



# Policy Prescriptions for Healthy Cities: How do Australian Metropolitan Planning Strategies Compare?

Never Stand Still

Faculty of the Built Environment

Healthy Built Environments Program

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## The Problem Setting

- Health and planning
- Chronic diseases
- Risk factors
  - Physical inactivity
  - Poor diet
  - Obesity
  - Social isolation



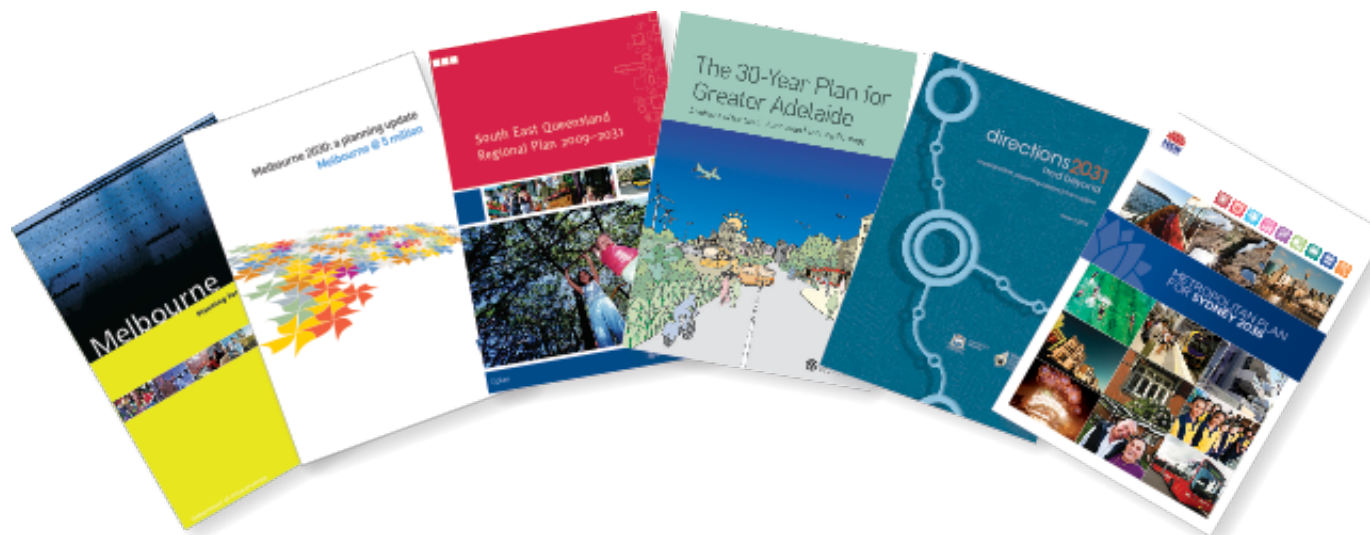
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## A Strategic Solution – Metropolitan Planning

- A coordinated and strategic policy response
- COAG Criteria (2009) and National Urban Policy (2011)



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## Criteria

Capital city strategic planning systems should...

4. address nationally-significant policy issues including: -
  - a) population growth and demographic change,
  - b) productivity and global competitiveness,
  - c) climate change mitigation and adaptation,
  - d) efficient development and use of existing and new infrastructure and other public assets,
  - e) connectivity of people to jobs and businesses to markets,
  - f) development of major urban corridors,
  - g) social inclusion,
  - h) health, liveability, and community wellbeing,
  - i) housing affordability, and
  - j) matters of national environmental significance;

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“There remains yawning scope for the inclusion of health concerns into planning frameworks. This review of Australian planning policies undertaken in this project suggests **health issues receive only very limited consideration in metropolitan plans**”

(Mead et al. 2006).



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## The Research: Central Research Question

To what extent do Australian metropolitan plans incorporate a comprehensive suite of intersectoral provisions for human health and wellbeing?



