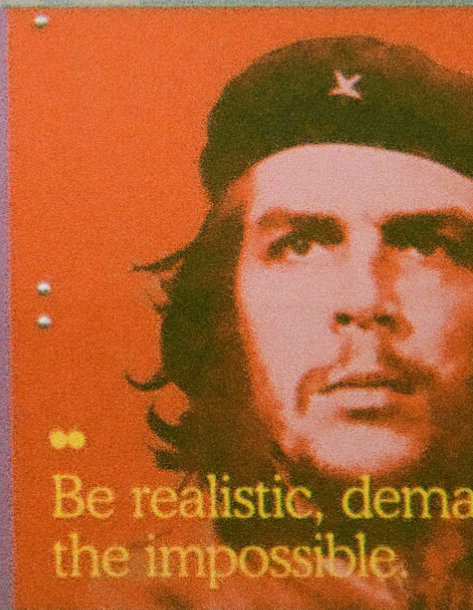16. Ash Amin, Land of Strangers (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)
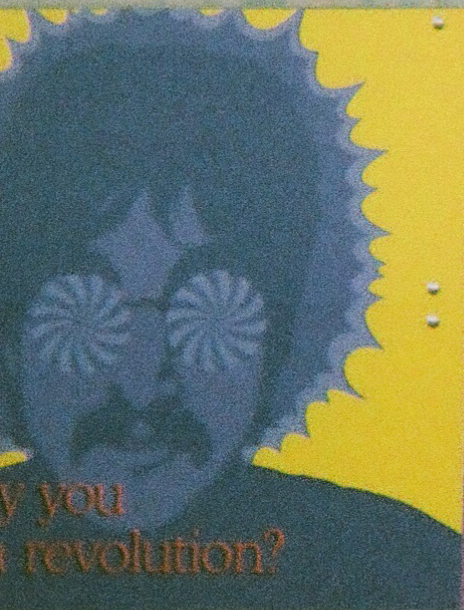
y you
revolution?

There's no need to dress
like everyone else.

Be realistic, dema
the impossible.

The Melbourne Museum. Credit: student interviewee

8. The four drivers in detail

Participation

Participation includes a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activity, including cultural, social and political participation; participation in sports and recreational activity; and participation in decisionmaking. Clubs and societies remain a central way in which students participate in campus life. However, many students look to activities outside the University, such as church groups, creative networks or sports clubs. These networks of participation and community are depicted in the 'Networks of community' section of this report, on pg 38.

There is an array of different modes and levels of participation in University life. These range from leadership and decision-making; active involvement; joining in; attendance; and those who are incapable of participating. While there may be an ideal of autonomous, self-organising students, the majority of students are more likely to simply attend, or join in with events that have already been organised or curated for them.

Students' stories tell us that there are a range of capacities and conditions which enable their participation, and push some to take on an a more autonomous and active role, in some cases, with a sense of collective responsibility. Unlike other cultural precincts or urban planning

projects, the pedagogical context of the University context offers an opportunity to develop these capacities and teach community members to participate over time.

Leadership

"Fortunately for me I became employed by the University and also I got myself involved in student union, UMSU, GSA. So partly joining UMSU and GSA was an extension of what I was doing, an extension of advisory roles, helping students to understand how to integrate, make new friends and navigate around the challenges".

Active involvement

"Well, I think since I joined a couple of clubs and societies at the beginning of the year I really felt like it's been a much more social place for me and along with that there's an increased sense of belonging. You just see people you know around campus and you say hi to them. You say hi to tutors and lecturers that you might not know before".

Attending / joining in

"I joined the Cast-On charity club, we do like little knitting things and sell it for charity. I don't know how far the actual selling thing works but it's kind of fun… The thing is being a really introverted person I push myself into situations where you kind of have to talk to people but not quite, so it kind of works well for me".

Incapacity to participate

"I don't go for tutorials… I guess social anxiety. I think I will fuck something up, or like um like, I guess in social situations panic attacks can be present so I will avoid them totally…Unless it's a group of people that I'm really familiar with. If not, I wouldn't interact".

