



The Healthy Built Environments Program: Working together to break down health and planning silos

Never Stand Still

Faculty of the Built Environment

Healthy Built Environments Program

Susan Thompson and Claudine Lyons

Making Cities Liveable Conference

St Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria

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Outline

1. The NSW Ministry of Health and its interest in planning
2. Overview of the Healthy Built Environments Program
 - Research
 - Education and capacity building
 - Leadership and advocacy
3. Challenges in moving forward



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Ministry's Key Interests in Planning

- Health promotion – encouraging active and healthy lifestyles and preventing chronic diseases
- Health protection – reducing exposure to environmental health risks
- Health facilities – minor and major capital works for health service delivery



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Ministry of Health

State level agencies,
stakeholders, decision
makers and planners

Built
environments
for health

Health staff working
regionally and locally
through Local Health
Districts

Local government and
regional planning decision
makers and professionals



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The **Healthy Built Environments Program** is a consortium linking planning and health

Leadership in urban planning and public health

Core funding from NSW Department of Health of \$1.5m over 5 years

Situated in the City Futures Research Centre, Faculty of the Built Environment at UNSW

HBEP partnership includes academics, Heart Foundation, NSW health professionals, local councils, planning consultants

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The HBEP **vision** is that built environments will be planned, designed, developed and managed to promote and protect health for all people



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Three Strategic Areas of Work

Research
Education & Capacity Building
Leadership and Advocacy



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Research Evidence for HBEs

Healthy Built Environments: A review of the literature

Major scholarly research project

Systematic, comprehensive and rigorous review of literature

Proposes three main 'domains' of built environment influence on health

Links research and policy to underpin actions



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Three key domains of the built environment and health:

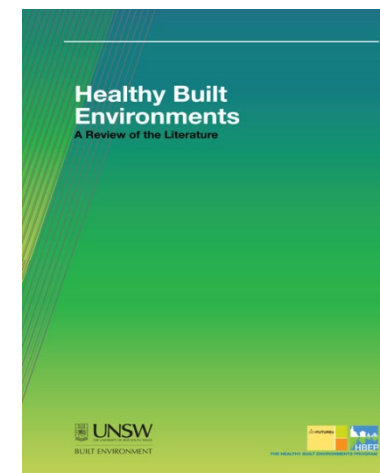
- The Built Environment and Getting People Active
- The Built Environment and Connecting and Strengthening Communities
- The Built Environment and Providing Healthy Food Options

Address major risk factors
for chronic disease:

Physical inactivity

Social isolation

Obesity



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Australian Research Council Linkage Grant

Planning and building healthy communities

Research partners from health and the built environment

Four sites being examined

Detailed healthy neighbourhood audits

Compilation of health data

Qualitative in-depth interviews



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AHURI Investigative Panel

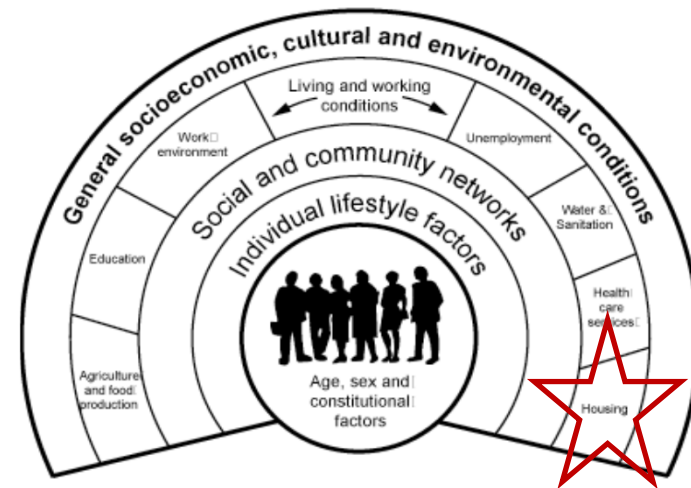
Researching the complex housing-health relationship

What's healthy housing?

Focus on Australasian research

New areas of housing-health research - HBEs

The policy research interface: engaging built environment & health professionals in collaborative partnerships



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Other Research Activities

Research Strategy

Identification of key research gaps

Leverage from other grants

Focus on building collaborative partnerships



Regular Research Updates

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Education and Workforce Development

Seminars, workshops,
special lectures and forums

University, metropolitan, rural
and remote locations

Focus on building
partnerships in participation
and speakers



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Education and Workforce Development

Practical exercises for participants

Focus on building partnerships in training



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Education and Workforce Development

Courses at UNSW

UG Healthy Planning

PG Healthy Built Environments

Pro-bono places for
NSW Health
professionals

Mix of theory, research,
policy and practice
based learning



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Leadership and Advocacy

Advisory Board of key HBE stakeholders

Newsletter

Regular HBEs column in *New Planner*

Other practice journals

Media engagement

Submission writing



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Specific challenges

- Healthy built environments work is cutting edge
- NSW Health is often not seen as a key stakeholder
- Traditional classification as a human services portfolio
- There are so many health concerns, what are our priorities?
- Medicalised perceptions of 'health' and other language barriers
- Need for more collaboration within the Health sector to share knowledge and strengthen influence

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Conclusion

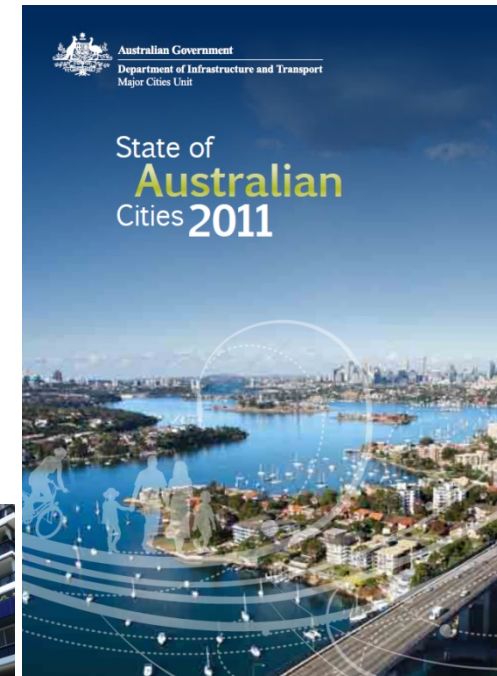
Building Australian research to inform policy and practice

Interdisciplinary ways of working and engaging

Building strategic alliances – impacting on policy across built environment and health

Education – professional development and university based courses

Getting the message out to a diverse audience of policy makers and practitioners



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Visit the HBEP website

<http://www.be.unsw.edu.au/programmes/healthy-built-environments-program/about>



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