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# The Research: Scope



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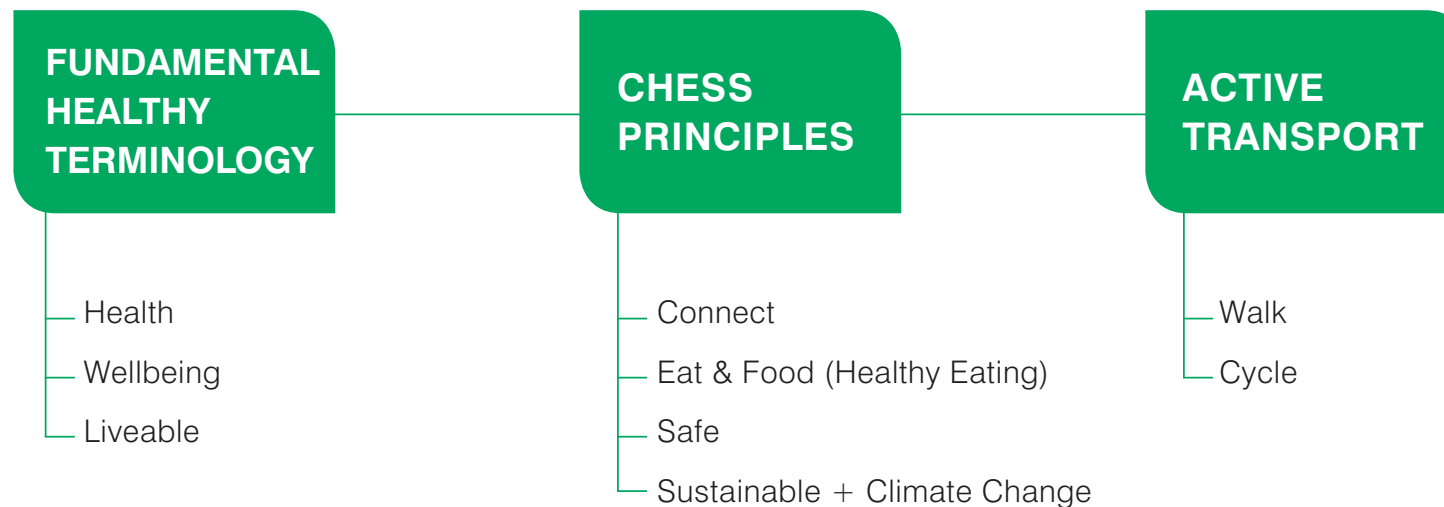
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## The Research: Method

- Summative content analysis



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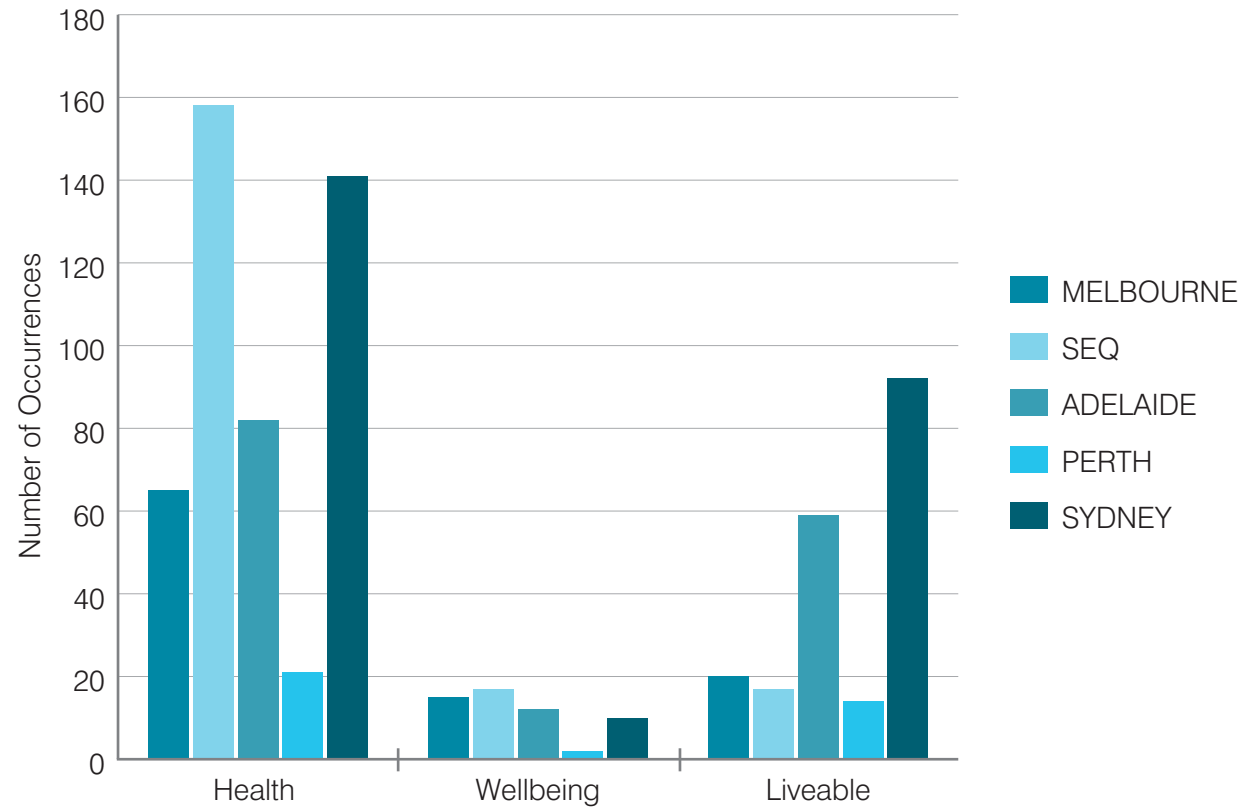


