

RMIT, School of Design

Mapping RMIT capabilities in Design for Social Innovation: A Conceptual Paper

November 2019

Acknowledgement

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

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1. Introduction and Contents

Worldwide we face unprecedented challenges whilst simultaneously being presented with previously unimaginable opportunities. These challenges and opportunities are social, cultural, technological and environmental. They are complex and beyond the domain of any one discipline expertise. To address these, there is a greater need for researchers to collaboratively contribute on designs for social innovation that are effective in navigating our future by tackling issues of sustainability, health, technology, and social exclusion of vulnerable people. This research, maps and profiles the internal RMIT capabilities and expertise in the field of design for social innovation (DSI). Identified competitors and partners are reviewed for furthering RMIT's strengths, synergies and research opportunities. Overall, aiming to validate the proposed DSI Network for meaningful and collaborative connections.

2. Design for Social Innovation Background Review	3
2.1. Definitions in literature	3
2.2. Search Strategy, Search Results, Limitations, Journals and Results Comparison	4
2.3. Scoping DSI: Fields, Perspectives, Mindset, Platforms, Stages and Design Briefs	7
3. Methodology	10
3.1. Participants, Research Design and Data Collection	10
4. Mapping Capabilities within RMIT	11
4.1. Schools Identified with DSI	11
4.2. RMIT Contributors and their Personal Definitions	12
4.3. Diverse Projects Identified with DSI	14
4.4. Partners of Design for Social Innovation	17
4.5. Outputs of Design for Social Innovation	18
4.6. Research Alignment to ECP	19
4.7. Challenges Identified for Design for Social Innovation Researchers	20
4.8. Fluid Approaches and Adopted Methods	21
5. Profiling RMIT's Design Social Innovation Capability	22
6. Competitors and Potential Partners	23
6.1. The Design Council	23
6.2. Centre for Social Innovation CY (CSICY)	23
6.3. The Presencing Institute – MIT Sloan School of Management	24
6.4. Social Innovation Curriculum - The Stanford Graduate School of Business	24
6.5. The Australian Center for Social Innovation (TACSI) – South Australia	24
6.6. World Economic Forum - Global Shapers Community – Melbourne Hub	24
6.7. Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESI) - Melbourne	24
6.8. Designing Social Innovation for Asia Pacific (DESIAP)	25
6.9. Centre of Social Impact – a UNSW, UWA, Swinburne collaboration	25
6.10. Design for Social Innovation (Course Unit) - The University of Sydney	26
6.11. Business Centre & Design Faculty - University of Technology Sydney	26
6.12. Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh USA	26
6.13. Design for Social Innovation (Degrees) - Victoria University, NZ	27
6.14. Social Enterprise Incubator – The University of Melbourne	27
6.15. Melbourne Innovation District (MID) – RMIT, University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne	27
6.16. Brunswick Design District	27
7. Gaps and Opportunities for Establishing a RMIT hosted Design Social Innovation Network	28
7.1. Current Gaps in the RMIT Profile	28
7.2. Opportunities that impact a RMIT Design for Social Innovation Network	28
8. Funding Opportunities	29
8.1. Identified Social Issues	29
8.2. Sources of Funding Opportunities	30
8.3. Specific Sources of Funding Opportunities	31
9. Beyond Melbourne: RMIT International	32
9.1. Opportunities to collaborate with Vietnam and Barcelona	32
10. Conclusion	33
11. Bibliography	34
12. Appendices	36

2. Design for Social Innovation Background Review

2.1. Definitions in literature

Social Innovation

Social innovation is “a construct increasingly used to explain the practices, processes and actors through which sustained positive transformation occurs in the network society (Mulgan, 2007). “A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than present solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Preskill and Beer, 2012). It includes both the innovation and the process of generating, testing, and adapting these types of novel solution, which is inherently exploratory and uncertain” (Hill and Vaughan, 2017). Yet, another definition describes SI as “new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.” (Murray et al., 2010, Manzini, 2015). Mulgan (2007) attempts to simplify the SI definition as “Ideas that work in meeting social goals”. This unlimiting scope allows for interdisciplinary actors to engage and adopt SI through the various representative sectors that pertain to social unmet needs. Social Innovation is also referred to as Social Impact; System Design, Social Systems or Social Entrepreneurship. A subset of Social Innovation that embeds the realisation of design activities, is the practice of Design for Social Innovation.

Design for Social Innovation

Design for Social Innovation (DSI) is “an approach for working on complex social / environmental challenges” (Hill and Vaughan, 2017). It uses design principles to explore different ways of understanding and responding to those challenges. Hill and Vaughan (2017) posit Tangaere, (2017), in defining the DSI pathway which they propose uses a 4-stage process conducted over iterative cycles until a case for change is found. The 4 stages involve: 1. Frame, 2. Explore, 3. Imagine, and 4. Test. The studies to be conducted to inform the Design Social Innovation Network will flow through these stages with a baseline review of literature and an online survey to provide the scope of the underlying DSI landscape within the RMIT University and the academic community. A face to face interview will expand on the online survey findings to gather detailed insights from established DSI stakeholders. A concept paper will publish the collated and analysed literature and data which will contribute to the framework and establishment of the Design Social Innovation Network.

The Designing Social Innovation in Asia Pacific (DESIAP), founded and led by Associate Professor Yoko Akama, is a network of professionals that advocate and educate through design social innovation practices and offer a platform that promotes work in the field. Through an interview with Akama, it was stated that “Design for Social Innovation really aims to empower people to tackle some of their pressing problems and all we really have to do is help in that empowering process” (Akama, 2019). Akama was mindful of the dangers created when researchers attempted to summarise and distil design social innovation into repeatable process that subscribe to a western, linear approach. She argued that this process of assessment can “become a reason for exclusion” and the less common practices of DSI that fall into the peripherals should not be omitted or less promoted as they “are actually working for people”. “It is clear from discussions within DESIAP network that there is not one model of design or ways to undertake social innovation. In other words, in contrast to theoretical models, the realities of designing social innovation is far messier and shaped significantly by its situated contexts” (DESIAP, 2019).

This perspective is adopted within this paper when presented the responses from the surveyed DSI community within RMIT. All contributions in the form of personal definitions of DSI, adopted approaches and methods listed, and captured projects with respective details are recognised equally and the aim is to showcase the diversity of practices and breath of disciplines DSI has reached.

2.2. Search Strategy, Search Results, Limitations, Journals and Results Comparison

Search Strategy

A baseline literature review and a survey were conducted to form the primary sources of research informing the paper. The literature review was carried out through the RMIT library database, conducting article retrieval with the Boolean search term “design social innovation” accommodating also for “design for social innovation” and “designing social innovation”. Active filters were used to limit the search results which were (1) results expanded beyond library collections (2) sort by relevance, (3) Peer-reviewed journals, (4) articles only, (5) years 2014-2019, (6) English only and (7) omitting all anonymous authors.

Search Results

The total peer-reviewed search results returned 145 articles. Figure 1 presents the articles sorted by ‘subject’ and ‘authors and number of articles produced’. All results are listed by most to least for example within the subject ‘design’, 63 articles were published, and the least published number of articles was the subject ‘culture’. Although, all articles are recognised as contributing to the field, this overview of subject results identifies where the majority of academics are focusing on.

Regarding the author list, the results are limited to the most recent publications falling between 2014-2019 (within the past 5 years) and indicate active leaders that have contributed the most to the design social innovation field. It is noted that these results do not reflect the quality of publications, nor the level of recognition received by each author globally, it only captures a view of the DSI community that is actively publishing peer-reviewed articles in the field.

All referenced peer-reviewed articles, grey literature and DSI related websites are recorded in the endnote library accompanied alongside this conceptual paper (Appendix 1)

Search Limitations

The literature review was limited to the RMIT library search results (expanded beyond library collections) with key academic authors possibly not recognised due to the literature listed behind the many alternative names of social innovation, or the limited results returned.

The research results are not an exhaustive representation of the RMIT Design for Social Innovation community. Many identified scholars in the field were not available to respond to the survey and also, other DSI researchers may not have been discovered in this first research round. Therefore, the sample results captured in this paper are indicative only of the participants that contributed to the survey and may not reflect the collective DSI RMIT university’s true population. Furthermore, it is proposed that the Design for Social Innovation Network is to be an ever-living collaborative resource, true to current and completed research projects undertaken within the RMIT university.

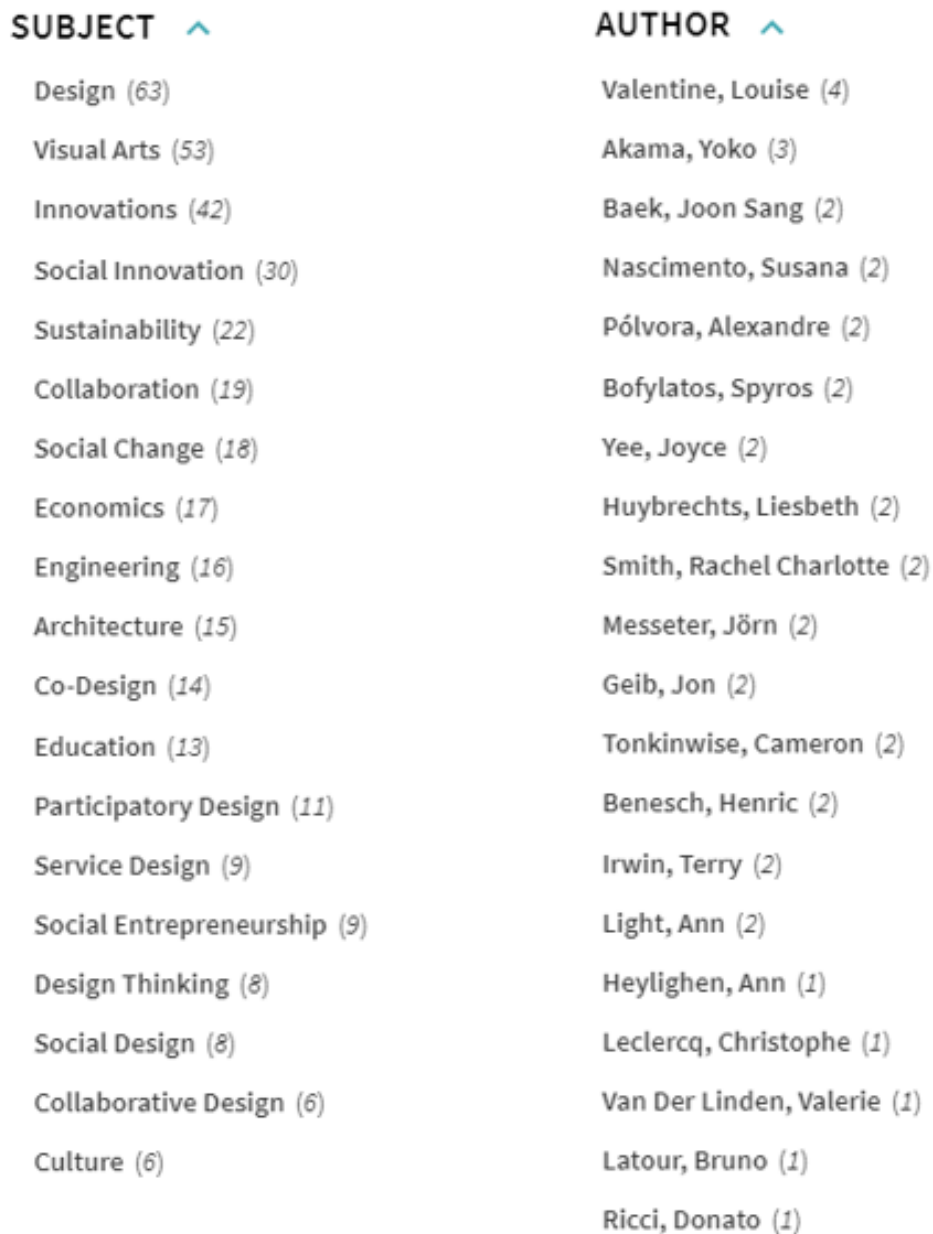


Figure 1. RMIT library database search enquiry for 'Design Social Innovation' showing results per subject and author (2014-2019)

Journals with a focus on Design for Social Innovation

The RMIT search results of the terms "Design Social Innovation" with the limiting search criteria as listed above returned a list of journals that publish research articles with DSI contexts. These journals have been graphed in Figure 2 to compare the number of published articles between 2014 and 2019 demonstrating the journals focus and recognition of DSI knowledge contribution.

