



The opportunity

While many Queenslanders are living longer, they are doing so with conditions that reduce their quality of life and negatively impact community well-being and productivity. Almost 40% of this disease burden is from risk factors that can be prevented. Forecasting indicates this burden will only increase as the population ages. Multi-sectoral evidence-based action is required to avoid these unsustainable health and societal costs.

Supporting Queenslanders to be healthy throughout their life will help to constrain future costs. There is strong evidence that the form, function and quality of the environments in which we live can support healthy living.

This thinking is not new and there is a long and connected history between the design of places and health. During

emergencies — whether a pandemic, fire, flood, cyclone or drought — this relationship becomes even more important, as people with existing health conditions will experience greater impact.

The relationship between the environment in which we live and health is strongly recognised in government policy and priorities nationally and internationally, including *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities*, *Prevention Strategic Framework 2017-2026* and *QDesign*.

As the COVID-19 response continues and our focus is shifting to economic and employment stimulus, there are real opportunities to ensure future investments in built infrastructure create the environments necessary to preference and support Queenslanders to live healthy lives.

About the initiative

Healthy Places, Healthy People is an initiative under *Our Future State: Keep Queenslanders healthy*. This initiative, led by Queensland Health and the Office of the Queensland Government Architect, is being progressed in collaboration with government agencies.

The *Healthy Places, Healthy People* initiative provides a mechanism for Queensland Government agencies to consider and integrate health outcomes into their policies, practices and investment decisions. By working together to improve our built and natural environments we can positively influence the health of Queensland communities.



“Leading a healthy lifestyle is no longer an option but a necessity. Now more than ever, we need well designed environments that preference, support and encourage people to be more active, eat well and enjoy a meaningful connection with their local community”.

Dr Jeannette Young,
Queensland Chief Health Officer



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The Framework

The *Healthy Places, Healthy People* Framework was developed with input from multidisciplinary experts within and external to government with a collective interest in the built and natural environment and health. The framework will inform policy directions and guide practice in Queensland. It is based on a broad definition of

health - recognising both the physical and mental well-being of an individual as well as the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community. It brings together three domains - Connected, Welcoming and Responsible and includes nine attributes that identify the fundamental qualities of place which positively impact health.

“The importance of urban design and evidence based decision making should be forefront in our minds. We must prioritise initiatives that improve our economic, social and environmental health and wellbeing.”

Malcolm Middleton,
Queensland Government Architect



Illustration: Rachel Apelt,
Curious Minds Co



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Applying the framework

Existing evidence and advice from policy and data experts across government are informing the identification of indicators that align with the framework. These indicators will provide a vehicle to measure, assess and monitor change over time.

The initial focus is on evidence informed indicators, currently being used for planning purposes across government, and showing how those can be optimised to support healthy lifestyles. These indicators will align with Queensland government strategic priorities and can help inform future policy directions and infrastructure investments. They will also support greater awareness of the role that government agencies play in improving health.

The first application of the *Healthy Places, Healthy People* framework will use an ‘active living’ lens to demonstrate how a set of key attributes of the built and natural environment

contribute to active living. For example, measuring the relationship between walking proximity to essential services, neighbourhood safety, and physical activity in a local area can help understand conditions that promote healthy lifestyles.

Future phases of the *Healthy Places, Healthy People* initiative will examine potential relationships using other health outcome lenses.



Applying the framework diagram

Unlocking opportunities

Outputs from the *Healthy Places, Healthy People* initiative will provide opportunities to:

- **Guide change** through the development of assessment criteria and guidelines which identify design features that promote healthy living and inform the development of healthy places, policies and programs.
- **Share evidence and knowledge** from the *Healthy Places, Healthy People* initiative (process and adoption) to promote confident evidence-based decision making with a health focus.
- **Demonstrate the value** by quantifying how healthy places infrastructure and investment can increase productivity, strengthen the economy and reduce demand on health and social services.



COOL, CLEAN AND GREEN CASE STUDY

Evidence tells us that residents living in urban areas with more trees feel healthier and have fewer cardio-metabolic conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease.

By using available data, an opportunity exists to measure the relationships between tree canopy, shade infrastructure or temperature with active living to support the design of healthy places in Queensland.

