



Planning, Health and the Environment: Working across disciplines, breaking down professional silos

Never Stand Still

Faculty of the Built Environment

Healthy Built Environments Program

A/Professor Susan Thompson

Director, Healthy Built Environments Program, UNSW, Sydney

Presentation for the Water Services Association of Australia

Adaptive Planning and Integrated Water Management Network

23 August 2013, Melbourne



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Outline

1. Why interdisciplinary initiatives?
2. Healthy Built Environments Program
 - Research
 - Education and capacity building
 - Leadership and advocacy
3. CRC for Low Carbon Living
4. Challenges and opportunities in moving forward



Why interdisciplinary initiatives?

- Our current ways of working and thinking are letting us down
- Our world has complex social, cultural & environmental problems
- Need to understand the inter-related nature of these problems
- Need to develop inter-related solutions that draw on different knowledge and ways of working
- Need to work across the physical and social sciences



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM



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

Leadership in urban planning and public health

Core funding from NSW Ministry of Health of \$AU1.5m over 5 years

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

HBEP partnership includes academics, health NGOs, NSW health professionals, local councils, planning consultants



BUILT
ENVIRONMENT

Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

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



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM



Three Strategic Areas of Work

Research
Education and Capacity Building
Leadership and Advocacy



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Research Evidence for HBEs

Healthy Built Environments: A review of the literature

Systematic, comprehensive and rigorous review of literature

Proposes three main 'domains' of built environment influence on health that link with key risks for chronic disease

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.

Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

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



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

AHURI Investigative Panel

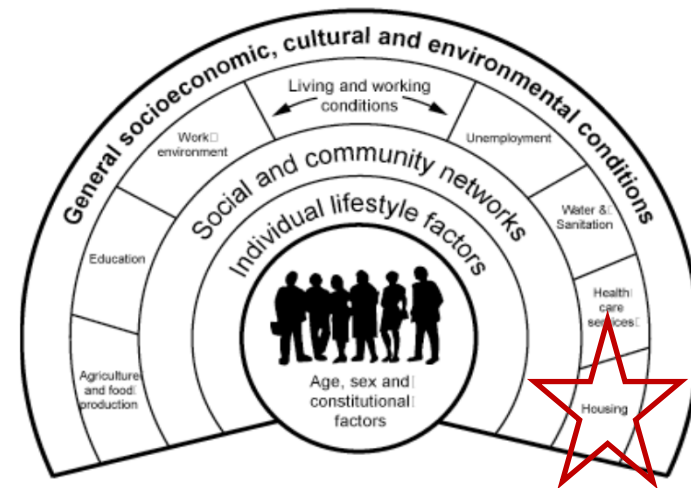
Researching the complex housing-health relationship

