



HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES

Newsletter No 3, August 2009



WEBSITE WENT LIVE ON 12 AUGUST

The *Healthy Spaces and Places* website: www.healthyplaces.org.au is now live.

The website is the primary information source for *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

It is foremost for planning and design professionals but also for health professionals (including health advocates, public health officers and population health managers); governments (including local councillors, state and federal politicians, advocacy organisations and peak bodies); the property development industry (including private and public developers); and the community (including individuals, community organisations and schools).

Healthy Spaces & Places provides a first-ever national guide on making our cities and towns places that encourage walking, cycling, running and catching public transport, in order that we individually and as a society can have improved lifelong health and wellbeing.

Visit the website now to see what it offers you: www.healthyplaces.org.au

OFFICIAL LAUNCH AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA

Healthy Spaces and Places was officially launched on 12 August 2009 at the annual Built Environment Meets Parliament (BEMP) Summit at Parliament House Canberra by the Hon Warren Snowden MP Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Service Delivery.

A one-day event, BEMP takes the form of a conversation between parliamentarians and industry leaders that showcases the relationship between Australian communities and their built environment. BEMP is hosted by the Association of Consulting Engineers, the Green Building Council of Australia, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia and the Australian Institute of Architects.

The theme for 2009 was '**Fast Tracking Recovery – Building a Sustainable Future**'. It focussed on how the building sector, in partnership with Government, can contribute to Australia's early recovery from the global economic downturn. This year's themes were prosperity, liveability, sustainability and partnerships – all of which connect with the purpose of *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

Did you know? – Based on current trends, the percentage of the Australian population who will be overweight or obese will have grown to 73 per cent in 2025, including one-third of children and three-quarters of adults.

– Australian Government, Preventative Health Taskforce, 2008, National Preventative Health Taskforce, Technical Report No 1, Obesity in Australia: a need for urgent action.

For more information about the project, please contact healthyplaces@planning.org.au



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

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED *HEALTHY SPACES AND PLACES*

The project collaborators – the Australian Local Government Association, the National Heart Foundation and the Planning Institute of Australia – and the project team give their most sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

Too many people have contributed to start naming individuals or groups – but take it from here, the contributions made by so many have been terrific. This is reflected in the quality and extensiveness of *Healthy Spaces and Places* product, comprising the *Healthy Spaces and Places* website and printed overview.

Please help keep *Healthy Spaces and Places* alive and relevant by using the resource it offers, and by making others aware of it. Think about what might be added to it at a future date, should the opportunity arise.

And, if you were not involved in its development but are reading this, take a look. It is a practical resource aimed at making a difference to the health and wellbeing of Australians.

EXPERT REVIEWERS

Independent experts reviewed the evidence based policies and practical advice that is on the website. Their expertise was in urban design, planning, public health, community safety and transport engineering. The last newsletter featured Brett Wood-Gush, *Healthy Spaces and Places* expert urban design reviewer. This issue we have profiles on Professor Billie Giles-Corti (public health reviewer), Associate Professor Susan Thompson (project evaluator) and Knowles Tivendale (transport planning reviewer).

Billie Giles-Corti is Director of the Centre for the Built Environment and Health at the School of Population Health, the University of Western Australia (UWA) and a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Senior Research Fellow.



The Centre for the Built Environment and Health was established in November 2007, building on research that has been undertaken by a multi-

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Did you know? – The total financial costs of obesity in Australia in 2008, not including overweight, was estimated at \$8.3 billion.

– Australian Government, Preventative Health Taskforce, 2008, *Australia: the Healthiest Country by 2020*.

disciplinary team of researchers and post-graduate research students at UWA for the last 15 years.

The Centre's mission is to undertake policy-relevant research that builds capacity and influences planning and urban design policy and practice to create healthy and sustainable communities. It studies the impact of the built environment on health, social and health behaviour outcomes including walking, cycling, public transport use, overweight and obesity, social capital and dog walking. It seeks input from consumers and works closely with practitioners and policy-makers, to ensure that its applied research program is policy relevant.

Since 2003, the Centre has been undertaking one of the first longitudinal studies internationally, that monitors the impact of urban design on people who have moved into new neighbourhoods. The RESIDE study is designed to examine the impact of the Western Australian state-government's Liveable Neighbourhood subdivision design code and will help better understand how the built form influences the health and wellbeing of residents.

Speaking specifically about *Healthy Spaces and Places*, Billie said: 'Globally there is now recognition that the way we build cities and communities impacts health. The question is, how to build better cities and communities and how can the health sector communicate what's required to the planning and development sector? *Healthy Spaces and Places* is a first attempt at achieving these goals, and is unique in a number of ways.'

