



place loom

Weaving together people,
place and possibility

Place Loom

Shaping places with meaning and purpose

www.placeloom.com.au

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Place Loom's story is one of weaving meaning into the fabric of urban life, an ever-evolving tapestry of culture, memory, and possibility. For more detail, read our story.

02. How we work 04

Through visioning, strategy and design, Place Loom weaves together people, place and purpose, to contribute to the tapestry of urban and regional communities. This section covers our ethos and way of working.

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Place Loom offers a suite of planning and urban design services, tailored to meet the needs of our clients, stakeholders and the communities we serve. More on our comprehensive range of services is captured in this section.

04. Experience 08

Place Loom brings cross-sector experience in shaping complex urban and regional environments. We blend technical rigour with creative insight, to deliver responsive solutions and outcomes for different projects.

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Whether expanding our team or forming meaningful partnerships, Place Loom thrives on collective energy and shared vision. Find out more on how to collaborate with Place Loom.

Our story



Cath O'Brien

FOUNDER / PRINCIPAL URBAN PLANNER AND DESIGNER

B. Regional & Town Planning (Hons. I),
M. Urban Design (Distinction), CAPM®,
IAP2 Accredited – Engagement

Places are not just physical spaces; they are living tapestries woven over time through the shared stories, aspirations and values that give places their identity and meaning.

Place Loom, a boutique strategic planning and urban design practice, has emerged from this philosophy. Just as a loom transforms individual strands into a rich, cohesive tapestry, Place Loom seeks to interlace culture, community, and environment to create places that resonate, nurture and inspire. Our approach is intentional, layered, and dynamic – ensuring every place is woven with meaning and purpose, reflecting the needs and aspirations of those who use it and call it home.

Founded by Cath O'Brien, Place Loom builds on her extensive experience working with State and Local government, private, and not-for-profit clients. For nearly 20 years, Cath has helped shape transformative projects and brings a strategic yet creative approach to placemaking. Cath's prior portfolio includes waterfront precincts, retail and activity centres, cultural districts, employment and industry hubs, mixed use and housing developments, as well as, various urban renewal and regeneration ventures.

Place Loom's capability and service offering spans everything from early planning and investigation tasks, feasibility studies, collaborative engagement, to master plans, urban strategies and policy frameworks. We also offer technical review and advisory services.

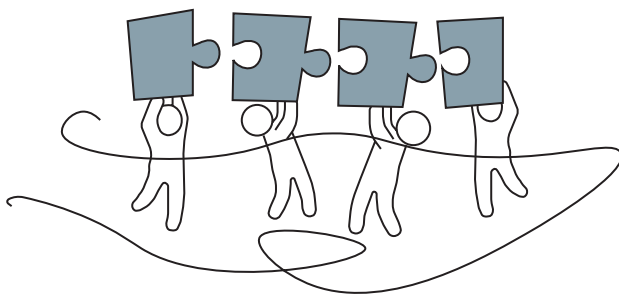
Whether it's precinct or city-wide strategies or small interventions, we believe in supporting environments that hold meaning, foster connection and stand the test of time.

How we work

Core values and ethos

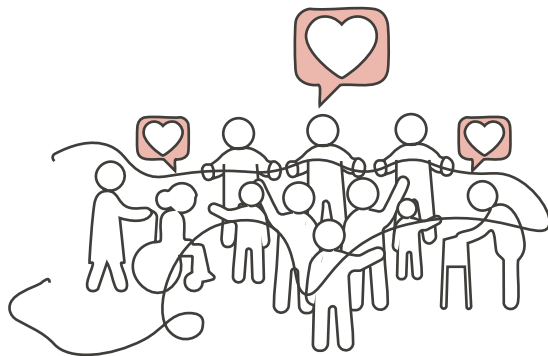
Place Loom's approach to master planning, urban design and placemaking is like weaving a tapestry—where individual threads of community, culture, history, and landscape come together. This approach demands intentionality, creativity, and a deep understanding of how each strand contributes to the tapestry of places and community life.

Our way of working is guided by three core principles:



COLLABORATION

We understand that the best places are created through partnership. By working closely with clients, communities, and industry experts, we bring together diverse perspectives to shape places that are meaningful and connected.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

We are committed to reflecting the identities and aspirations of the communities we serve, with a particular focus on honouring First Nations voices and stories. Our plans and design ideas seek to foster belonging, social exchange, identity and pride.