This work aligns to various Government policies including *QDesign, Creating healthy and active communities, Activate! Queensland, Queensland Walking Strategy* and the *Queensland Cycling Strategy*.

New measures and knowledge will help to support policies and infrastructure across Queensland that encourage active living and improve community health and well-being.



Local governments, academic partners and industry are invited to contribute to this important health initiative. By working together, we will create more great places to support current and future generations of Queenslanders to live healthier lives.



Bundaberg CBD revitalisation, Bundaberg Regional Council, Archipelago

Our partners

Current partners include Queensland Government agencies who invest in or have policy oversight for our built and natural environments and the health and well-being of Queenslanders. This includes Department of Transport and Main Roads, Department of Environment and Science, Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Queensland Police Service and Queensland Treasury.

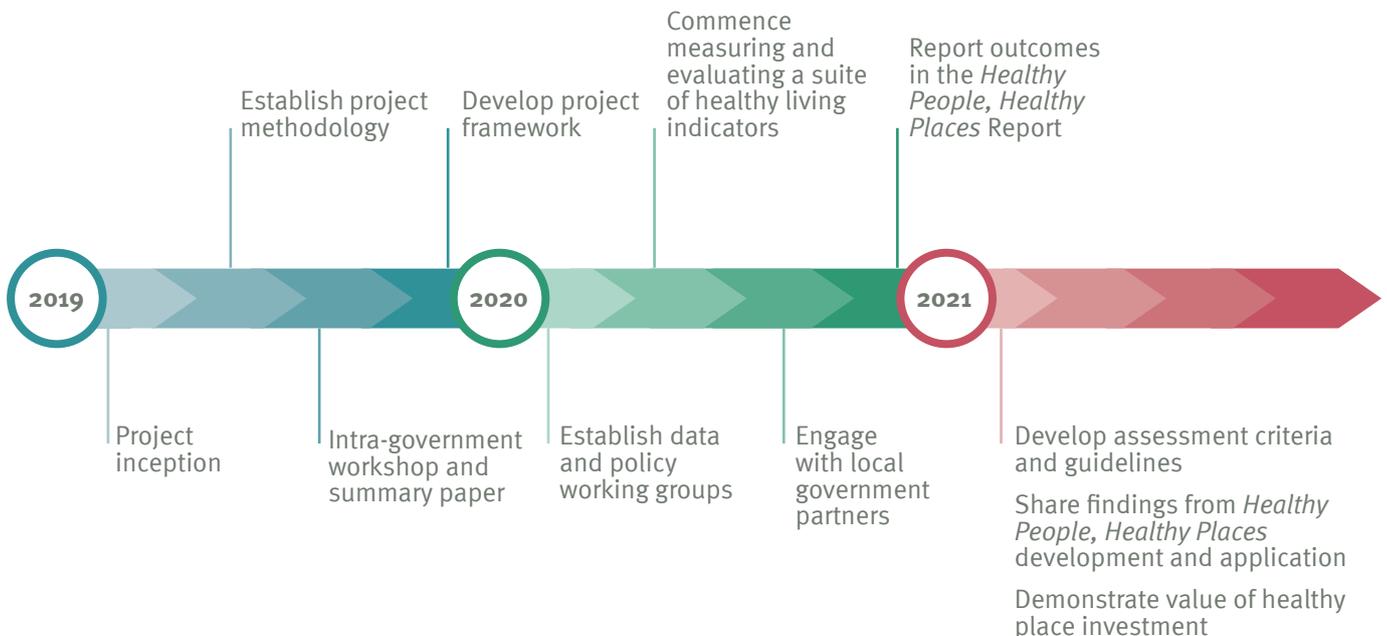
Future partnerships are just as important and local governments, academic partners and industry are invited to contribute to the success of this important health initiative.

Benefits of partnership

Through collaboration, the framework and its application has the potential to assist government agencies to inform policy and infrastructure investment in several ways:

- **Improved awareness** providing a stronger understanding of the key features within our built and natural environments that combine to support healthy and active living
- **Providing an evidence base** to inform future policy directions and infrastructure investments
- **Establishing a base** of information to measure healthy places and identify data opportunities for prioritised consideration
- **Monitoring and reporting progress** to understand changes to these features within the built and natural environment and health over time, and
- **Evaluating economic benefits** to be gained from investing in healthy places.

Project timeline



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