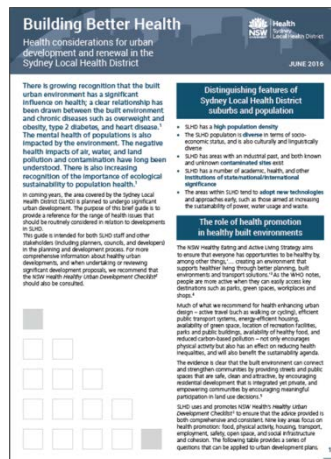


# Building Better Health

## Health Considerations for urban development and renewal in the Sydney Local Health District



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# Building Better Health

## Health considerations for urban development and renewal in the Sydney Local Health District

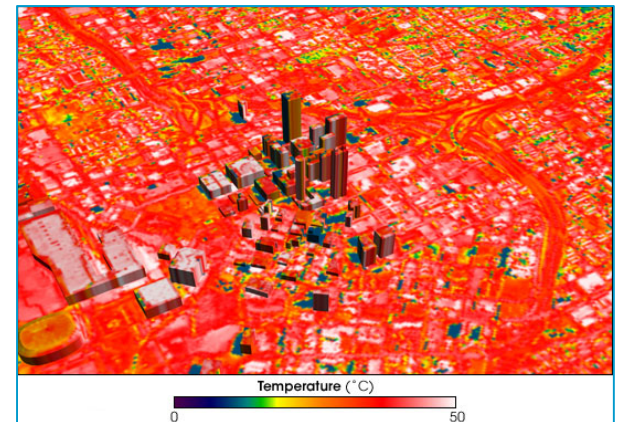
- Background: why did we need this guide?
- Objectives and overview of guide
- Examples of healthy urban development principals Sydney  
LHD
- Distribution and use
- Implications for Sydney Local Health District and the health of  
our community



# Background: the evidence

## Built environment has significant influence on health

- Direct influence on chronic diseases
  - Overweight & obesity
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Respiratory diseases
  - Mental health
- Indirect influence through climate change: mitigation and adaptation - new developments need to consider effects of droughts, floods and heatwaves (e.g. urban heat island effects)
- Important to protect from health hazards and risks
- *Opportunity to have broad based positive health effects across societal strata as entire population interact with their environmental surrounds*