CREATIVITY

Creativity drives our work. We strive to challenge conventional ideas and embrace fresh perspectives, to craft places that inspire, engage, and contribute to the prosperity, growth, enhancement and resilience of local communities.

“Through our work, Place Loom fosters places that elevate communities, while also promoting learning and recognition of the deep-rooted wisdom of places and the people connected with that place. It is about design that is felt as much as it is seen – where environments don’t just function but invite participation and cultivate belonging.”

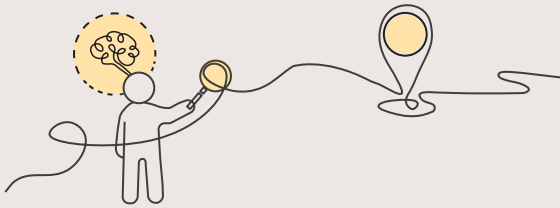
PLACE LOOM



Our services

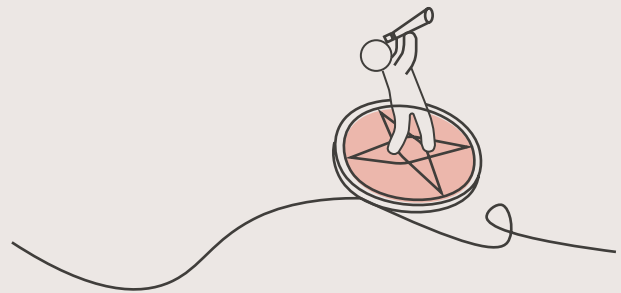
Placemaking, urban planning and design

Place Loom offers a comprehensive suite of planning and urban design services. We bring together research, strategy and leading practice to shape meaningful and resilient environments. Place Loom offers tailored solutions that are designed to meet the requirements of individual projects, and that of our clients and other stakeholders. Our key services are captured below.



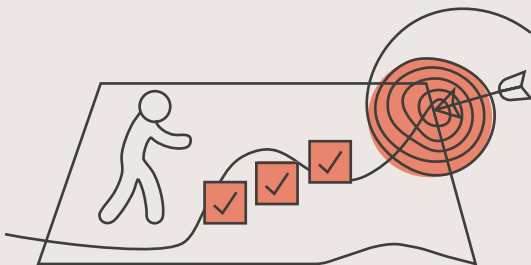
Urban research and analysis

Providing in-depth insights into local context, demographics, land use, market conditions, and transport behaviours to inform strategic decision-making.



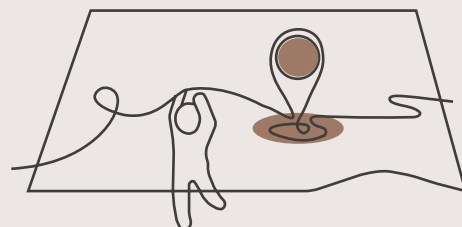
Visioning and early options exploration

Helping to shape shared aspirations through visioning workshops, early concept testing and feasibility investigations.



Master planning

Creating forward-thinking plans that integrate land use, infrastructure, and public spaces into thriving urban environments.



Placemaking and activation

Transforming places through engagement, cultural expression, storytelling, and dynamic interventions that foster connection and vibrancy.



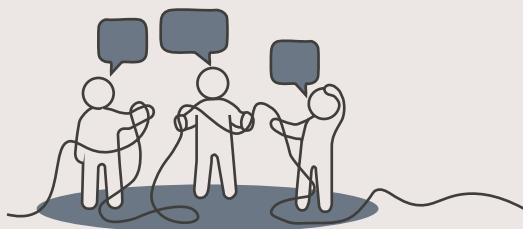
Frameworks and strategies

Developing master plans, frameworks and design strategies that align community values with best practices for sustainable growth and change.



Design guidance and policy

Crafting design guidelines and urban policies that ensure quality, sustainability, and positive urban outcomes.



Engagement

Facilitating collaborative workshops that build consensus and empower stakeholders to shape the places they treasure and value.



Technical review and advisory

Offering strategic expertise and guidance to navigate complex urban projects, ensuring feasibility, impact, and alignment with best practices.

Experience

Broad expertise across a range of sectors

With nearly 20 years of experience across government, private, and not-for-profit projects, Cath has shaped work spanning waterfront precincts, retail and activity centres, cultural districts, transport and employment hubs, housing precincts, and urban renewal initiatives.

Our project approach is tailored to suit your needs, responding with insight and integrity, and working hand-in-hand with you, to translate your visions into reality.

