



The National Heart Foundation of Australia

***Creating Places for People
an urban design protocol for Australian cities***

***Draft Framework for Comment
(19 July 2011)***

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The Heart Foundation

The Heart Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation committed to improving cardiovascular health in Australia. The Heart Foundation's vision is for Australians to have the best cardiovascular health in the world. Through its research, health promotion programs and policy development, the Heart Foundation promotes healthy public policy to support better health for all Australians.

Cardiovascular disease

Cardiovascular disease is the term used for a group of diseases including heart disease, stroke and blood vessel disease. It affects more than 3.7 million Australians and is this country's leading cause of death – more than 46,000 Australians die each year because of cardiovascular disease.

1. Introduction

The Heart Foundation (national) has previously provided comments to the draft Creating Places for People document.

This submission reflects the comments of the Heart Foundation Active Living divisional state and territory staff.

General Comments

We support:

- the approach identified in the objective to identify a common language for urban design and to provide a framework that is supported by case studies, toolkits and links to other resources.
- that although this agreement applies to Australia's capital cities, it is recognised that regional cities and towns can benefit by sharing best practice knowledge and encouraging better quality and design of the built environment. A consistent and integrated approach to urban design across all levels of government and the development industry can result in better outcomes for cities, towns and neighbourhoods. In this regard, consideration needs to be afforded to the potential scale that the framework could be applied or modified to cater for outer metropolitan and regional areas.
 - For example, increased population within the outer metropolitan areas of Perth is resulting in proposed developments for higher densities which has implications for local governments regarding meeting additional infrastructure requirements.

However:

- It is important that the protocol will complement Healthy Spaces & Places and support the reference here. It is also important that the protocol will complement state-based versions of Healthy by Design. We agree that the protocol will need to complement local government guidelines.
 - For example, the City of Perth has an Urban Design Framework.
- Public transport needs to be included in a definition of active transport as this mode includes a significant element of physical activity at both ends of a journey.
- Suggest there could be more emphasis on the relationship between health and wellbeing including physical activity throughout the document. This is apparent in the definition and goals and principles.
- Within the related concepts and toolkit, suggest there is some reference to Health Impact Assessment processes as a consideration in relation to both leadership and governance and design principles.
 - For example, Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has

been used as part of the mandatory 'Impact Assessment' required by the UK Government for all relevant policies for developing better, evidenced-based policy by careful consideration of the impact on the health of the population. HIA can identify 'win-wins' across policy areas. For example, green space and green infrastructure improve mental and physical health and have been shown to reduce health inequalities.

- There is presently a policy gap between identification of areas as 'natural' and those that are specifically arable for food production purposes. There is therefore a need to specify food producing environments as separate areas required for specific purposes that need protection, in the urban and peri-urban realm.
- 'Best practice' may be a more appropriate term than 'world class'. 'World class' is surely culturally and context specific. However, if design for a 'world class' standard is retained, suggest that the definition includes – 'for what purpose'. Is the design exemplary because of the outcomes it delivers for people, livability, aesthetics? Or is it exemplary because it achieves architectural excellence? Is the design for people or for professional distinction?
- Does the Design Protocol need to illustrate the means through which it seeks to operate? For example, there are no legislated requirements to design according to this protocol. Therefore, should the document include a description of how the protocol will influence the built environment profession? Is there a need to discuss legislated versus softer approaches?
- Inter-linkages with other policy areas of government would be helpful in creating a stronger mandate and profile for the Urban Design Protocol. What is the relationship of the Urban Design Protocol to cross-portfolio policy areas of importance to the design for livability, productivity and sustainability of cities, including:
 - Climate change and energy efficiency
 - Agriculture, fisheries and forestry
 - Infrastructure and transport
 - Education, employment and workplace relations
 - Families, housing, community services and indigenous affairs
 - Health and ageing
 - Innovation, industry, science and research
 - Prime minister and cabinet
 - Sustainability, environment, water, population and communities.

Specific Comments

Definition of Urban Design (P4)

- Relate definition of urban design to food production, food security and local production.
- Definitions generally might be more authoritative if they included references.

Design Principles for People (P12)

- **Comfortable:** Suggest the attributes include access to physical activity infrastructure as the social and economic role that these facilities play is often underestimated as they can contribute to the legibility, identity and sense of place that helps to build a community.
- **Pedestrian scale:** Suggest there is some reference to the provision of sufficient well planned and designed public open space and trail and pathway systems within urban green space as this will actively encourage cycling and walking.

Design Principles for Place (P13)

- **Connected:** Suggest there is also a reference to co-location as a concept that will encourage groupings of key destination points within close proximity of each other to improve accessibility, integrated facilities and multiple uses of space and travel networks.
- **Diverse:** Suggest that compact development is added to the related concepts as this can increase pedestrian access and increase transport options.

Other points

- P.9:
 - last dot point, could read 'it sustains and enhances the natural and food producing environment'.
- P.13:
 - under connected, 5th dot point, could include food production – perhaps before flora and fauna? Under related concepts include healthy and sustainable food production and access.
- P.14:
 - enduring related concepts final dot point, add new dot point – 'Healthy and sustainable food system'.
 - under 'enhancing final column add new dot point under toolkit – 'Healthy and sustainable food system'