Built Environments for Active Living Abroad – An Australian Perspective

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Overview

• Health and planning issues in Australia

• PIA initiatives

• Healthy Spaces and Places Project
PIA

- PIA is the peak professional association in Australia for urban planners and related professions - 4600 members
- Advocates and develops policy positions on behalf of members
- Planners work in Local Government (50%), Private Sector (30%) and State Government/Academia
Planning Context in Australia

• 21 Million People; 85% live in cities, mainly along eastern & SE coastline

• Three tiers of government – Federal, State/Territory and Local

• Planning Challenges:
  – Ageing Population
  – Housing Affordability
  – Climate Change
  – Infrastructure
Health Issues in Australia from inactive lifestyles
Inactivity – a major health problem

• Physically inactive Australian adults are costing the healthcare system $1.5 billion a year

• It is estimated that almost 9 million Australians – 54% of adult population – do not do enough physical activity on a daily basis

• Not doing enough physical activity doubles the risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and obesity, and increases the risk of breast and bowel cancer, depression and anxiety

• All it takes is 30 minutes of activity most days a week to reduce the problem

(Source: Medibank Private Research 2007)
Getting people out of cars

Car trips in local neighbourhoods:
• 10% of all car trips are less than quarter of a mile (the equivalent to a ten minute walk)
• 30% are less than 1 mile (3 kilometres)

PIA National Initiatives

• Adopted a National Position Statement on Healthy Communities

• Formed partnership to develop a national guide (discussed later)

• Advocacy and awareness for the principles through submissions, presentations, articles and professional development

• Supporting other organisations – eg Cycling Federation, Smart Travel initiatives
Design Elements that promote active lifestyles
Create Walkable Neighborhoods

- Have legible streets and connected activities such as schools, shops
- Encourage local trips to be made by walking and cycling by having direct routes to activities
Plan for Walking & Cycling

• Walking is free and has great health benefits - especially walking to school & local services
• Walkways may be shared: walking, cycling, prams, scooters
• Walking routes should be safe – road crossings, pavement surface
• Cycling facilities important to encourage use – lockers, showers, maps
Design for surveillance and safety

• Create safe environments for activity
• Perceptions of safety are a major influence for people’s willingness to be active
• Pathways should also be safe to minimize falls and injuries
Encourage Use of Public Transport

- Well located and convenient public transport to encourage use over private vehicles
- Shelters and signage important & accessibility to bus/train/tram
- People that use public transport also walk to the train/bus stop
Provide Passive and Active Recreation

• Adequate, serviced and well located recreation areas and parklands
• Multipurpose – school ovals
• Private/public partnerships
Promote Mixed Land-Use

• Activities grouped together to minimise trips, especially residential, retail, employment, recreation and public transport
• Local and regional activities
• Promotes walking, cycling and the use of public transport
• Local businesses also benefit
Provide opportunities for interaction

- Meeting Places & Public Places that support a variety of interactions between people
- Creating a sense of belonging = mental health benefits
Development of a National Guide
TOWARDS A NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDE
Healthy Spaces and Places is a partnership between:

• Australian Local Government Association
• the Heart Foundation
• Planning Institute of Australia

This project has received funding assistance from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
Value of Partnership

• Unique Partnership
• Memorandum of Understanding underpins partnership
• Leveraging knowledge, advocacy and networks
• Stronger influence for change
Project design

Four project stages are identified:

• Scoping – during 2007
• Consultation – workshops mid - late 2008
• Implementation – 08/09
• Evaluation - 2009
Healthy Spaces and Places project is about:

- recognizing how everyday urban management decisions can influence people’s health and well-being
- recognizing the complexity and cross-disciplinary/sectoral nature of the issues
- raising awareness
- setting a national policy agenda
- supporting current State/local initiatives
What are we trying to achieve?

• improved understanding amongst health and planning professionals of how the built environment influences active living
• people engaging in regular physical activity
• sense of belonging and social inclusion
• sense of place
• positive health impacts on future health burden
• sustained economic well-being
Further Information

• Healthy Spaces and Places Discussion Draft available shortly from PIA website, with links to ALGA and Heart Foundation websites
Thank you - further information at: www.planning.org.au