- +** **Transport and mobility**
- +** **Commercial activity centres**
- +** **Industrial precincts**
- +** **Port and waterfront precincts**
- +** **Education, civic and community spaces**
- +** **Housing and mixed use developments**



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Place Loom translates visions into robust, place-based structure plans and planning frameworks that guide decision-making through clarity of purpose and policy alignment.

Cath has led and participated in the development of strategic plans across diverse scales, from site and precinct frameworks to broader township and city-scale strategies.

Our approach is both analytical and creative, weaving together research, consultation findings, and design thinking to shape outcomes that are aspirational, responsive and deeply rooted in place.

MASTER PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN

Place Loom brings place and community focused expertise to the development of master plans. Our approach is iterative and collaborative, aligning creative exploration with technical detail to ensure each master plan is not just aspirational, but pragmatic and achievable.

Place Loom's founder has led and shaped master planning projects across varied contexts — from civic and public spaces, commercial and industrial centres, waterfront and port precincts, housing and mixed-use developments, to areas undergoing urban renewal and regeneration.

Acknowledging that no two places are the same, and the nuances and social constructs of place, our approach honours community, culture and context.

We embed strategies that confront systemic urban challenges while also honouring the unique strengths and stories of the places and communities we help to strengthen.

Our master plans explore ways to address climate adaptation, housing equity, celebrate and draw on community and cultural narratives, promote social and cultural wellbeing, safety and inclusion. We also prioritise and in some cases reimagine mobility hierarchies, leverage local economies, as well as support regenerative design and asset transition for different areas.

