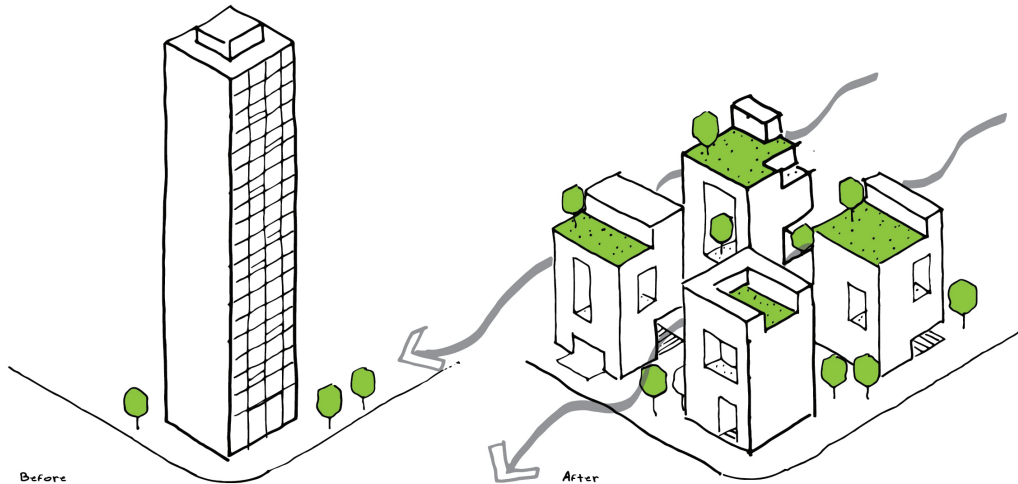


AUDRC Research Note

Planning implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic

'To reduce transmission we need an emphasis on three-storey walk-up flats to achieve higher densities, as high-rise dwellings require people to stand close in lifts.'



What did planners in 2020 think the COVID-19 pandemic would have on city planning?

Background

- By the end of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had exceeded 83 million cases worldwide. Given the shared origins of planning and public health, new living and social conditions prompted an interest in how urban planning could respond to the pandemic's associated implications.
- In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the connections between urban planning and public health, especially regarding transportation, walking, and physical activity. However, planning documents generally do not refer to pandemics, and pandemic 'action plans' do not refer to urban form's role in reducing disease transmission and successful self-isolation.
- We aimed to capture the thinking of experts early in the health crisis about how urban planning could reduce the threat of pandemics through urban forms that reduce disease transmission and improve liveability in times of self-isolation.

- In 2020, we conducted a national online survey, Plan My Australia, among planning experts (n = 161) to identify new challenges facing urban planning and design due to the pandemic.

Key findings

- The study found the expert respondents to have differing opinions on a range

of important health-related planning issues. However, there was some consensus on the importance of public and private open space, self-sufficiency,

and planning flexibility for managing future pandemics.

- Many expert opinions highlighted the interplay between the somewhat parallel public health and urban planning fields as comments focused on perceived links between density and the spread of a pandemic.
- The results indicated that one of the more benign but beneficial impacts of COVID-19 has been reigniting and re-focussing thinking on a raft of planning issues, including regional settlement patterns, public and private open space provision, housing design, urban density and mass transit connectivity.

Links to related publications

- Bolleter, J., Edwards, N., Duckworth, A., Cameron, R., Freestone, R., Foster, S., & Hooper, P. (2021). Implications of the Covid-19 pandemic: canvassing opinion from planning professionals. *Planning Practice & Research*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2021.1905991>

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