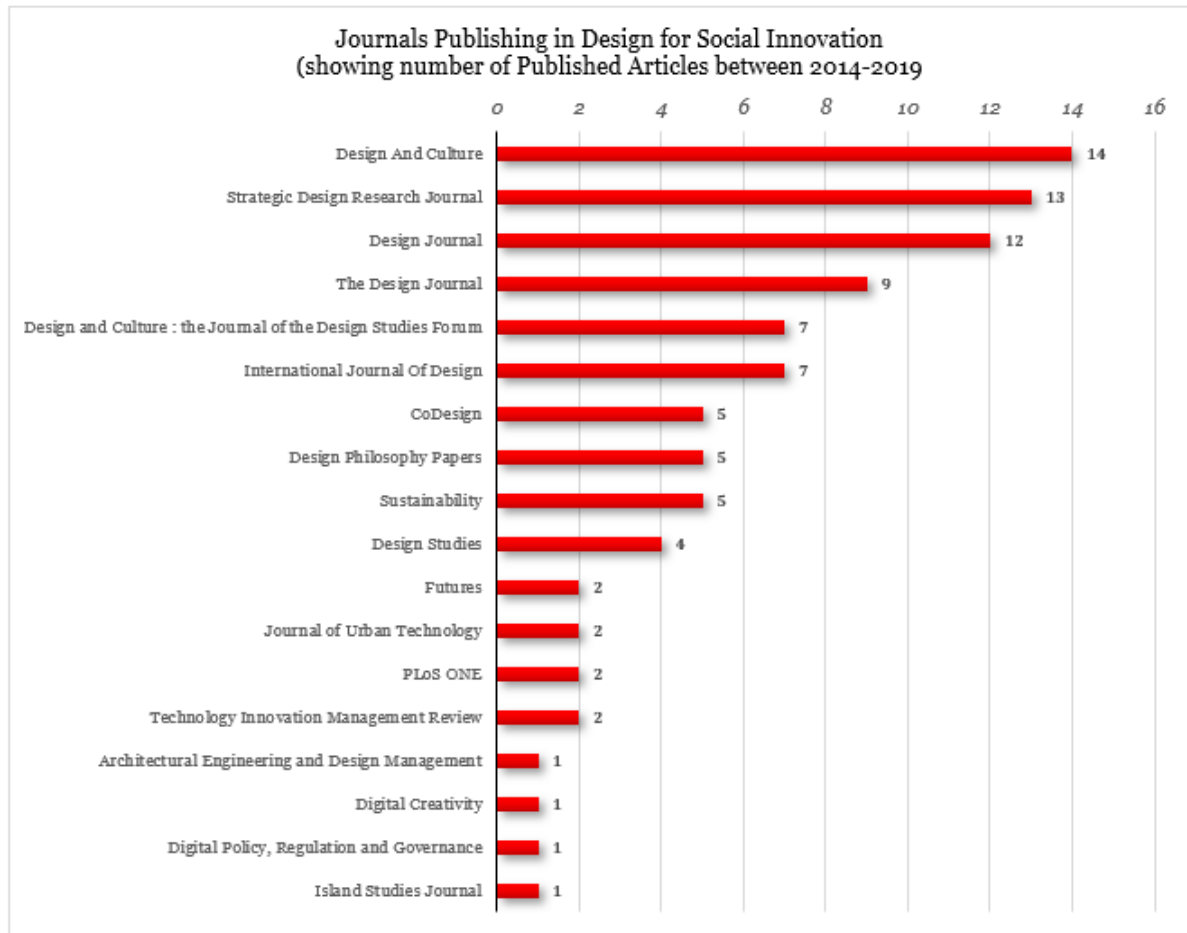


Figure 2. Journals published in design for social innovation (2014-2015).

Results Comparison

Google Trends is a sub-service of the global search engine Google, which reports on selected search terms comparing their percentages of interest over a set period of time. For example, three search terms were entered for comparison: (1) “social innovation” (blue line), (2) “social entrepreneurship” (red line), (3) “design for social innovation” AND/OR “design social innovation” (yellow line), (4) “design thinking” (green line) and (5) “social design” (purple line) as shown in Figure 3. The percentage of compared searched terms over the period 2004 to 2019 are reported with 100% representing the highest frequency of searches for any one term and 0 indicating that there was not enough data for Google to report on the search activity. The report quickly demonstrates that ‘design thinking’, is the most searched term compared to the other reported terms, showing exponential growth in interest from 2010 onwards.

Following ‘design thinking’, (ordered by interest percentage at 2019 results) is ‘social design’, ‘social innovation’, ‘social entrepreneurship’ and ‘design (for) social innovation’. ‘social innovation’, maintained a steady global interest, with neither positive or negative change, on average from 2010 onwards. Interestingly, ‘design (for) social innovation’ did not have enough data for Google to report on, with the average not reported, indicating the field is a very young discipline and not commonly searched globally in comparison to the other more established fields of interest.

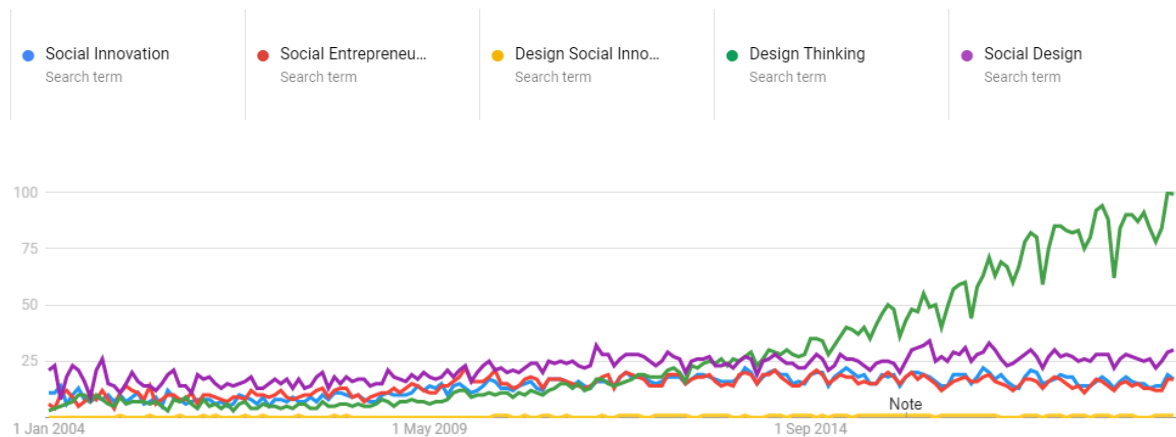


Figure 3. Google Trends comparing search terms and their respective interest levels (2004-2019)

2.3. *Scoping DSI: Fields, Perspectives, Mindset, Platforms, Stages and Design Briefs*

Combined Fields

Social Innovation and Design Thinking are not siloed disciplines and a growing hybrid field is growing under the umbrella category of ‘design thinking for social innovation’ Manzini (2015, 2016). Manzini profiles DTSI as “a collaborative approach to solving complex social problems where everyone (and not just the designer) designs” (Valentine et al., 2017, Manzini, 2015). This combined field accommodates Design for Social Innovation and leverages the accelerated Design Thinking movement. Some authors may argue that they are not of the same family and the practices are restrictive to the foundational pinning’s of Social Innovation due to the modularisation and rollout of the design thinking phenomenon.

Shifting Towards a Pluriversal Perspective

Akama et al, (2019), alert on the dangers of attempting to formalise Design for Social Innovation practices into systemised approaches founded on colonial linear thinking and methodised exports. The concern lies with the popularised trend towards modularising methods that promote a standard DSI process which claims to be repeatable, simplistic in nature, and depicted in a step-by-step guide, similar to that of the Double Diamond (Design Council, 2019), or the Human-Centred Design (HCD) toolkits (d.school, 2019). Akama and colleagues go on to argue that a one-size-fits-all approach risks the disengagement of the people and their culture, knowledge, and relationality that is foundational to engaging in, and designing with, social systems. Recommendations are made for a shift in thinking, abandoning a “universal, replicability, best practice model”, towards a “pluriversal view that is respectful, reciprocal, and relational co-designing for social innovation” (Akama et al, 2019).

Vaughan (2018) calls us to “re-humanise our approaches to design - from our methods to the design outcomes”. Shifting from the age-old approaches that attempt to dissect market groups based on demographic variables and reintroduce “design as a practice of care” that recognises relationships of individuals forming communities, along with their complexities and diverse natures, as the new “material’ of our design practices” (Vaughan, 2018). Akama and Yee (2016) seeks stronger plurality when designing for social innovation. They recommend “integrity and intimacy in our analysis” focusing on positive language that embraces “community-led change” based on “empathy, humility, respect, trust and emotional resonance

that enhances the intimacy between entities already interrelated, embedding in contextual specificities” (Akama and Yee, 2016).

Hillgren et al. (2011) propose an idea of infrastructuring, based on a participatory design tradition, that differs to the project-based design planning. The concept suggests that social innovation design emerges from “long-term relationships” built with stakeholders rather than introductory clientele and recommend “prototyping as a way to explore opportunities”. Hillgren and colleagues (2011) state that at the social innovation core is “openness and participation”. Mulgan (2007) provides examples of Social Innovation including “The Open University, Wikipedia, micro-loans, hospices, fair trade and magazines for homeless people such as The Big Issue”.

Platforms for Change

In the widely recognised book, *Challenge Social Innovation*, the author of the book’s forward, Hubert (2012) defines the three platforms: Systemic, Societal and/or Social levels in which social innovation can be presented for change. The information is adapted into a visual format portraying the platforms and their details with social issues of focus (Figure 4).

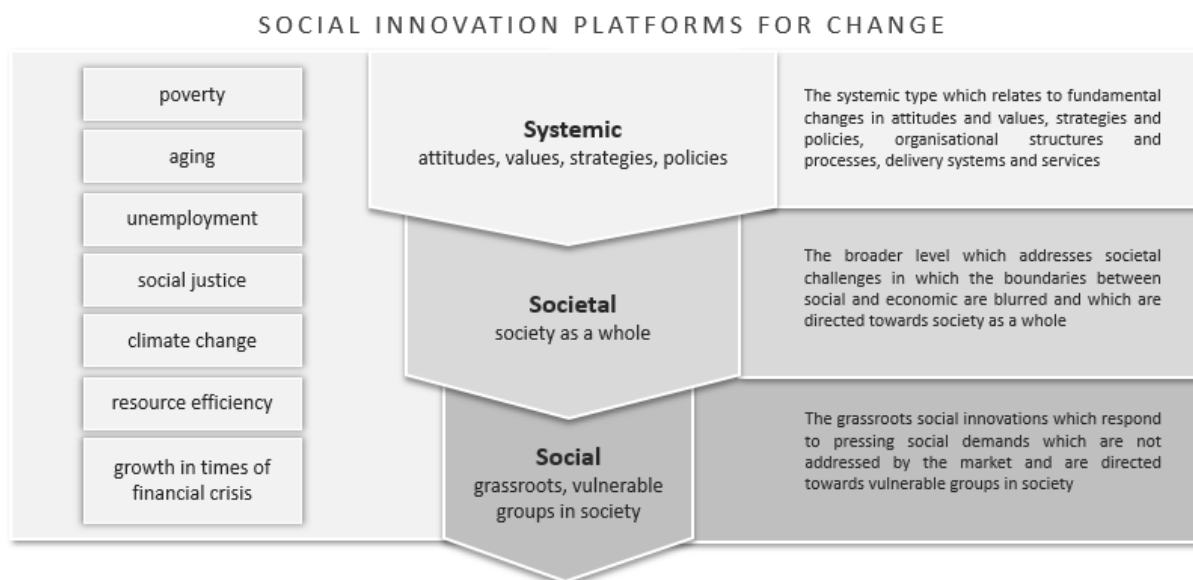


Figure 4. Social Innovation Platforms and Levels (adapted from Hubert (2012))

Hubert (2012) clarifies that the levels equally deserve to be “nurtured, financed, made more visible and researched” with a focus on building on “the complementarities of the three approaches to engage the systemic change which is necessary to effectively address poverty, ageing, unemployment, social justice, climate change, resource efficiency and growth in times of financial crisis”.

