



11th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities (AFHC2026)

Call for Abstract Submissions

Category B: Interactive Sessions

Theme: Healthy Cities for All: Equity, Innovation and Action

Special Focus: Celebrating 40 Years of the Ottawa Charter

Date: 1-3 September 2026

Location: UNSW Sydney, Australia

INVITATION

The 11th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities Scientific Committee invites abstract submissions that advance our understanding of healthy cities and contribute to equitable, sustainable urban futures.

We welcome submissions that:

- Address the complex challenges and opportunities facing cities in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.
- Centre diverse voices, perspectives, and ways of knowing.
- Offer practical insights for policy, practice, and research.

OUR APPROACH

This conference takes place on the unceded lands of the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples. We acknowledge their ongoing custodianship of Country and pay respect to Elders past and present.

In marking the 40th anniversary of the Ottawa Charter, we also take this opportunity to reflect critically on how knowledge is produced, shared, and valued. We are committed to creating space for multiple ways of knowing, learning, and communicating.

We actively encourage submissions that:

- Are grounded in Indigenous, traditional, or community-held knowledge systems
- Use storytelling, yarning circles or other culturally grounded approaches
- Come from practitioners, community members, advocates, and policymakers, as well as academics
- Reflect the diversity of the Asia–Pacific region and the Global South
- Challenge conventional abstract, presentation, or session formats

CONFERENCE SUB-THEMES

All submissions should align with at least one of the following sub-themes:

Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems for Healthy Cities

Exploring how Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems can guide urban planning strategies rooted in respect for land, culture, and community. This perspective fosters holistic approaches that strengthen social and environmental resilience.

Key Topics:

- Connecting with Country and place-based health approaches
- Indigenous health and culturally responsive urban design
- Traditional ecological knowledge in contemporary urban planning
- Community-led and Indigenous-governed healthy cities initiatives
- Cultural safety and inclusivity in urban spaces
- Indigenous urbanisation experiences across Asia-Pacific
- Preserving cultural heritage in rapidly developing cities

Liveable High-Density and Urbanisation Challenges

Addressing the complexities of growing urban populations while ensuring liveability, access to green spaces, and community well-being. Innovative design and policy solutions are key to balancing density with quality of life.

Key Topics:

- Creating liveable high-density environments for children and families
- Liveable, healthy high-density models and design innovations
- Social housing, affordable housing, and informal settlement upgrading
- Equity and diverse communities in growing urban regions
- Developer, local council, and community partnerships
- Play spaces, green spaces, and nature access in dense environments
- Peri-urban development and migration challenges
- Social connection and community building in high-density settings

Financing, Governance and Empowering Local Leadership

Examining models for sustainable funding and governance that enable equitable health outcomes in urban settings, while highlighting the critical role of local governments and communities in translating global health commitments into practical urban action. Cities are the frontline for implementing policies that drive real change.

Key Topics:

- Financing mechanisms and business cases for healthy cities
- Transition to wellbeing economy

- Health in All Policies and cross-sector governance frameworks
- Mayors' commitments, political leadership, and advocacy
- Strengthening local government capacity for health promotion
- Community engagement and participatory governance
- Evidence-based policy implementation and evaluation
- Regional and global networking for knowledge exchange

Urban Climate Resilience and Planetary Health

Designing cities that adapt to climate change and environmental challenges while protecting planetary health for current and future generations. This approach integrates sustainability, resilience, and ecological stewardship into urban planning.

Key Topics:

- Climate-resilient health systems and disaster preparedness
- Heat mitigation, cooling strategies, and urban heat islands
- Air quality, pollution reduction, and healthy environments
- Green infrastructure and planetary health perspectives in urban design
- Waste management, circular economy, and resource efficiency
- Water security and sustainable water management
- Low-carbon cities and renewable energy transitions
- Urban biodiversity and One Health
- Climate justice and equity in adaptation strategies

Demographic Change and Health Across the Life Course

Supporting the health and wellbeing of all generations through urban design and policy that responds to diverse needs from early childhood through to older age. This approach integrates accessibility, inclusivity, and intergenerational connection into urban planning.