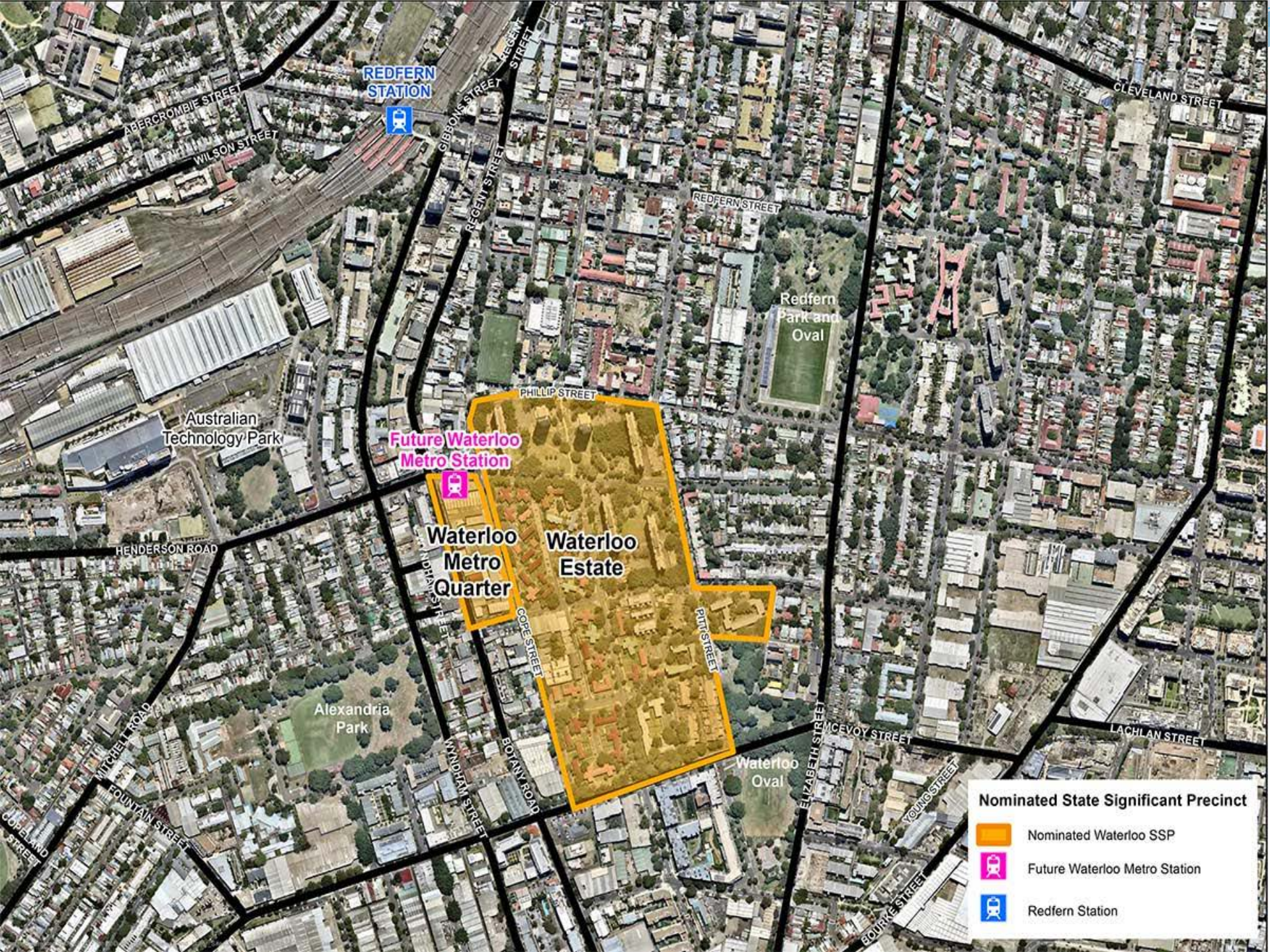
# Background: changing environment

## Urban development in SLHD – increasing at a rapid pace

- Central Park
- Green Square
- Waterloo
- The Bays Precinct Area
- MacDonalddtown (Central – Eveleigh)
- WestConnex, Stage 1,2,3
- Sydney Metro and Metro West







REDFERN STATION

Future Waterloo Metro Station

Waterloo Metro Quarter

Waterloo Estate

Redfern Park and Oval

Alexandria Park

Waterloo Oval

**Nominated State Significant Precinct**

-  Nominated Waterloo SSP
-  Future Waterloo Metro Station
-  Redfern Station







# Background: need for consistency and an evidence based approach

- Health increasingly being asked to provide input into planning issues
- Different parts of the district were asked to participate in different planning projects
- No consistent messages, no clear common agenda, evidence-base for feedback was unclear
- Existing NSW guidelines out of date (NSW Healthy Urban Development Checklist)





# Objectives of this project

To develop a template to use as a guide in discussions across the District, by **any staff** that might be talking about urban development that:

- emphasises the link between health and environment
- is short and easy
- is specifically relevant for local use (local contacts and experts)
- Covers many health issues including health equity, promoting health, addressing health hazards and risks
- Target audience: SLHD staff and other stakeholders in development process (planners, councils, developers, community)

# SLHD - the population and the environment

SLHD has:

- a high population density
- a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population
- A large Aboriginal population
- areas with an industrial past and known and unknown contaminated sites exist
- Significant differentials in health status, especially chronic disease, across the district

