

possibilities that are sparked by the emergence of common themes. From these “universals” we can create new frames for the problem situation, leading to proposed actions that can be critically appraised. Thus, the model of the nine steps might better be presented as two sets of nested circles, one of increasingly wider contexts of players and activities, and the other of thought patterns that increasingly converge toward action. These two sets of nested circles are connected at their widest point, by the emergence of meaningful themes that are neither problems nor solutions (see figure 5.2). And in the end, they are also connected at the most concrete level, where the solution born in this period of reflection should effectively address the original problem (thus linking the original paradox with the proposed agenda for transformation).

In case study 9, the problem of preventing a possible terrorist attack at Circular Quay was expanded to consider the open, underdeveloped nature of the adjacent squares. By physically enlarging the area under consideration, the designers came to consider a very broad group of possible stakeholders. For these partners in the field, the underdeveloped space is an opportunity to express the possible significance of this place: as a “showcase for Australia,” the perfect destination point to welcome visitors and an opportunity to show what Australia has to offer. These ideas can then be translated into design briefs for objects to be placed in the public space.

5 SEARCH FOR PATTERNS

The beginning of a frame creation process can be seen as a deep and probing questioning of the initial problem situation. Yet this inquiry is a fact-finding exercise focusing on the “what,” rather than a social or psychological inquest to try to understand the hidden depths of the problem. To ground the frame creation process, we can restrict the scope of inquiry to understanding the pattern of actions that people have performed, and the direct occasion that sparked their actions. Frame creation is a practice that is based on pattern recognition, and we need to pragmatically steer away from opinions or theories that people might hold about the world and about themselves. In the analysis and the creative steps of frame creation, it is the patterns of behavior that are key. It is the deeds that count, not the words. When we think back to case study 6, on the integration of mentally handicapped people in society, we can see why it is important to concentrate on facts and actions: the caregivers who create the problem by unwittingly isolating their charges are all wonderful, warm, and caring people acting with the best of intentions. It is hard not to be swayed