Participation

Leadership

Decision-making

Active involvement

Joining-in

Attending

Incapable of participating

⌃ *Figure 8: Key driver: Participation*

Engagement with difference

The student body is increasingly diverse. There are a growing number of international students at University of Melbourne, but this should not be the primary way of understanding difference on campus. The landscape of difference is much more complex, and includes local students from migrant backgrounds, students from low SES backgrounds, rural students, and significant cultural diversity among international students who bring varied expectations and capacities with them. **All of these differences contribute to the diverse realities of participation and belonging on campus.**

The presence of international students has created the impression of an increasingly segregated student body, leading parallel cultural lives. The tendency towards separation is exacerbated by institutional structures – both inside and outside the university – that provide specific kinds of information and support to international students, or channel them into particular accommodation and social networks.[17] For many students, these structures provide easily accessible or 'ready-made' forms of community. International students, for example, report making connections through WhatsApp or WeChat groups with other students of the same background, long before they arrive at the University. A degree of institutional and social separation is, to some extent, inevitable. These 'co-ethnic networks' are particularly important when institutional support is lacking.[18]

There is currently a climate of negative media reporting and political commentary that frames international students as a 'threat' to teaching quality or the cohesion of the student community.[19] Such hostility and suspicion contributes to division, and the feeling among many international students that they are not valued as equal members of the University community.

Given the growing size of the international student cohort there

---

Collaboration across difference

"I was put in a group assignment in my third year with an international student from China. I had a very negative perception of many Chinese international students from other group assignments, where I often found they didn't have good English. … And she became one of my best friends".

Interaction across difference

"I try to explore other cultures as much as possible. Because once I finish my studies I'm going to like, go back to India it's like gonna be the same thing again so I might as well push myself to other cultures as much as possible".

Awareness of difference

"So, here it may not be very accepted, or maybe people might label you … or ostracise you by labeling you. So, you want to fit in. Yeah. So, you adjust".

Engagement with Difference

Friendship

Collaboration

Interaction

Tolerance

Awareness

Not-mixing

Avoiding

Tolerance

"Especially being a bit of a nerd at high school, where no one really drank, coming to uni, and they're like, 'Yeah, sherry party!' I was like, 'Thank you but no thank you.' Now I've sort of adjusted to it. I understand that as being a big part of university culture and that for many people their Monday trip to the pub is their home in a way that I found home in Christian Union and in volunteering, they found it in the pub".

Not mixing, segregation

"I find that a lot of Chinese students will stick together, whereas like other exchange students from other countries will often be a lot more involved in my groups, my friendship groups".

⌃ *Figure 9: Key driver: Engagement with difference*

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17. Ruth Fincher and Kate Shaw, "Enacting separate social worlds: 'international' and 'local' students in public space in central Melbourne", *Geoforum* 42,5 (2011): 539-549.

18. OECD. *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background,* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018).

19. Robert Burton-Bradley, "Poor English, few jobs: Are Australian universities using international students as 'cash cows'?" ABC, 27 November 2018, 3:08pm https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-25/or-english-no-jobs-little-support-international-students/10513590.

is a pressing need for the University to offer its explicit support for international students. Such support should go beyond tokenistic gestures of 'welcome' to offer resources to students experiencing cultural or financial stress, and include ongoing opportunities for international students to participate in University decisionmaking. Rather than characterise international students as a problem or burden, they could be viewed as a 'learning resource' for students in multicultural contexts.[20] In this respect, **the NSP's emphasis on co-creation has the potential to embed activity that emphasises meaningful cultural exchange, community-building and intercultural learning.**

There is strong desire among students to make friendships that cross cultural lines and social boundaries. However, this is also perceived as difficult, among both local and international students who are time-poor, and already embedded in existing social cliques and networks. Students' encounters with each other are often fleeting, which is a further barrier to making deep and lasting friendships.

Friendship is just one mode of engaging with difference and should not be viewed as the only, or most valuable outcome of mixing. The University can offer students a range of other opportunities for engaging with difference, ranging from active collaboration to raising awareness of difference.

Collaboration across difference is a particularly important mode of activity in complex spaces of diversity. Such forms of collaboration can foster not only intercultural understanding or recognition, but creative resources for navigating risky futures.[21] These flexible, communal resources are increasingly important for fostering a robust politics of solidarity and collective agency.

Collaboration can also contribute to 'cultural intelligence', or the ability to effectively mediate and translate across cultural difference.[22] These cross-cultural skills and orientations are an important vocational capacity for students entering a globalised workforce. Facilitating cultural intelligence should be a central part of the University's efforts to produce flexible, global citizens.

