

THE GEOGRAPHY OF INNOVATION

Making sense of innovation places and spaces.

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OVERVIEW

Towards definitions

Essential ingredients of innovation places and spaces

Insights: Brookings Innovation Districts

Entrepreneurial Eco-systems from EDA friends

Deciding 'best fit' innovation programs: Checklist

COVID-19: preparing for recovery

Spotlight on Liverpool City Council and City of Greater Bendigo

TOWARDS DEFINITIONS

Plethora of terms: precincts, hubs, tech parks, incubators, clusters...

Not an exact science, but vital for clear purpose & performance

Australian Government on 'innovation precincts', October 2018:

3 DISTINCTIVE INNOVATION PLACES AND SPACES:

Innovation Precincts, Districts or Hubs, Co-Working Centres, Maker Spaces:
focus on locality, region or neighbourhood.

Industry Clusters:
focus on industry sectors.

Incubators, Accelerators, Entrepreneurial Hubs, Science or Technology Parks:
focus on business enterprises and universities.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

ATTRIBUTES

- Concentration of innovative and entrepreneurial activity by a critical mass of businesses.
- Excellent universities and training bodies for skills and research.
- Mix of supportive institutions & infrastructure, e.g. financiers, civic leaders.
- Ready access to skilled people, customers, suppliers.
- Deliberate & effective vehicles for collaboration & joint action.
- Shared identity & vision of success for the innovation place/space.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

DYNAMICS

- Power in proximity, but not automatic.
- Sustained effort to understand the innovation place & activate its power.
- Magnetic effect of strong interaction & engagement between diverse participants.
- Not just industry concentration or co-location.
- Eco-systems: organic, self-directed, collaborative & slightly chaotic communities.
- Open to unplanned interactions & serendipitous opportunities.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS:

DYNAMICS

- Lightning rod for connectivity & collaboration.
- Accelerate abilities to innovate, compete & serve needs of customers and communities.
- Social capital is key - for trust & relationship-building.
- Mutually-beneficial knowledge-sharing, cross-fertilization of ideas, joint action & opportunities.
- Thrive on diversity, serendipity & adversity.

BEWARE PITFALLS

Beware premature projects; learn what you don't know.

Don't just follow latest fads.

Avoid copying Silicon Valley... or other well-promoted innovation stories.

Not generic innovation programs, but tailored to distinctive local identity.

Don't either overestimate or underestimate your power as local government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES IN INNOVATION PLACES

- **A civic leader and direction-setter**, helping to promote the identity and legitimacy of the innovation place, talking it up, communicating its community benefits.
- **A sophisticated purchaser**, using its purchasing and commissioning power as a lead customer, encouraging new competitive capabilities from participants in the innovation place.
- **A broker of knowledge and relationships**, facilitating the sharing of economically-useful knowledge and the strengthening of relationships and connections, especially between parties with seemingly different interests.
- **An infrastructure and information provider**, ensuring particularly that infrastructure projects also serve to assist the innovation place's priorities.
- **A responsive regulator**, ensuring that regulatory regimes operate to help, not hinder, competitive and innovative solutions and opportunities pursued by participants in the innovation place. It can also include the alignment of planning and infrastructure policies with economic development strategies locally.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO, VICTORIA LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL, NSW

1. What are you doing to create an innovation place/space in your local government area?
What are its features and how does it work?
2. Why did you choose this approach as best fit for your community?
3. What results, impact, achievements can you show to date? How do you know?

INSIGHTS TO MAKE SENSE OF INNOVATION PLACES AND SPACES

Lessons on Innovation Districts from the Brookings Institution.

Lessons from friends of EDA on entrepreneurial eco-systems.

Deciding best fit innovation programs for your community.

BROOKINGS INNOVATION DISTRICTS

- Not isolated technology parks, but compact, vibrant districts.
- Mixture of housing, jobs and social amenities.
- Innovation districts combine economic, physical and networking assets.
- Uncommon connections nurture economic prosperity, and social inclusion, liveability and sustainability.



Photo by Vidar Nordli-Mathisen on Unsplash

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO-SYSTEMS

- Economic growth and social dynamism
- Mainstream businesses, as well as high tech start-ups
- Be alert to myths about high growth companies
- Knowledge from customers and commerce, not just universities
- Solve problems that matter, business-led not tech-led
- Interactions and interdependence, not linear and sequential

Photo by chuttersnap on Unsplash



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BEST FIT INNOVATION: A CHECKLIST

QUESTION 1. What is the prime reason that the innovation place/space exists? What is its purpose? What 'pains' and 'gains' does it aim to address?

QUESTION 2. What type of innovation place/space can best achieve this purpose?

