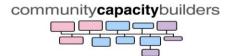
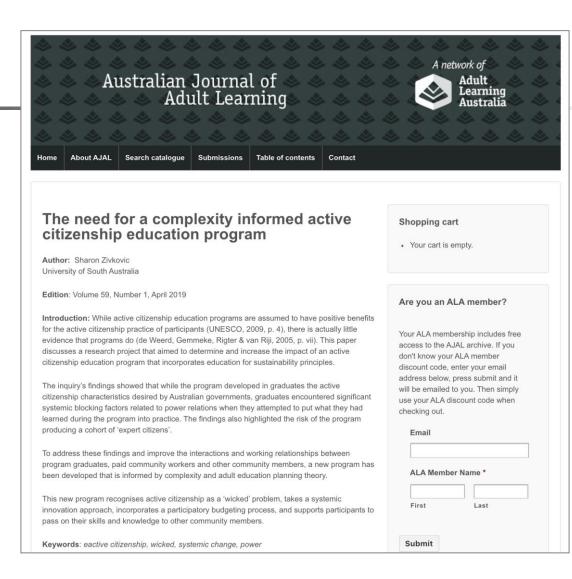
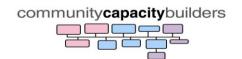
# The need for a complexity informed active citizenship education program

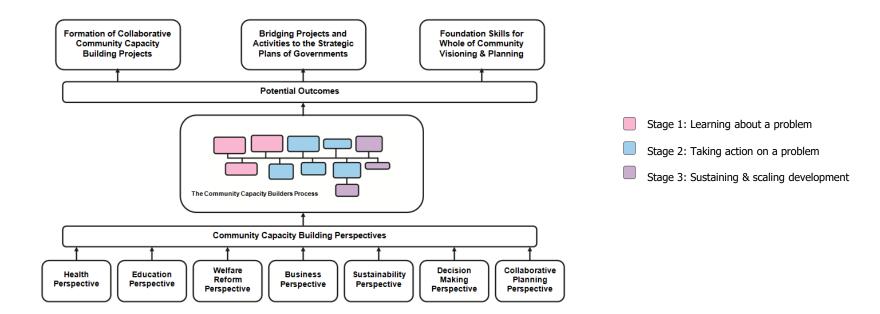
Dr Sharon Zivkovic

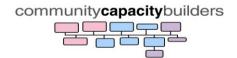






#### **Original Active Citizenship Program**

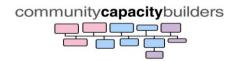




# Education for Sustainability Elements

- Imagining a better future
- Systemic thinking
- Critical thinking and reflection
- Participation in decision-making
- Working in partnerships

Tilbury & Wortman 2004, p. 11



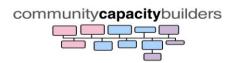
# **Education for Sustainability Elements**

- Assumed if programs contain elements:
  - Graduates become active participants and decisionmakers in change processes

Tilbury & Wortman, 2004, p. 9

 Graduates are able to influence the organisations and the wider society that they interact with