Collaborations can take place across a range of forms, from the arts, to academic pursuits, to sports. Many students are already active in informal kinds of media production and storytelling that could be supported more strongly as sites of collaborative practice and cultural exchange. The NSP's Student Ambassador program and campus activations are also examples of collaboration across difference. There is a strong role for the NSP in encouraging these shared practices of creative collaboration.
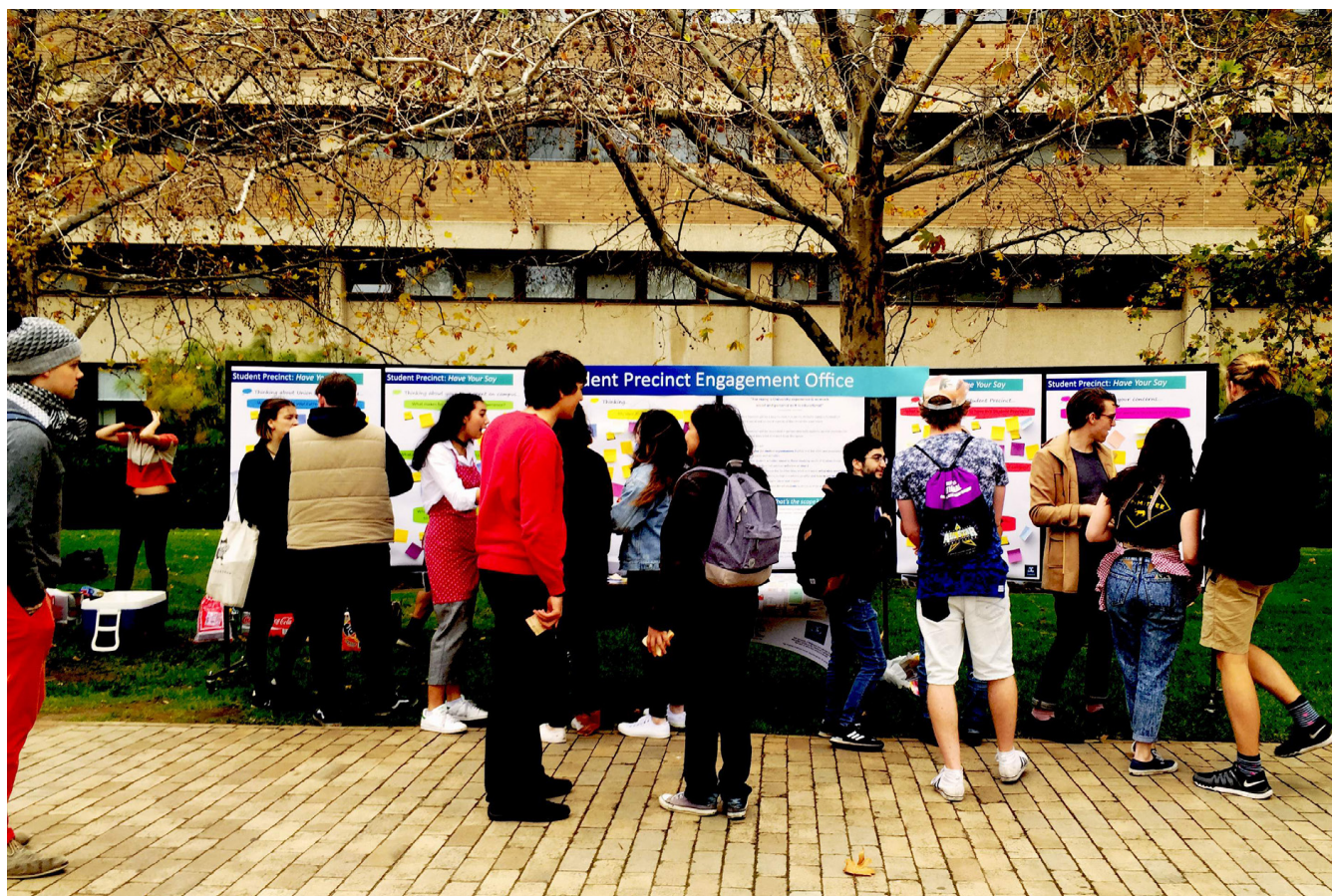
⌃ Students linger around NSP information boards. Credit: NSP team.