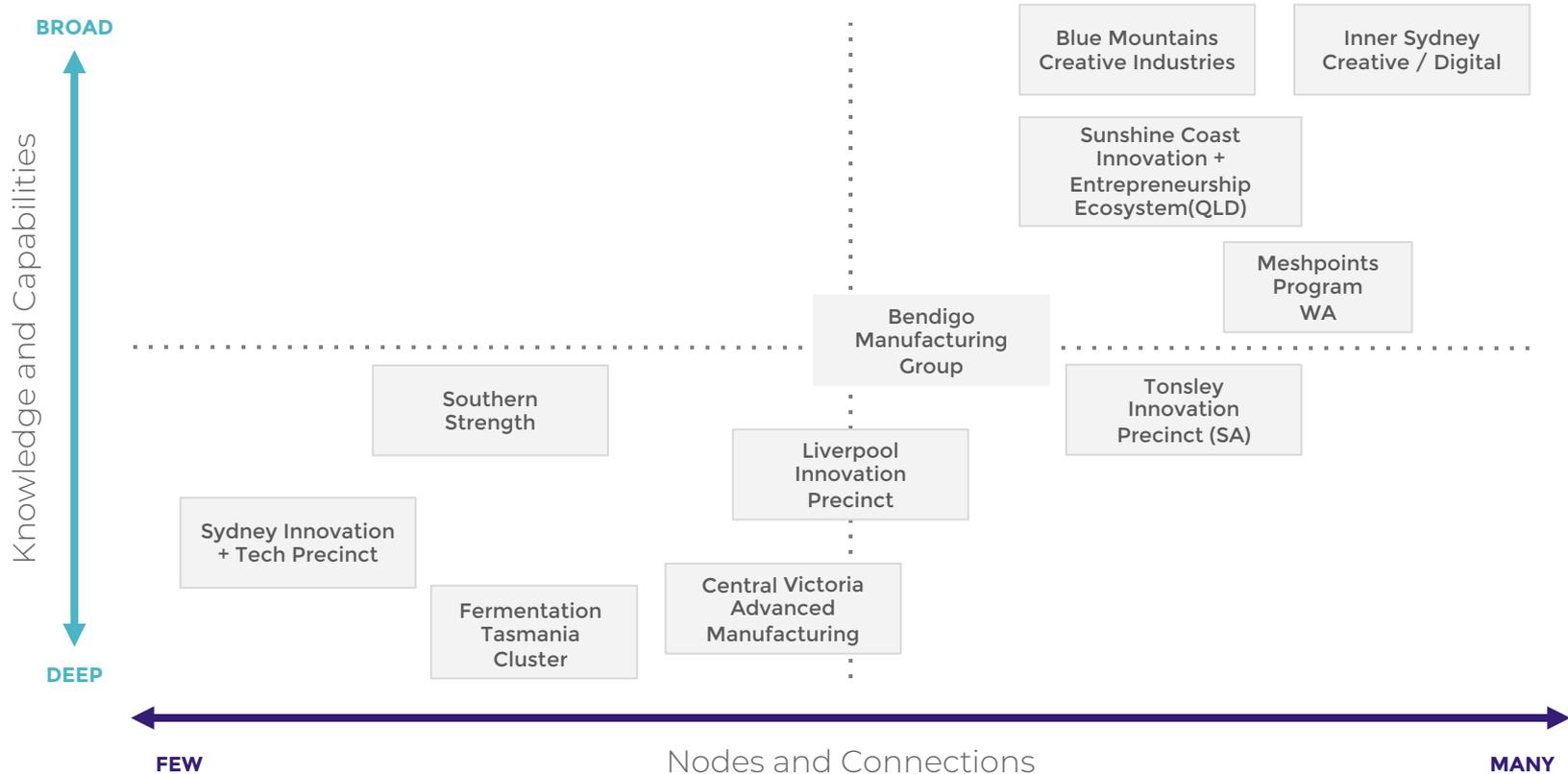


QUESTION 3. What are the distinguishing features of the innovation place/space and its stage of development?



QUESTION 4. What practical programs are most likely to achieve results for the innovation place/space?

KEY ACTIVE INGREDIENTS OF INNOVATION PLACES/ SPACES



A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a tram is partially visible, moving from left to right. The street is paved with cobblestones. In the background, there are buildings with classical architectural features, including arches and columns. A few pedestrians are walking on the sidewalk. The lighting suggests it's daytime.

PREPARING FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

- Role of innovation places and spaces.
 - COVID-19 crisis once in 100 years; orthodox policies impotent.
 - Opportunity to re-think the foundations of prosperity.
- Innovation places help recovery as:
 - a vehicle for intelligence, knowledge sharing, learning & networking;
 - structure for fast response, collaborative action & trialing innovative projects;
 - as a transition to new ways of working.
 - The importance of the everyday economy.

THANK YOU.

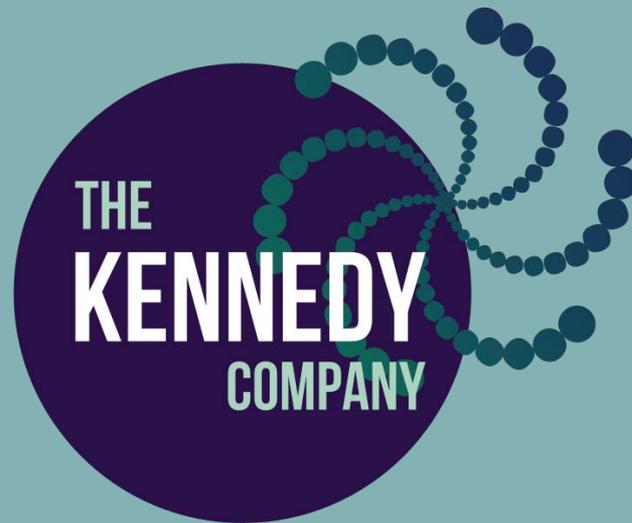
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