Universal Design: How do we create more accessible places regardless of age or capability?

*A community discussion and workshop organised by Inner Sydney Voice about universal design and its application in Waterloo Redevelopment.*



# DEBRIEFING

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| **Workshop Title** | Universal Design: How do we create more accessible places regardless of age or capability? |
| **Objectives** | Understand better the principles of universal design and how they help create more accessible and inclusive private, public and open spaces |
| **Held on** | Thursday 20th July – 10.30am-1.30pm |
| **Target Audience** | Waterloo public housing tenants, local residents, community and government workers. |
| **Organised by** | Inner Sydney Voice |
| **Facilitated by** | Dr. Jane Bringolf, Centre for Universal Design Australia  Thomas Chailloux, Inner Sydney Voice |
| **Report Aim** | Debrief and record outcomes of the workshop for those who couldn’t attend. |
| **Attendance** | **24 people** total  **20 people filled the attendance sheet:**  9 identified as female and 11 as male  8 were between 25 and 44 years old, 6 between 45 and 64 years old, 5 between 65 and 84 years old, and 1 didn’t say.  2 people identified as ATSI, 1 identified as CALD. |

All of the documents mentioned are available on request.

**Universal Design – Community Discussion & Workshop 20/07/17 Summary of Feedback**

*Did you find the content of the workshop relevant and useful?*

Very useful: 11/14

Useful: 3/14

Not Useful: 0/14

*How did you find the structure of the workshop?*

Well structured: 14/14

Could be improved: 0/14

Poorly structured: 0/14

*How did you find the timing of the workshop?*

Too long: 1/14

Right amount of time: 13/14

Too short: 0/14

*Would you recommend your friend/neighbour to participate in a similar workshop?*

Definitely: 14/14

Possibly: 0/14

No: 0/14

*Additional suggestions/feedback:*

* Wonderful talk
* Invite more private residents to such sessions, really important for able bodied locals to heighten their awareness of the accessibility issues that will be so important to a successful master plan
* Thank you for taking the time to facilitate this important information.
* Way of collecting information and needs so we don’t “reinvent the wheel”. “Tough call, yet need illicite responses (sic) yet make sure no individual dominates agendas. Possibly round table requests with a short time limit on responses so individuals as much as possible focus on “important” or most vital aspect.
* More for different groups, such as Chinese, Russian, other CALDs, etc.
* Sweeteners for drinks for diabetics (Note: We run out this day but usually provide sweeteners for drinks for diabetics)
* Keep these things up – they are great opportunities to mix professionals with tenants to inform each other
* Probably needed a bit of Waterloo context inbuilt

## Introduction to principles of Universal Design - Debriefing

The session started by exploring pre-conceptions and prior knowledge that participants may have about universal design. People were invited to give their own definition of what universal design means or what they think it means.

Jane Bringolf then defined universal design as “the design of products and environments so they are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation design”. This definition was afterwards completed by various examples and with the 7 principles of universal design, which are[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Equitable use
* Flexibility in use
* Simple and intuitive to use
* Perceptible information
* Tolerance for error
* Low physical effort
* Size and space for approach and use

These principles were discussed by participants, and two short educational videos were used as support for further discussion and understanding of urban design and place making concepts related to accessibility and inclusion. We also discussed legal requirements for accessibility and “disabled access” and how they do not deliver the same level of usability for all as universal design. A practical and concrete discussion was then proposed to participants: When was the last time you had to deal with an ill designed object, private or public/open space?  
People delivered lots of interesting stories which made for a good starting point to talk about design issues and universal design.

## Reflecting on Urban Design issues and Key Messages for Waterloo Redevelopment

This part of the workshop included various exercises to think about universal design and how to integrate it in plans and designs of future dwellings, public spaces and general neighbourhood design.

For the purpose of the first exercise, people were split into pairs to think about design issues and how to make a certain building or public space more accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Insights were then shared back and discussed with the broader group. Participants also reflected on key messages to put forward during the community consultation process.

Then, using the most recently released Master Plan in Sydney region that is publically available, the Telopea Master Plan from February 2017, participants tried to identify potential accessibility issues on this particular site, how they were addressed or not by the Master Plan and how they may want to contribute to make sure these issues are addressed.

The last exercise encouraged a collective discussion around what is well designed and what isn’t, starting from pictures of buildings and outdoor/public spaces.

To conclude the workshop, participants were invited to rehearse what are the most important issues to them, and how they might introduce these issues to urban planners and consultants hired by government to prepare the Master Plan. People thought about their key messages, the issues that they want to put on the table, and the questions that they might ask during the Waterloo Redevelopment community consultation process.

Results of all exercises and conversations were captured by filming the whole workshop, and were also written down by Thomas C. on butcher paper.

## Conclusion

“Universal Design: How do we create more accessible places regardless of age or capability” was one of the most successful workshops ran as part of Inner Sydney Voice capacity building programme. The feedback received from participants was overwhelmingly positive and they reported greater understanding of best urban design practices, inclusion and accessibility issues, as well as greater confidence and desire to engage in the community consultation process.  
Highly skilled facilitation, using creative, diverse and interesting material such as an actual Master Plan, educational videos, and the concrete, directly linked to daily life character of the subject, made for a dynamic and successful community conversation.

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1. [www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about\_ud/udprinciplestext.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm)   
   For more information you can also refer to the article written by Dr. Bringolf on Inner Sydney Voice’s website: <http://www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/pub/universal-design-creating-inclusion-for-everyone/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)