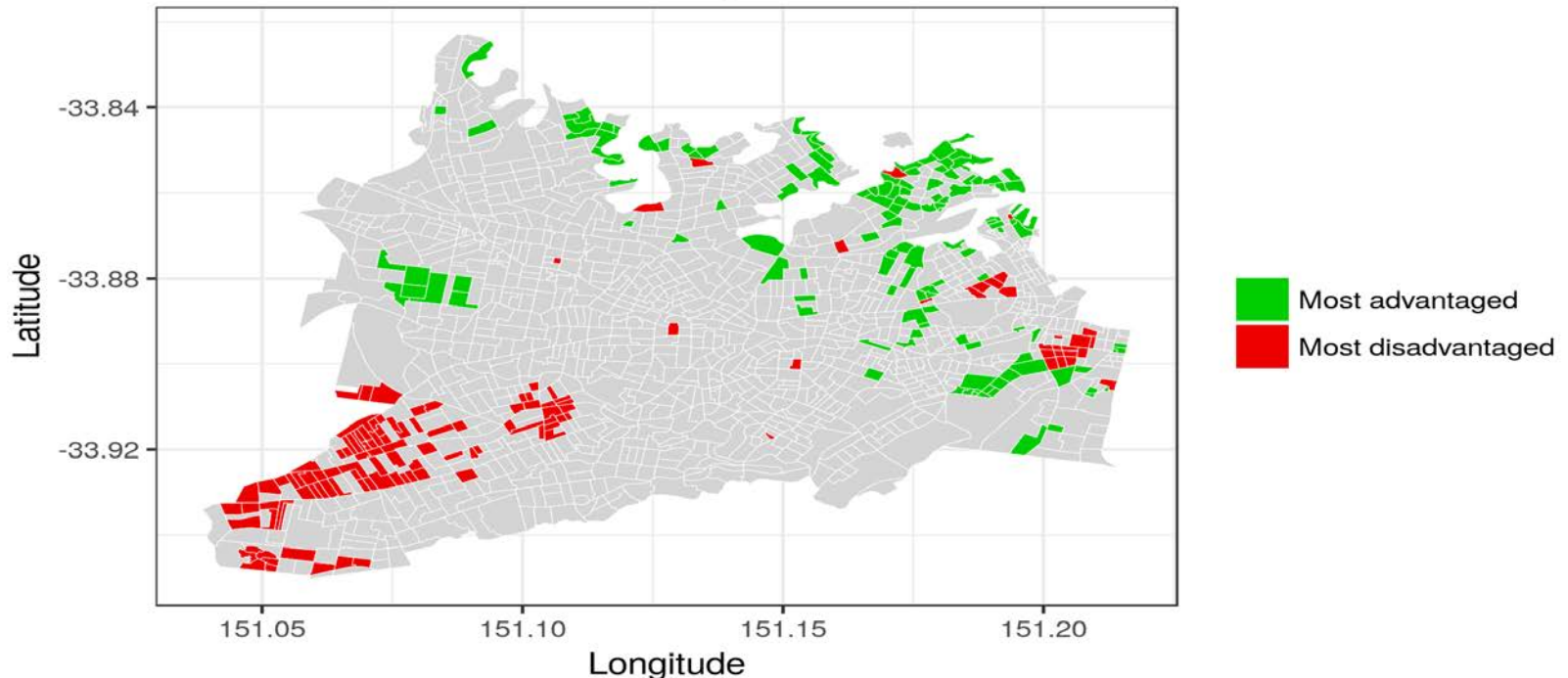
**AND**



# Large differentials in socioeconomic disadvantage

- About 10% of suburbs in SLHD are amongst the 10% most **disadvantaged** in Australia
- About 10% of suburbs in SLHD are amongst the 10% most **advantaged** in Australia

Suburbs among the 10% most advantaged and 10% most disadvantaged in Australia



Source: ABS SEIFA (based on 2011 census)

# Building Better Health

**Building Better Health**  
Health considerations for urban development and renewal in the Sydney Local Health District  
NSW Government Health Sydney Local Health District  
JUNE 2016

There is growing recognition that the built urban environment has a significant influence on health; a clear relationship has been drawn between the built environment and chronic diseases such as overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.<sup>1</sup> The mental health of populations is also impacted by the environment. The negative health impacts of air, water, and land pollution and contamination have long been understood. There is also increasing recognition of the importance of ecological sustainability to population health.<sup>1</sup>

In coming years, the area covered by the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) is planned to undergo significant urban development. The purpose of this brief guide is to provide a reference for the range of health issues that should be routinely considered in relation to developments in SLHD.