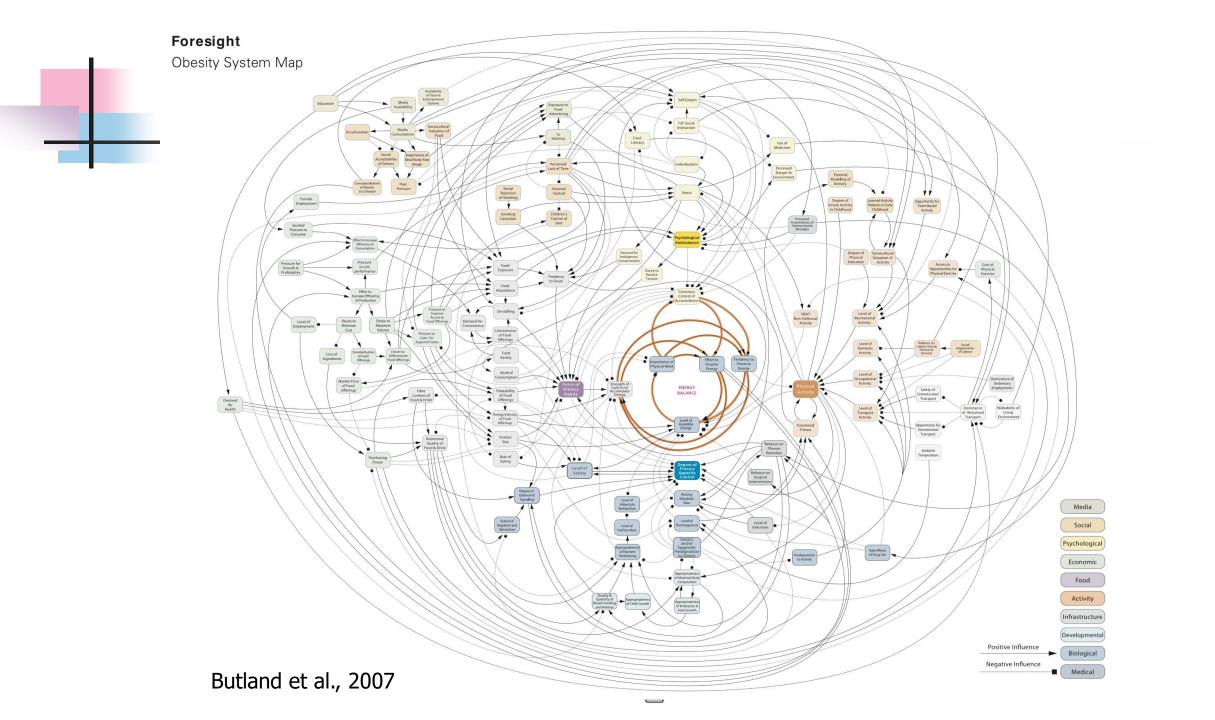
Tilbury, 2007



#### Active Citizenship

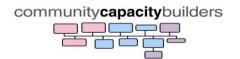
- Little evidence that active citizenship education programs have an impact on active citizenship practice de Weerd et al., 2005, p. vii
- Questionable if active citizenship practice can effectively be addressed through a single education program
  - Active citizenship is a wicked problem

Day, 1997, p. 421



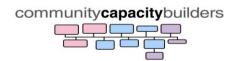


- How does participation in the program impact on the community leadership practice of participants and on their ability to influence the groups, organisations and communities that they interact with?
- What are the enabling and blocking factors participants encounter?
- How can the social impact of the program be increased?



#### Literature Applied to 3 Areas

- Three areas emerged from the coded data :
  - Perceived power imbalance between paid workers and active citizens
  - Risk of active citizenship education programs creating an elite group of expert citizens
  - Need to improve the nature of both the interactions and the working relationships between paid workers, active citizens and other community members



Theory of street-level workers

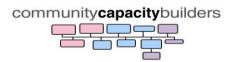
Lipsky, 2010

 Citizens disengage from the processes and institutions of formal democracy because don't believe they can influence

Power Inquiry, 2006, p. 41

 Most appropriate adult education planning approach to address power imbalances is to counteract them

Cervero and Wilson, 1994, p. 261



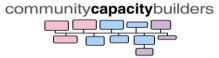
# Risk of Elite Group

- Expert citizenship:
  - new forms of informed citizen activism that take shape in multistakeholder governance networks and partnerships
- Expert citizens:
  - require a certain level of skills and capabilities
  - more concerned with having an impact on policy development and implementation that assists their own projects than assisting others in the community to engage in governance decision making

Bang, 2009

 'I reckon the Deweyan and Jeffersonian call for an educated citizenry may lead, intentionally or inadvertently, to elite engagement.'

Carson, 2012



# Need to Improve Interactions & Relationships

- Complex adaptive systems theory provides insights into how to improve the interactions and working relationships between street level workers, active citizens and other community members
  - under certain conditions interactions between these interdependent agents produce system level order as the agents interact and learn from each other, change their behaviour, and adapt and evolve to increase their robustness

Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009, p. 618

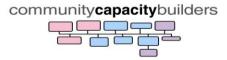
Gillis, 2005, p. 10

 Complex adaptive systems approach recommended for tackling wicked problems such as active citizenship

Davies et al., 2012, p. 8

 confronts the multi-causality, interdependencies and evolving nature of wicked problems

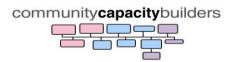
Australian Public Service Commission, 2007



#### Need to Improve Interactions & Relationships

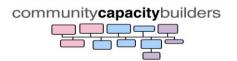
- Now recognised that Education for Sustainability Active Citizenship Programs should take a complex adaptive systems approach.
- The UNESCO Roadmap for implementing the post-2015 Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development has identified:
  - creating the enabling environment for Education for Sustainability to bring about systemic change is a priority area, and
  - understanding complex systems is a key Education for Sustainability skill