Empowering people and **driving change** are the paired primary objectives for social innovation success shifting “attitudes, preferences and production for a sustainable, inclusive and smart economy for 2020”, with empowerment defined by “education and knowledge plus governance and anticipation” (Hubert, 2012).

Does Social Innovation Have Stages?

Stages within social innovation are vastly represented, or argued against, within literature with few definitions recognised. Murray et al. (2010) proposes a six stage outline that is non-linear and reflective of a cycling and expanding journey, depicted on the spiral following the golden rule 2:1. The stages as shown in Figure 5 include (1) Prompts, (2) Proposals, (3) Prototypes, (4) Sustaining, (5) Scaling and (6) Systemic change with each latter stage exponentially growing in size and impact. Interestingly, the stages begin at a stage where the opportunity for innovation is discovered through a prompt whether that being through a relationship, observation or direct or indirect experience.

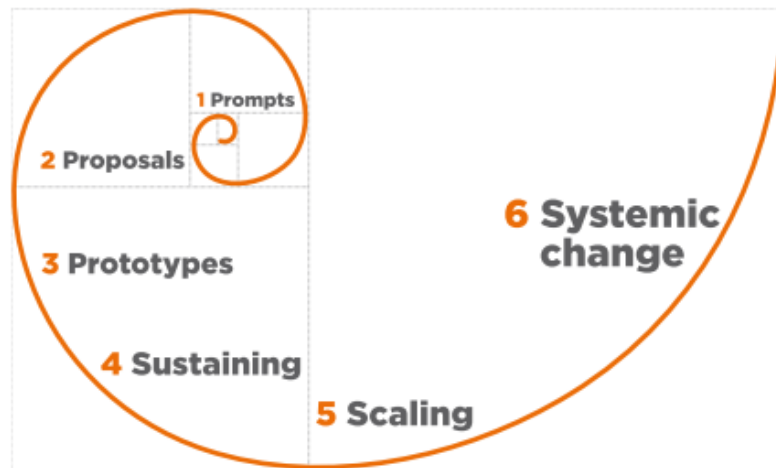


Figure 5. Six proposed stages for Design for Social Innovation (Murray et al., 2010)

Social Issues Distilled into Design Briefs

Social issues lined up for innovation are often systematically broad with complexities difficult to reframe. Brown and Katz (2011) states that “if we need to set priorities, the UN Millennium Development Goals would be a good place to start, but “eradicating extreme poverty” and “promoting gender equality” are far too broad to serve as effective design briefs. If the Millennium Development Goals are to be met they must first be translated into practical design briefs that recognize constraints and establish metrics for success”. This process is unique for each case and each brief should respectfully capture the collaborative voices of the social groups, recognising their expertise, knowledge and contribution to the innovation journey. Within any teamwork enabling collaborative efforts of creative problem solving, a design brief must propose tasks, schedules, decision makers and ownership of responsibilities, deliverables, risk mitigation, and the overall rules of the game for a transparent and effective co-creation process.

3. Methodology

We approach this research by both reviewing the literature discussing DSI and listening to the experts in their field. To assess the capabilities of the RMIT university, an on-line survey was undertaken where the participants were able to present their unique approaches to, and experience with, design for social innovation in the context of their expert field. The on-line survey was designed and presented in Qualtrics in a format suitable to collect researchers' profile information and DSI project details. The survey was open for 3-weeks. It was designed and developed using methods appropriate for achieving the aims of the network proposal.

3.1. Participants, Research Design and Data Collection

Selection criteria of participants required employment within the RMIT university and of whom had past/current involvement in research within the investigated field of Design for Social Innovation. Recruitment of participants was through self-selection, desktop research and word of mouth. Majority of participants were identified initially by the core research team through their professional network. The participants were contacted by the Project Manager and Lead Researcher through their work professional email. The email included summarised information of the project, the PSCIF form and the 30-minute on-line survey questions. All participants included in the Design for Social Innovation network proposal had provided online consent through the survey and had nominated Design for Social Innovation as the area they had experience within. Participation in the research involved completing an on-line survey that asked questions on staff experience with design for social innovation. Survey questions (Table 1), were focus on disciplinary background, broad research focus, approach to design for social innovation methods, existing partners/ collaborators, previous contract research (title, year, funding amount, research outputs) and authored Literature (asking for electronic copies).

Table 1. Interdisciplinary survey assessing RMIT's capabilities and research within Design for Social Innovation

Survey Questions	
Q1:	Please write your title and full name:
Q2:	Please choose your School:
Q3:	Please provide a short biography that you would be happy to have published?
Q4:	What are your broad research interests?
Q5:	Of the following fields, which applies to your research projects? (CVIN or DSIN or BOTH)
Q6:	In your own words, please provide a brief definition of Design for Social Innovation as it relates to your work?
Q7:	In your Design for Social Innovation industry engaged research which groups have you partnered with?
Q8:	List the 'method/s' you use for Design for Social Innovation research projects
Q9:	Please describe an example project/s that illustrates your work with relevance to Design for Social Innovation
Q10:	Which area of expertise does this project relate to?
Q11:	Please write a brief description of the project.
Q12:	What was the time period of the project?
Q13:	Please list primary partners and additional collaborators for this project.
Q14:	We are interested in the scale of your research. What was the funding amount?
Q15:	What was the size of your team?
Q16:	What were the main outputs/outcomes from your research project?
Q17:	We would like to know of any Enabling Capability Platform's (ECP), research alignments and affiliations that are related to your Design for Social Innovation work?
Q18:	What are the challenges for undertaking industry engaged Design for Social Innovation research projects at RMIT?

Follow up interviews were undertaken with survey respondents if there were gaps in the data and they were available for follow-up. The interview was estimated to take less than 30 minutes and included open ended questions to elaborate on the survey responses if needed. All interviews were scheduled at time and location convenient to the interviewee and was audio recorded, transcribed with insights captured and presented for this conceptual paper.

4. Mapping Capabilities within RMIT

This section maps the RMIT capabilities that are reflective of the respondents that contributed profiles, projects and research details. The following sections report on the design for social innovation community's diversity across Schools (Section 4.1), the listed Contributors and their Personal DSI Definitions (Section 4.2), their respective Projects (Section 4.3), identified Partners (Section 4.4), Outputs (Section 4.5), Research Alignments (Section 4.6), collected Challenges (Section 4.7) and adopted Approaches and Activities (Section 4.8). Limitations of the results are also acknowledged as a small sample representation (of 20 respondents) and as such, may not be a true reflection of the entire university's population.

4.1. Schools Identified with DSI

Identified design for social innovation research, conducted throughout RMIT, were captured per discipline with the respective number of projects reported for each school, as graphed in Figure 6. Nine disciplines, inclusive of Design (6 representatives); Media and Communication (3); Art (3); Accounting (2); Economics, Finance and Marketing (1); Global Urban and Social Studies (1); Research and Innovation (1); Business and Law (1); and Education (1) demonstrated work within the DSI field. Although the School of Design, School of Media and Communication and School of Art represented the majority of submissions to the DSI survey, the presence of the other schools demonstrates that design for social innovation is adaptive movement, responsive to the interdisciplinary needs for tackling system level social issues with design approaches in mind.

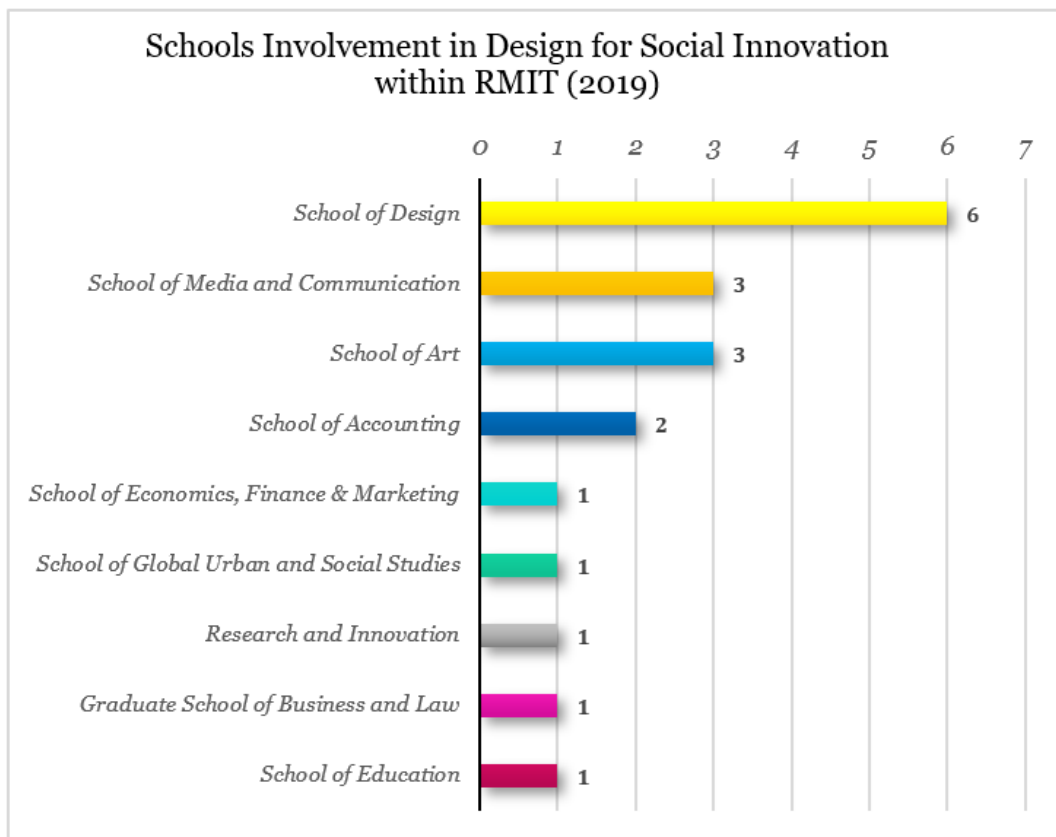


Figure 6. The list of schools represented in design for social innovation research.

4.2. RMIT Contributors and their Personal Definitions

Design for Social Innovation is an asset-based approach to build inter-disciplinary capacities (DESIAP, 2019). Therefore, the RMIT DSI community (assets) were asked to personally contribute through their expertise to define Design for Social Innovation in the context of their research purposes as shown in Table 2. These co-created definitions represent the commonalities and diversities found within the DSI family identity with all variations valued. The multi-methods are listed as activities (an active process) that were adopted, but not limited to, by the researchers to conduct DSI engagements. The list strongly demonstrates the multitude of approaches that offer fluidity and collaboration for each unique social innovation project.

Table 2. Contributing RMIT authors of DSI research, schools, personal definitions and activities.