This guide is intended for both SLHD staff and other stakeholders (including planners, councils, and developers) in the planning and development process. For more comprehensive information about healthy urban developments, and when undertaking or reviewing significant development proposals, we recommend that the NSW Health Healthy Urban Development Checklist<sup>2</sup> should also be consulted.

**Distinguishing features of Sydney Local Health District suburbs and population**

- SLHD has a **high population density**
- The SLHD population is **diverse** in terms of socio-economic status, and is also culturally and linguistically diverse
- SLHD has areas with an industrial past, and both known and unknown contaminated sites exist
- SLHD has a number of academic, health, and other institutions of state/national/international significance
- The areas within SLHD tend to adopt new technologies and approaches early, such as those aimed at increasing the sustainability of power, water usage and waste.

**The role of health promotion in healthy built environments**

The NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy aims to ensure that everyone has opportunities to be healthy by, among other things, '... creating an environment that supports healthier living through better planning, built environments and transport solutions.'<sup>3</sup> As the WHO notes, people are more active when they can easily access key destinations such as parks, green spaces, workplaces and shops.<sup>4</sup>

Much of what we recommend for health enhancing urban design – active travel (such as walking or cycling), efficient public transport systems, energy-efficient housing, availability of green space, location of recreation facilities, parks and public buildings, availability of healthy food, and reduced carbon-based pollution – not only encourages physical activity but also has an effect on reducing health inequalities, and will also benefit the sustainability agenda.

The evidence is clear that the built environment can connect and strengthen communities by providing streets and public spaces that are safe, clean and attractive, by encouraging residential development that is integrated yet private, and empowering communities by encouraging meaningful participation in land use decisions.<sup>5</sup>

SLHD uses and promotes NSW Health's Healthy Urban Development Checklist<sup>2</sup> to ensure that the advice provided is both comprehensive and consistent. Nine key areas focus on health promotion: food, physical activity, housing, transport, employment, safety, open space, and social infrastructure and cohesion. The following table provides a series of questions that can be applied to urban development plans.

1

- Short guide (8 pages)
- Evidence-based
- Available online
- Range of health issues to consider routinely:
  - Health promotion
  - Health protection
  - Health equity
- Does not cover Health Service development



# The role of health promotion

Create an environment that supports healthy living by:

- Facilitating physical activity
- Having sufficient public open space (green space and natural areas)
- Promoting active travel (walking or cycling)
- Advocating for public transport
- Providing safe streets, public spaces, recreational facilities
- Providing social infrastructure (childcare, medical centre, local shops)
- Encouraging social interaction and connectivity
- Offering quality employment
- Availability of healthy food



# Example: Green square



- Pedestrian and cycle friendly development
- Variety of open green spaces
- Increased lighting for streets - safety
- Public transport
- Social infrastructure



# Protection from health hazards and urban development

## Some of the environmental health risks include:

- Construction of developments – impact on surrounding communities
- Past and existing land use – possible contamination
- Operation of developments – Impact e.g. WestConnex
- Air quality – outdoor and indoor
- Noise and vibration
- Water quality – drinking water, recycled water, recreational water (swimming, fishing)
- Waste and sewage – potentially hazardous
- Public health pests including insects
- Climate change and sustainability
- Impact on local population – populations with less resources or more marginalised often more vulnerable to impacts (e.g. Lower SES, Aboriginal people, CALD populations)
- Impact on other areas further away from development

