Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**
  Accessing the Neighbourhood: built environment performance for people with disability

- **Format:**
  Written paper and pre-recorded Presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**
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- **University or Company Affiliation:**
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- **Abstract (300 words):**
  In the face of rapid urbanisation, increasing diversity of the ‘human condition’, ageing populations, failing infrastructure, and mounting evidence that the built environment affects health and wellbeing, the existing built environment still fails to meet the needs of people with disability. Nevertheless, many sustainability and city-improvement movements exist. Improving public transport, improving existing roads, auditing road safety, and sharing space are of topical interest. Household appliances are starred, buildings and/or their components energy-rated, indoor environmental quality and occupant wellbeing studied, fire engineering modelling methodologies in dense built-up areas devised, and neighbourhood and city-scale sustainability assessed. Additionally,
urban realm research interests are wide-ranging, for example: investigating walkability and urban design qualities, measuring urban form complexity, assessing sustainable urban design, and examining crash severity and streetscape design. Within the interdisciplinary Health-Built Environment field analysing the built environment at, micro-scale (buildings), meso-scale (neighbourhood), and macro-scale (city wide) for: increasing physical activity, understanding older adults mobility and wellbeing, enhancing active travel, reducing negative home-health impacts, and increasing positive community-health impacts is undertaken from various multi-disciplinary perspectives. The need to critically appraise, and measure, the existing built environment is, therefore, well established in the literature. But, although built environment performance is already measured in many ways accessibility performance for people with disability, at neighbourhood scale, is rarely considered. The Institutional and Medical Models of Disability help explain the inaccessibility of the existing built environment. Additionally, the Social and Human Rights Models of Disability offer insight into improving the accessibility of the existing built environment. Adopting the social model of disability, this paper explores the design, planning and politics of an inaccessible built environment concluding that assessing the built environment accessibility performance for people with disability, at neighbourhood scale, is an essential component in the process of built environment accessibility improvement.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

An Architect, Planner and Access Consultant based in the private sector, with over 30 years experience, Mary Ann’s passions revolve around ‘Accessibility in the Built Environment’ particularly within the urban realm. Wider professional interests include: built environment sustainability, accessible reconstruction post-disaster, and equitable housing provision; several projects have been awarded local, national and international recognition in these fields. Mary Ann has also designed and delivered many tertiary and professional education programmes, courses, intensives, seminars and workshops in architectural design, construction technology, sustainability, and built environment accessibility, as well as presenting peer-reviewed conference papers.
A keen internationalist, and Urban Scholar with UN Global Compact Cities Programme, Mary Ann endeavours to develop exchange between Asia-Pacific, Australia and Latin America within the Built Environment and Disability Studies spheres. Mary Ann’s ability to collaboratively work together with others, across multiple disciplinary boundaries, is evidenced by past and present membership of many organisations, committees, and boards.

Mary Ann is Managing Director of Visionary Design Development Pty Ltd, a transdisciplinary consultancy working across accessibility, research and architecture, and her PhD studies are further investigating ways of Assessing the Accessibility of the Existing Built Environment, focusing on the lived experience of people with disability.