20. *International Students at University* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2012), 5.

21. Amin, *Land of Strangers*.

22. Ien Ang, "Navigating complexity: From cultural critique to cultural intelligence", *Continuum* 25,6 (2011): 779–794.

Access to information

Students access information in a variety of ways, ranging from peer-to-peer communication, influencing, communicating, top-down informing, and cases where information is inaccessible.

Overall it appears that students' awareness of existing opportunities, that are promoted by the University through official channels, is low. Centralised or top-down forms of knowledge-sharing are important, but do not always have the same level of engagement with students as peer-to-peer contact.

While students access information via a vast array of networks and platforms, there are barriers to engagement with centralised modes of University communication, including:

■ A lack of proficiency with particular platforms (eg., some students communicate solely through social media and are not used to regularly checking email).

■ Too much involvement in other social media networks and communities. Students do not have time or capacity to engage with information from many different sources.

■ Tone. A feeling amongst some students that University communications are too formal, obscure, or difficult to comprehend.

Peer-to-peer

"Right now it's like everything I found out about post university life has been through other people sharing their personal experiences. I'm not too sure how the university would teach us what to expect afterwards, because you can have workshops, you can have lectures, but at the end of the day, I feel as if human stories and people sharing their experiences and learning experiences ultimately are going to have a much greater impact than a fact sheet about how many people graduate after finishing their undergrad".

Information

Peer-peer knowledge sharing

Influencing

Communicating

Informing (top-down)

Information inaccessible

Information inaccessible

"I want to find some advice from them. But it's a bit hard to. Maybe I need to send emails to them and just wait until they get back. Some of them maybe email back".

"Basically before we landed in Melbourne, everything you know is just from Internet. There's no person or even like a video chat or something to help us".

︿ *Figure 10: Key driver: Information*

Belonging

Belonging and participation are mutually constitutive: belonging enables participation, but is also produced through participation. A strong foundation of both belonging and participation can contribute to more meaningful citizenship. Belonging is a necessary condition for people to engage the civic structures and cultural forms that shape their lives.[23]

Belonging also guards against vulnerability and contributes to resilience.[24] While belonging is an important capacity, it is also difficult to measure. The increasingly porous and unstable forms of community in which students participate mean that belonging is complex and multifaceted. Belonging should not be understood in simple binary terms of inclusion or exclusion. Rather, people have multiple attachments, and can belong to an array of cultural, institutional, or digital spaces.

The NSP has an important role in fostering practices of belonging that can lead to commoning and collective agency, and which supports the University's agendas of sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion. Research with students highlighted the different ways in which students belong.

Commoning / collective agency

"I wanted to make UMSU a better place… I needed to be elected to make big change happen to the things I loved, that had helped me when I was in such a bad place".

"So that appeal for advocacy got me into the women's and disability's department roles because I saw the committees as a way to get a bit of an insight into A). How a university works and B). How I can support two departments that aligned with my demographic? So I'm female and I have a disability".

Belonging-in-difference

"Everyone's quite different. So yeah, I guess if someone is very different and I don't fit in with them particularly, that can be a learning opportunity".

Belonging-in-place

"Melbourne's just like … Yeah, it feels like home. It's like, I can visit a lot of different places that I went to as a kid".

Belonging to specific community

"That's where I felt included. I felt the warmth of friends, of people here, and I also felt that I wanted to belong to them. So yeah, that's why I've been with this church for two years".

Individualism

"I wish I'd been more social and open [at uni] because I'm just starting to make some good friendships now, but I'm not going to lose sleep about it. I have other stuff I do and stuff, so I'm not too bothered".

Exclusion

"My experience as a mature aged student has meant I face some kind of ageist based social exclusion each week…usually delivered unconsciously by young students and young staff employed by the University. I actually don't feel old at all, and am pretty open minded…but am made to feel old when my age is used as a reason for social exclusion".

Belonging

- Commoning, collective agency
- Belonging-in-difference
- Belonging-in-place
- Belonging to a specific community
- Individualism
- Exclusion

⌃ *Figure 11: Key driver: Belonging*

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23. Rimi Khan, Audrey Yue, Nikos Papastergiadis and Danielle Wyatt, *Multiculturalism and Governance*, (Melbourne: Research Unit in Public Cultures, School of Culture and Communication, The University of Melbourne, 2017).

