

Kelly Andrews

CEO | Healthy Cities Australia

Kelly Andrews is a strategic public health leader with extensive experience in governance, policy, and advocacy.

Skilled in financial and operational oversight, Kelly excels in complex, cross-sector environments, driving systemic change to improve health equity and social outcomes.

With over 25 years of experience in health promotion, she has worked across the not-for-profit and government sectors in chronic disease prevention, community development, social and health policy, and advocacy.



Kelly also spent 15 years as a researcher in the university sector, specializing in social marketing and public health research on topics including alcohol and junk food advertising, asthma self-management, organ and blood donation, mental health, and dementia.

Kelly leads high-impact teams and initiatives that influence public policy, secure investment, and enhance community resilience. Adept at facilitating cross-sector collaborations, Kelly brings together government, industry, and community partners to co-design solutions that address the social and commercial determinants of health.

She is currently the CEO of Healthy Cities Australia, a regional not-for-profit charity established in the Illawarra in 1987 as part of the World Health Organization's Healthy Cities movement. Their mission is to reduce the prevalence of disease and prevent hospitalisations by improving health and wellbeing outcomes in communities that need it most.



Kelly's Topic:

Inclusion is Prevention: Why Belonging is a Health Strategy...

Social inclusion directly impacts health because connection, belonging, and access are vital to wellbeing.



When people feel valued, connected and included—regardless of age, gender, culture, or ability—they're more likely to engage in healthy behaviours, access services, and experience better physical and mental health.

Isolation, discrimination, and exclusion, on the other hand, contribute to chronic stress, poor health outcomes, and reduced life expectancy. Inclusion strengthens communities, builds resilience, and supports preventative health by addressing the social determinants of health—like housing, education, and employment. Simply put: inclusion saves lives, improves quality of life, and creates healthier, happier communities for everyone.

Kelly will explain how the Healthy Cities approach translates policy into impact by showcasing key outcomes from Illawarra-based programs that support vulnerable populations, particularly those designed for Aboriginal, migrant, and refugee women.

As part of the 4th Annual Illawarra Women's Day of Dance and Culture, taking place on Friday 5th September at Wollongong Town Hall, Kelly will highlight how this much loved event combines physical activity, cultural connection, and local service delivery to improve health equity and fostering stronger, more resilient communities across the region.