



news



HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM

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A Word from the Director

Welcome to our winter newsletter – I hope you are keeping warm and healthy in this chilly and very damp season!

We've been busy on many fronts including writing our submissions on the White Paper and the Draft Sydney Metro Strategy. We've also delivered more of our 'Planning for Health' workshops and just recently I was fortunate enough to attend and present at the 6th Making Cities Liveable Conference in Melbourne. We are celebrating our first ever HBEP PhD award to Research Associate Dr Jennifer Kent! In this Newsletter get to know Jennifer a bit better and read about our other activities. As always we welcome feedback and ideas from you. Keep warm, active and well as the winter continues and we'll be back in Spring with another update! I'm off to warmer climes – the European and American Planning Schools Congress in Dublin, Ireland, to spread the news about HBEP!

Introducing our new Research Associate

In the Autumn Newsletter we mentioned that Dr Jennifer Kent joined the HBEP as our new Research Associate. In this Newsletter we shine the spotlight on Jennifer by asking a few curly questions....

HBEP: What motivated your interest in healthy planning?

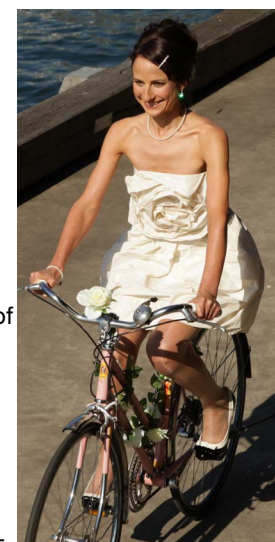
Jennifer: Eight years ago I was working as a town planner at Tweed Shire Council and attended a day long workshop presented by PCAL where Susan Thompson was a speaker. The workshop revealed a side of planning that genuinely fascinated me. Prior to completing my training as a planner, I was a professional cyclist racing in Europe and the USA – so the ability to combine my interest in planning with my love bikes really appealed. Not long after the workshop I returned to live in Sydney and sent Susan an e-mail asking for work – the rest, as they say, is history!

HBEP: What do you do when you're not being our Research Associate?

Jennifer: Until recently all I ever did was my PhD! [Jennifer was awarded her PhD in May, see below for more]. These days, however, I can usually be found working with my husband in our new bike shop Park Bikes@Sydney Olympic Park (yes, that's a plug).

HBEP: Where is your favourite "healthy built environment"?

Jennifer: I love the dog park on the Hawthorne Canal at Leichhardt. I have never seen anyone walk the entire length of the park without a smile! It's a place where people can be active and be together – to me, that is what healthy built environments are all about.



Jen loves the outdoors and being active – she even rode a bike to her own wedding!

HBEP PhD Graduated

Jennifer Kent is the HBEP's inaugural PhD completion, with her degree of Doctor of Philosophy recently approved for award by the University of NSW Graduate Research School.

The links between excessive car use, poor health and environmental degradation are well known. Yet each and every day, people in low density cities like Sydney continue to drive. Jennifer's PhD research unpacks this relationship, exploring the intricate details of our day-to-day attachments to the private car. Using a complex process of participant selection, the project identified a series of people who could travel to work using active transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport use) in the same amount of time it currently takes them to drive. These people were then interviewed in-depth to explore their reasons for continued car use.

The study reveals the way the private car is deeply engrained in the way people make sense of, and navigate, not only their streets, but their place in the world. It reveals junctures at which transition away from private car use will only occur in the face of unprecedented disruption to existing ways of 'being' in modern life. This finding provides a deeper understanding of barriers to the uptake of active transport and exposes a series of inconsistencies between the expectations of those planning for, and those anticipated to one day use, alternative transport.

Jennifer's thesis can be downloaded from the HBEP website - [here](#).

NSW Planning System Review and Draft Metro Strategy for Sydney 2031

Working concurrent to undoubtedly countless other built environment professionals and interested parties, the HBEP has recently prepared submissions to both the next stage of the review of the NSW planning system and the Draft Metropolitan Plan for Sydney. We have used the opportunity to congratulate the State for inclusion of health as an objective of the draft planning legislation, but also to articulate more specific ways a health objective can be implemented "on the ground". An underlying theme to our focus has been to question the system's prioritisation of economic growth over the health and wellbeing of our State's people. Both submissions can be downloaded from our [website](#).



HBEP stakeholders at a recent White Paper forum celebrating the inclusion of the health objective in the Draft Planning Bill

Mapping Project

The HBEP recently completed a major research project to 'map' activities currently delivered in NSW to support healthy built environments (HBEs). Initiated in late 2012, the project included an on-line survey, collating responses from 46 organisations active in the promotion of HBEs around NSW. The results of the research have been collated in a report which can be accessed from the [HBEP website](#). The project demonstrates a need for ongoing collaboration between health and built environment professions, with the built environment currently under-represented in HBE activities. The report further illustrates the way HBE activities are "governed", providing a clear mandate for more concrete prioritisation of HBEs in both policy and funding models.

Walking for All – A Focus on Inclusive Walkable Environments

Healthy built environments need to support everyone's wellbeing. Walkability for people of all ages and abilities has been a recent focus in the HBEP's undergraduate planning course at the University of NSW. In early May, students participated in a 'walking experience' led by Gisele Mesnage and her guide dog, D'Artagnan. Gisele, who has been visually impaired since birth, navigated the UNSW campus, demonstrating the way various urban design treatments can literally make or break her ability to travel from one place to another on foot. Described by one student as "the most informative experience of my degree so far", the exercise demonstrated how walking in the shoes of another can be the most effective way to understand how built environments need to be structured to encourage health.



Gisele and D'artagnan explore the UNSW campus with the students

Planning for Health Workshops

The HBEP is continuing its series of day long workshops on the NSW Planning System across NSW. Designed to enable health professionals and related stakeholders to better engage with a range of planning proposals, the workshops are being presented by HBEP Director Susan Thompson and HBEP partner, Dr Danny Wiggins. In May we held workshops in Shellharbour and Penrith and in July we are off to Albury and Griffith. For more information on the series, including details of more workshops (Sydney CBD, Queanbeyan and Dubbo) visit our [website](#).



What's New on the HBEP Website?

As well as the work mentioned above, you can find other new material on our website.

HBEP Research Assistant Emily Mitchell's [presentation](#) to the **7th Australian Housing Researchers' Conference** in Perth on the HBEP's audit instrument to assess healthy built environments

New Planner column: The most recent Healthy Built Environments column in New Planner focuses on education – considering the value of planning for interdisciplinary understandings which are central to creating and managing healthy built environments. Click [here](#) to read the column.

Don't forget our **fortnightly literature review updates**

And you'll notice that we've updated our **publications section** too!

Supported by



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