



# ***The Healthy Built Environments Program: Working together to break down health and planning silos***

Never Stand Still

Faculty of the Built Environment

Healthy Built Environments Program

**Susan Thompson and Claudine Lyons**

*Making Cities Liveable Conference*

*St Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria*

17-19 June 2013



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

## Outline

1. The NSW Ministry of Health and its interest in planning
2. Overview of the Healthy Built Environments Program
  - Research
  - Education and capacity building
  - Leadership and advocacy
3. Challenges in moving forward



## Ministry's Key Interests in Planning

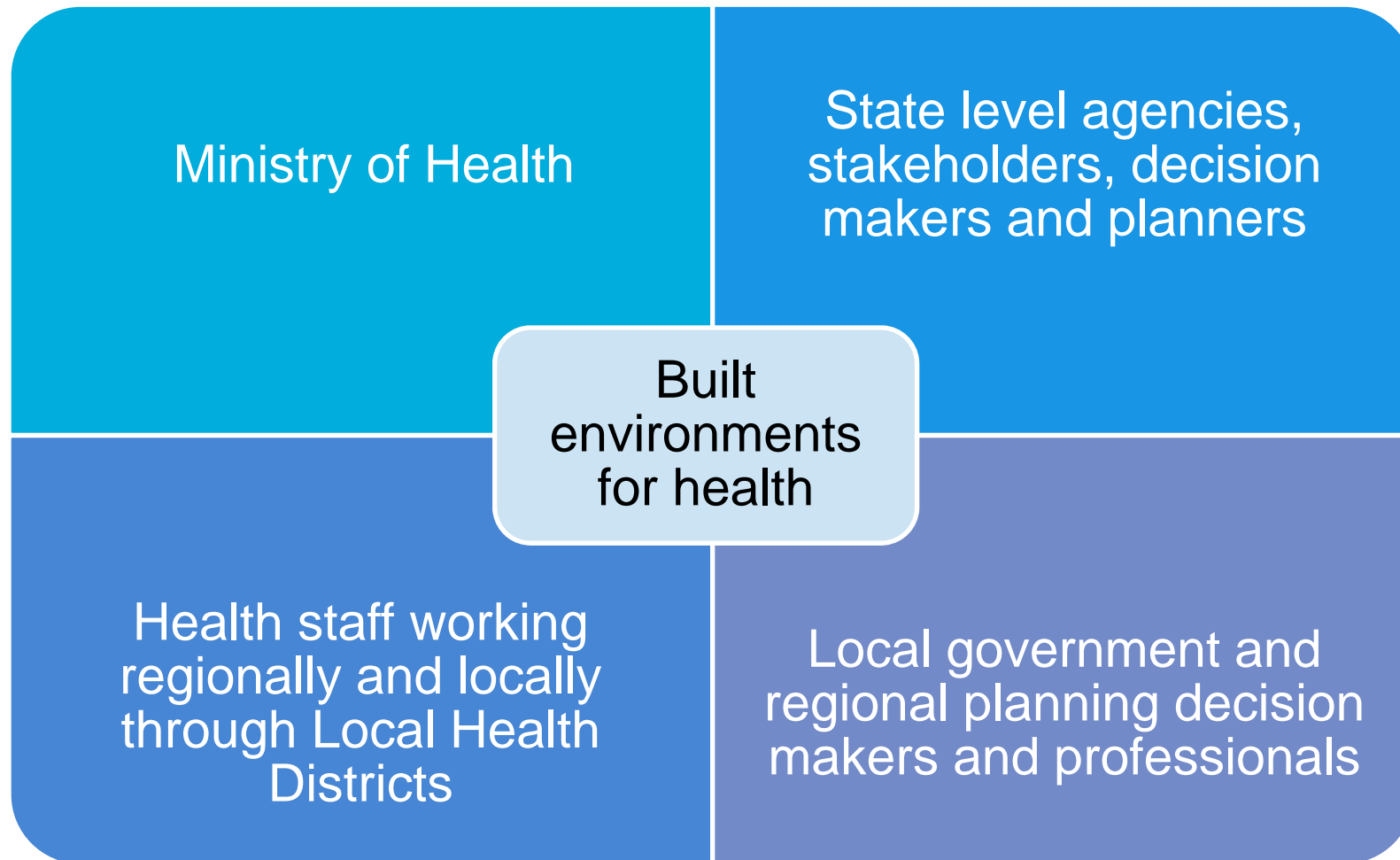
- Health promotion – encouraging active and healthy lifestyles and preventing chronic diseases
- Health protection – reducing exposure to environmental health risks
- Health facilities – minor and major capital works for health service delivery



