

Designing for Health; There is no magic bullet.

Soon after its discovery, Penicillin became a magic bullet which transformed our ability to fight infection. Today, we continue to search for new and transformative approaches to healthcare. As design specialists, we understand the importance of innovation and research in creating buildings that are healthy, efficient, adaptable, and resilient. However, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to healthcare design. It takes continuous effort and a willingness to challenge tradition to achieve real-world transformation.

Recovery

In the face of natural disasters, pandemics, and healthcare system disruptions, we are challenged to rebuild our health system and adapt to a changing environment while prioritising health and wellbeing in our communities. Building beyond tradition means embracing technology, innovation and a new level of cooperation between providers, policy-makers and patients, to kick-start healthcare system transformation for a new era.

We must consider the challenge of rapid renewal while ensuring communities have access to healthcare services close to home. Recovery means creating a healthcare system that promotes physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and an accessible built environment that supports healthy lifestyles.

Is a reform to the Australian Healthcare system imminent? Are our communities currently well-served with healthcare close to home? What does recovery truly mean, and how can we achieve it for individuals, communities, the health system and the built environment? What role does accessibility play in promoting better health outcomes? And how can biopsychosocial models of care provide more effective, individualised, and holistic care for our communities?

Scale

As our population continues to grow and age, it's crucial that we focus on designing healthcare infrastructure and services that are tailored to the diverse needs of patients. This means taking a human-centred approach to healthcare and considering the needs of the individual alongside the needs of the system.

As the demand for healthcare services increases, there is a need for larger and more complex health projects to meet this demand. However, planning for these projects must be done with a long-term view, taking into account changing demographics, new technologies, and evolving

disease patterns. It is important to take a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to health system and health precinct planning.

How can we expand our health service into an adaptive and resilient ecosystem? How can the design industry impact system-level change, through new partnerships across providers, new sources of investment, and new digital health technologies? Can we genuinely balance the needs of the system with the needs of the individual? Is the environment navigable and accessible for everyone? How can we use design to create a welcoming healthcare experience?

Country

Health planners and designers can play a role in improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and reducing healthcare inequality. The practice of incorporating Indigenous Australian knowledge, values, and perspectives into the design and construction of buildings has wide-ranging benefits for the whole community. Meaningful engagement, consultation, education and co-design is required to ensure projects of all scales meet the needs of the communities they serve. And healthcare providers can lead the way with sustainable and ecologically responsible building practices that counter the impacts of climate change and care for Country.

How can we incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the design process, and what benefits does this bring to our built environment? How can we design buildings and landscapes that are environmentally sustainable, adaptable and resilient to climate change? And how can we ensure that our architecture and urban design respects the natural environment and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's unique connection with Country?

Our upcoming conference aims to bring together designers, clinical planners, and healthcare specialists to discuss the many small steps required to build better health buildings. We believe that by fostering human-centred, inclusive, and future-focused design, we can create spaces that support the delivery of better healthcare. Join us as we explore the latest trends and technologies in healthcare design and examine the role of design in shaping the future of healthcare. Together, let's create a healthier future.