Author	School	DSI Personal Definition	DSI Activities
Associate Professor Yoko Akama	School of Design	<i>Taken this way, designing social innovation means giving material and immaterial form to meet certain social goals. Communities and organisations have always tackled problems and effected change to meet certain social goals. Such acts can be called designing (with a little 'd'), which has been operating under other names, continually incorporating various blends of cultures, relationships, materials, histories, philosophies and worldviews in response to particular localities and situations.</i>	<i>Participatory Action Research, participatory design, ethnography, deep listening, visiting, eating, relating</i>
Dr Michelle Aung Thin	School of Media and Communication	<i>Creative conversations based on evidence that enable a redressing balances of power.</i>	<i>active research; reflection; analysis</i>
Dr Janneke Blijlevens	School of Economics, Finance & Marketing	<i>I combine a deep understanding of human behaviour and psychology and my knowledge of design principles and design thinking to inform and design innovative behavioural interventions (products, services, strategies, policy) with positive impact in society.</i>	<i>Design thinking, experiments, surveys, observation, interviewing, user-testing</i>
Dr Jan Brueggemeier	School of Media and Communication	<i>Design and reflection on communication practices and technology applications for inclusion and planetary survival.</i>	<i>case studies, non-traditional research outputs like podcasts, exhibition display and community engagement</i>
Dr Jaz Hee-jeong Choi	School of Media and Communication	<i>It can be transformational if done care-fully.</i>	<i>participatory/co-creative/digital/ethnographic methods.</i>
Dr Melanie Davern	School of Global Urban and Social Studies	<i>new methods for addressing complex social problems</i>	<i>empirical modelling, data visualisation, catropgraphy, spatial analysis, community engagement</i>
Dr Marius Foley	School of Design	<i>Using a human-centred design approach to developing innovations that are meaningful and purposeful for the people impacted by the design</i>	<i>Tactile Tools Workshops; education in the Master of Design Futures; translation of design research outcomes into policy and impact</i>

Table 2 (continued). Contributing RMIT authors of DSI research, schools, personal definitions and activities.

Author	School	DSI Personal Definition	DSI Activities
<i>Dr Alena Golyagina</i>	<i>School of Accounting</i>	<i>Using visual rhetoric to highlight the value of social innovations The use of Key Performance Indicators for social innovations</i>	<i>Case studies</i>
<i>Dr Leah Heiss</i>	<i>School of Design</i>	<i>Design that has a measurable impact on the lived experience of people in the community.</i>	<i>Co-design approaches; iterative design processes</i>
<i>Professor Larissa Hjorth</i>	<i>Research and Innovation</i>	<i>I deploy creative practice ethnography to innovate in cross-cultural contexts (especially the Asia-Pacific region). Currently I am exploring games for change (sustainable futures).</i>	<i>creative practice ethnography</i>
<i>Professor Larissa Hjorth</i>	<i>Research and Innovation</i>	<i>I deploy creative practice ethnography to innovate in cross-cultural contexts (especially the Asia-Pacific region). Currently I am exploring games for change (sustainable futures).</i>	<i>creative practice ethnography</i>
<i>Professor Ingo Karpen</i>	<i>Graduate School of Business and Law</i>	<i>My design-driven research and external engagement projects often centre on social innovation within and across organisations. This includes, for example, initiating and leading business transformation projects with significant social impact. For this purpose, I have done innovation projects with institutions such as hospitals, social enterprises and strongly purpose oriented businesses.</i>	<i>I work cross-disciplinary and cross-methodological, using any method/approach (qualitative, quantitative, experiential, conceptual) that best addresses the research question.</i>
<i>Associate Professor Linda Knight</i>	<i>School of Education</i>	<i>Design that understands not all bodies are human: some bodies are hybrid and maybe cyborgian. Design that understands that not all bodies are the same, that not all minds are the same.</i>	<i>performance-based interventions, research design methods</i>
<i>Associate Professor Laura Maran</i>	<i>School of Accounting</i>	<i>governance, management control systems, organisational and information system design</i>	<i>case studies, interviews, archival analysis</i>
<i>Mr John Smithies</i>	<i>School of Art</i>	<i>Building on the causal link that cultural outcomes (primary) have to social outcomes (secondary)</i>	<i>Multi-year field research projects, case-studies, theoretical modelling, commercial consulting, contracted evaluation</i>
<i>Associate Professor Soumitri Varadarajan</i>	<i>School of Design</i>	<i>I see design (industrial Design) as comprising two forms of innovation: technical innovation and/ or social innovation. I construct technical innovation as pertaining to new product development, or new materialities, or new configurations for technical improvement. Social innovation I bracket as focussed upon social constructions, such as the agency inherent in individuals and communities, and upon socially activating new ways of being doing and undertaking practices.</i>	<i>Ethnography, systems design, service design, scenario thinking,</i>
<i>Professor Laurene Vaughan</i>	<i>School of Design</i>	<i>Design practices and approaches that particularly focus on enabling people to create or realise quality of life activities of localised meaning.</i>	<i>case studies, interviews, workshops</i>
<i>Associate Professor Karli Verghese</i>	<i>School of Design</i>	<i>Understanding what the drivers and causes of food waste in the supply chain (from farm to fork) and using this to co-design solutions with industry, government and consumers</i>	<i>Case studies; Ethnography (e.g., journey mapping); On-line surveys; Interviews; Primary data collection (e.g., material and waste flows through organisations)</i>
<i>Professor Kit Wise</i>	<i>School of Art</i>	<i>Expanded practice; impact; future industries; innovation</i>	<i>creative practice</i>

4.3. Diverse Projects Identified with DSI

RMIT's current array of Design for Social Innovation expertise ranges throughout multi-disciplines and covering diverse sectors. Figure 7 maps out the collated 24 projects, past and present, undertaken by 20 research academics and their support teams. Note each project is labelled with an identifying reference number, such as 01, 02, 03, etc. The projects provide an overview of the respective activities occurring within the RMIT DSI community with their authors acknowledged.

Figure 7. 25 Design for Social Innovation Projects conducted within the RMIT community (2012 - 2020)



The projects reflect the vast issues that Design for Social Innovation can and will address in today's ever evolving landscape. The scoped research covers eclectic crossovers of sustainability, health, technology, and social inclusion of vulnerable people. The projects present on social issues, industrial design, communication design and design strategy. One callout is the work generated by Dr Leah Heiss in discrete wearable medical technologies that are transforming the way people perceive and connect with health monitoring and delivery. Another highlight is given in the work by Associate Professor Soumitri Varadarajan, who is advancing health support resources through co-creating stories of experience taken from cancer patient's expertise and participatory collaboration. These RMIT projects are inspirational and breaking new ground. Internal and external recognition of such design social innovation expertise is expected to unlock future research collaborations by exposing existing and potential capabilities and strengths. The proposed network aims to provide meaningful presentations of staff profiles and projects that impact and value-add to RMIT DSI experts.

Project Schedules

The DSI projects previously presented are further reviewed on their project time duration. A RMIT DSI Projects Schedule, shown in Figure 8, displays each project listed with its project identifier (e.g. 01, 02, 03 etc) and plotted according to the reported timeframe the project occurred. Projects that are reported to run in 2020 were noted as ongoing. This demonstrates the number of activities occurring and the frequency increase between 2018 onwards.

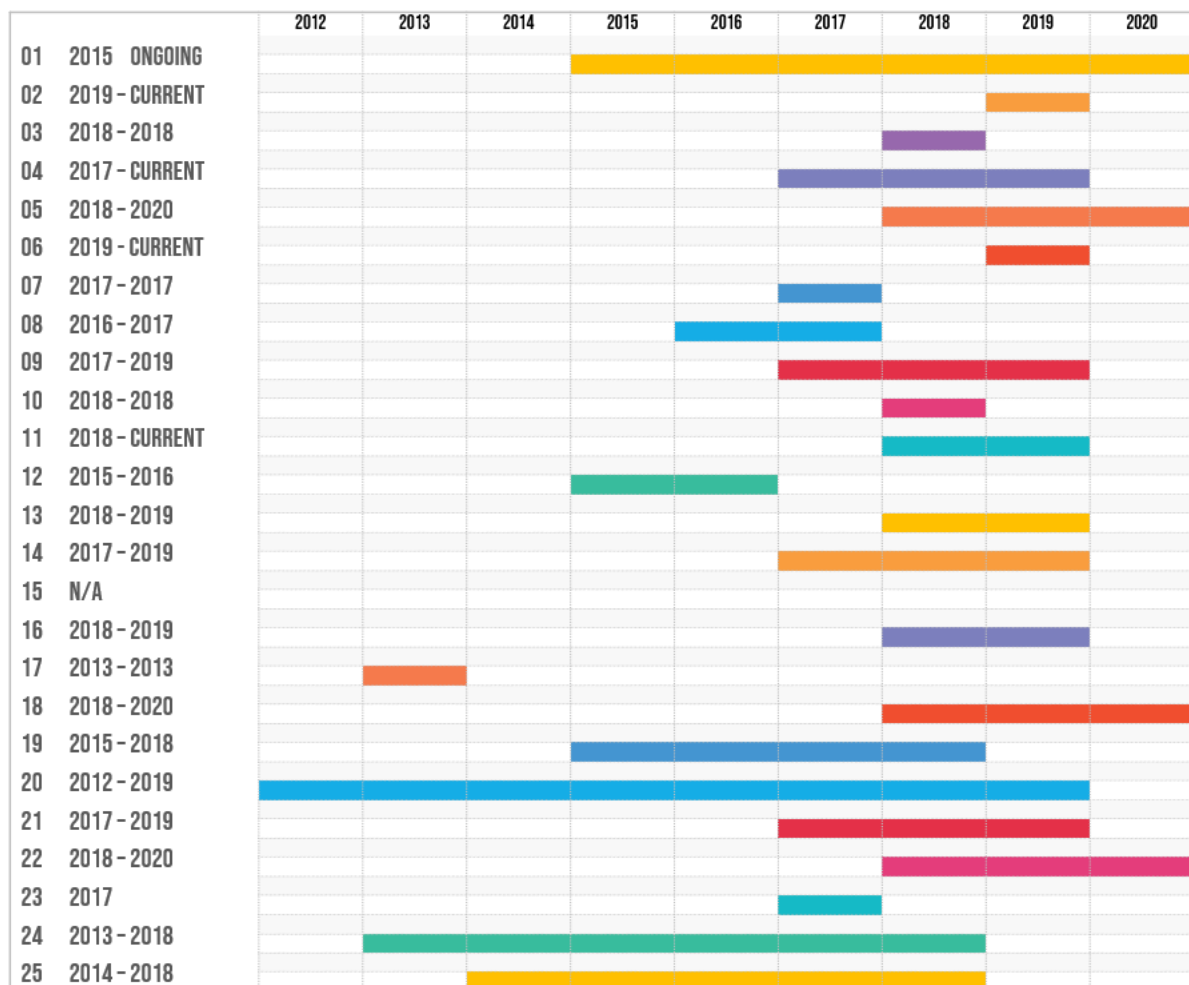


Figure 8. DSI Projects Schedule showing each project duration (between 2012 to 2020).

Projects Grouped by Size

The RMIT staff were asked to select from the offered funding amounts that best represented the scale of the submitted project (Figure 9) with the available options being (1) Under \$20,000 (small sized project), (2) \$20,000 – \$50,000 (medium sized project), (3) \$50,000 - \$200,000 (large sized project), and (4) over \$200,000 (major sized project). From the 25 projects that reported the funding, 13 projects (over 50% of the total number of projects) were under \$20,000, followed by 7 projects between \$50,000 and \$200,000 (28%), 3 between \$20,000 and \$50,000 (12%), and 2 projects over \$200,000 (8%). Although larger projects offer greater income flow, smaller projects are significant to the DSI growth in RMIT as they are easier to win, more attractive to industry partners and are regularly occurring throughout the academic year. Collectively, the smaller projects income is valuable as they provide research impact in industry and support diverse research and activate the employment of many Research Assistants contributing to the numerous projects identified.