24. OECD. The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018).

2018 NSP Student Ambassadors at work. Credit: New Student Precinct Project, University of Melbourne

9. Networks of community

The diagrams in this section depict the social, digital and institutional networks in which students participate. These networks constitute important spaces of community for students.

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In many cases, these digital networks enable and strengthen connections in real-life. In other instances, connections remain virtual but are nonetheless important for generating belonging. **Some communities are closely institutionally tied to the University, while others are disconnected.**

For many students, official channels of communication and institutional networks are a very peripheral part of their cultural worlds. Many international students are enrolled in WeChat and Weibo groups that connect them with both study-related networks and leisure activities in Melbourne.

These informational networks produce collective knowledge that is critical for navigating student life. Peer-to-peer networks produce shared knowledge that responds most directly to students' needs and interests. This includes practical and informal knowledge that allows students to adapt to life on (and off) campus (e.g., information on classes, restaurant

reviews, shopping discounts, dealing with stress). There is also cultural knowledge that is shared through these networks; it is through participation in these groups that students may develop confidence or the willingness to 'try things out'.

Reading the networks map

The diagram overleaf is a snapshot of students' networks. It is not exhaustive, but attempts to show the multitude of networks and groups that students engage with.[25]

It depicts University organisations and external groups in dark grey, and student-run groups in light grey. These are the networks that have a face-to-face presence. Social media groups are also depicted.

The size of the bubbles in the diagram represent the number of participants in each social media platform. The key below explains the colour-coding in detail.

The 'ties' on the diagram indicate funding or other kinds of infrastructural support between groups. Some qualitative and critical analysis has been required to discern the nature of connections between groups, and what 'counts' as a tie.

Detailed snapshots are presented on the following pages.

Key to the social networks map

- ⬤ Student-run organisations
- ⬤ University-run or external organisations

- (FB) Facebook *- followers*
- (In) Instagram *- followers*
- (Sn) Snapchat *- not quantifiable*
- (Tw) Twitter *- followers*
- (Wc) Wechat *-views per article*
- (Wb) Weibo *-followers*
- (Tc) Tencent QQ *-followers*

- (Li) LinkedIn
- (Av) Broadcast or podcast
- (Tx) Website, blog or print publication

> *Figure 12: Social networks map*

25. Networks are always permeable and porous.[26] The diagram is a 'snapshot' or static representation of a dynamic set of relationships and processes of connection. Networks are also both 'structure' and 'process'.[27] For this reason, our approach to examining students social and digital networks has involved a 'mixed methods' approach to social network analysis, that combines quantitative analysis with ethnography, textual analysis of social media content and case study analysis. The 'networks of community' diagram is an indicative one, intended to highlight clusters of student activity, and the groups and platforms that bring students together around a myriad of different interests, concerns and orientations.

26. Sue Heath, Allison Fuller, Brenda Johnston, "Chasing shadows: defining network boundaries in qualitative social network analysis", *Qualitative Research* 9,5 (2009): 645-661.

27. Gemma Edwards, *Mixed-method Approaches to Social Network Analysis* (Manchester: Economic and Social Research Council, National Centre for Research Methods, 2010).

Take a Look at Melbourne
Wc <100,000 views per article

City Discounts
Australia discount and life information
Wb 117,718

Eat in Melbourne
Restaurant recommendations
Wb 55,351

AIESEC Australia
Fb 56,505

Planetshakers
FB 43,056

AIESEC

Melbourne Micro Life
(latest Melbourne food, travel, and life information)
Wb 181,643

City of Melbourne

City Discounts
Wc Page
<40,000 views per article

Discount information in Melbourne
Wb 30,802

Melbourne Online
Wc Page >20,000 views per article

Melbourne City Association
Melbourne news
Wb 78,888

Melbourne Today
Melbourne news
Wb 50,096

Planetshakers Church

Melbourne Uni Memes
Fb 29,938

Overhead at the University of Melbourne
FB 1,558

Unimelb Confessions
Fb 73,110

Unimelb Love Letters
FB 17,298

Melbourne Uni Alumni
Fb 19,852

Chinese Scholars and Students Association
Wc 19,922

Cross Cultures Church

Orfam

Habitat for Humanity

Save the Children

Oaktree

Liberal Party Australia

Australian Labor Party

Greens Australia

Science Students' Society

Melbourne Arts Students' Society

Clubs & Societies (200+)