Key Topics:

- Age-friendly cities and designing for healthy ageing
- Maternal, child, and adolescent health in urban environments
- Early childhood development, play, and child-friendly cities
- Accessible transport and mobility for all ages and abilities
- Mental health, social inclusion, and combating loneliness
- Healthy workplaces and employment conditions
- Addressing health inequities across the life course
- Dementia-friendly and disability-inclusive urban design

KEY DATES

Milestone	Date
Call for Abstracts opens	16 February 2026
Abstract submission deadline	8 April 2026
Notification of outcomes	Mid-May 2026
Deadline for presenters to register	30 June 2026
Conference	1–3 September 2026

**Presenters who have not completed their registration by 30 June will be withdrawn from the program.*

SUBMISSION CATEGORY

Category B: Interactive Sessions

Duration: 75 minutes total

Design and facilitate an engaging session that brings together diverse perspectives to explore a topic in depth. These sessions go beyond traditional presentations - they might: debate critical issues, generate new ideas, build practical skills, foster cross-sector dialogue, or advance collective action.

Session Format Options

We strongly encourage creative and participatory formats. Options include but are not limited to:

Format	Description
Symposium	3–5 integrated presentations with a moderator
Workshop	Hands-on skill-building or problem-solving session
Panel Discussion	Facilitated conversation among 4–6 panellists with different perspectives
Yarning Circle	Indigenous-led circular dialogue following cultural protocols
Walking/Mobile Session	On-site exploration connecting theory to place (weather permitting)
World Café	Rotating small-group discussions on themed tables
Fishbowl	Inner circle discussion with outer circle observers who can rotate in
Simulation/Game	Interactive learning through structured play or scenario exercises
Art-Based Session	Using creative arts to explore themes (visual art, performance, etc.)
Technology Showcase	Demonstration and discussion of digital tools, apps, or innovations
Film/Documentary	Short film screening with facilitated conversation
Other	Propose your own format!

Required Information for Interactive Sessions

Session Convener must submit:

1. Session Title and Overview

- Overall objective and how it addresses conference themes
- Why this topic matters for healthy cities
- Why this session will be of interest to conference attendees/ Key outcomes or takeaways participants will gain from attending

2. Format and Structure

- Proposed format (from list above or your own)
- Detailed session plan with timing
- How you will ensure meaningful audience participation
- Any special requirements (space configuration, technology, materials). Please note that the conference will provide a standard room setup with AV equipment and moveable seating. Presenters are responsible for providing any additional materials or resources needed for their session.

3. Presenter/Contributor Details

- For each presenter/contributor, provide name, title, organisation, role in session, and individual abstract
- Sessions should include 3–6 contributors

4. Diversity Statement

- Describe how your session includes diverse perspectives (see Selection Criteria)

SUBMITTING YOUR ABSTRACT IN THE PORTAL

Abstract submission is a two-step process. Please follow the instructions carefully to ensure your submission is uploaded into the abstract submission portal correctly.

STEP 1: Create an author account and contact profile

To access the abstract submission portal, you will first need to create an account.

On the landing page, select either **Sign in** or **Create New Account**. Under the **New Account** heading, click **Create New Account**, then enter your email address and create a password. Once this is complete, you will be able to sign in to the portal.

After signing in, you will be prompted to update your contact information. This step is **required** before you can access the full abstract submission features. To do this, click the **Contact Information** tab in the top menu and select **Create Contact** at the bottom of the page to complete the short form.

STEP 2: Submitting your abstract

Once you have created your **Contact Profile**, you will be able to submit your abstract by selecting **Submit Abstract** from the top menu bar. Please ensure you take the time to read through the instructions provided throughout the submission process.

Before submitting your abstract, you will be required to provide the following information:

- An **Abstract Title** and selection of the **Presentation Type**
- Select the most relevant **Theme** and available **Keywords** for your abstract
- The name, organisation, position, and institutional affiliation of all presenting authors and co-authors
- The presenting authors' biography

FORMATTING YOUR ABSTRACT

Abstracts must be uploaded as a PDF document via the Abstract Submission Portal.

