



..... for an equitably accessible world

Winter Greetings from all of us at Visionary Design Development Pty Ltd. In this issue, we focus on Disability, Technology and the Built Environment, as well as sharing project, VDD Studio and other news updates with you. We look forward to receiving your reports on Calendar (or other interesting) events. And, as always, we look forward to continuing working together with you for an equitable accessible world.

### PROJECT UPDATES

#### Alterations and Additions

Various Alterations and Additions projects are moving along. As well as sustainability (social - accessibility, economic - cost effectiveness and environmental - passive design/ energy efficiency) requirements, all projects are subject to the additional challenges of Heritage Overlays. Construction on our inner-city terrace project will start in September. Planning permission for our inner-west bayside suburb project is imminent. Resolving competing tensions of: cost, functional requirements, family lifecycle expectations, architectural form and aesthetics is providing a multi-faceted platform for our eastern suburbs project explorations.



Rear elevation, project in progress

#### Accessible carparking

The City of Port Phillip Disabled Parking Review (council-controlled on-street accessible carparking project) has concluded very successfully. A summary of the Report is available here. In addition to the Report, we provided Port Phillip with a GIS compatible file whereby details of Location-specific: Existing Conditions image, Complexity Categorisation and rectification requirements, applicable Best Practice Diagram, and Prioritisation, are instantly available electronically. We are currently finalising another accessible carparking project, investigating both on- and off-street accessible parking, working across north-western suburbs.

If you would like to discuss collaboration possibilities across the areas of accessibility, research or architecture for any of your projects, please contact our office.

### DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Over the last few decades advances in assistive devices for people with disabilities have expanded considerably. From GPS-equipped walking canes to stair-climbing wheelchairs the choice from specialist provider catalogues is vast.

To succeed, accessibility initiatives need to take into account affordability, availability of technology, knowledge, cultural differences, and the level of development. Solutions that work in technologically sophisticated environments may be ineffective in low-resource settings such as developing world countries. The best strategy for achieving accessibility from a low base, has shown to be incremental improvement. This is prescriptive change through legislation. Initial efforts should focus on removing basic environmental barriers. Once the concept of accessibility has become ingrained, and as more resources become available, it becomes easier to raise standards and attain a higher level of universal design. This amounts to conceptual change achieved by, in the case of our physical surroundings, embedding such notions in the education and training of built environment students and professionals.

Association of Consultants in Access Australia (ACAA) Conference 2015: Universal Design - a better way, 7-9 October 2015, Melbourne (Aust). Spread the word!!

The enabling success of assistive technologies however reflects the failure of the built environment to provide access to the spectrum of human ability within society. Technology alone should never be seen as a panacea. Making progress in accessibility requires engagement of international and national actors, including international organizations, national governments, technology and products designers and producers, and persons with disabilities and their organizations. This holistic approach will never ultimately eliminate the need for assistive devices. Some specific requirements will always be necessary for some people with individual needs. Nonetheless, such devices should be less necessary in an increasingly universally designed world.

We reiterate: Universal Design is a 'meta-disciplinary' concern. Universal Design Matters ....to everyone.

#### Social Housing Project Update

We are currently in Contract Administration (construction) stage of four 2 bedroom, social housing dwellings on two different sites, in the south-eastern suburbs. Each corner-block site contains 2 x 2bedroom, single storey, detached houses with carport. Working within constraints of cost-effectiveness, orientation and lands levels, we have achieved: affordable to build, passive designed energy efficient, accessible housing. Therefore, we look forward to continuing collaborations with the Dept of Health & Human Services, Housing Organisations and Local Government.



Social housing under construction



Light and bright. Social housing under construction.