UNESCO, 2015

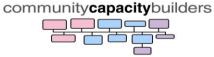


# **Research Findings**

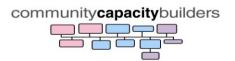
- Program developed in graduates all of the active citizenship characteristics desired by the three levels of government in Australia
- Education for Sustainability assumptions did not hold for the program
- Graduates encountered significant blocking factors:
  - asymmetrical power relationships
  - a lack of participation opportunities for graduates
  - the attitudes, skills and knowledge of other community members



- If you don't have the power you don't get a say. It's very worker influenced.
- She's [paid worker] a bit of a bully in meetings and that, so she will disregard what a person will say or she will say I know you will agree this is the only way to go about fixing the problem.
- We make a decision about something ... and we set the date and parents start sourcing resources so we can do it cheap. People are getting donations and then staff have a meeting and say no that's not going to work we'll have to do it ten weeks from then. That's really not valuing the decisions that are made at a meeting and not valuing the amount of work that parents put into something.

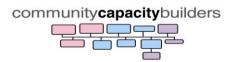


- Blasting people's ideas; just because I don't have a badge with a title on it doesn't mean I don't have things to say and that they are not very valuable.
- A lot of paid workers just see volunteers as providing a service ... They provide not only their time, but they provide their thoughts and their ideas and just so much more.
- They wouldn't have listened to me because I'm not an employee.

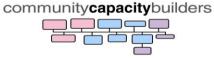


# Lack of Participation Opportunities

- I haven't been aware of any opportunities to participate in any community forum stuff.
- We often talk about this. There's almost like a deflated feeling because we get inspired so much by what's going on overseas [network governance] and the opportunities aren't here.
- I don't think I'm in the loop. I feel like if I was to present myself they would say "who are you". If the opportunities were there, I'd be there, because it really interests me.

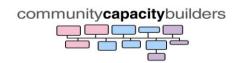


- Many of them are people that are really, really set in their ways, and to try and change these people's attitudes is a very, very slow educational process.
- It's important that we can communicate with the rest of the community, our volunteers, and can relate something towards them. At the moment if I was to bombard them with the program itself I think I would lose them ... I use to do lots of training when I was working and when you come out of it your full of beans and then you find your running against a brick wall because you have got the program but to bring other people along it's not that easy.
- If they don't understand it, it's "yeah but", and it's like there's no point talking to you because you have no idea what I'm talking about. So it is frustrating.



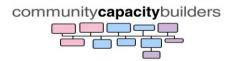
#### Increasing the Program's Impact

- Counteract asymmetrical power relationships
- Address the risk of creating expert citizens

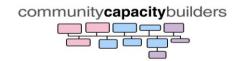


#### New Program

- 5 units
- Project-based
- Addresses power imbalance
- Embedded in a participatory budgeting process
- Participants develop active citizenship learning experiences



- Participants explore:
  - different meanings of the terms citizenship, active citizenship and democracy
  - declining trust in government and diminishing appeal of democracy in western countries
  - difficulty citizens encounter when they attempt to put active citizenship capabilities into practice
  - similarities between characteristics of active citizenship and characteristics
    - of wicked problems



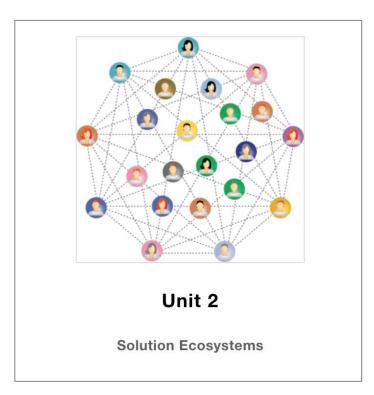


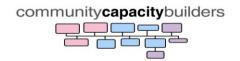


Active Citizenship

Participants:

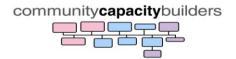
 research and map all the initiatives that are addressing any of the causal factors that underpin the ability of the community to have a culture of active citizenship and all of the organisations that are partnering on those initiatives.





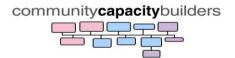
- Participants:
  - explore different types of social movements
  - identify the characteristics and the stages of successful social movements
  - investigate the use of social media by social movements for communicative action and how social movements occupy urban spaces
  - undertake an analysis of a social movement that is of interest to them





- Participants:
  - explore a variety of approaches for community organising
  - compare power from the conflict and the consensus community organising approaches
  - develop a power map for an issue or organising goals



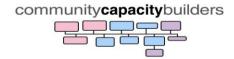


- Participants:
  - take a learning experience design approach to develop an active citizenship learning experience that incorporates some of the active citizenship capabilities that they have covered in previous units.



Unit 5

**Community Education** 



# Thank You

community**capacity**builders