

# HEALTHY PLACES: IPSWICH CENTRAL PILOT PROJECT

A Healthy Places, Healthy People Initiative



In 2020, the Office of the Queensland Government Architect (OQGA), in partnership with Queensland Health led a cross government consultation process that informed the development of the evidence based Healthy Places, Healthy People (HPPH) framework. We are continuing to engage with state agency and local government partners to identify opportunities to apply the HPPH framework with the vision of creating great places to keep Queenslanders healthy.

## About the project

Through a collaborative partnership with West Moreton Hospital and Health, Ipswich City Council and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), we are proposing to apply the HPPH framework to assess and evaluate the walking environment in and around Ipswich Central. An evidence-based approach will provide a mechanism to support prioritised policies and inform investment decisions to support increased walking activity and improve health outcomes for the community.

## Our vision

Through an evidenced based approach our vision is to create great places in Ipswich to support locals to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

## Project ambition

The ambition for the Health Places Pilot Project is to better understand walking activity in Ipswich Central and how built and natural environment features may be influencing people's desire to walk between and around major city destinations.

Footpaths are just one part of a quality walking environment. Many things contribute to making irresistible places to walk – a mix of climate (including temperate and rain), provision of shade, close destinations to walk to, parks and open spaces, safety and surveillance, accessibility, places to stop and rest and integration with public transport.

By using an active mobility focused lens, the HPPH framework provides an excellent overview of environmental factors that influence walking and will guide the development of indicators to assess qualities of Ipswich Central which may be influencing walking and activity within this precinct.





*The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major disruptor and significantly changed the way we live, work, learn and play. Some of these impacts are likely to catalyse a 'new normal' that will undoubtedly have an impact on how community members access and use streets and public spaces. To support increases in walking within local areas we must ensure our environments are safe, comfortable and well connected.*

## What the evidence tells us

According to the World Health Organisation, physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality and is responsible for 3.2 million deaths globally per year<sup>1</sup>. Concerningly, 41% of adults and 54% of children do not meet the recommended 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week in Queensland<sup>2</sup>.

In the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service area, 68% of adults are overweight, with 35% being obese and 14% are inactive<sup>3</sup> placing Ipswich in the unenviable position as one of the most overweight and inactive localities in Queensland.

Evidence tells us that walking can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke by 35% percent and Type 2 diabetes by 40%. Furthermore, physical activity health benefits accrue with even small increases in activity. While the greatest benefits are derived for those moving from inactivity to any level of physical activity<sup>4</sup>.

Research indicates if Australians increased their level of physical activity by 10% through walking, this would result in 6,000 fewer incidents of disease and 2000 fewer deaths per year. From an economic perspective we would gain 114,000 working days and reduce health care costs by \$96 million per year<sup>5</sup>.

Walkability is also a major contributor to the vitality of any city centre. Highly walkable places generate significant foot fall, which creates opportunity for vicarious economic activity and in turn creates an additional cycle of activity that drives further vitality. Increasing walking within city destinations will not only contribute to improved health outcomes but will support local businesses and employment. Evidence from other jurisdictions demonstrates small interventions to build active streets can increase the number of people entering shops and trading by up to 40%<sup>6</sup>.

## The consultancy team

QH in partnership with OQGA have brought together a team of experienced consultants to assist in the early-stage delivery of this pilot project.

At **Bull + Bear (B+B) Economics** urban economic Marcus Brown will lead the investigation and development of strategic walking data to understand the extent, drivers and impediments of walking within Ipswich Central. Based on their extensive experience in economic planning and property economics, B+B Economics can also provide insights into the potential economic value of improvements to walkability within Ipswich Central in future stages of this pilot project.

**ARUP**, global leaders in shaping cities, will draw on their national and international perspectives to support the development of key indicators to understand and assess the built and natural quality of Ipswich Central. Their multi-disciplinary team of designers, transport specialists and planners will draw on their expertise to collect and synthesise environmental data to inform priorities strategies for improving walkability.

