

URBAN GOVERNANCE

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1

- Overall our cities are healthier places to live than our non-urban areas. This is partly because of the readier availability of accessible health services and partly because many aspects of rural life involve risky behaviour in the workplace.
- That being said, most of our population lives in our cities, and much still needs to be done to improve the prospects of engaging in a healthy life in the city
- Urban governance is one key area of activity through which health issues must be addressed

Health and Urban Governance

2

- The historical origins of 'town planning' lay in public health issues:
 - the separation of living areas from polluting industry
 - regulation of the size of windows
 - Mandatory provision of water supply and sewerage
 - Planned street layouts to allow light-filled streets
 - The Garden City movement
- These and many other measures formed the expanding body of legislation and regulations that govern urban development
- Numerous other issues are bound up in modern town planning but almost all have deep roots in the concept of public well-being

Town Planning

3

- Modern urban management includes the legislative and regulatory instruments that govern urban growth and change, manage development, and in most cases, manage environmental matters
- But the business of urban management and the achievement of policy objectives, including health policy objectives, in an urban context, has moved well beyond just legislation and regulations
- This has been widely acknowledged through the work of such international bodies as the WHO's Healthy Cities Network

Urban Management

4

EXTRACT FROM THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE ZAGREB DECLARATION FOR HEALTHY CITIES 2008

Box 3. Core themes of Phase V of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network

The choice of core themes offers the opportunity to work on priority urban health issues that are relevant to all European cities. Topics that are of particular concern to individual cities and/or are challenging and cutting edge for innovative public health action are especially emphasized. Healthy Cities encourages and supports experimentation with new ideas by developing concepts and implementing them in diverse organizational contexts.

- **1. Creating caring and supportive environments**
 - *A healthy city is a city for all its citizens: inclusive, supportive, sensitive and responsive to their diverse needs and expectations.*
- **2. Healthy living**
 - *A healthy city provides conditions and opportunities that encourage, enable and support healthy lifestyles for people of all social groups and ages.*
- **3. Healthy urban environment and design**
 - *A healthy city offers a physical and built environment that encourages, enables and supports health, recreation and well-being, safety, social interaction, accessibility and mobility, a sense of pride and cultural identity and is responsive to the needs of all its citizens.*

WHO European priorities

5

- The themes of the upcoming 2010 Healthy Cities Conference in Brisbane in July 2010 illustrate the diversity of issues considered relevant to urban health in Australia:

- Managing population and economic growth
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Managing Communicable Disease Outbreaks
- Health Security
- Population Health Management - bio security, food safety and epidemic control
- Waste Reuse Technologies
- City Design - designing changes to urban life to encourage Physical Activity
- Disaster Management - public welfare - recovery and rebuild
- Managing Legislation and Policy
- Natural Resource Management
- Green Cities and Technology
- Renewable Energy
- Community Engagement and Planning

- Such diversity requires diverse instruments that cross the spectrum of governance responsibilities in the city

The scope of Australian urban health issues

6

- Urban governance involves the following groups of instruments:
 - *Policy* – stated intentions of government
 - *Legislation/regulations* – the rules that give effect to policy
 - *Fiscal measures* – taxation and pricing
 - *Financial* – government expenditure
 - *Institutional* – setting roles and responsibilities
 - *Advocacy* – presenting the case
 - *Knowledge management* – sharing experiences

Instruments of urban governance

7

- Most urban strategic plans (which are the high-level policy statements governing urban management) include principles consistent with healthy city priorities:
 - Sustainability
 - Innovation
 - Adaptability
 - Inclusiveness
 - Equity
 - Leadership
 - Partnership
 - (Principles from Melbourne 2030)
- The WHO Healthy Cities initiative relies heavily on clear declarations of policy that set the framework for action to improve city health through measures not normally within the control of the formal 'health system'

