



Fact Sheet:

Safe Streets to School

Problem

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Active transportation that embeds physical activity into our daily lives is an effective way to increase physical activity and reduce the burden of chronic disease. Habits of active travel formed early but Australian children are highly car dependent. Car dependency in children increases childhood obesity rates, worsens children's independent mobility, increases road trauma, and has negative environmental effects. Walking and cycling to school are a great way to increase physical activity for kids but we know that rates of walking and cycling to school have declined precipitously in New South Wales since the 1980s.

How can we design our cities to facilitate safe and active travel to school for children?

23%

of 5-14 year olds
undertook
recommended physical
activity every day

26%

of 2-14 year olds
overweight or
obese

75%

of NSW school
children walked or
rode to school in
1985

< 25%

of NSW school
children walk or
ride to school in
2024



Subject Matter Experts

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Contact and Membership

Interested in learning more or in joining the HUE CoP?

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Solutions

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Case Study 1: Safer Routes to School

The Safer Routes to School (SRTS) program allows Wollongong City Council to involve school communities in the process of planning transport infrastructure and strengthen grant funding applications through early consultation with schools. Through this project Council have been meeting with schools to understand their community, priorities, demographics, etcetera and preparing “SRTS Reports” for each school identifying potential infrastructure works to support walking and riding across their intake area. School’s vet the proposals and give their support or identify gaps. We use this consultation to support grant funding applications. Proposals are added to our prioritisation tools for consideration in Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Program (IDP).

Resources

Wollongong City Council Safer Routes to School website, <https://bit.ly/40J37Bu>

Case Study 2: Green Travel Plans

Green Travel Plans provide a consistent approach to understanding travel behaviours and whether they can be more sustainable by prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport use. They look at the barriers to travelling by sustainable modes. At the systemic level, they look at the safety and ease of using the network and identify opportunities to make it feel safer and easier to get to and from the school. At the individual level, they look at capacity (can it be done), Opportunity (is it feasible), Motivation (do they want to do it) and the resultant Behaviour (how they get to school) to develop programs or infrastructure that enables behaviour change along with disincentives for driving. A healthier and safer school transport system can be provided by addressing barriers, improving the desirability of walking, cycling, and using public transport, and disincentivising car use.

Resources

School Travel Planning Toolkit, <https://bit.ly/3GJbw14>

Case Study 3: Healthy Streets

Public domain design must consider how people interact with and move through space, and how design influences behaviour and decision-making. To encourage increased use, such as walking and riding to school, streets, parks, and public spaces must be deliberately designed to support these objectives. Delivering high-quality, well-designed public spaces within a budget-constrained environment requires infrastructure that delivers on multiple strategic goals. Aligning these outcomes with government policy enhances access to funding opportunities, secures broader stakeholder support, and ensures alignment with wider community priorities.

Resources

Cooks River Parkland Master Plan, <https://bit.ly/4nFoSfB>

Liverpool City Centre Public Domain Master Plan, <https://bit.ly/3TrLYZg>