## VDD STUDIO ACTIVITIES

The final Report from the Parliament of Australia's Senate Inquiry into 'Young People in Nursing Homes' can be found [here](#). The Report acknowledges the import content of VDD Studio's submission by noting that, 'This submission argues that 'the inability of the built environment to satisfy the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, thereby creating major barriers, is seldom recognised' and goes on to also say that 'This submission describes the benefits of using Universal Design, 'a design approach that advocates for holistic environments able to be accessed, understood and used to the greatest degree possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability'.

Using conditions within Indian slums as their reference point, Saumya Kaushik, Davis Clarke and Soledad Maldonado put together an entry for the recent Dencity competition. As anticipated, it was a very challenging, thought-provoking exercise. How can accessibility be achieved in low-resource settings? What should be prioritised? Our submission, entitled 'transform dencity – open Accesscity', explores 'small times many equals big'. By this we mean that many small accessibility interventions will ultimately assist in making a more equitably accessible world. [The full submission can be viewed here](#).

Forthcoming VDD Studio activities include further research in the arena of 'Designing for the Public Good', being one of VDD Studio Research labs topics. Cambodia again provides the physical setting for the next competition entry.

## CALENDAR

### August 2015

- 10-13 International Conference on Dwelling Form, organised by Architecture Department of Universitas Indonesia, conference on Lombok Island, Indonesia
- 11-14 Enabling Technology Festival 2015, Singapore
- 26-29 ICAADE 2015 - first conference on amphibious architecture, design and engineering, Bangkok, Thailand

### September 2015

- 8-9 Environments for Humans. Virtual, on-line Accessibility Summit
- 9-12 13th AAATE Conference, Assistive Technology and Accessibility, Budapest, Hungary
- 12-13 1st Annual Accessible Yoga Conference, expanding access to Yoga teachings for people with disabilities, Santa Barbara, California, USA
- 17-21 Museum Education and Accessibility: Bridging the Gaps, ICOM CECA Annual conference, hosted by Smithsonian Centre for Learning and Digital Access, Washington DC, USA

### October 2015

- 3-7 22nd conference Asian Federation on Intellectual Disabilities, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 7-9 Association of Consultants in Access Australia (ACAA) ACAA Conference 2015: Universal Design - a better way, Melbourne (Aust).
- 27-29 New World Conference: Disability in the 21st Century hosted by NDIA Brisbane, Australia

### November 2015

- 4-6 1st biennial PARSE conference at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- 13-15 30th Japanese Conference on the Advancement of Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology (JCAART) Okinawa, Japan
- 25-26 EKSIG 2015 'Tangible Means - experiential knowledge through materials', Design School Kolding and University of Southern Denmark, Kolding, Denmark

## SELECTED UNIVERSAL DESIGN RESOURCES

Due to the importance of Universal Design we again include these useful links:

- [Seven Principles of Universal Design](#)
- [The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design \(CEUD\) Ireland](#)
- [Universal Design - Barrier Free Environments](#)
- [Australian Network for Universal Housing Design](#)
- [Accessibility Design Guide](#)
- [Universal Design: University of Washington](#)

Universal Design, considered from the outset, greatly improves accessibility as well as OH&S, maintenance, delivery and distribution outcomes. Please contact any of the Team to discuss how our accessibility expertise may enhance your next project.



Water Collection Station - Dencity competition

## TEAM NEWS

Nick (Shearman) is currently on extended leave, travelling through The Americas, lucky Nick!! Saumya (Kaushik) is embarking on working towards her registration as an Architect. Mary Ann (Jackson) has been busily attending conferences, both as an attendee and as a presenter. Ralph (Green) has assisted in the co-authorship of peer-reviewed conference papers; our first, on accessible carparking, will be published soon.

**NEWSFLASH:** Mary Ann has been selected from a field of international candidates for team inclusion in a bid for a community development project, focussing on children with disabilities, in Mongolia. More details coming soon!!

## THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR

## ...AND BEYOND

Visionary Design Development Pty Ltd looks forward to collaborating with you to make the world a more equitably accessible place. Come and visit us in our office, or at a location of your choice.

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