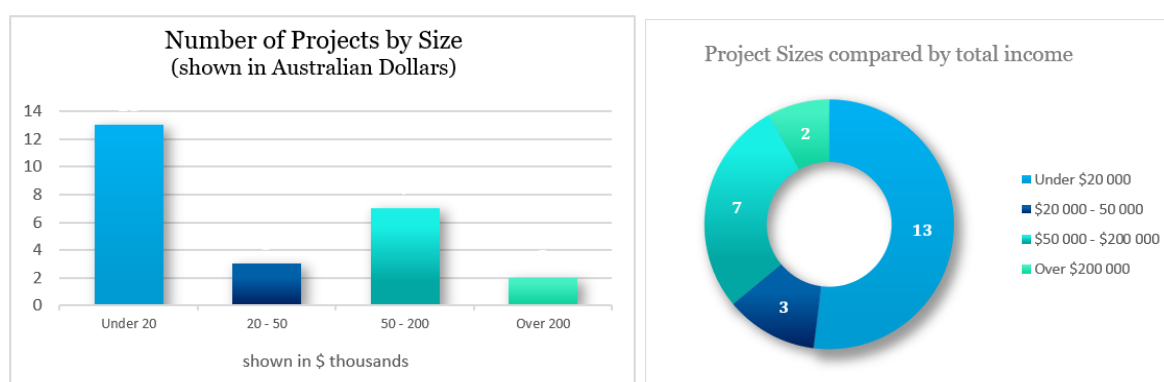


Figure 9. Number of Projects by Funding Size (shown in Australian dollars by thousands in two formats)

The results also highlight that design social innovation projects are being operated at all funding levels with many projects falling under \$20,000, and notably between the \$50,000 and \$200,000 band. To further map the capabilities in detail, Table 3 acknowledges the RMIT researchers under each funding scale.

Table 3. Listed staff in respect to their DSI projects funding size.

Project Size Ranges			
Under \$20 000	\$20 000 - 50 000	\$50 000 - 200 000	Over \$200 000
Dr Michelle Aung Thin (1)	Dr Jaz Hee-jeong Choi (1)	Associate Professor Yoko Akama (1)	Dr Melanie Davern (1)
Dr Janneke Blijlevens (2)	Associate Professor Linda Knight (1)	Dr Leah Heiss (1)	Professor Ingo Karpen (1)
Dr Jan Brueggemeier (2)	Professor Kit Wize (1)	Associate Professor Linda Knight (1)	
Dr Jaz Hee-jeong Choi (1)		Mr John Smithies (1)	
Dr Marius Foley (2)		Associate Professor Soumitri Varadarajan (2)	
Dr Leah Heiss (1)		Associate Professor Karli Verghese (1)	
Associate Professor Laura Maran (1)			
Professor Larissa Hjorth (1)			
Associate Professor Linda Knight (1)			
Professor Laurene Vaughan (1)			

Note.

Figures in brackets indicated the number of projects reported under the Project Size ranges

The sample lists provide clarity of research experts who have DSI experience within the project sizes

Additional projects may not have been reported and therefore the lists acts only as a guide.

4.4. Partners of Design for Social Innovation

The partners identified as regular collaborators for design social innovation were selected or otherwise listed under the 'Other' option. Figure 10 visualises the frequency of partner engagement as reported by the 20 RMIT researchers within the context of DSI. Community networks are the most common collaboration outreaches with 14 academics, closely followed by Industry (13) and Government (12). It is interestingly noted, that inter-disciplinary partnering is well behind the external memberships of Community, Industry and Government with only 9 of the 20 academics highlighting internal collaborative efforts. The proposed DSI network aims to provide more awareness of cross-collaboration opportunities within RMIT and therefore, strengthen the Inter-disciplinary meaningful connections.

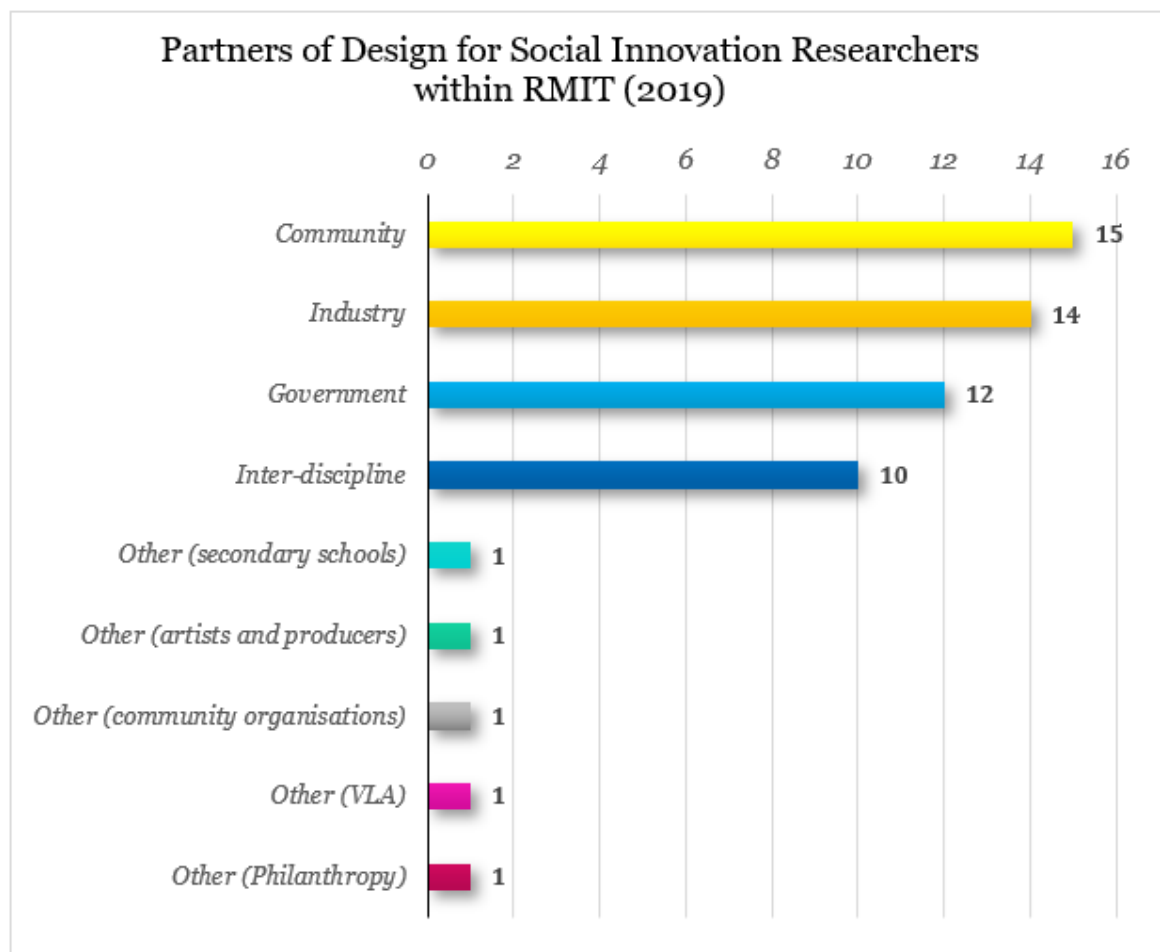


Figure 10. Number of Projects listed by Partnerships

4.5. Outputs of Design for Social Innovation

The outputs from the identified DSI projects undertaken through the RMIT community were captured and reported in Figure 11. Interestingly, all participating staff in the survey nominated 'interdisciplinary collaboration' as an output from their conducted research suggesting that all DSI projects were interdisciplinary in nature. The second and third highest ranked output 'industry engagement / impact', and 'peer-reviewed (PR) articles' respectively.

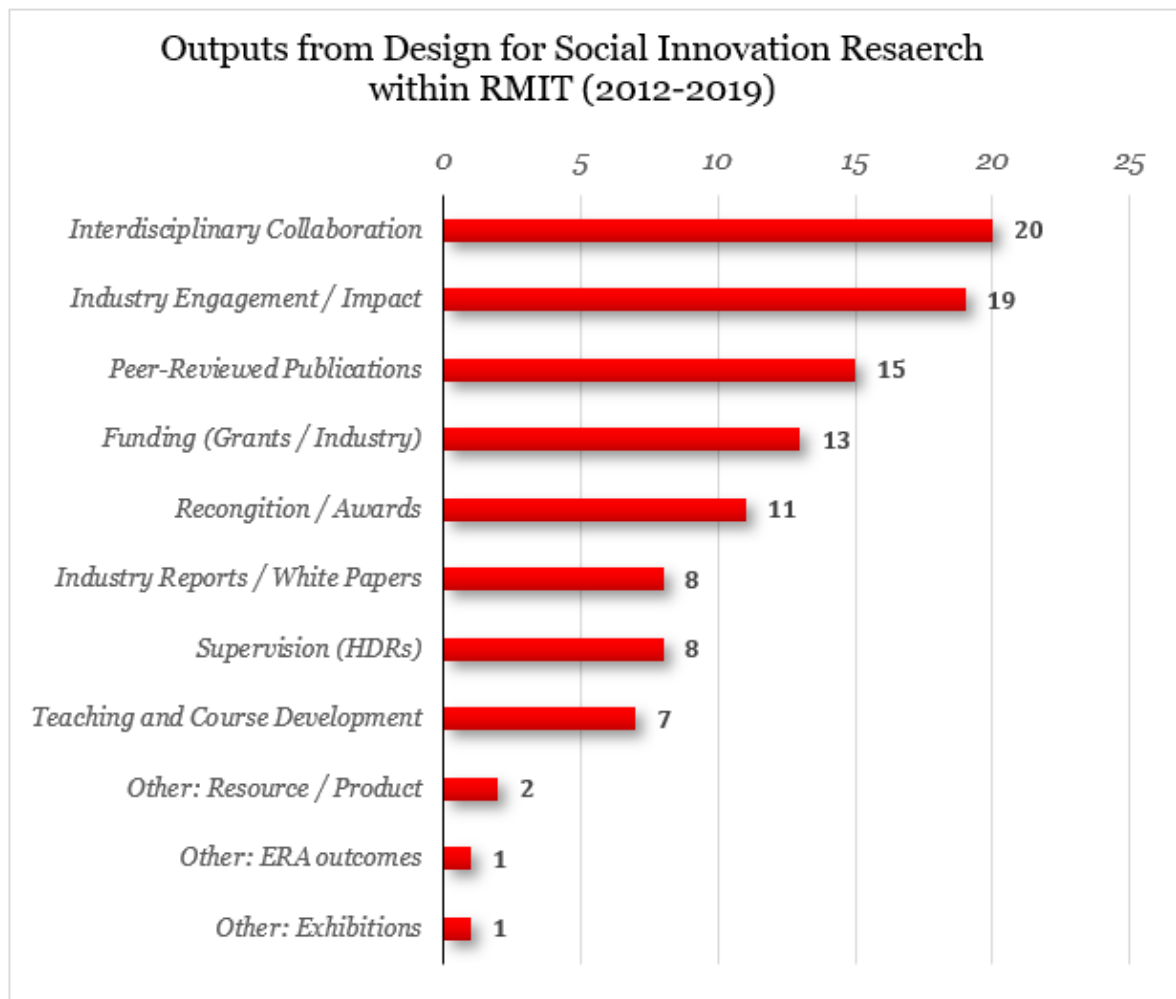


Figure 11. Outputs reported for DSI research within RMIT between 2012 -2019.

4.6. Research Alignment to ECP

The RMIT Enabling Capability Platforms and other groups were presented for the DSI participants to nominate which align to their Design for Social Innovation Research. The following Figure 12 demonstrates the areas which closely resonate with current and past projects captured in the survey. Design and Creative Practice ECP was the most targeted ECP with 13 researchers aligning to this field followed by Social Change ECP (8), and Global Business Innovation (5). All others had 4 or less research aligned. It is noted here that additional networks and affiliations may not be listed (such as the Health Network) however, participants could list additional entries under the “Other” option (such as the Care-full Design Lab).

