



Healthy Active by Design: Supporting Design for Healthier Hearts and Communities

The [Heart Foundation](#) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fighting the single biggest killer of Australians – heart disease. For 60 years, it has led the battle to save lives and improve the heart health of all Australians. Its sights are set on a world where people don't suffer or die prematurely because of heart disease.

[Healthy Active by Design](#) is a web-based tool created by the Heart Foundation to highlight how best-practice planning and design of buildings, streets, towns and cities can improve heart health. The site is a practical guide that offers the best available evidence, practical advice, case studies, checklists and videos. A key aim of the site is to assist those who design and build our communities to develop healthy and active cities and neighbourhoods.

Through Healthy Active by Design, the Heart Foundation advocates for environments that promote and support heart health, in particular supportive environments for physical activity and healthy eating, noting the prominent contribution of inactivity and unhealthy eating to the burden of cardiovascular disease.

Designing communities where walking, cycling, recreational physical activity, proximity to parks and access to a healthy food supply are prioritised can reduce population-wide chronic disease and increase life expectancyⁱ. Successful interventions in the built environment have a lasting impact on heart health unlike typical shorter-term individual or educational approaches to healthⁱⁱ.

Designing and providing safe spaces and places for walking is key to encouraging people to be active. People who live in 'walkable communities' are two times as likely to get enough physical activityⁱⁱⁱ. Further studies have noted a difference of 68 to 89 minutes of

moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per week between the least and most supportive built environments^{iv}.

Healthy Active by Design is structured around eight key 'design features' that can assist planners, urban designers, related professionals and those in decision-making roles to design and implement a built environment that enables people to lead healthy and active lives. These design features are not discrete but highly inter-related, and on the Healthy Active by Design web site, each includes an evidence summary, case studies, checklists, policies and best-practice examples.

Keep up to date with developments in the Healthy Active by Design program by subscribing to the Healthy Active by Design e-news at healthyactivebydesign.com.au

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