## Partnering for success

The success of this pilot project relies upon a collaborative relationship between project partners. Working with our key partners including West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, Ipswich City Council and TMR the project will be shaped and developed through targeted engagement. Targeted stakeholder workshops and meetings will ensure the project scope, methodology and development is relevant to future plans, policies and initiatives. Additional inputs, including available base information and data may be requested from partners to support a more comprehensive understand of walking activity and influences of walking within Ipswich Central.

By working together to improve our built and natural environments we can positively influence the health of Queensland communities.

<sup>1</sup> [www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/3416](http://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/3416)

<sup>2</sup> *The health of Queenslanders 2020 – Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland*, Queensland Health, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Data from *The health of Queenslanders 2020 – Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland*, Queensland Health, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Section 5: Our lifestyle, *The health of Queenslanders 2020 – Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland*, Queensland Health, 2020

<sup>5</sup> Cadilhac, D., Cumming, T., Sheppard, L., Pearce, D., Carter, R., & Magnus, A. (2011). The economic benefits of reducing physical inactivity: an Australian example. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 8:99

<sup>6</sup> *The benefits of walking: A research summary*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, Australia, 2019

## Project approach

The methodology developed as part of this pilot project is intentionally flexible and iterative to ensure the process can be responsive and highly effective, meeting the needs and expectations of our project partners. Any modifications to the methodology will be communicated with lessons learned through the process documented to ensure future projects have the benefit of any learnings identified during this pilot project.

We propose a four-stage approach. The below staging aims to provide a structure and framework to progress the investigation. Stage 1-2 will be progressed in the first instance with the understanding that later stages will be informed by the evidence and findings from these initial stages.



Image: Ipswich Central Heat Map, CRC Water Sensitive Cities Scenario Tool

### Stage 1: Project scoping and definition

- Project definition including partner workshop to establish project parameters, primary drivers and desired outcomes
- Establishment of project parameters for analysis including project boundary, key pedestrian generators and prioritised pedestrian movement networks
- Consider proposal in response to existing project and policy drivers from project partners
- Confirm major nodes of city activity for prioritised investigation (i.e. Ipswich Hospital, Ipswich Train Station, Nicholas Street Precinct)
- Assess availability of existing movement and place data from key partners/stakeholders to assess existing city environmental conditions
- Develop prioritised environmental indicators that increase walking & physical activity

### Stage 2: Data collection and mapping

- Verify the extent of walking activity in and around prioritised city locations via surveys with key employers (e.g. Ipswich City Council, Queensland Health), interviews with informed persons (e.g. business owners), and third party datasets
- Undertake pedestrian counts of key movement corridors
- Analyse survey results and summarise indicative findings
- Develop prioritised environmental indicators that increase walking & physical activity
- Prepare healthy places precinct maps based on agreed indicators and available data
- Based on walking activity and precinct maps, identify focus areas for more detailed investigation into conditions for walkability
- Present to partners findings and workshop focus areas for next stages

### Stage 3: Solution development (future stage)

- Confirm focus areas and agree on priority sites
- Determine impediments to walking and develop potential solutions/interventions
- Develop list of prioritised projects to improve walkability and associated health benefits
- Refine visual representation of data, indicators and maps into final report

### Stage 4: Evaluation (future stage)

- Evaluate list of prioritised solutions and identify improvements in pedestrian activity and their potential benefits in terms of value uplift from increased foot fall, health benefits associated with reduced morbidity and mortality and potential recreation benefits

## Next steps

Stages 1 and 2 will commence in early 2022 to ensure the proposed methodology has been based on the best available data and knowledge from key stakeholders. Stages 1 and 2 provide the critical foundation that will underpin the solutions and options phase at stage 3 and 4.

At the conclusion of Stage 4, an evaluation of the project will be undertaken to understand whether modifications or further information will be required to progress the pilot project beyond this point. Through consultation with project partners, priority actions will be identified for implementation through future policy, work and initiatives.

## Conclusion

By providing a compelling evidence base on the walkability of Ipswich Central, targeted decision making can occur that strategically improves walking environments to support and encourage the uptake of more walking to the benefit of the city, community and their health. It is anticipated that the process developed for this pilot project will be transferable to other Queensland cities and towns to measure the 'health' of their place.