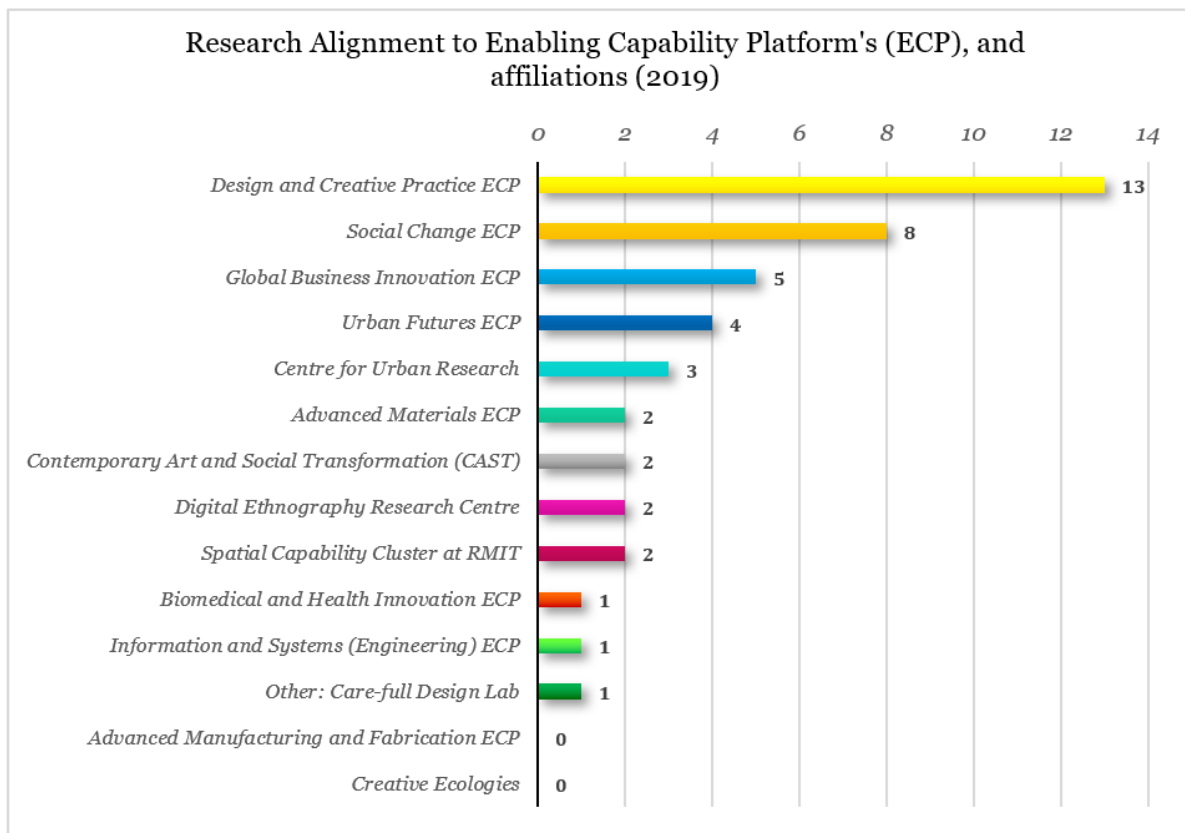


Figure 12. Challenges reported for DSI research within RMIT (2019).

4.7. Challenges Identified for Design for Social Innovation Researchers

Researchers were asked to highlight their challenges that hindered furthering DSI research. The statements chosen are presented in Figure 13 along with the response totals. From the results, 14 researchers stated they 'needed internal administrative support for grants proposals and preparation', 12 responded for both 'need an awareness of other researchers' expertise' and 'need time to develop an interdisciplinary team'. While, 8 required the 'need opportunities to collaborate with researchers outside RMIT', only 2 researchers nominated the 'need for access to data sets and training' and also the 'need to train research assistants and student to do fieldwork'. Other comments were also captured and are shown in the figure.

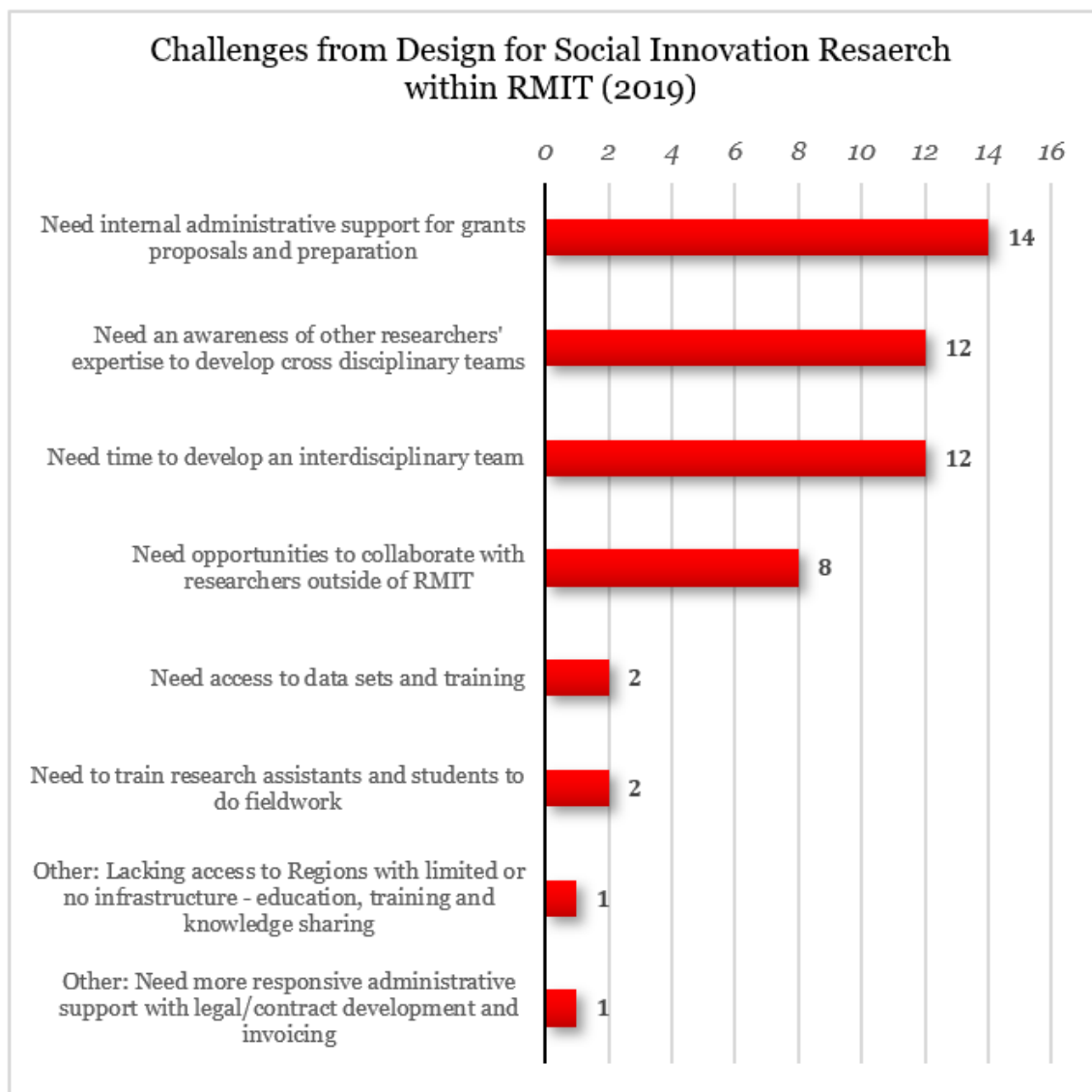


Figure 13. Challenges reported for DSI research within RMIT (2019).

4.8. Fluid Approaches and Adopted Methods

The RMIT researchers were asked to list any methods, approaches, thinking or other ways of doing DSI. The Design for Social Innovation Resource Wheel (Figure 14) collates all the listed (1) 'Approaches', (2) 'Activities' (or Methods), (3) ways of 'Thinking' and (4) Collaborative 'Verbs'. These were grouped loosely on the proximity to these categories however, it is possible for individual activities to share across other categories and are not strictly bound by these definitions. The purpose of the DSI Resource Wheel is to illustrate the diversity and array of resources available for DSI workers. It also demonstrates the equality of each activity suggesting the value of each resource, whether used often or a common practice among DSI researchers. It is noted that the width of each sector indicates the greater use of the activity across the university. For example, Ethnography was nominated 5 times and is a common tool for DSI researchers, therefore, accommodates a larger portion of the wheel whereas Cartography is less common, however, not less valuable.

The identified approaches and activities reflect the literature reviewed and align to the DSI definitions discussed earlier suggestive of cocreation, community-led and participatory research that looks to listen deeply and innovate with social empowerment in mind.

RMIT Researchers co-creating a collection of 'Resources' that frame Design for Social Innovation



Figure 14. Design for Social Innovation Resource Wheel

5. Profiling RMIT's Design Social Innovation Capability

The survey captured profiling details from each DSI staff member with each member submitting their name, school, biography, interests, definitions, projects. They also commented on restrictions, gaps and opportunities within DSI research.

Database Spreadsheet

The DSI network database of RMIT experts and their projects (Appendix 2) is purposed for compiling the content of the Design for Social Innovation Network (sample: Figure 15).

Author	School	Biography	Interests
Associate Professor Soumitri Varadarajan	School of Design	Soumitri Varadarajan, is Associate Professor, Industrial Design, RMIT University. Varadarajan is also Senior Lecturer (Hon) at Austin Health focussed upon Health CoDesign to improve patient experiences and develop new digital affordances. Varadarajan currently holds two grants (supported by Cancer Council Australia): (1) PanSupport, 2017-2019 (supporting people with Pancreatic Cancer) and (2) Older and Wiser, 2018-2020 (supporter older Australians with Cancer). Both research projects are situated within VCCC. He works with CoHealth to embed researchers within CoHealth (2018 Honours Project, Alex Toutalis), and to facilitate UG Design Studios (Digital Design, 2018). His work with CoHealth is part of a larger focus upon a demographic (bottom quintile), including collaboration (studios and embedded researchers) with Forensicare (Thomas Embling Hospital), Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) and Royal Dental Hospital (Embedded PhD, Tania Ivanka and Studios, Interior and CommDesign). Varadarajan focuses upon service design with an emphasis upon involving patients, carers and staff to collaboratively identify problems and develop solutions. Varadarajan has undertaken research focussed upon service provision in unserved areas, with a specific emphasis upon health care needs of remote, rural and poor women. His practice takes the approach of de-medicalising and re-contextualizing everyday practices of 'patients' by developing new traditions and artefacts.	design for development, poverty, SDGs, social innovation, de-medicalising death, maternal death, diabetes

Figure 15. A sample of the collated profile survey data.

Suggestive ways on how to present the information on the network are shown in Figure 16 using the responses from Associate Professor Soumitri Varadarajan showing 1 page dedicated to the profile view (left) and additional pages for the DSI projects (middle and right). This Network Profile and Projects PowerPoint file acts as a supplementary file (Appendix 3).



Figure 16. Promotional pages prototyped for displaying the DSI research profiles.

6. Competitors and Potential Partners

6.1. *The Design Council*

The Design Council UK offers Social Innovation services and educational resources on their Double Diamond innovation framework (Figure 17) founded on Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver (Design Council, 2019). The framework depicts arrows indicating iterative actions however, it presents a neat model that moves from left (challenge) to right (outcome).