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# The Research: Findings

## FUNDAMENTAL HEALTHY TERMINOLOGY

- Health
- Wellbeing
- Liveable



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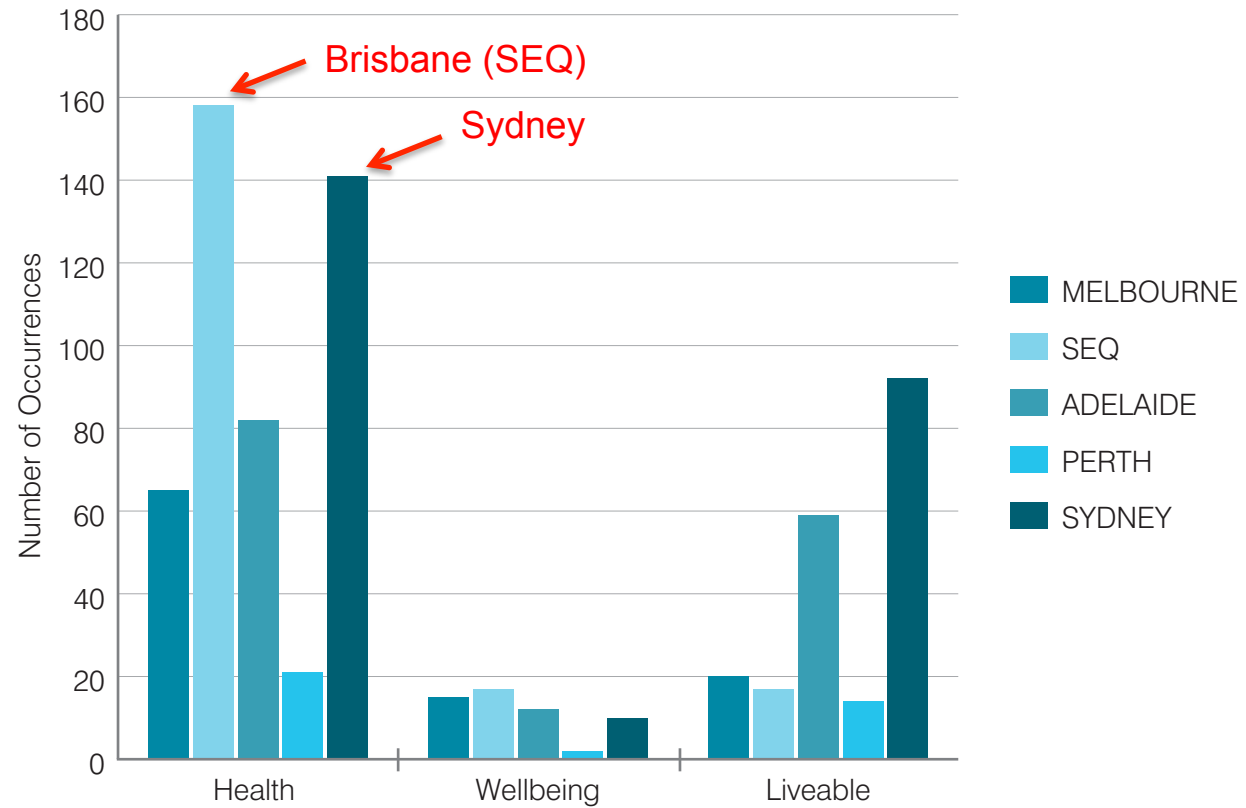


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# The Research: Findings

## FUNDAMENTAL HEALTHY TERMINOLOGY

- Health
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# The Research: Findings