Graduate Student Association

UMSU International

MU Student Union

UMSU Media

Women's dept

Farrago

Creative Arts

Union House Theatre

Activities

Welfare

Education Public

Education Academic

Engineering Faculty

MU sport

Stop 1

FBE Faculty
Fb 489,293

Faculty of Business & Economics

Science Faculty

Law Faculty

Colleges

University College
Queen's
Trinity
Ormond
St Hilda's
St Mary's
Medley Hall
Newman
Janet Clarke
International House

Chancellry

UoM
Fb 418,210

UoM
In 70,000

MSD Faculty

Education Faculty

Fine Arts & Music

Medicine, Dentistry & Health-Sci

Arts Faculty

Vet & Ag science

NSP project management team

Libraries

FMAA

Australian National University

Student unions

The map of communities on this page and the page overleaf highlights the ongoing importance of the student union for fostering student activity and belonging. Both UMSU and GSA support a huge number of clubs and societies.

Graduate groups tend to include more discipline-specific groups or groups connected to professional associations.

Undergraduate union groups are more diverse, cultural and activity-based, including some which are very niche and others which are very large. UMSU's communications provide one of the more effective structures for disseminating information to students.

Some of these groups connect to external stakeholders, especially churches, political parties and NGOs.

There is a perception among some international students that they are excluded from UMSU. Although there is an 'UMSU International' office, it is felt that cultural diversity should be better represented in its other branches. The current structure of the undergraduate union seperates international students from local students.

Graduate Student Association
FB 11,521
GSA working groups
GSA tickets
Tw 418
Wb ??
In 1,474
GSA Committee reps

Built Industry Group
Fb 1,191
Fb 1091 Consulting Group
Fb 250 Bioinformatics Grad Assoc.
BusinessOne Consulting
Fb 674
Outlook Rural Health Club
Graduate Backyard Cricket Club
Fb 1,809
Fb 2,248 Australia Award Scholars
OCULUS
Sri Lankan Graduates' Society
Fb 365

Graduate Group of Student Parents
Fb 42
Asia Institute Grad Group
Fb 142 Language & Linguistics Students
Wellbeing Arts Graduate Student Group
Fb 575
Cancer Society
Fb 190 SOFI
Wilderness Medical Students Society
In Ws
Fb 700
Fb 10 Agrifoodies

Fb 182 MD Queer
Fb 1022 AntiTHESIS
Ws
Tw 983
In 763
Fb 157 Amphora
Ws Issue
Fb 25 AWWSUM
Crossing Borders Melbourne
In 406
Ws
Tw 98
Fb 984

Fb 2,582
In 406

Chilean Research Group of Australia
Fb 224
Grad groups (100+)
Fb 169 Unimelb PRIDE
Community Students in Primary Care Research
Navigators
Fb 264 Australia Students Society of Haemology
SYNAPSE
Fb 910
In 216 Students of Landscape Architecture
Fb 188
FB 3,702
Bangladeshi Students' Society

Optometry Students' Society
Students of Royal Melbourne
Fb 130
Students of Pharmacology
Fb 303
Speech Pathology Students' Society
University of Melbourne Medical Students' Society

Chinese Culture Society
175 T
Cantonese Students Association
Chinese Garment & History Society
Au
FB 138
Wc 400
Australia-China Youth Association
Chinese Music Group
In 334
637 Wb
FB 3,067
Wc 600
FB 6,200
Malaysians of Melbourne Uni
FB 15,681
Science Students' Society
Book C
Fb 3,962
In 390
Pl

UMSU international
FB 1,400
Tx news-letter
Queer
Tx zine
In 104
bilities
you-tube
flickr
spotify
MU Student Union
Sn ???
Ws
Mailing

People of Colour
Myriad Magazine
Tx
FB 448
FB 560
Rowden White Library
FB 1,820
In 488
Clubs & Societies (200+)
Newsletter 20-
Melbourne

Chinese-language information networks

The Weibo and WeChat groups depicted at the top of this diagram are Chinese-language information forums that target international students, but are run by external businesses or networks.

