



# Media Release

## Embedding equality into the built environment from the outset—by design

### Equity by Design: Applying the 7 Switches to transform the built environment

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Design is a critical tool for ensuring equality, accessibility, sustainability, and community resilience are built into the future from the outset, according to a new resource from Champions of Change Coalition. Developed by the Champions of Change Architecture Group\*, *Equity by Design* provides a structured approach to embedding equity into all design decisions and development processes.

As Australia's population continues to grow, infrastructure investments, including a projected \$213 billion five-year major public infrastructure pipeline<sup>1</sup>, bring to life the opportunity to intentionally shape a more inclusive built environment that enables all people to thrive.

Anchored to the Coalition's [7 Switches framework](#), *Equity by Design* helps designers and decision-makers to challenge traditional norms, systematically check for bias, and integrate perspectives of equity, diversity, and inclusion at every stage of project development.

*Equity by Design* provides practical guidance for integrating gender equality, accessibility, culture, and wellbeing into every phase of design, including:

- ◆ **practical actions** for *embedding equity* into the earliest stages of project planning and design development, shaping design visions and priorities that respond to the needs of diverse communities.
- ◆ **detailed case studies** demonstrating how thoughtful design fosters dignity and creates environments that address the nuanced needs of traditionally underrepresented populations, including women, Indigenous communities and people with disabilities.
- ◆ a spotlight on using the *7 Switches* in the design of safe **public urban spaces** and equitable, gender- and body-diverse **public bathrooms**.
- ◆ a **literature review** bringing together leading frameworks and resources on embedding gender-aware and equitable design principles into the built environment.

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** Infrastructure Australia, *2024 Infrastructure Market Capacity Report*, available at <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/2024-infrastructure-market-capacity-report>.



Founder of Champions of Change Coalition Elizabeth Broderick AO said *Equity by Design* addresses a critical need for more inclusive spaces, offering a practical framework to shape environments that create opportunities for all.

*“Equity by Design demonstrates how the spaces we navigate every day—workplaces, sports stadiums, public parks—shape not only how we live and interact but also the opportunities we can access. These spaces influence our sense of safety, belonging, and dignity. By embedding equity into design, we can break down barriers to participation and access, empowering individuals and communities to thrive,”* she said.

*“This resource, offers practical tools and a clear pathway to create spaces where everyone feels safe, valued, and able to contribute fully, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable future.”*

To support the advancement of inclusive design, Champions of Change Coalition is collaborating with the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) Equity 2030 Alliance, a global initiative launched in 2023 to accelerate gender equity in science, technology, and financing by 2030.

Chief of Innovation at the UNFPA and co-founder of the Equity 2030 Alliance Dr. Nigina Muntean highlighted the significance of the *Equity by Design* resource.

*“The world we live in was not designed with women in mind, yet we have the tools to change that. *Equity by Design* provides a clear pathway for organisations to address systemic biases and create spaces that reflect the needs of everyone. By embedding equity into every solution—across industries and geographies—we can ensure that innovation and progress are truly inclusive,”* said Dr Muntean.

*“This resource is a call to action for leaders to be bold, collaborative, and intentional in building a world where equity is at the heart of development.”*

Director of SJB and member of Champions of Change Coalition Architecture Group Francisco Layson said *Equity by Design* establishes a new benchmark for embedding equity into the built environment.

*“The 7 Switches framework provides a two-phase process—learning and changing, followed by decisive action. It begins by helping designers and decision-makers recognise traditional norms that often exclude many, fostering growth through an openness to see and address biases. The next step is acting: making deliberate choices to prioritise equity and create spaces that remove barriers, embrace diversity, and where everyone feels valued.*

*“Equity by Design adds to the 7 Switches methodology by offering real-world examples of how these principles can guide the design phase and shape the experiences of end-users. Together, they empower us to rethink how we conceive, plan, and build environments that are welcoming, accessible, and reflective of the needs of all communities.”*

*Equity by Design* will feature at international forums, including the 2025 World Economic Forum in Davos later this month and the United Nations 69th Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Organisations are encouraged to [download \*Equity by Design\*](#) and explore its practical insights, case studies, tools and resources.

*\* Architecture Group members involved in the publication: AJC, SJB Architects, COX Architecture, Billard Leece Partnerships, Hassell.*

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**About Champions of Change Coalition:**

The Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, Secretaries of Government Departments, Non-Executive Directors, and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal, and human rights issue. The Champions of Change Coalition is a globally recognised, innovative strategy for achieving gender equality, advancing more and diverse women in leadership, and building respectful and inclusive workplaces. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to achieve inclusive gender equality across workplaces by 2030 and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership. Visit: [championsofchangecoalition.org](https://championsofchangecoalition.org)