

# UNIVERSAL AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN: INTER-PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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## DEAKIN UNIVERSITY



- Large regional university in Victoria, Australia (established in 1974)
- 4 campuses with over 44,000 students
- Waterfront campus in Geelong includes students studying Architecture and Occupational Therapy
- Opportunities for partnerships identified but never enacted.

## WHY? WHY NOT .....

- Increasing emphasis on equity/diversity / access in social and political agendas
  - “ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (2008)
  - “ Review of Australian Standards for Access and Mobility (AS 1428, 2009)
  - “ Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards(2010)
  - “ Build for Life Campaign (2010)
  - “ Livable Housing Design Guidelines
  - “ Growing recognition of placemaking / healthy city initiatives
- Increased focus on student experience and graduate attributes
- No one else was doing it

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## PROJECT AIMS

- Develop and trial flexible, blended teaching & learning resources, designed to provide rich experiences in inclusive design practice
- Explore and identify sustainable opportunities for architecture and occupational therapy students to learn about inclusive design practice within a framework of inter-professional education
- Explore and identify sustainable partnerships with key stakeholders that will support ongoing research and work integrated learning opportunities in the area of inclusive design practice

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## WHAT AND TO WHOM ....

- Literature review
- Consultation with key stakeholders (focus groups and telephone interviews)
- Design of online teaching resources
- Face-to-face teaching
- Simulation activities
- Formal evaluation

(1<sup>st</sup> year Architecture and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Occupational Therapy)



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## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

- 76 people invited to participate with 28 participating in either focus group (16) or telephone interview (12)
- 75% female and 25% male
- 80% of participants aged 34 years or older
- Mean of 20.22 years of experience in accessibility
- Range of professional backgrounds and roles



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## PARTICIPANTS

- Occupational therapists (34%)
- Architects (11%)
- Disability service managers (18%)
- Remainder from variety of backgrounds including law, higher education, other health professional roles
- 29% reported that they were access consultants

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## KEY THEMES

- a) A shared understanding of terminology
- a) Multiple stakeholders
- b) What's holding us back
- c) Making it happen
- a) The bureaucracy & Standards

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[http://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/toolip/img/2013/10/18/ud2014lund\\_logo-square.jpg](http://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/toolip/img/2013/10/18/ud2014lund_logo-square.jpg)

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## TERMINOLOGY

*“I like universal because it’s more egalitarian. Universal to me implies everybody can do it. Inclusive implies someone’s doing me a favour.+*

*“I prefer this inclusive idea where there is some way of designing it that will include great diversity but not boil down to one thing for everybody.”*

*“I don’t think inclusive design is as well known or spoken about versus universal design but I think overall both concepts are not well known in the general community.”*

*“When we use the word inclusive, we cannot explain inclusive without specifying who is excluded, who are ‘the others’ and that is why this whole thing has a language difficulty.”*

## Key message from Patricia Moore (USA)

Continuing to use the words universal design, design for all, inclusive design etc continues to make us a fringe element. It's better to think of exemplary design, usable by all. Good design is good design.



## MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

*“Environmental sustainability is almost now getting ingrained. Financial sustainability has always been there ... it's the first question that gets asked. Now the second question that gets asked is have you used recycled materials, what's its energy use. Accessibility hasn't reached that level of understanding ... it's still an afterthought. It needs to be fundamental from day one.”*

*“The thing architects don’t get is the needs of people with a disability ... and the thing that occupational therapists don’t get is architectural designing for the broadest number of people.”*

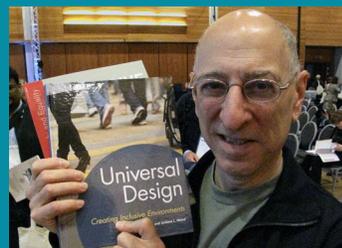
*“I don’t think much is to be gained by the occupational therapist trying to become an amateur architect or the architect trying to become an amateur health practitioner.”*

*“There are architects who are very much artists and this is their art ... and it looks beautiful and to make any changes is a personal insult. They are trained to defend their design.”*

*“Architects have the capacity to create designs which are elegant but I don’t think they can do that unless they develop or work with people who actually understand what the diversity of function is within the community.”*

## Key message from Ed Steinfeld (University of Buffalo) and others

We need to locate universal / inclusive design in the sustainability discourse so that it does not continue to be seen as “other” and for it not to be continually marginalised .