Policy

8

- Town planning 'schemes' are normally based in law and set down standards and requirements for the development of cities and towns (and non-urban areas)
- They all include:
 - Zoning or equivalent means of identifying permitted or prohibited land uses in an area
 - Traffic, transport and other access and mobility requirements such as pedestrian pathways, cycleways, and emergency vehicle access
 - Provision of public open space and recreation areas, or areas for environmental protection
 - Buffer zones between residential areas and hazardous activities
 - Building heights, lot sizes, solar orientation, and related physical standards
 - Numerous other measures governing the quality of the built environment

Legislation/regulation

9

- Similarly, there are numerous other regulatory measures affecting urban land use and built development:
 - environmental regulations including management of wastes, control of pollution, reuse of gray and black water and protection of natural resources
 - building regulations, that govern room sizes, access to natural light, ventilation, structural safety
 - regulations governing the layout and management of streets and roads to prevent accidents
 - health regulations administered by local government

Legislation/regulation

10

- The use of taxation and pricing to manage urban development is increasing and is very applicable to the issues of urban health:
 - Full pricing of externalities such as pollution through 'polluter pays' policies has helped clean up our atmosphere and our urban environments
 - Road pricing is being used to manage traffic congestion
 - Tax concessions are available for developers who contribute to protection of native vegetation or, in some circumstances, provide affordable housing in their projects
 - Trade waste and landfill waste pricing help reduce levels of waste and encourage recycling

Fiscal measures

11

- Government spending on the public realm to ensure we have a high quality urban environment accessible to all is a key element of urban management for a healthy city
- Clearly, how government spends on direct health facilities of all kinds, and where that spending is located, is also critical
- The allocation of discretionary spending towards facilities such as recreation areas, cycleways, well-lit and safe pedestrian areas, facilities for community use is demonstrative of a government's commitment to supporting a healthy urban lifestyle and environment
- Similarly, support for the 'soft infrastructure' of the city (community groups, clubs and associations, and the like) is important

Financial measures

12

- The arrangement of powers, roles and responsibilities within society is a critical factor in urban governance and hence in city health and societal well-being:
 - the structure of democracy
 - the relationships between government, the private sector and the community
 - the respective roles and powers of different levels of government
 - the powers and functions of organisations governments create and support
 - the accountability of organisations

Institutional arrangements

13

- Some examples in Victoria of organisations outside the health sector critical to our urban health include:
 - The Minister for Planning and his/her Department
 - The Growth Areas Authority which manages planning for new development in Melbourne's growth corridors
 - The Environment Protection Authority and the Commissioner for the Environment
 - Sustainability Victoria which supports business and government in sustainability initiatives
 - The Building Commission
 - The Department of Transport and VicRoads
 - Parks Victoria
- There are many others, including all local governments

Institutional arrangements

14

- Leadership through advocacy is a very important function of urban governance and can be extraordinarily effective in the context of urban health issues:
 - Anti-littering and anti-graffiti campaigns that aim to improve community pride and respect
 - Green energy and green vehicle campaigns promoting the purchase of carbon offsets or alternative energy
 - Water-saving and water recycling campaigns
 - Greenhouse gas reduction campaigns
 - Pro-exercise campaigns aimed at older citizens (eg over 50's cycling)
 - Community participation advocacy

Advocacy

15

- Networking and the sharing of experience is also a fundamental element of urban governance used to address and promote health issues:
 - The sharing of information across the WHO Healthy Cities networks
 - The training of municipal councillors in Victoria through the PLANET program
 - Monitoring and reporting through the internet by the EPA on water quality, ozone conditions, and other environmental hazards
 - Provision of data through State and municipal websites on success and failure of initiatives, on support groups, conferences and events, and numerous related matters
 - The empowerment of communities to share and develop knowledge and initiate actions

Knowledge management

16

- Making and measuring progress on the health of cities and the communities within them is a complex and often slow process.
- But changes can also be dramatic - the Travelsmart public education program on public transport dramatically increases public transport use, for example
- The lack of 'silver bullets' means that the entire armory of governance instruments usually needs to be brought into play to address any given set of health-related issues
- The key is to think 'not only... but also...' when choosing a pathway to address a complex problem in an urban environment – not only regulation, but also fiscal measures and advocacy, for example
- This integration of instruments is the most likely pathway to success.

Integration is the key

17