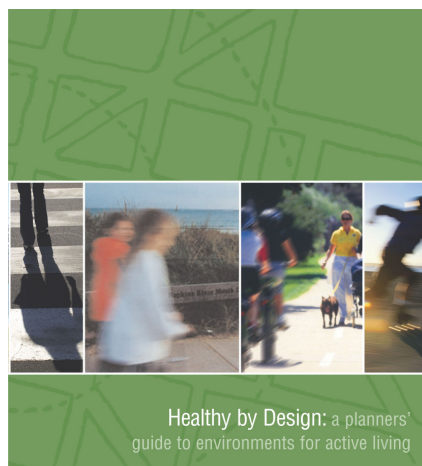


Healthy by Design: a planner's guide to environments for active living

In Brief

Town/Region	Local government areas
State	Victoria
Context	Inner city, suburban, metro, coastal, regional and rural greenfield developments
Target Group	Professionals with responsibility for the design, development and maintenance of new subdivision and urban growth
Organisation(s):	National Heart Foundation (Victorian Division)
Timing of Project	Resource launched 2004
Weblink	http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Professional_Information/Lifestyle_Risk/Physical_Activity/Active_by_Design/Pages/default.aspx
Key Outcomes	Built environments providing increased active living



Overview

Healthy by Design: a planner's guide to environments for active living was developed by the Heart Foundation (Victorian Division) in 2004. The guide arose out of recognition of the significant health implications of planning decisions, and aims to assist planners to create built environments that support physical activity, particularly through provision for active transport.

Healthy by Design provides advice on optimal design approaches in seven key areas: walking and cycling routes; streets; local destinations; open space; public transport; seating, signage, lighting, fencing and walls; and fostering community spirit.

The Heart Foundation has been actively distributing the guide in Victoria for the last four years. Implementation has had a primary focus on how local government can incorporate the principles of *Healthy by Design* into local policy and municipal planning schemes.

OUTCOMES

Successes

- Inclusion of *Healthy by Design* content in tertiary courses and professional development programs for planners.
- Partnerships between the health, planning and transport sectors at local and state levels.
- Amendments to municipal planning schemes to embed *Healthy by Design* principles into the core business of local government.
- Development of guidance for developers by individual councils, based on the design considerations contained in *Healthy by Design* (see the link to case studies below).
- Advocacy to state government via key policy and legislative reviews.

Learnings

- Providing information alone is not enough to facilitate change. Human and financial resources must be allocated to promote and implement resources.
- *Healthy by Design* is heavily focused on new development and lacks information regarding retrofitting/urban consolidation. This issue has been addressed in the newest version of the resource, recently developed for Tasmania.
- Interested and motivated individuals can be effective change agents for healthy urban environments but a supportive policy environment is required for sustainable change.

Costs

- The cost of implementing *Healthy by Design* can vary markedly, depending on the approach used and the availability of existing or in house resources. In some cases, councils have used *Healthy by Design* to assess plans and develop local policies using existing staff resources. Others have recruited specific staff or engaged external consultants to undertake more extensive work at some cost.

Benefits

- An increasing emphasis on healthy urban planning in policy development and infrastructure funding at local and state government level.
- The creation of built environments that provide increased opportunities to build physical activity into daily activity, for social interaction and which build a stronger sense of community.

REFERENCES

National Heart Foundation of Australia (Victorian Division), 2004, *Healthy by Design: a planner's guide to environments for active living*. National Heart Foundation of Australia.

Links

Healthy by Design case studies, providing examples of environmental support for healthier lifestyles in Victorian local governments

http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Professional_Information/Lifestyle_Risk/Physical_Activity/Active_by_Design/Pages/default.aspx

Healthy urban environments site assessment tool

<http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/ABD%20HUE%20Site%20Audit%20Tool.pdf>

'Safe Speed' resources, exploring the relationship between lower speed limits and high rates of walking and cycling in urban environments

http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Professional_Information/Lifestyle_Risk/Physical_Activity/Active_by_Design/Pages/default.aspx