



Applying a universal design lens to pedestrian planning

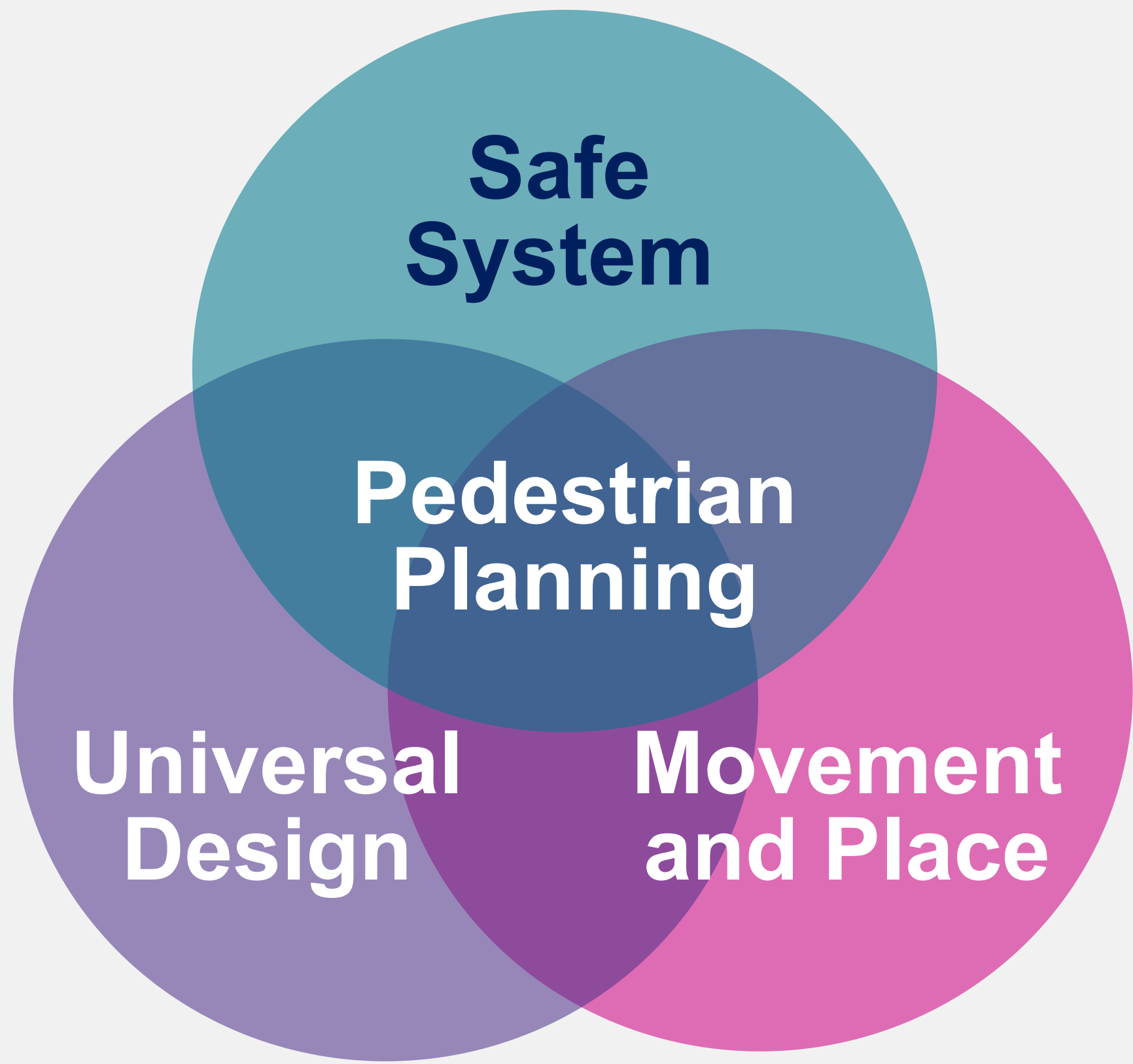
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Summary

In 2023, Austroads commissioned a project to review and update its Pedestrian Planning Guidance for transport professionals, as part of a strategic push to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility across Australia and New Zealand.

A key recommendation to come out of this review, which Austroads adopted, was replacing the word "pedestrian" throughout the guidance with the phrase "people walking and wheeling, with or without assistive devices." Austroads recognised this term's value extends beyond pedestrian planning alone.

This clarity better reflects universal design approach ensuring the guidance is more inclusive of the full range of people who move through public spaces on foot or using mobility aids.



Source: Austroads' Strategic Review of Pedestrian Planning Guidance (2026)



Image credit: Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads

About the review

The review team consisted of two private practice transport professionals, Victoria Walks, and the Centre for Universal Design Australia.

The team was guided by three overarching concepts for pedestrian planning: Safe System, Movement and Place and Universal Design.

Workshops with advocates from disability and ageing provided information that challenged existing practitioner perceptions of pedestrians.



Image credit: Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads

Outcomes

- Engaged** with transport professionals and challenged prevailing assumptions about pedestrian needs
- Proposed** a new approach to describing pedestrians
- Adoption** of substantive changes to the Austroads' Guide to benefit all pedestrians

What's next

- A universal design approach remains essential to creating streets that genuinely work for everyone.
- The task now is to sustain this momentum, ensuring the diversity of pedestrians stays front of mind as guides, standards and street designs continue to evolve.

New definition for pedestrians

People walking and wheeling, with and without assistive devices

More information

Austroads (2026), Strategic Review of Pedestrian Planning Guidance
<https://austroads.gov.au/publications/netw ork/ap-r749-26>



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