

HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES

Newsletter No 1. February 2009



WELCOME

Welcome to this first newsletter of the *Healthy Spaces and Places* project. The newsletter gives feedback on what's been happening so far. Since May 2008, *Healthy Spaces & Places* has consulted with:

- > governments
- > planning and health professionals
- > the development industry and community sector, and
- > academics and researchers.

About 400 people have attended workshops (held in Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart, Canberra, Darwin, Perth and Geelong). Thank you, if you were one of those people. Thanks also to everyone who completed the workshop evaluation survey. We are analysing the results, and the learnings will help shape the next steps.

While the principles and approaches suggested in the project's Discussion Paper *Towards a National Planning Guide* were a major focus of the workshops, equally important were presentations on work happening in each State or Territory that shows how different sectors and places are tackling the challenges of ensuring built environments encourage active living – walking, cycling and public transport.

This is one of the strengths of *Healthy Spaces and Places* – it supports and

complements many existing initiatives of state, territory and local governments, the development industry and the community sector. As *Healthy Spaces and Places* progresses, this side of it will grow as we actively promote some of these exciting examples of how communities are working on supporting healthier lifestyles.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

From the consultations, we know there is strong support for a national guide, both web-based and in print, that clearly explains the links between health and well-being and the built environment and that people want to see the guide clearly stating national principles for planning for health and active living. People consulted want to see:

- > case studies of current practice, including critical analysis, visual illustrations, good and poor practice, successes, learnings and barriers

HEALTH FACT

In 2008, the financial cost of obesity alone (ie. excluding overweight) in Australia was estimated at \$8.3 billion – Access Economics, 2008

For more information about the project, please contact the Project Manager, Anne Moroney at healthyplaces@planning.org.au



This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

- > the guide being evidence based (linking planning principles with health outcomes), inspirational, challenging and a vision of good practice
- > information tailored to different audiences
- > the guide and project responding to a broad range of partners – all governments, the education sector, professional groups, industry peak bodies and the community.

For more detail, including responses to the consultation feedback, view the consultation report at www.planning.org.au.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The consultations have given clear direction on the need for tools and products and a parallel advocacy / education stream to promote the work. Work is underway on:

- > a hardcopy National Planning Guide, mainly aimed at planners and others working in the built environment
- > the *Healthy Spaces and Places* website
- > an advocacy component.

Focus groups will be held in early this year with practitioners to test a pilot website and Guide, with the Guide and website to be ready for use by year. Shortly we will inform you of workshop dates.

FURTHER INPUT

If you have ideas for the work now underway, including case studies and supporting photos, please contact us. If you are new to the project but want to join a mailing list, we want to hear from you. In the meantime, read about *Healthy Spaces and Places* at the PIA

The 'built environment' – meaning the structures and places in which we live, work and play that are integral to improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our community.)

HEALTH FACTS

1. The Australian healthcare system could save \$1.5 billion annually if more people were physically active for 30 minutes a day. (Medibank Private, 2007)

2. The cost of physical inactivity. What is the lack of participation in physical activity costing Australia? Available from: www.medibank.com.au/Client/Documents/Pdfs/physical_inactivity.pdf

website: www.planning.org.au

WHAT IS HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES?

Healthy Spaces and Places is a national approach that recognises built environments can affect our health and can facilitate lifelong active living and good health for all. As such, *Healthy Spaces and Places* is all about creating new places (or improving existing places) that are conducive to walking, cycling and public transport – then there is a better chance of people being fitter and healthier.

Healthy Spaces and Places is an initiative of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