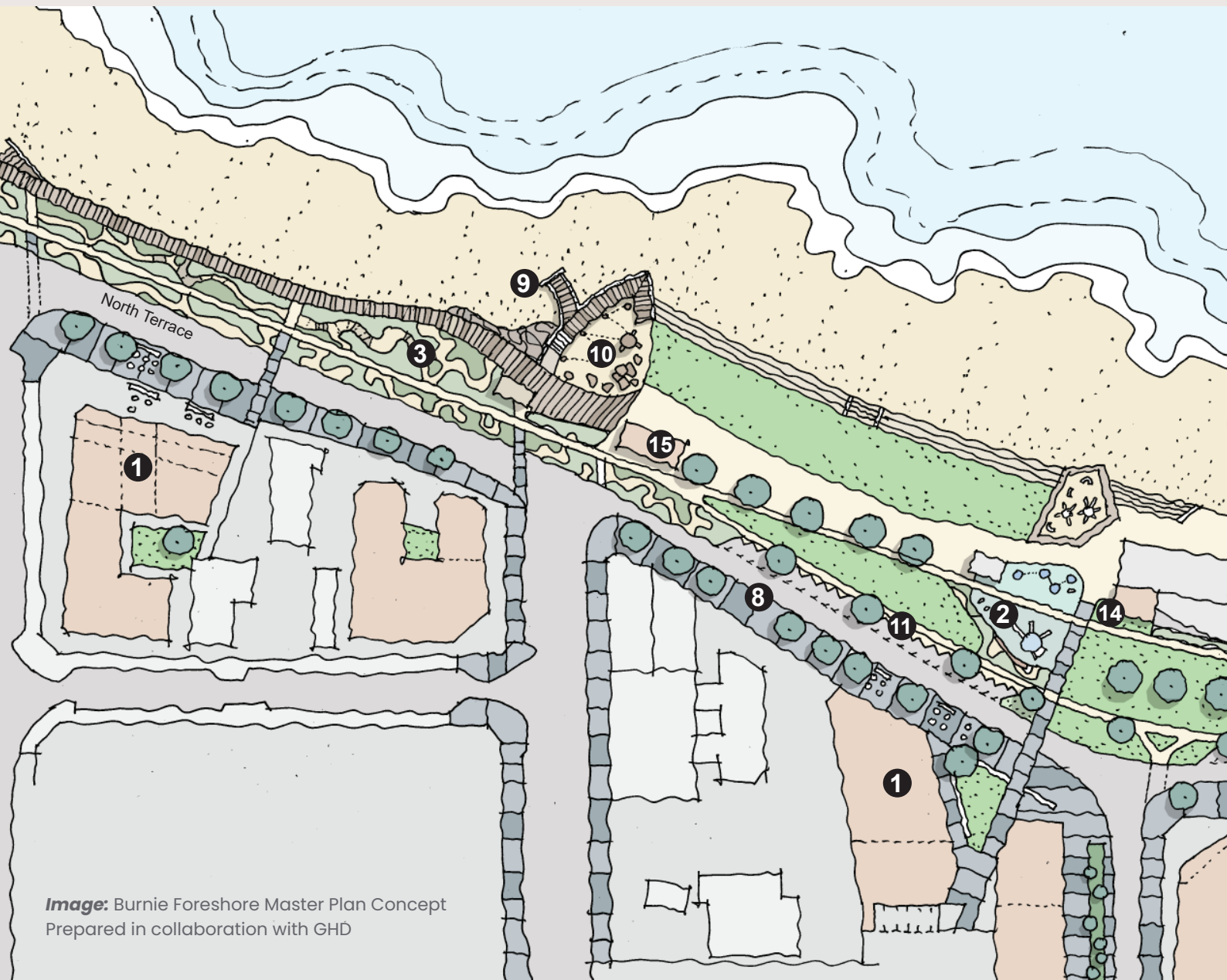


Image: Burnie Foreshore Master Plan Concept
Prepared in collaboration with GHD



Image: Example of inner city activation project
Nash Lane, Mildura VIC

PLACEMAKING AND ACTIVATION

Place Loom brings expertise in placemaking and place activation, grounded in the belief that vibrant, resilient places emerge when communities, culture, and local context are truly honoured.

Our approach goes beyond surface-level activation, focusing instead on co-creating environments that spark connection, reflect shared identity, and evolve organically through collaboration and ongoing agency by the community and key stakeholders.

Cath has led and contributed to initiatives ranging from precinct activation strategies to smaller tactical urbanism and temporary installations, each tailored to amplify local voices, foster belonging, and catalyse enduring social, economic, and cultural outcomes.

We have experience breathing life back into underutilised places. We recognise there is often resistance to change, as it can stir feelings of uncertainty, nostalgia and loss of familiar rhythms or traditions. As such, we work alongside you to manage these changes in a sensitive and participatory manner.

What we can do

- **Place plans and strategies** for key public, community and civic spaces that celebrate local identity, connection and meaningful ways to honour a place's living history (past and present) and its stories.
- **Tactical urbanism initiatives** to drive an uptick in activity and footfall, and ways to draw people into an area.
- **Activation strategies** for underutilised spaces, such as civic plazas, laneways, main streets, retail and activity centres.
- **Creative engagement methods** to involve people in a project, and capture stories, values and ideas.
- **Public art integration** to facilitate commissioned artworks within public spaces.
- **Programming and curation** of events, activities and temporary interventions to achieve objectives.
- **Night-time economy strategies** that help boost activity after hours, and therefore the vibrancy and feeling of safety at night.
- **Placemaking frameworks and toolkits** tailored to an area, for Council, developers/private parties, traders and community groups.
- **Post-occupancy and impact evaluations** to track outcomes and inform ongoing stewardship.

