

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?



Chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, depression and cancer are the most common cause of death worldwide. The built environment has a significant impact on three of the main behavioural risk factors for chronic disease: physical inactivity, social isolation and obesity.

By focusing on the built environment's role in facilitating physical activity, social interaction and access to fresh fruits and vegetables, the aim of the project is to understand how different residential localities can make healthy everyday living a reality, and reduce the burden of chronic disease.



WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?



This project is funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant. The project partners are Landcom, the National Heart Foundation and the South Western Sydney Local Health District.

WHERE IS THE RESEARCH TAKING PLACE?



The research for this project is being undertaken in four socio-demographically and geographically diverse neighbourhoods in NSW: Victoria Park, Rouse Hill, Airds-Bradbury and Renwick.



HOW ARE WE DOING THE RESEARCH?



We are using different methods to conduct the research, which are outlined below.

Healthy Neighbourhood Audits

A Healthy Neighbourhood Audit Instrument is being used to map the key features and infrastructure of each neighbourhood, such as land uses, walking and cycling networks, public transport systems, open space, street trees and furniture, amenities, and traffic calming measures. The audit instrument is also being used to record detailed environmental observations about how different spaces are used, how people move through and between spaces, and perceptions of safety.



Market Basket and Farmers' Market Surveys

Food outlets in each neighbourhood are being assessed to provide an understanding of how residents access healthy food. The research team are using a Market Basket Survey Instrument to record the availability, price and quality of food items needed to satisfy typical nutritional requirements. Farmers' markets in each locality are also being assessed using a similar method.



Focus Groups

Focus groups are being held in each neighbourhood to allow residents and community workers to participate in group discussions about how their neighbourhoods support healthy everyday living. Each focus group participant will be asked to fill out a survey with questions about the types of physical activities they take part in, how they interact with their neighbours and community, and how they get fresh fruits and vegetables.

FURTHER INFORMATION



Visit the HBEP's website to find out more about the project:
<http://www.be.unsw.edu.au/healthy-built-environments-program/research>