[http://opendesignct.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Edward-Steinfeld\\_portrett\\_540.ashx\\_.jpg](http://opendesignct.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Edward-Steinfeld_portrett_540.ashx_.jpg)

Universal design is essential to sustainable and global practice.



## WHAT'S HOLDING US BACK?

***“Historically, I find you start talking about disability, and architects and people in local government, their eyes start to glaze over. But as soon as you start talking about it in a broader community context of every single one of us could benefit from this, then there’s a different view.”***

***“I think the challenge is to make it sexy ... and there’s an absence of marketing around this to make accessibility sexy.”***

***“You can present the principles but there’s no one size fits all and people want me to tell them how to do it so they can tick the box.”***

***“The building industry is still going to hold it back. They’re always going to say that things are too costly because with universal design, everything has to be bigger.”***

## Key messages from the conference

Industrial design and ICT versus design of the built environment



How do we make it more explicit for built environments and where are the exemplars?

**ICT Accessibility**  
Information and Communication Technology



Danish Disabled People's Organisation headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark.



## MAKING IT HAPPEN

*“There’s pockets of expertise in the field, both in Australia and overseas, but there seems to be an overwhelming need for better connection between various people doing it.”*

*“It needs to be in the fundamentals from day one of the brief. What’s the universal access appraisal of this building, just the same as you do an environmental sustainability appraisal of a design.”*

*“I think the ageing of the community is pushing it forward and I hear the voice of older people now, where I don’t think we heard that 20 years ago and they’re a loud voting [group] with income. We need to work with them and not hear their voices in isolation.”*

*“Until people personally experience issues with family members, they don’t really have any understanding.”*

## Key messages from the conference

- “ The process is as important in universal design as the outcome - probably more important.
- “ Design for all transforms obligations into opportunities.
- “ Design is not a noun. It is a verb, it is a process and process is the key.



## THE BUREAUCRACY & STANDARDS

*“Unfortunately when it comes down to it, the bottom line is they just want to meet the Building Code of Australia requirements and that’s quite minimal. They’re not really concerned about universal design, they’re concerned about meeting the regulations.”*

*“Regulations are dangerous because people think that’s all they’ve got to do and they’re just the minimum. We’ve got to encourage people to go past them.”*

*“[The Standards] are a guide only. They will tell you what you can’t do, but they very seldom tell you what you can do.”*

*“People provide access because the law requires them to, not because they understand the reasons for it.”*

*“[The Standards] always seem to be lagging slightly behind current thinking and uses a sledgehammer to crack a nut. When you make a concrete statement, there is always a group that will be disadvantaged.”*

## Key message from FinnPetrén (President, Design for All Sweden)

“Regulations are the floor from which we build. Regulations alone are not enough. You can’t make it accessible and good design until you have empathy and when you have empathy, you become creative.”



## SINCE 2010



- Teaching into first and second year Architecture
- Teaching of architectural drawing and communication into Occupational Therapy
- Continuation of 'real life' simulation experiences
- Increase in research students in this area (Honours and Post Graduate)
- Building capacity within the Architecture program

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## CHALLENGES

- Dependent on "champions" of change
- Two professionally focused programs with highly structured unit progression
- Identifying exemplars / aesthetics / function
- Embedding within sustainability discourse and not "other" discourses
- Identifying the relevant design processes
- Development of a cross disciplinary unit of study focusing on health cities and environments

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## SOME FINAL COMMON MESSAGES

- “ Universal design can't be achieved by laws and regulations
- “ Universal design needs to be at the beginning of the design process
- “ Accessibility ≠ Universal Design
- “ Universal design can't be achieved without regulations and guidelines but can't be achieved without empathy and “conviviality”
- “ It's about respecting difference and not about similarity
- “ We know enough about doors but not a lot about the design process and what creativity can do in that process



## SOME FINAL PERSPECTIVES FROM UD 2014, LUND.

- “ “For people with disabilities, all tourism is adventure tourism”  
(Ivor Ambrose, European Network for Accessible Tourism)
- “ Not taking our eye off the issue of cultural influences and differences



**“It’s not enough to be accessible, it’s not enough to be universal; it has to be useable ...”**

*A history of UD: Today’s exemplars and tomorrow’s opportunities*

Patricia Moore, UD 2014 Conference, 16-18 June, Lund, Sweden.



<https://l.yimg.com/vi/cpNIBML2FFo/maxresdefault.jpg>