URBAN RENEWAL AND REGENERATION

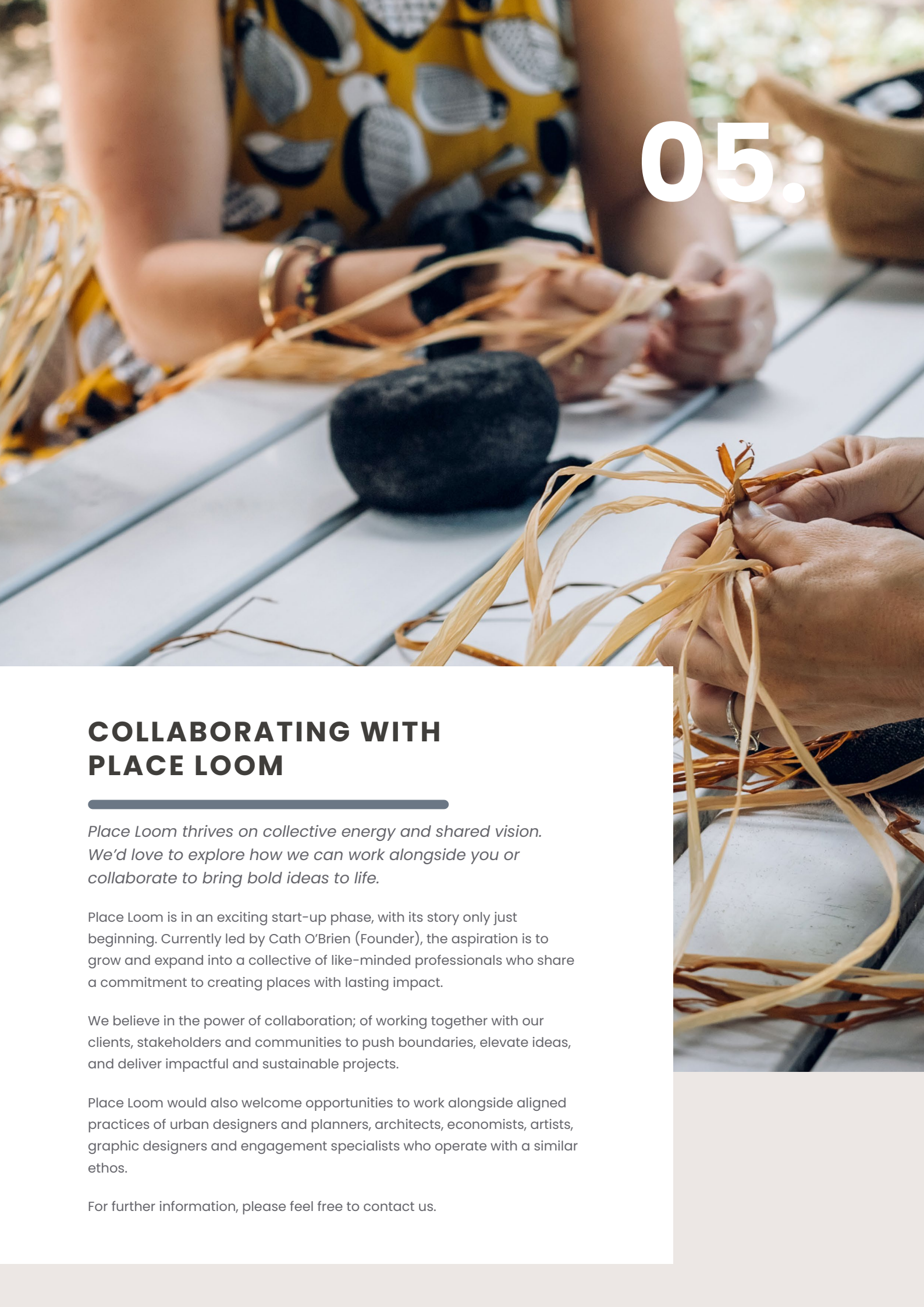
Place Loom understands the importance of unlocking new futures for underutilised and transitioning areas. We see urban renewal as more than a facelift; it's a chance to reimagine places with care, courage, and community at its heart.

From forgotten edges to future precincts, we help breathe new life into spaces while respecting what's already there. Our approach seeks to guide transformation in a way that is equitable, authentic and meaningful. Place Loom's founder has experience working across complex sites in flux, and areas earmarked for transition and densification. Whether it's shaping a master plan or urban renewal strategy, activating a street or retail precinct, exploring alternative futures for disused assets and buildings, governance and delivery frameworks – we can assist you.

We appreciate the importance of shaping cohesive, place-responsive strategies that align with policy, governance structures, investment pipelines and community values.



Image: Example of urban renewal project
Bangalow, NSW

A close-up photograph of a person's hands weaving a basket from natural fibers. The person is wearing a yellow and black patterned shirt and a gold bracelet. The basket is made of light-colored, dried plant fibers. The background is blurred, showing more of the weaving process and some greenery.

05.

COLLABORATING WITH PLACE LOOM

Place Loom thrives on collective energy and shared vision. We'd love to explore how we can work alongside you or collaborate to bring bold ideas to life.

Place Loom is in an exciting start-up phase, with its story only just beginning. Currently led by Cath O'Brien (Founder), the aspiration is to grow and expand into a collective of like-minded professionals who share a commitment to creating places with lasting impact.

We believe in the power of collaboration; of working together with our clients, stakeholders and communities to push boundaries, elevate ideas, and deliver impactful and sustainable projects.

Place Loom would also welcome opportunities to work alongside aligned practices of urban designers and planners, architects, economists, artists, graphic designers and engagement specialists who operate with a similar ethos.

For further information, please feel free to contact us.



Place Loom seeks to support places that are not only functional, safe and inclusive, but also where connection is cultivated, resilience is strengthened, and stories are honoured.

CATH O'BRIEN
Founder



Lets **weave**
something
meaningful
together

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