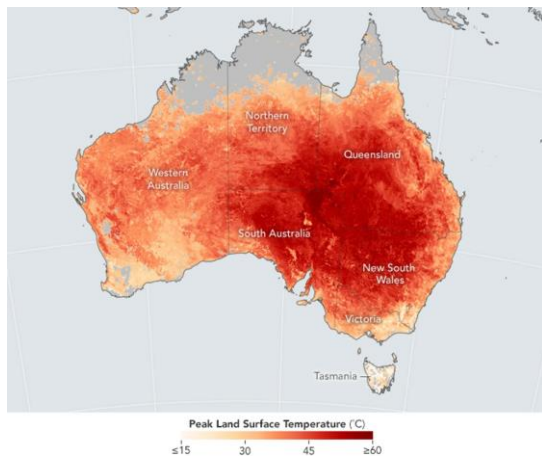
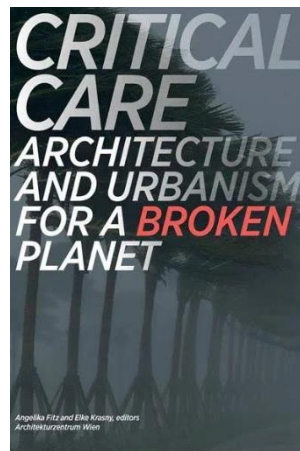


CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION – A TIMELY RESPONSE...OR MORE HOT AIR?



Map of Australia showing the extent of 2017 heatwave.
(Source: NASA Earth Observatory)



Anyone who was able to watch David Attenborough's documentary *Climate Change: The Facts* on ABC on Sunday 11/8 must have had some degree of concern that there is real and imminent danger, not just on the horizon but already in play across our country and the globe. While there are still some naysayers, the imperative to act is evident in this and many other recent articles and programs that raise disturbing facts and limited responses to act on a climate emergency.

Through an international declaration recognizing the existence of an environmental and biodiversity climate emergency, Australian architects are looking at existing research and technology that can help initiate real transformation under the auspices of **Architects Declare Australia (ADA)**. Their aim is promotion of more collective will to "*advocate for faster change in our industry towards regenerative design practices,*" to "*establish climate and biodiversity mitigation principles as the key measure of our industry's success,*" and extend or adapt the life of existing buildings in a more carbon efficient alternative to demolition.

For everyone working in the construction industry, meeting the needs of our society without breaching the earth's ecological boundaries will demand a paradigm shift in our behaviour. Together with our clients, we will need to commission and design buildings, cities and infrastructures as indivisible components of a larger, constantly regenerating and self-sustaining system. — ADA

On ABC's RN Blueprint on Saturday 10/8, Jonathan Green interviewed architect Caroline Pidcock (spokesperson for ADA) and author/architecture critic Elizabeth Farrelly. With the development industry responsible for around 40% of emissions that contribute to CO₂ in the atmosphere, there is need for radical rethink of design, materials and energy systems for builders, architects and other industry professionals to show how there might be a future still worth hanging around for. Green questioned what can be done individually and collectively in best practice to identify and act across the whole environmental systems including urban areas on which our future life depends.

Farrelly suggested that it was easy to be sceptical where so many feel they don't have to be responsible, or that their efforts will not amount to much in the big picture. Small actions by citizens

can help, but the big issues require moral cause and political will beyond just architecture or building or development. Pidcock spoke of the recent Oceania Biophilic workshop in Glenorchy, NZ, that showed how good, low impact and energy efficient work is being done under the radar. However, with projects like the 67 storey Crown Casino on public land and with very high energy needs, Farrelly suggested such bad private industry examples without 6 Star energy ratings or zero carbon impacts set poor examples that lower rather than raise the bar for others to follow.

The ADA believes critical mass is needed to influence big changes but, realising government regulation does not come quickly in democracy, is looking to corporate and professional sectors being more influential and helping promote community engagement. As Green stated, small steps by local communities are important but cultural change is difficult without what Farrelly termed '*collective decency*' for achieving big changes and a necessary groundswell.

In *Critical Care : Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, editors Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny look at how so much architecture and urban development is capital-centric, driven by speculation and investment thinking, and have contributed to the planetary toll through a 'tabula rasa' approach to the earth (an idea also pursued by Bruce Pascoe in his recent book *Dark Emu*, which looks at the impacts of Colonisation on indigenous culture in Australia). *Critical Care* considers the low key alternatives available through ethical architecture, equitable land policy, creative ecologies and diverse economies that can be effective in more caring communities through a range of project case studies across the globe - revitalisation of modernist public housing in France; catalyst projects for neighbourhood change; enriching the public realm to attract greater diversity of uses and users.



Blackheath Community Farm (Source: Edible Garden Trail) Repair Café Sydney North (Source: RCSN Facebook)

In Lane Cove there have been some local initiatives such as Sydney Edible Garden Trail and Repair Café workshops, both established by Lane Cove Resident of the Year Bridget Kennedy. These are aimed at more sustainable living through recycling, reuse and reduced waste with localised community involvement in small steps towards a bigger cause of lowering our living footprint and creating social connections.

But much more needs to be done, and all new urban developments should be scrutinised where possible to see what better design and local involvement can do to show how small local actions can contribute towards a big critical cause. The TVO would be interested in any projects or actions that its readers believe could be worth pursuing.

Jon Johannsen
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