

## MESSAGE

In 1987, Australia initiated Healthy Cities pilot projects, marking the first attempt to promote Healthy Cities in the Western Pacific Region. Soon, Japan and New Zealand followed with pilot Projects. And in 1994, WHO began to support cities in developing countries in the Region to initiate Healthy Cities projects. Since then, a number of cities in the Region have taken up the Healthy Cities approach as a way of improving local governance. Recognizing a need for sharing best practices among Healthy Cities planners and practitioners, WHO helped establish the Alliance for Healthy Cities (AFHC) in 2003.

In a span of six years, the membership of the alliance has grown from just 10 founding members to more than 130 members, making it a powerful international network of cities, national agencies, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions for promoting Healthy Cities.

This year's theme for the Second Meeting of the Australian Chapter of the AFHC, "Communities in Partnership for a Sustainable and Healthy Future", aims to highlight one of the key elements in building a healthy community-partnership involving local government, the public and private sectors, and, of course, the community members. A city is comprised of several different elements of society, which ultimately means that everyone is a stakeholder in the development and direction that their city takes. A Healthy City should be that ideal direction. This year, the Second Meeting of the Australian Chapter of AFHC includes site visits to some exciting projects within the city of Ongkaparinga, South Australia, ranging from a waste water treatment project to an eco-village.

As more and more countries continue to industrialize and develop and more communities urbanize, we must ensure that the quality of life does not decline. The pursuit of "Health for All" must be maintained. It is in this light that I wish to congratulate the Alliance for Healthy Cities – Australian Chapter for continuing to pursue this movement and for their effort in addressing the emerging health security challenges which our cities continue to face.



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