'First it involves a partnership between health, planning and local government. Second, it is evidence-based. Finally, it seeks to improve policy and practice.'

'However, the success of *Healthy Spaces and Places* is not the document nor the website nor the partnership. It is the extent to which you, the reader and practitioner reads and applies its principles and guidelines and then evaluates the impact on residents, to ensure the impacts are positive.'

Susan Thompson has over 30 years of experience as an urban planning practitioner, teacher and researcher. She is an Associate Professor in the Urban Planning and Development Program, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of NSW (UNSW).



Her interests are wide and cross-disciplinary, encompassing healthy planning, meanings of home and belonging, the implications of cultural diversity for cities and planning practice, and the importance of local environments for communities.

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Susan is a passionate advocate of interdisciplinarity and the use of qualitative research methods, pioneering their use in built environment disciplines, particularly in facilitating better understandings of people / place relationships. Over the years she has received various awards for her contributions to planning scholarship. Most recently her edited text, *Planning Australia*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2007, was awarded both the state (NSW) and national Planning Institute of Australia's Prizes for Excellence.

Since late 2004, Susan has been actively working in the field of healthy planning. Currently she is supervising three PhD students working in healthy planning. In 2007 and 2008, undergraduate students honours theses in healthy planning included the topics of food security, mental health, children and inclusion of the National Heart Foundation's 'Healthy by Design' guidelines in residential development

A Healthy Planning elective at UNSW, offered as a summer course since 2007 will be a featured case study on Healthy Spaces and Places.

Visit her web page for more details:
<http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/staff/susan.t.hompson/>

Knowles Tivendale is an Associate with Booz & Company, based in the Melbourne office. He has over 15 years experience as a transport and land-use planner. With his first degree and initial work experience in urban planning, Knowles has developed a detailed understanding of the relationships between transport and land-use.

He has led multi-disciplinary teams in various settings collaborating with clients and stakeholders to develop transport improvement strategies. He has managed a wide range of transport projects including:

- > integrated transport plans
- > bus network reviews
- > options assessment and business case development for rail projects, and
- > parking management strategies.

Knowles is currently managing a Bus Service Reviews (totalling 70 per cent of Melbourne's network) and has facilitated around 50 public workshops and 100 stakeholder discussions as part of that project.



Most of Knowles' work is focused on facilitating people to use more sustainable transport modes. The impact of design on people's transport choices has been shown to be significant in many research papers. The link between transport mode choice and health is also significant, with a clear correlation between increased walking and greater personal health.

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He has recently been elected the National Chair of PIA's Transport Planning Chapter.

CONSULTATION

FOCUS GROUPS

Consultation, including through focus groups, featured throughout the 18-month development of *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

Participants at the focus groups were mainly from the government sector (about half), with a quarter from the private sector, 15 per cent from non-government organisations and the remainder from other areas, particularly tertiary education/universities.

Focus groups continued to be held until early May 2009, providing opportunity for feedback on the pilot website's evolving structure and content, as well as issues not covered by the site and the role and content of the printed document.

New emerging issues identified in these final rounds of consultations included public art and health and wellbeing, remote communities and physical activity, implementing sustainable healthy design for hospital precincts and food security and nutrition.

SURVEY RESULTS

At workshops, participants were asked to give feedback in a written survey, in addition to participating in facilitated workshop sessions. Although the number of written responses was small, the feedback covered a cross-section of

professional interests. Qualitative feedback included statements such as:

- > [there is a] compelling need to help me in advocating for changes to planning proposals that increase social and health outcomes
- > how can I get all Government agencies (not just some) to consider healthy environments?
- > how can we make it easier for developers to incorporate healthy design elements into their residential subdivision plans?
- > I need 'bite size' compelling statistics and stories that are compelling to help me in advocating for changes to planning proposals that increase social and health outcomes
- > how can we get agencies to work together?
- > how can I educate regional associations on strategic planning, design initiatives and sustainability practices when they have little to no resources available for anything other than capital works projects?
- > how can I better advise my clients on the options available to them in terms of space development so that they can provide for their key stakeholders?

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Remember!

The success of Healthy Spaces and Places will come from ‘...the extent to which you, the reader and practitioner reads and applies [Healthy Spaces and Places] principles and guidelines and then evaluates the impact on residents, to ensure the impacts are positive.’

As health expert Professor Billie Giles-Corti so succinctly says of the success of *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

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