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The **Healthy Built Environments Program** is a consortium linking planning and health

Leadership in urban planning and public health

Core funding from NSW Department of Health of \$1.5m over 5 years

Situated in the City Futures Research Centre, Faculty of the Built Environment at UNSW

**HBEP partnership** includes academics, Heart Foundation, NSW health professionals, local councils, planning consultants

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The HBEP **vision** is that built environments will be planned, designed, developed and managed to promote and protect health for all people





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## Three Strategic Areas of Work

Research  
Education & Capacity Building  
Leadership and Advocacy



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## Research Evidence for HBEs

Healthy Built Environments: A review of the literature

Major scholarly research project

Systematic, comprehensive and rigorous review of literature

Proposes three main 'domains' of built environment influence on health

Links research and policy to underpin actions

### Healthy Built Environments A Review of the Literature



The Healthy Built Environments Program vision is that built environments will be planned, designed, developed and managed to promote and protect health for all people.



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## Three key domains of the built environment and health:

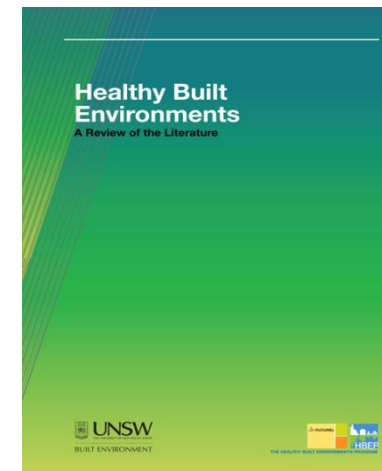
- The Built Environment and Getting People Active
- The Built Environment and Connecting and Strengthening Communities
- The Built Environment and Providing Healthy Food Options

Address major risk factors  
for chronic disease:

Physical inactivity

Social isolation

Obesity



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## Australian Research Council Linkage Grant

Planning and building healthy communities

Research partners from health and the built environment

Four sites being examined

Detailed healthy neighbourhood audits

Compilation of health data

Qualitative in-depth interviews



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## AHURI Investigative Panel

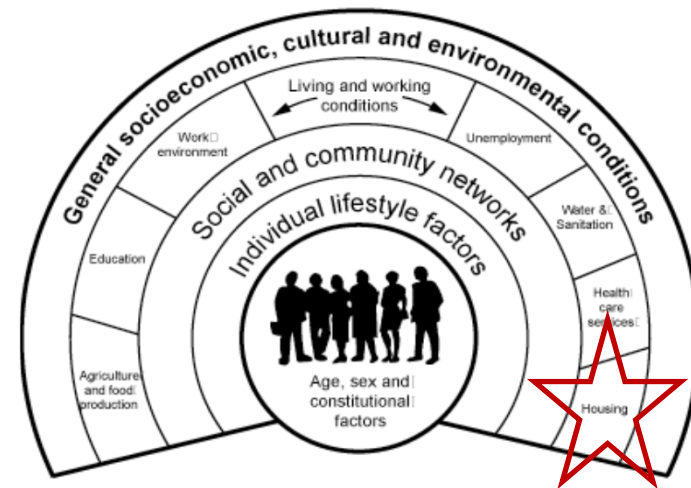
Researching the complex housing-health relationship

What's healthy housing?

Focus on Australasian research

New areas of housing-health research - HBEs

The policy research interface: engaging built environment & health professionals in collaborative partnerships





