

## Centre for Universal Design Australia Ltd

### Strategic Plan 2021-2022

**Vision:** Our vision is to live in a world where everyone can participate on an equal basis in all aspects of social and economic life.

**Mission:** Our mission is to promote the health and wellbeing of people with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments through the application of universal design principles.

To enact our mission,

1. CUDA provides advice, information and education on design processes and outcomes that:
  - reduce the differences in current health status
  - ensures equal opportunities and access to resources
  - enables all people to achieve their fullest health potential
2. CUDA supports individuals and groups to optimise physical, mental and social wellbeing by changing or coping with the environment.
3. CUDA advocates for the fundamental conditions and resources for health. This includes the availability of shelter, education, and income for all people regardless of disease, health condition or impairment.
4. CUDA gathers and shares knowledge and experience about designs for health and wellbeing with an emphasis on people with health conditions and/or impairments.
5. CUDA provides information and evidence from sectors within and beyond health.
6. CUDA communicates the connection between universal design and health, and how inclusion in all sectors is consistent with the [Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion](#)\*.
7. CUDA collates and curates universal design strategies and programs to build healthy public policy through coordinated action for increased equity.
8. CUDA maintains a strong global network of researchers and practitioners to ensure knowledge on health and design are current.

\*According to the World Health Organization, “Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health”. CUDA emphasises the focus on equity as an objective of health promotion.

The ability to increase control over our health and wellbeing also upholds our human rights and supports the activities outlined in the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

## CUDA's Strategies

We have three key strategies. The first has a focus on the built environment sector as this has the greatest impact on the health of the Australian population. The second strategy is targeted more broadly to position CUDA as a clearinghouse of information. The third strategy positions CUDA as a provider of education and training across sectors.

### Strategy 1: Understanding and applying the principles of universal design in the built environment

**The aim** is to increase understanding of taking a universal design approach to the design of the built environment. This approach focuses on the physical, cognitive, sensory, psychosocial and intellectual wellbeing of citizens regardless of their age, gender, background or level of capability.

#### The strategic goals are:

1. To create and deliver education, training and communications strategies to assist the construction industry to understand the concepts underpinning universal design as mainstream inclusion, health and wellbeing for everyone.
2. To create and facilitate workshops for community members and built environment professionals to
  - a. increase their understanding of what is possible through environmental design
  - b. increase their knowledge of the impact of design on human functioning, health, and well-being

#### The objectives are:

In collaboration with stakeholders we will:

1. Design and facilitate capacity building workshops and seminars that deliver specific training for the building and construction sector. The target groups are:
  - a. construction and housing industries and their association members
  - b. community advocacy groups
  - c. community housing organisations
  - d. local government
  - e. state government
  - f. community members

2. Design and facilitate practical workshops for community members and built environment professionals that will:
  - a. provide information about universal design to participants and how it promotes health and wellbeing
  - b. generate information relevant to the construction industry that can inform future design practice
  - c. showcase best practice and successful case studies
  
3. Design and deliver training for policy development professionals to understand the importance of inclusion on the health and wellbeing of all citizens regardless of their level of capability or health status.

**Key points underpinning this strategy are:**

1. Legislation alone has not provided the impetus for social, commercial and attitudinal change that is required to create built environments that promote the health and wellbeing of citizens
2. At highest risk of impaired wellbeing are people with disability, older people, and NDIS recipients. Maintaining health and wellbeing is essential for achieving their aspirations.
3. Voluntary codes and standards have resulted in a piecemeal and uncoordinated approach to the issues.

**Strategy 2: Building knowledge and expertise through shared information**

**The aim** is to increase and maintain the knowledge and skill level of practitioners across a range of disciplines covering the built environment, products and services, and internet and communications technology.

**The strategic goals are:**

1. To maintain an open access website as a clearinghouse of information on inclusive practice and universal design for advocacy groups, practitioners, academics and individuals.
2. To utilise social media channels to leverage the website content

**The objectives are to continue to:**

1. Collate and curate academic, government and practitioner articles, checklists, toolkits and guides on universal design and inclusive practice from across Australia and internationally
2. To post and maintain collated material on the CUDA website that is searchable by topic, subject or discipline
3. To produce and disseminate a weekly update of the latest information posted on the website
4. To increase the number of subscribers to the weekly update of latest posts

5. Maintain maximum accessibility of the website and posted material
6. Liaise with similar centres internationally to share information and build knowledge

**Key points underpinning this strategy are:**

1. Australia lacks a central point where people can go for information on universal design and inclusive practice.
2. The body of knowledge and information about universal design is continuously evolving – new research and practitioner knowledge is being created all the time.

**Strategy 3: Building practitioner expertise through education and training**

**The aim** is to create communities of practitioner groups and disciplines that understand and regularly apply universal design principles in their work.

**The strategic goals are:**

1. To encourage and foster cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary collaboration
2. To provide education and training specific to individual disciplines through:
  - a. Face to face workshops, seminars and presentations
  - b. Online learning programs related to specific disciplines\*

**The objectives** are to

1. Maintain and promote our open access entry level online module based on the principles and goals of universal design
2. Develop and implement online modules and courses related to:
  - a. Home design and renovations
  - b. Outdoor areas and landscaping
  - c. Including people of all ages with emphasis on children and older people
  - d. Webpage and blog design
  - e. Communicating effectively to a diverse population
3. Organise the 5th Australian Universal Design Conference
4. Continue to submit papers to conferences and journals on issues relating to inclusion and universal design and the relationship to health and wellbeing of people with impairments
5. Continue assistance to other organisations where appropriate to stage events related to universal design

**Key points underpinning this strategy are:**

International and national legislation and policies require that people with disability, older people and children have the right to be treated on an equal basis with others.

The key documents are:

- a. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability

- b. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- c. Australian Government's National Disability Strategy
- d. World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities and Communities Program
- e. State Governments' policies for access and inclusion.

\*Specific disciplines include but not limited to designers of: products, education programs, digital products and services, tourism services, retail services, social policy, workplace policy, employment practices, small and large scale events, built environment, housings, transportation, and recreation and arts programs.