# Example: Central Park



- Recycled water network incorporated into building design - assure safety
- Water recycling plant operates with minimal noise
- Sustainability (40-50% less drinking water use; solar panels reduce energy consumption)



# Health equity in development planning

## Healthy built environments mean:

- Access to all aspects of a community is fair to all residents regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural background, gender, age or ability.
- Equal access to urban development including open space, safe pedestrian and cycling environments, gathering places and natural areas
- Equal access too health, education, employment and social support

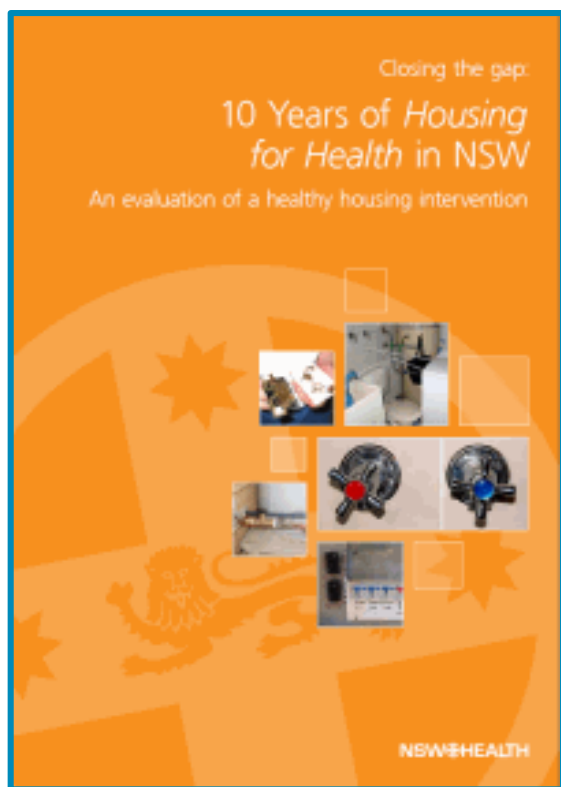
# Health Equity and development

Ensuring developments support health equity requires focus on:

- Consider the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged populations
- Consider children and the elderly
- Ensure community representation
- Undertake health impact assessments
- Provide affordable housing
- Provide broad-based employment opportunities
- Ensure equity of access to social and community infrastructure



# Example: Housing for Health – improving living conditions in Aboriginal communities



- Ensure safety: electrical, gas, fire, sewage and structural safety
- Healthy living practices:
  - Washing people
  - Washing clothes and bedding
  - Removing waste safely
  - Improving nutrition
  - Reducing overcrowding
  - Reducing dust
  - Reducing impacts of animals, vermin or insects
  - Controlling temperature
  - Reducing trauma and injury

# Distribution and use of the guide

- Approved by the SLHD CE and Board
- Distributed to:
  - All councils within SLHD
  - Government departments
  - Big developers (e.g. Mirvac)
  - Other LHDs
- Guide is being used by staff in interactions with other agencies
- Part of impetus for Building Better Health forum 2016



# Impact to date

- **Building Better Health has been well received**
  - Positive feedback from City of Sydney Council and being used by City of Canada Bay Council
  - Adapted for local use by other LHDs (SESLHD & WSLHD)
  - We have recommended its use in planning requirements
  - SLHD quality award from SLHD Annual General Meeting and selected for NSW Health Awards under the Keeping People Healthy category
- **SLHD staff refer to and use the guide**
- **Intent to ensure all SLHD input to development is evidence based, locally relevant and equity focussed**



# Summary

- Evidence-based template for local discussions about urban development and health
- Expectation that it will be written into health impact assessment processes and broader planning processes
- Improving quality of urban environment broadly has potential to ensure health benefits enjoyed by various social groups equitably
- Plan to update this year to include new areas (e.g. health services, universal design, density, alcohol, smoking, social housing, injury)