- Strengths:
  - Health issues are receiving increasing attention in metropolitan plans
  - Adelaide and SEQ Plans include stand-alone sections on human health




**Chapter D POLICIES AND TARGETS**

**Health and wellbeing**

**Rationale**

The development of a new urban form for Greater Adelaide will support improvements in community health and wellbeing. There is growing evidence of a link between current health epidemics such as obesity and depression and the built environment. Development that supports healthy lifestyles can improve both physical health and mental wellbeing.<sup>76</sup>

In particular, the Plan sets out policies and targets aimed at reducing car use by promoting a more compact and diverse urban form with integrated public transport and pathways for walking and cycling. Reliance on car travel has been shown to be associated with overweight and obesity,<sup>77</sup> while physical inactivity is now second only to tobacco as the leading risk factor associated with ill health in Australia.<sup>78</sup> The provision of open space and infrastructure for people to be physically active is critical to a healthy community. The

Designing Greater Adelaide to be a more walkable city will contribute to business activity, benefit the environment and improve access to services for people who cannot drive or access public transport. Evidence shows that accessible local facilities (when combined with a safe and attractive street system with an appropriate degree of connectivity) enhance social equity by reducing the need to own a car to get access to services. There is also increased social connection and interaction with benefits for both physical and mental health.<sup>79</sup>

**6.3 Healthy and safe communities**

**Principle**

Develop healthy and safe environments that encourage community activity, participation and healthy lifestyles, and prevent crime.

**Policies**

6.3.1 Integrate health and community safety considerations in the design and delivery of broadacre development, Development Areas, activity centres and other urban areas identified to accommodate future growth.

6.3.2 Implement best practice urban design to create built environments that enable walking and cycling, support community safety and provide adequate shade.

6.3.3 Provide adequate and appropriate community greenspace for outdoor recreation, built spaces and facilities for recreation and sport, and community facilities and spaces to enable community activity and healthier lifestyles.

6.3.4 Plan for broadacre development and development in established urban areas using the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Guidelines for Queensland* to optimise community safety.

6.3.5 Apply a health and social impact assessment framework to planning processes to identify and manage likely health and community wellbeing effects of development.

**Programs**

6.3.6 Research and monitor major broadacre and redevelopment projects to evaluate the delivery of health and community wellbeing outcomes.

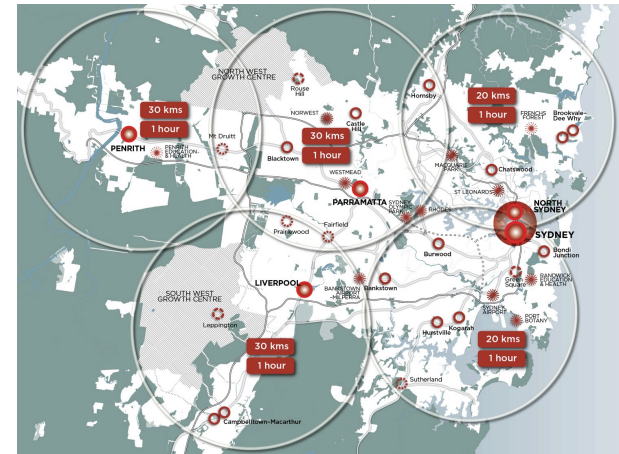
6.3.7 Develop an implementation guideline on the development of healthy communities in strategic and statutory land use planning processes.

6.3.8 Support initiatives that increase access to fresh food in urban environments, including provision of space for fresh food markets and community gardens.

6.3.9 Prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases by identifying significant mosquito breeding sites, including temporary water pools, to inform planning and development processes.

## The Research: Findings

- Strengths:
  - Connecting people and places through integrated land use and transport planning
  - Recognise the link between safety (both real and perceived) in encouraging healthy activities such as walking and cycling





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## The Research: Findings

- Weaknesses:
  - Presence of 'health' in key sections – vision, strategic directions, specific policies and actions.
  - Limited policy provisions on food
  - Link between human health and environmental threats
  - Intersectoral collaboration and partnerships between planners and health professionals – policy formation, monitoring and review.

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## Conclusion

- Human health – key objective of plan, part of overall vision, present in specific policies and actions.
- Requires interdisciplinary ways of working and thinking
- Recognition of all the ‘environments’ that must be addressed
- Set the framework for lower-order plans
- Words alone are not enough – do the plans deliver healthy cities?