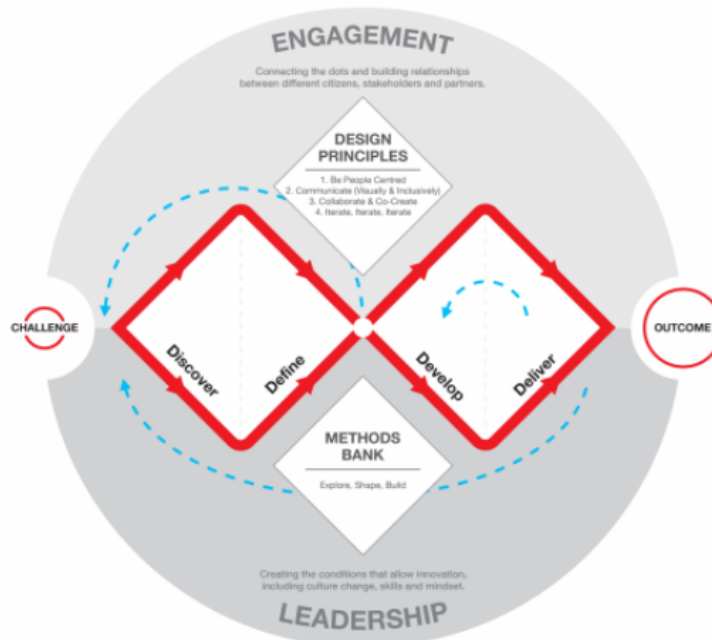


Figure 17. Double Diamond framework for Social Innovation (designcouncil, 2019)

Akama et al. (2019) argue against this oversimplified, neat and linear process in the context of working with Indigenous People, stating that “when design enters this space through widely popular methods like the Double Diamond or Human-Centered Design (HCD) toolkits, it often carries legacies of its industrialized, Eurocentric origins”. They go on to state that “these origins emphasize problem-solving, replicable methods and outcomes, pursue simplicity and efficiency, and detach knowledge, people, and relationality from the sites of design’s embodiment...this risks perpetuating acts of colonialism, inadvertently displacing Indigenous practices, knowledges, and world views” (Akama et al., 2019).

6.2. *Centre for Social Innovation CY (CSICY)*

The Centre for Social Innovation is an international organisation that offers social innovation services ranging from Business Forensic Intervention through to Life Sciences Research as well as Social Problem Improvements (CSICY, 2019).

6.3. *The Presencing Institute – MIT Sloan School of Management*

The Presencing Institute, founded in 2006 aims to create “an action research platform at the intersection of science, consciousness, and profound social change” (Scharmer, 2006) who developed Theory U, a developed innovation framework and methodology and the u.lab.

6.4. *Social Innovation Curriculum - The Stanford Graduate School of Business*

The Stanford University offers a Social Innovation course that educates on their Social Innovation Learning Model. The curriculum offers students to select from “economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, health, or education”, and “academic efforts can be shaped on their preferred approach to social impact: e.g. responsible business, social entrepreneurship, non-profit leadership, social impact funding, or public policy” (Stanford University, 2019).

6.5. *The Australian Center for Social Innovation (TACSI) – South Australia*

Formed in 2009, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) as an “initiative of the South Australian Government, is now an independent social enterprise working on projects and initiatives across Australia” (TACSI, 2019).

6.6. *World Economic Forum - Global Shapers Community – Melbourne Hub*

The World Economic Forum has established representative groups around the world defined as Global Shapers Communities in which a Melbourne based hub is operating the Australasia and Oceania region (WEF, 2019). It is a small group with 34 members, communally working on projects and events for local, national and global partnerships and organisations for social change.

6.7. *Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) - Melbourne*

The Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) and DESIS.lab are interconnected platforms for Social Innovation promotion and activities. It boasts over 400 members and “is supported by major design academic institutions in Melbourne including RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University”. DESIS claims partnerships with organisations ranging from public services like the City of Melbourne, Department of Human Services, Worksafe Australia, Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI); Non-profit organisations like the Green Living Centre, Oxfam Australia and Victorian Eco Innovation Lab (VEIL); and social enterprises like Co-Design Studio, Design Managers Australia, Engineers Without Borders, Shareable, and The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI). It is also affiliated with several prominent networks, such as Service Design Melbourne, the Centre for Social Impact and Design and Social Innovation in Asia-Pacific (DESIAP)” (DESIS lab, 2019).

6.8. *Designing Social Innovation for Asia Pacific (DESIAP)*

The DESIAP (2019) is an advocate for Design Social Innovation projects undertaken within the Asia Pacific and the founders are keen to promote research projects discovered within RMIT. In the one-on-one interview with Akama, the collated DSI projects were discussed and Akama was positively surprised of the work that has been undertaken in the field of DSI undetected by DESIAP. An opportunity exists for the RMIT School of Design to work in collaboration with DESIAP, firstly to promote active and completed projects together and secondly, to consider joint efforts in grant applications for DSI within Australia and Vietnam. Being a part of the Asia Pacific region, Vietnam is a potentially targeted location for both DESIAP's (Akama et al., 2017) and RMIT's expansion for Design Social Innovation work and RMIT's presence there could open doorways for joint grant ventures.

6.9. *Centre of Social Impact – a UNSW, UWA, Swinburne collaboration*



A Centre for Social Impact has been initiated in collaboration between the University of New South Wales, University of Western Australia and Swinburne University. This Centre offers online toolkits, courses and consultancy services to educate and resource social innovators.

Centre of Social Impact Toolkit – University of Western Australia

The University of Western Australia have initiated a Centre for Social Impact that offers a toolkit for social innovation (CSI, 2019). They target (1) local governments, (2) community group or network, and (3) individuals or groups. The toolkit's purpose is two-fold: connecting to your place and listening to your community.

The website introduces indigenous leaders such as Noel Nannup who presents stories, songs and art taken from Perth Artists calling the audience to orientate yourself and be inspired. The toolkit promotes two social innovation actions which is to:

- Listen deeply
- Put on your curiosity glasses

In addition, the Social Impact Festival, commenced in 2015, ran again this year within Western Australia. A potential opportunity for RMIT partnership or further learning.

Centre for Social Impact Elective/Course - University of New South Wales

The University of New South Wales offers a Design for Social Innovation elective subject in the Graduate Certificate in Social Impact suite of course. It is advertise not only for designers and social entrepreneurs and positions the content for social innovators seeking 'practical knowhow', 'creative models', 'to drive positive change', 'serious play', 'hands-on experiential learning', and "practice concepts – rapid prototyping, user-centred design, business model design for social purpose and co-design from a practical perspective" (UNSW CSI, 2019).

6.10. Design for Social Innovation (Course Unit) - The University of Sydney

The University of Sydney offers a course unit that “combines methods from design thinking with case studies from networked learning with a focus on learning to implement a full cycle of a robust design process-Feel, Imagine, Do and Share-that has successfully been used with people of all ages from around the world” (The University of Sydney, 2019). The Design for Social Innovation course was renamed from Culture+Context Design in 2017.

6.11. Business Centre & Design Faculty - University of Technology Sydney

Centre for Business and Social Innovation

The Centre for Business and Social Innovation presents multidisciplinary social innovation researchers that merges the “technical, the economic and the social” with the aim to target high quality research, publications and engagement, feeding an innovation culture within Australia (UTS CBSI, 2019). In 2014, UTS offered a social innovation fellowship program in which top postgraduate students were selected to engage social enterprises and support the development of new business models and become “investor ready” (Parker, 2014).

Faculty of Design

The University of Technology Sydney also has a globally recognised Design faculty that offers design related courses and postgraduate studies (UTS Design, 2019). However, there is no clear courses dedicated to designing for social innovation with most specialised courses falling under the Centre for Business and Social Innovation.

6.12. Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh USA

The Carnegie Mellon School of Design offers undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral degrees with an focus on sustainability and social innovation (CMU, 2019a). The program framework (Figure 18) is to encourage students to holistically view the impact of their decision making and portrays areas for design input from the build world through to the natural world.

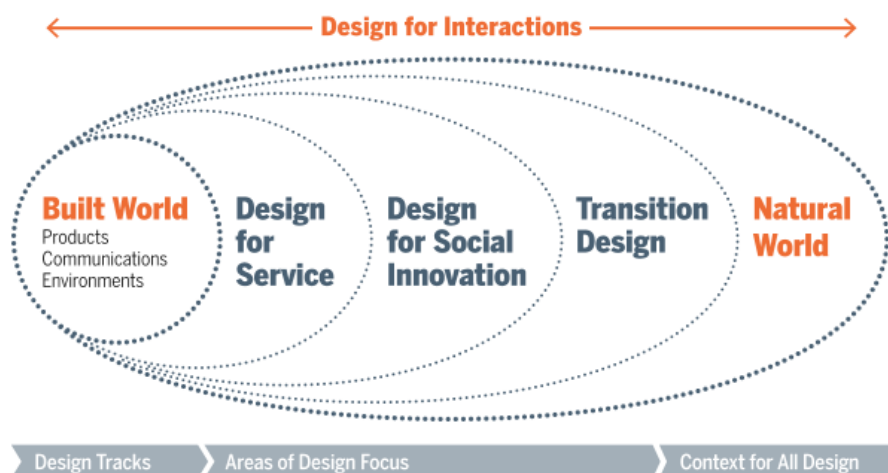


Figure 18. Carnegie Mellon University Program Framework showing Design for Interactions (CMU, 2019b).

6.13. *Design for Social Innovation (Degrees) - Victoria University, NZ*

The Victoria University Wellington in New Zealand offers undergraduate and postgraduate study in Design for Social Innovation. They call students to “examine the relationship between design and culture, society, technology and the environment from a theoretical and practice view” (The Victoria University Wellington, 2019).

6.14. *Social Enterprise Incubator – The University of Melbourne*

The University of Melbourne offers a Social Enterprise Incubator subject under the Faculty of Arts that involves “designing, developing and pitching your own social enterprise”...”guided by Julian O’Shea, an award-winning social entrepreneur” (University of Melbourne, 2019).

6.15. *Melbourne Innovation District (MID) – RMIT, University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne*

The Melbourne Innovation Districts (MID, 2019) is a collaborative partnership between the City of Melbourne and the two neighbouring universities RMIT and the University of Melbourne set to innovative cities for the future (Noonan, 2017). The district houses five initiatives being (1) Digitally-enabled tech, (2) Enterprise activation, (3) Institutional design, (4) Public realm, and (5) Social innovation. All five areas have social innovation cross-overs however, the individual social innovation initiative has a strong focus on the evolving social needs of the modern Melbourne. Areas of identified focus include “health, housing, disability and justice in partnership with industry, civil society, government, users, and experts” (MID, 2019). Noonan (2017) states that the “three institutions will work together to attract more small businesses, start-ups and social enterprises to the area”...

“Home to 21 per cent (60,260) of all knowledge sector jobs in Melbourne, the urban innovation district features the central campuses of RMIT and the University of Melbourne, State Library Victoria, Queen Victoria Market, Royal Exhibition Building, Trades Hall and the Melbourne Museum” (Noonan, 2017).

The MID presents a clear opportunity for the School of Design to engage the district stakeholders for future design coursework and research projects that are socially outward facing.

6.16. *Brunswick Design District*

The State Government has announced the establishment of the new Brunswick Design District (Business Moreland, 2019) which will be in partnership with “RMIT University (including its Brunswick design campus), Moreland Council and the government body Creative Victoria to encourage other enterprise businesses to set up in the area”. The district has been confirmed with a memorandum of understanding and consultations commenced between stakeholders, experts and local community members.

7. Gaps and Opportunities for Establishing a RMIT hosted Design Social Innovation Network

7.1. *Current Gaps in the RMIT Profile*

The Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESI) has other strong profiles however an event is published on the RMIT website that is the first presented site when 'RMIT Design for Social Innovation' is searched. This event was conducted in 2015 and the expired event description details have major text errors. This communicates publicly that RMIT is not currently contributing to the DSI field and not actively updating its content (<https://www.rmit.edu.au/events/all-events/workshops/2015/july/design-for-social-innovation-and-sustainability>).

7.2. *Opportunities that impact a RMIT Design for Social Innovation Network*

Through the discussions with participants prior, during and after the study, a number of insights were revealed that demonstrated clear gaps and opportunities that would impact the establishment of an RMIT hosted Design Social Innovation Network.

Comments reflected the lack of awareness of each other's work in the DSI field and the surprise of the diversity of research projects undertaken outside the traditional focus area of design such as accounting. Several staff members raised their desire to connect to other DSI members if certain interests and research opportunities aligned. Some invited staff did not participate due to time restrictions and lack of availability.