Many of these groups are lifestyle oriented, and offer shopping and restaurant discounts, or cultural information about life in Melbourne.

These groups highlight how many international students navigate the city and form community in the absence of more structured forms of support offered by the University, and how important locally-based Chinese-language social media is in this process.

External organisations

The grey bubbles to the right of the diagram depict external organisations that impact student life, such as political groups and churches.

Some of these groups are directly connected to student clubs, and raise the question of what role these external stakeholders should play in shaping campus life.

The absence of arts and cultural stakeholders is notable, and suggests an opportunity for University partnerships that could enhance opportunities for cultural and creative participation.

Student-run social media

At the bottom of the diagram are a plethora of independent social media groups run by students themselves.

These exist in both English and Chinese. They reflect a desire to connect with the University of Melbourne 'brand' but do so outside of formal structures provided by the Universeity and Unions.

These groups range from honest and humorous forums for sharing experiences to more serious spaces for disseminating information.
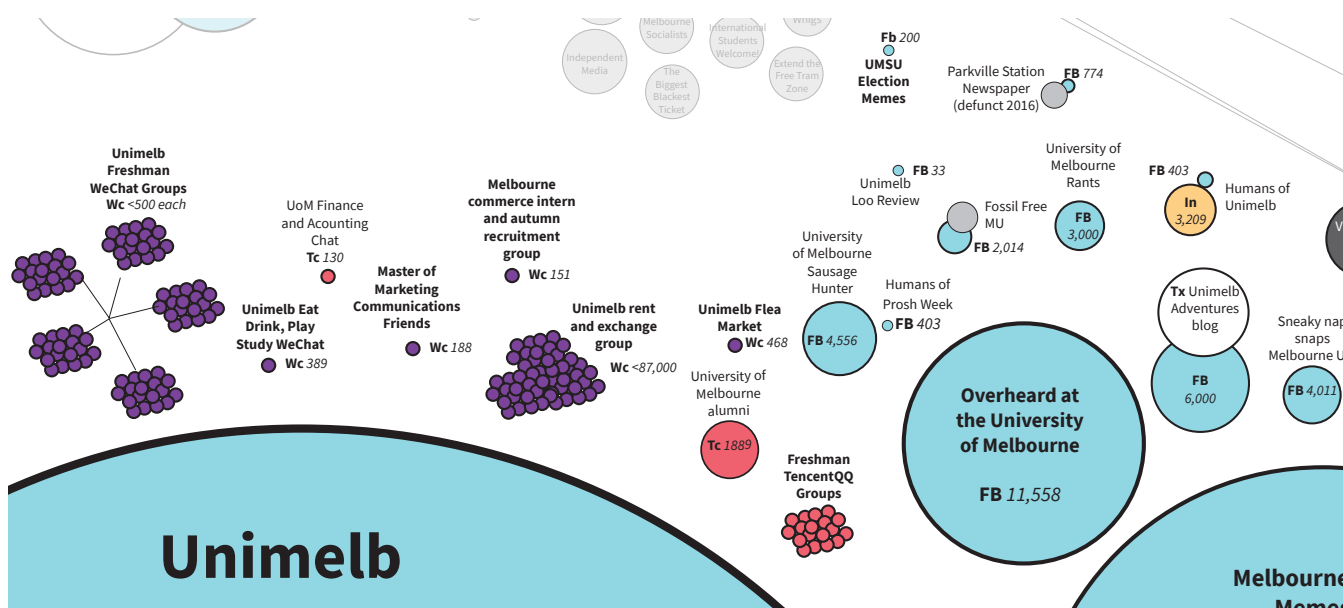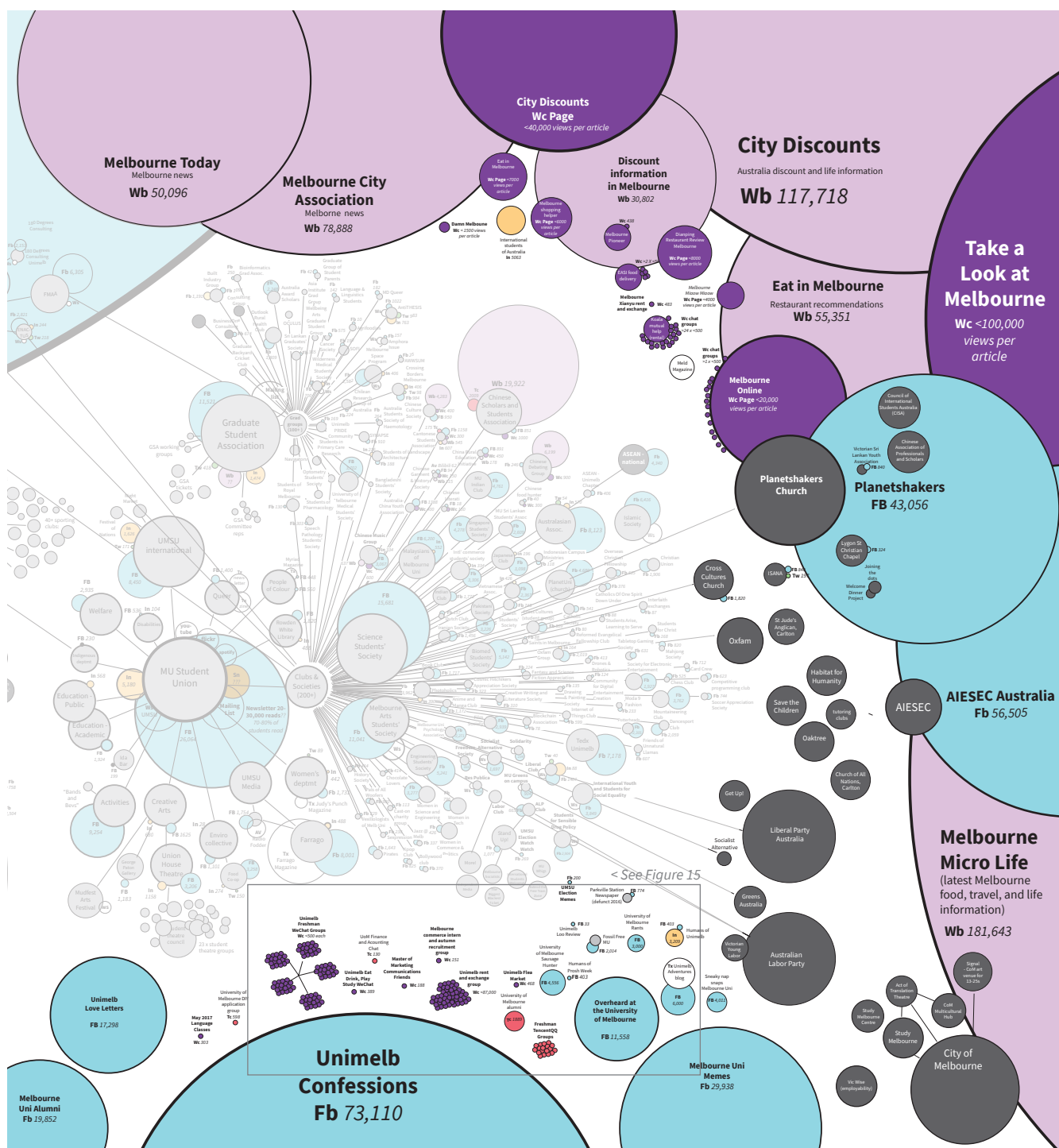

Figure 13: Detail of student-run social media, social networks map

City Discounts
Wc Page <40,000 views per article

Melbourne Today
Melbourne news
Wb 50,096

Melbourne City Association
Melborne news
Wb 78,888

Discount information in Melbourne
Wb 30,802

City Discounts
Australia discount and life information
Wb 117,718

Take a Look at Melbourne
Wc <100,000 views per article

Eat in Melbourne
Restaurant recommendations
Wb 55,351

Melbourne Online
Wc Page <20,000 views per article

Planetshakers
FB 43,056

AIESEC Australia
Fb 56,505

Melbourne Micro Life
(latest Melbourne food, travel, and life information)
Wb 181,643

< See Figure 15

Unimelb Love Letters
FB 17,298

Unimelb Confessions
Fb 73,110

Melbourne Uni Memes
Fb 29,938

Melbourne Uni Alumni
Fb 19,852

^ *Figure 14: Highlight on external networks, social networks map*

10.　References

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