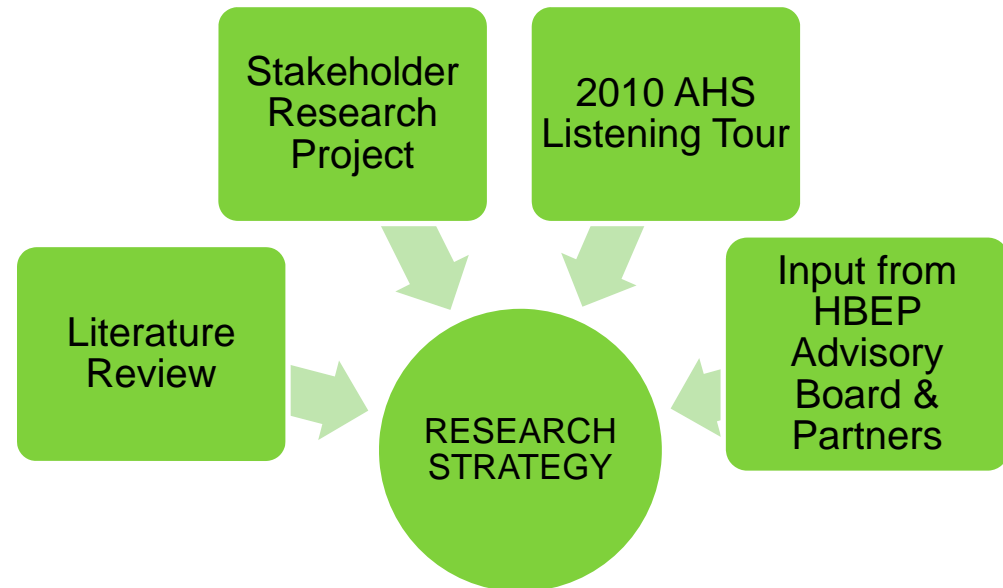
## Other Research Activities

### Research Strategy

Identification of key research gaps

Leverage from other grants

Focus on building collaborative partnerships



### Regular Research Updates

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## Education and Workforce Development

Seminars, workshops,  
special lectures and forums

University, metropolitan, rural  
and remote locations

Focus on building  
partnerships in participation  
and speakers



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## Education and Workforce Development

Practical exercises for participants

Focus on building partnerships in training



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## Education and Workforce Development

Courses at UNSW

*UG Healthy Planning*

*PG Healthy Built Environments*

*Pro-bono places for  
NSW Health  
professionals*

Mix of theory, research,  
policy and practice  
based learning



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## Leadership and Advocacy

Advisory Board of key  
HBE stakeholders

Newsletter

Regular HBEs column  
in *New Planner*

Other practice journals

Media  
engagement

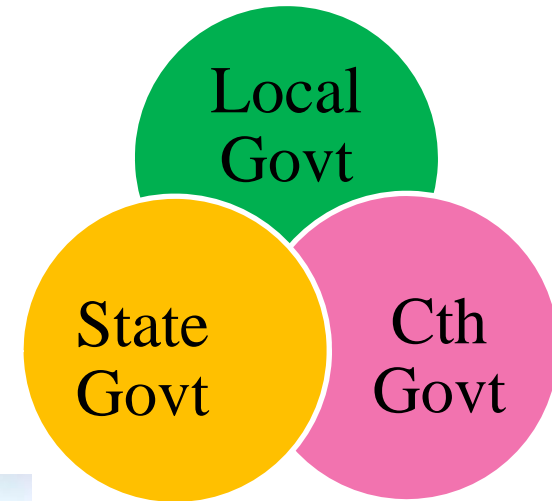
Submission  
writing





## General Challenges

- Multiple policy levers and actors
- Difficulty getting on the agenda – everyone has an interest in planning
- Traditional Westminster system of government can make progress on cross cutting issues difficult





## Specific challenges

- Healthy built environments work is cutting edge
- NSW Health is often not seen as a key stakeholder
- Traditional classification as a human services portfolio
- There are so many health concerns, what are our priorities?
- Medicalised perceptions of 'health' and other language barriers
- Need for more collaboration within the Health sector to share knowledge and strengthen influence

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## Conclusion

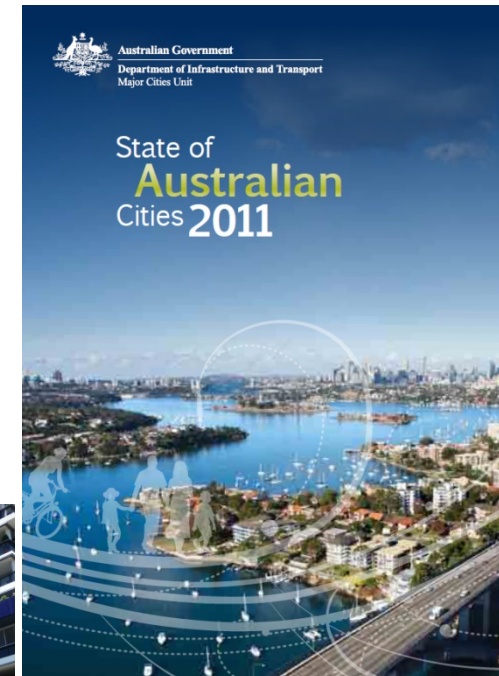
Building Australian research to inform policy and practice

Interdisciplinary ways of working and engaging

Building strategic alliances – impacting on policy across built environment and health

Education – professional development and university based courses

Getting the message out to a diverse audience of policy makers and practitioners



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## Visit the HBEP website

<http://www.be.unsw.edu.au/programmes/healthy-built-environments-program/about>