Therefore, for the network's success, the network must:

- Further identify who is working in the DSI field and their related projects
- Specify the project details to allow the DSI community know where expertise lies
- Offer flexibility in searching specifics such as using dynamic searching methods (e.g. medical elderly cancer research).
- Be dynamic and added to with new networked projects being contributed – potentially the survey design could be translated to a website so that researchers can self-populate their own projects with a low-level vetting process put into place before the project goes live on the RMIT site.
- Present specific capabilities of the researchers, their services and resources available internally and externally (e.g. the RMIT Business school runs consultancy services for Social Innovation)
- Outline the process of funding projects and funding opportunities that inform of new or continuing DSI grants and financial opportunities
- Advertise:
 - Willing collaborators
 - Experienced Fund Finders
 - Experience with larger projects
 - Interdisciplinary Services and expertise
 - A strong role for values and missions (Murray et al., 2010)

8. Funding Opportunities

8.1. Identified Social Issues

Scoping the social issues and government funded / promoted programmes enables innovation opportunities to become considered and social issues with greater funding potential to be identified. The AUSTGOV (2019) have listed 20 social programs and resource links that address pressing social issues identified within Australia. These programs have been grouped according to relatable topics under the headings shown in Table 4. The most accommodated area for running of support, educational programs is the Sexual assault / Violence social issue with 9 programs on offer. The list of Social Issues in full detail are included in Appendix 4.

Table 4. Australian Government listed Social Issues and their active programs (adapted from (AUSTGOV, 2019))

	<i>Social Issues</i>	<i>No. of Programs</i>
1	<i>Sexual assault / Violence</i>	9
2	<i>Violence / Harrassment / Bullying</i>	2
3	<i>Community Resilience and Action against violent extremism</i>	1
4	<i>Racism</i>	2
5	<i>Alcoholism / Drink Driving</i>	1
6	<i>eSafety</i>	1
7	<i>Housing and Homelessness</i>	1
8	<i>Gambling</i>	1
9	<i>Organ Donations</i>	1

At a more macro scale, the Budget Review 2019-20 report from the Parliament of Australia (2019) lists the key areas for funding distributions. These areas are shown in Figure 19 and highlight the areas of governance importance which all impact directly or indirectly on society. For example, environmental issues are an indirect opportunity for design social innovation with the behaviours of food purchasing and food wastage rapidly changing due to growing awareness of personal actions impacting the environment. Thus, collaborating and co-creating solutions at the systems level questioning existing practices run by major suppliers and retailer's whist bringing into conversations local communities, families and new ways of thinking is an approach that branches together the environmental, social and economic factors. Therefore, these sectors present many opportunities for design social innovation by remaining in touch with the distribution of governmental resources to address these pending topics.

Economic issues Budget 2008–09: key features Communications, broadband and the digital economy Personal income tax and personal capital gains tax Tax reform Innovation funding Infrastructure Accounting standards Workplace relations	Social issues Health Education Public housing and rental assistance Early childhood services Welfare Disability and caring support Carers Employment services Indigenous affairs Immigration Media and communications Arts Sport	Environmental and scientific issues Climate Change Caring for our Country Water for the Future Agriculture Science Funding Health and Food Security Issues
Legal issues Attorney General's Portfolio Consumer Protection Laws and Corporations Laws	Foreign affairs Official Development Assistance Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) budget	
Defence and security issues Defence Security and policing	Public Service issues Australian Public Service	

Figure 19. Australian Budget Review Report showing Chapter Headings (2019–2020)

8.2. Sources of Funding Opportunities

Government agencies, departments and authorities regularly offer community organisations grant funding for a range of projects and initiatives. Partnerships with RMIT have been formed to undertake social innovation work collaboratively. For example, in 2015, VCOSS (2019) partnered with RMIT through an Industry Fellowship Research Program, a RMIT/VCOSS PhD scholarship and a range of collaborative research opportunities, to promote research into the causes and impacts of poverty and disadvantage in Victoria, now the government funded, *Future Social Services Institute (FSSI, 2019)*. The institutes vision is “a society that optimises people’s abilities to lead full lives with the support of their families, carers, a highly skilled workforce and the community” (MID, 2019).

Other bodies that offer funding opportunities are listed on the Australian Parliament House website (Ferguson, 2019):

- “the performance-based [research block grants](#) (RBGs) administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET), made up of the [Research Training Program](#) and the [Research Support Program](#)
- Australian nationally competitive grants, mainly from the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#) (NHMRC) and the [Australian Research Council](#) (ARC); but also from other national funding bodies, such as the [Medical Research Future Fund](#)
- Australian Government funding to support industry engagement, such as the [Cooperative Research Centre \(CRC\) Program](#), administered by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS), which supports industry-led collaborations with researchers and other groups

- Australian Government research infrastructure funding programs, such as the DET-administered [National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy](#), or the ARC-administered [Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities](#) scheme
- other public sector research funding that is not awarded on a nationally competitive basis—for example, [National Institutes Program](#) grants administered by DET, or state and local government grants and direct contributions to projects
- student fees—a [recent study](#) undertaken for DET found 85 per cent of funding for a [Commonwealth supported place](#) is spent on teaching, with the remainder cross-subsidising other functions, including research
- income from research commissioned by industry and private not-for-profit organisations, such as charities and foundations and
- other sources such as philanthropic donations, endowments, and crowd-funding.”

8.3. *Specific Sources of Funding Opportunities*

More specifically, subscriptions and continuous monitoring for funding opportunities should be made with:

- Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) (<https://vcoss.org.au/>)
Subscribe to the VCOSS eNews for regular updates on a wide variety of grant and funding opportunities
- Grants Victoria (www.vic.gov.au/grants.html)
- GrantConnect (FED) (www.grants.gov.au/?event=public.GO.list)
- Social Change Central (SCC, 2019) (<https://www.socialchangecentral.com/>)
 - Social Impact Hub (<https://www.socialchangecentral.com/listing-item/scaling-impact-the-impact-investment-readiness-journey-sydney/>)
- Social Innovation Partnerships (City of Melbourne, 2019)
- Australian Government Department of Science, Research and Innovation (DSRI, 2019) – Excel database of budgeted grants including social innovation grants (Appendix 5).
- The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) Social Impact Investing Discussion Paper, A submission to the Australian Government (TACSI, 2017).

9. Beyond Melbourne: RMIT International

9.1. Opportunities to collaborate with Vietnam and Barcelona

Vietnam – a call for social innovation

As RMIT is a “twin hub” university, it has programs in place to enable students to nominate part of their study jointly across Vietnam and Australia. With a growing number of Australian-based students undertaking projects in Vietnam (RMIT Vietnam, 2019), “research initiatives have taken place in the fields of information technology, food technology and safety, the control of infectious diseases and water”. This presents a gap and opportunity for the school of design to collaborate on these current ventures between the two campuses. Furthering these research initiatives into fields of Design for Social Innovation will strengthen existing networks and expand on available research outreaches by the RMIT university.

Students and academics choosing to focus on social issues in poverty and social rights can extend their reach within the cultural differences and social issues found in Vietnam. Vietnam’s primary social issues are found in rural and child poverty with 9.8% of the population’s poverty headcount ratio still living below the national poverty line of US\$1.90 per day (Data Bank, 2018). With the thriving Vietnam based RMIT campus, significant research opportunities for collaboration and social innovation are evident.

The RMIT Vietnam website (<https://www.rmit.edu.vn/research>) specifies fields of breakthrough research within education, the environment, childhood poverty, and economic reform which social innovation can contribute value.

In addition, the DESIAP currently showcases active projects running throughout the Asia Pacific and promote DSI research in numerous countries. However, DESIAP do not currently have projects representing social innovation within Vietnam according to Akama (2019). Any research opportunities that result from leveraging the existing RMIT network would be a new venture that would fill the gap that currently exists for the Asia Pacific region.

Barcelona – an established network

An RMIT news article in 2017 reported the connection of Innovation Districts in Barcelona and Melbourne. The Melbourne Innovation District is a result of this collaboration as it reflects and leverages the learnings taken from the Innovation District housed in Barcelona and other international sites. The Barcelona Innovation zone 22@ was reported to “transform 200 hectares of industrial land of Poblenou into a district focused on intensive knowledge-based activities” (Matthews, 2017) as shown in Figure 20. RMIT DSI community has an opportunity for strengthening this already established network through cross-collaboration efforts.

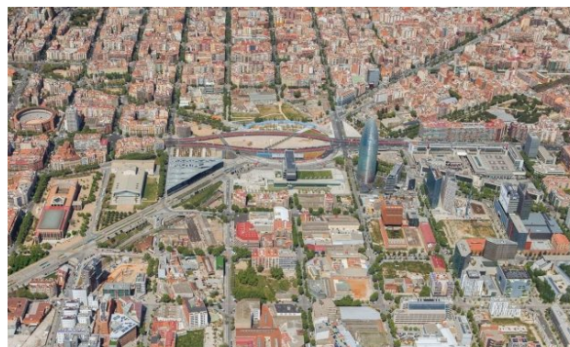


Figure 20. Barcelona Innovation zone 22@ Poblenou (Matthews, 2017).

10. Conclusion

The conceptual paper has navigated the surrounding facets of Design for Social Innovation within the context of literature, the expertise, perspectives and activities within RMIT, the external competitors with potential learnings and partnering opportunities, the placed parameters required for the success of a DSI network, opportunities in social issues and identified funding sources, and finally outreach openings to existing RMIT branches beyond Australia to leverage networks in Vietnam and Barcelona. In summary, the review began with a global knowledge investigation and then moved inwards to reflect on RMITs internal capabilities followed by the possibilities presented in RMITs extension plans.

The cyclic journey reflects the iterative 6 stage approach offered by Murray et al. (2010) as discussed in the Design for Social Innovation Background Review chapter.

The first stage is the responding to the prompt (stage 1) or call to act. The prompt for this research partly generated by the report presented by Hill and Vaughan (2017) identifying opportunities for a collaborative culture of interdisciplinary research unified in targeting complex social issues. The proposal (stage 2) was to scope and map RMIT DSI community capabilities and activities to assess the need for a meaningful resource that networked current and future experts in the field. The prototype (stage 3) was in the form of a survey with the experts co-creating the content for a DSI network, collaboratively defining social innovation design and expressing a DSI vocabulary in the context of RMIT. The conceptual paper validates the proposal of a DSI network and the co-designer's vision for the network is to establish a sustainable (stage 4) and upscaled (stage 5) network that goes beyond promoted projects and expands into an informative, learning and connecting resource. This paper recommends the hosting of a Design for Social Innovation Network that acts as an invitation to neighbouring partnerships within Melbourne, within RMIT's branches and beyond to external partnerships to seek research activities that impact systemic change (stage 6).

RMIT has an opportunity to reframe competitors as partners and consider joint research ventures with established RMIT members abroad.

RMIT has an obligation to listen deeply to their DSI experts and to nurture the existing research efforts that are being grounded through current and future projects.

RMIT School of Design needs to refresh its public published DSI profile and promote new activities and courses dedicated to the design for social innovation field linking into the established DSI ventures and platforms such as the Melbourne Innovation Districts (MID) and the Designing Social Innovation for Asia Pacific (DESIAP).

RMIT can contribute to the public learning and community partnership by expanding its knowledge and education resources for open access which has potential to be offered through the DSI network.

In summary, RMIT is presented with an opportunity to strengthen their current position as a leader and advocate on Design for Social Innovation by hosting a network that promotes ongoing DSI activities, expert knowledge, funding platforms and collaborative opportunities across research that impacts social, societal and systematic levels within domestic and international partners.

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12. Appendices

- Appendix 1 References and PDF files (endnote library zipped file)
- Appendix 2 Network Database (microsoft excel file)
- Appendix 3 Network Profile and Project Design (microsoft powerpoint file)
- Appendix 4 Social Issues full details list (microsoft word file)
- Appendix 5 Australian Government Department of Science, Research and Innovation 2019 (microsoft excel file)