

HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES

Newsletter No 2, May 2009



THIS ISSUE

Welcome to this edition of the *Healthy Spaces and Places* project newsletter.

This issue reports on recent activities, covering these main areas:

- > focus groups to test the pilot website, and the hard copy (printed) document
- > independent expert reviewers
- > a discussion forum on *Healthy Spaces and Places* at PIA's National Congress, held recently in Darwin.

AUSTRALIA-WIDE FOCUS GROUPS

A series of focus groups have been held throughout Australia throughout during March to May.

Their purpose was to receive feedback on work so far on the *Healthy Spaces and Places* website, examining both structure and content, and on the approaches proposed for the printed document.

The website has been updated progressively in response to feedback from the workshops. Thus, the most recent workshops provided comment on increasingly refined content and structure.

The focus group participants were a mix of planning and design, health and sport and recreation professionals from the government and private sectors, as well

as those with broader interests such as climate change, cycling, food security and children development.

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

Feedback from the earlier focus groups helped refine the website and change the approach for the printed document (see below).

Feedback received included:

- > the case studies will be highly valued; a list of all case studies will make them readily accessible
- > there should be examples of poor practice as well as good practice and a simple way of identifying both (ie. green/red light system)
- > site content should be practical with not too much theory
- > information about the links between health and planning should be more prominent on the site
- > the importance of quality images and minimal but effective text at the higher levels of the site (with more detail at lower levels for those who need and want it)
- > a 'what's new' section would help
- > expanded information about 'how to use' the site would help.

So thank you to those people who provided comments.

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



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

EXPERT REVIEWERS

Independent experts have been appointed to review the evidence based policies and practical advice that will be on the website. Their expertise is in urban design, planning, public health, transport engineering, community safety, and children and families.

URBAN DESIGN

Brett Wood-Gush (below), Principal Urban Designer – TPG Town Planning and Urban Design, is the expert urban design reviewer.



Brett holds degrees in architecture, planning and urban design. He describes getting to where he is now professionally as “a long journey to becoming an expert in understanding healthy places and spaces. An interest in design led me to architecture but by the time I graduated I was already more interested in how people used cities and the spaces between buildings than in buildings themselves.”

He then completed the Master of Urban Design at Sydney University and to his knowledge was the first qualified urban designer in Western Australia. He soon left Australia to see the great cities of

the world and returned in his early thirties. Since then he has also qualified as a planner. His work on policies, projects and education now spans the country and he continues his search for new places to learn from and new ways to make cities vibrant and healthy.

Connectivity – referring to the directness of links and the number of connections in a path or road network and, for Healthy Spaces and Places, the ease with which people can walk and cycle around and between places.

PRINTED DOCUMENT

Along with work on the website content, the approaches for the printed document have been further refined over the past three months.

The printed document has been identified as needing to be a summary of *Healthy Spaces and Places* for planners and related design practitioners, and health professionals. As importantly, it needs to be an introduction for the wider community, including government representatives, community representatives and individuals.

As such the printed document will introduce the *Healthy Spaces and Places* project, including by introducing the ten key principles of the project, the importance of active living and the links between health and planning – acting as an incentive for people to visit the much more comprehensive information available.

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The Project Team is also looking at producing a CD of the website, recognising that not all potential users of the site have easy web access. Availability and distribution methods are yet to be determined.

PIA CONGRESS

Over 60 people participated in a discussion forum on *Healthy Spaces and Places* at PIA's National Congress in Darwin on March 31. Forum panel members included congress keynote speaker Robert Cervero (Berkeley University), Susan Thompson (University of NSW), Carmel Boyce (City of Greater Geelong) and Liz de Chastel (SGS Economics and Planning), with Stephanie Knox, from the *Healthy Spaces and Places* project team chairing the session.

Topics covered included issues about food security, approaches to making it happen on the ground and the impact of regional climatic differences – shade and shelter.

WHAT'S NEXT

Substantial work is continuing on the refinement of the *Healthy Spaces and Places* web-based resource and printed material.

A release date is due in mid- 2009. Further advice about its launch and access details will be announced shortly.

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