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



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Other Research Activities

Research Strategy

Identification of key research gaps

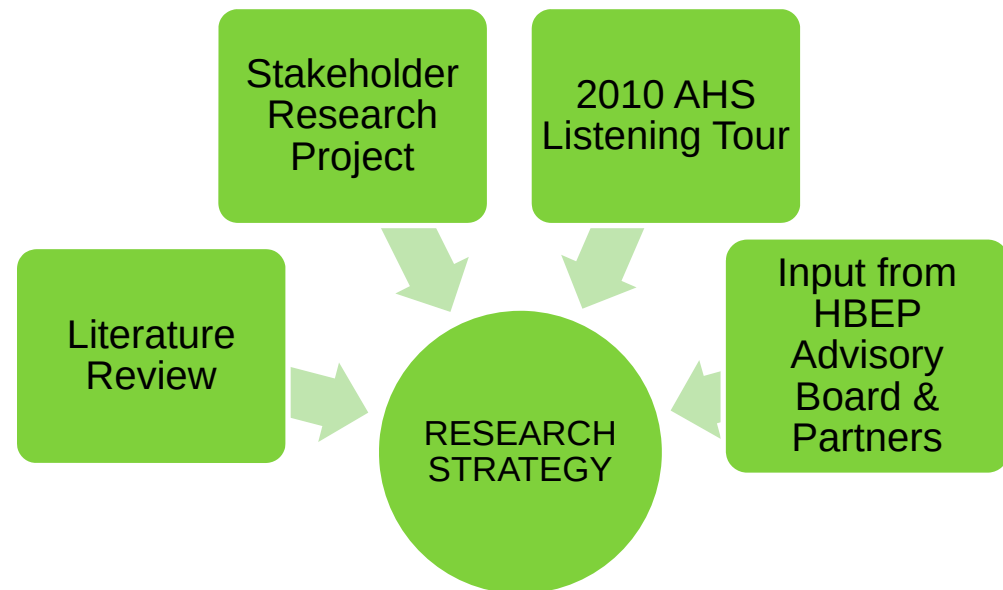
Leverage from other grants

Focus on building collaborative partnerships

Regular Research Updates

Three domains

On HBEP website



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Education and Capacity Building

Seminars, workshops,
special lectures, forums

E-resources on website

University, metropolitan,
rural and remote locations

Focus on building
partnerships in participation,
training and speakers



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Education and Capacity Building

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



Supported by



THE HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Leadership and Advocacy

Advisory Board of key
HBE stakeholders

Newsletter

Regular HBEs column
in *New Planner*

Other practice journals

Media
engagement

Submission
writing





**LOW CARBON LIVING
CRC**

The key challenge for the CRC for Low Carbon Living is to address climate change by bringing together leading innovators from the public and private sectors to develop the scientific, technological, industrial, educational and social resources required for Australian communities to develop a low carbon built environment.

WHY A CRC ? – Collaboration to address a national priority

Complex problem requiring

- ✓ **Deep involvement of end-users**
- ✓ **Multi-disciplinary expertise**
- ✓ **Sharing of experiences and facilities**
- ✓ **Focus on Australia-wide impact**

Predominantly non-competitive public good research

INTEGRATING END USER RESPONSE

Government



*Evidence base for
~\$1billion/yr
investment in
government
programs*

Manufacturing



*Incubating next
generation multi-
purpose building
products*

Development



*Enabling world
class low
carbon property
development*

Professionals



*Tools for
Australia's
building design
services industry*

Program 1: Integrated Building Systems

- Integrated solar technologies for buildings
- Low carbon materials
- Integrated design, showcase, ratings and standards



Program 2: Low Carbon Precincts

- Digital information platform
- Integrated assessment of design
- Precinct-level demand forecasting for distributed infrastructure networks
- Health and productivity co-benefits



Program 3: Engaged Communities

✓ Transition Scenarios & Affordability

- How is the policy environment influencing GHG emissions in the built environment ?
- What would be the likely impact of alternative policy interventions ?

Economic modelling
Urban Planning

✓ Drivers & Barriers to Community Engagement

- What cultural, social and infrastructure features influence propensity toward low carbon living ?
- How can these features be activated in communities ?

Sociology
Psychology
Urban Planning

✓ Living Laboratories (includes other programs)

- Action research – trial new engagement tools in community groups and cultural groups

As above

✓ Training & Education

- Tertiary, vocational and community education

Education
Media/ communications

Some Challenges in this Work...

- Traditional Westminster system of government can make progress on cross cutting issues difficult
- Budgetary silos – **shifting costs** (e.g. planning pays for a health supportive environment) **and benefits** (e.g. health costs are reduced due to healthy behaviours facilitated by the health supportive environment)
- Traditional areas of work are hard to change – e.g. Department of Health not seen as key stakeholder in built environment – priorities in acute sick care, not built environment or prevention of illness

Some Challenges in this Work...

- Convincing professionals to look beyond their boundaries (e.g. convincing planners that healthy built environments is relevant work for them)
- Linking work in one area to others (e.g. environmental sustainability links to health – the co-benefits framework)
- Language barriers – translating each other's 'jargon'
- Developing professional respect across the disciplines
- Understanding different research traditions
- Developing new shared 'ways-of-working'
- Policy 'wins' may mean new work, more work, different work (e.g. health objective in NSW Planning legislation)



HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

Further information

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

CRC: <http://www.lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au/>