Session Title* (max 20 words)

Session Overview* (max 200 words)

*Describe the overall objective, how it addresses conference themes, and why this topic matters for healthy cities, **why** this session will be of interest to conference attendees - Key outcomes or takeaways participants will gain from attending.*

Format and structure* (max 300 words)

Please include:

- Proposed format
- Detailed session plan with timing
- How you will ensure meaningful audience participation
- Any special requirements for your session

Note: *We will provide a room with moveable furniture, projector, screen, microphone, and whiteboard/flipchart. Conveners are responsible for sourcing any additional materials, handouts, or specialised equipment. For walking or outdoor sessions, a backup indoor plan is required.*

Diversity Statement* (max 100 words)

Describe how your session includes diverse perspectives (geographical, demographic, epistemological – see Selection Criteria in the Call for Abstracts).

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

We are committed to making this conference accessible to diverse voices across the Asia-Pacific region. If English is not your first language, please let us know in your submission and we will do our best to provide appropriate support.

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Selection Criteria

All abstracts will be reviewed against the following criteria:

Criterion	Description
Relevance	Alignment with conference theme and sub-themes
Quality	Clarity, coherence, and rigour appropriate to submission type. Offers fresh perspectives, approaches, or insights Scientific merit (for research) OR Practical relevance for other cities, contexts, or settings (for policy/practice submissions)
Contribution	Adds to knowledge, evidence, or practice for healthy cities
Completeness	All required information provided; abstract is clearly structured

Diversity Considerations

To ensure a rich and representative conference program, the Scientific Committee will actively consider:

Geographical Diversity

- Representation across the Asia-Pacific region
- Inclusion of voices from the Global South
- Balance between metropolitan and regional/rural perspectives

Demographic Diversity

- Gender balance across presenters and session contributors
- Inclusion of early-career researchers and practitioners
- Representation of Indigenous peoples and communities
- Voices of people with lived experience of urban health challenges

Epistemological Diversity

- Balance of research, policy, and practice perspectives
- Inclusion of Indigenous and traditional knowledge approaches
- Recognition of community-based and participatory methods
- Variety of presentation formats and styles

Review Process

1. Initial screening – Secretariat checks completeness and eligibility
2. Peer review – Each abstract reviewed by 2 Scientific Committee members. Note: Research abstracts (Category A1) undergo blind review. Author names are not shown to reviewers during assessment.
3. Calibration – Committee meets to ensure consistency and balance program
4. Diversity review – Assessment against diversity criteria; additional invitations if needed
5. Notification – Authors notified of outcome add date

PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Conference Proceedings

All accepted abstracts will be published in the Conference Program (digital).

Special Journal Issues

AFHC2026 is partnering with select journals for special issue publication opportunities. Authors may opt in during submission to have their work considered.

Eligible submission types:

- Research papers
- Practice-based case studies
- Policy analyses
- Commentary pieces

The journal selection process is separate from conference abstract review. Authors will be contacted directly if selected for further development.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

- **Language support:** Secretariat contact persons available for selected languages (contact us)
- **Accessibility:** Please indicate any accessibility requirements in your submission
- **Travel grants:** Limited grants available for presenters from low-income countries and early-career participants (details TBC)
- **Childcare:** On-site childcare available during conference (details TBC)

GENERAL POLICIES AND PRESENTER EXPECTATIONS

- There is no limit to the number of abstracts you may submit. However, each person may present a maximum of two times across the conference program (as oral presenter, poster presenter, or interactive session contributor). Co-authorship does not count toward this limit.
- All abstracts must be original work.
- Abstract submission acknowledges consent to publication of the abstract in the conference app and journal as noted.
- It is the responsibility of the presenter/author to ensure that the abstract is submitted correctly.
- Abstracts are anonymously reviewed by the Scientific Committee and scored. Accepted abstracts are allocated as a poster or oral presentation to align with conference sessions.
- Abstracts can be submitted for consideration for an oral or a poster presentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate the presenter/author presentation type preference; However, the Scientific Committee reserves the right to allocate the presentation to best suit the program.
- The invitation to submit an abstract does not constitute an offer to pay travel, accommodation or registration costs associated with the conference. Similarly, no presenter fee is paid to successful presenters.



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- The presenting author will be required to register for a minimum of one day of the conference (the day of their presentation) by the abstract author registration deadline, or the presentation will be removed from the final program.

CONTACT

For registration and accommodation enquiries: register.afhc2026@arinexgroup.com

For program and general enquiries: afhc2026@arinexgroup.com

Conference website: <https://healthycities2026.com/>

AFHC greatly appreciates your interest to share your insights, knowledge, and experience across the AFHC 2026 program with our diverse and engaged delegates.