

Promoting active travel in young people

A resource for schools and community groups



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Introduction

Active travel means walking, cycling, scootering, skateboarding or any similar transport where human energy is spent to travel. The health benefits of active travel are well recognised, particularly as an alternative to motorised or sedentary forms of transport. Using public transport almost always includes walking to and from destinations, and therefore also can be considered as active travel.

Research from around the world has shown that young people's active travel to places they regularly go to provides significant benefits. In addition to the many important health benefits from physical activity, walking and bicycle riding can improve young people's concentration. For example, a 2012 study in Denmark found that young people who cycle or walk to school demonstrate a measurable increase in concentration that lasts for up to four hours.

To encourage more young people to walk or cycle, involve young people in the development and implementation of an active travel initiative.

Of course, safety always needs to be considered for any kind of active travel.

Go to [Active Travel Action Plan - Template](#) ➔

Refer to index on page 10 for full website address.

Getting started

This is a guide on how to encourage and promote active travel to and from a facility, venue or school and how to develop an Active Travel Action Plan.

– Identify a champion

This may be you, or someone in your group who volunteers to be a co-ordinator or champion. The champion will be responsible for organising a Working Group made up of young people and supporting them to develop an Active Travel Action Plan. It usually helps if this person is passionate about active travel, physical activity, and health and wellbeing.

– Recruit young people to form a Working Group

Ask for volunteers in your school or community group to help develop and implement an Active Travel Action Plan. Young people can also act as champions, encouraging and promoting active travel to and from your venue or facility. Young people interested in the environment or climate change will also be ideal as working group members.

– Involve other people

Promoting active travel, or lobbying for environmental changes to make active travel safer and easier, is not always straightforward. Having the support of other people can make the journey easier and everyone has something to contribute. These people can be parents and carers, community organisers, teachers, or local government officers.

Telling other people about what you want to achieve is also a good way to get active travel on other people's agenda.



Develop a plan

The aim of developing a plan is to have a roadmap to healthier, happier and more productive young people. This plan is really just a set of simple documents that set out where you are starting out from, where you want to get to and how you plan to get there. The champion should work with the Working Group to develop a plan for your organisation.

(Develop a plan - continued)

– Where are you starting from?

It's a good idea to find out how young people currently travel to your venue. You need a baseline to work from, so the first step is to complete a short and simple survey of current travel behaviour. A 'hands up' survey of a class or group is a simple way to ask young people how they travelled there that day. A responsible young person from the Working Group, or a teacher, or a group leader could do this and record the results.

Click here to access the 'Hands Up' survey form [▶](#)

Refer to index on page 10 for full website address.

– Find out barriers and enablers to walking and bicycle riding

Many of the barriers and enablers to walking and cycling are common, like busy streets, lots of cars and poor road crossing points. However, there are often also quite specific issues that need to be identified, and which can make a big difference. For example, there might be a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists that could be extended without too much effort and make a really useful connection and therefore enhance a particular route. Alternatively, crossings may need to be re-positioned after land use developments. The best way to find out these things is to conduct a brief survey of young people.

Some draft questions are can be located in the [Active Travel Survey](#) [▶](#)

Refer to index on page 10 for web address.

– Review the current active travel facilities

Find out if your venue has facilities for parking bicycles/scooters and storing gear like helmets; what condition they are in; how well they are used; if the facilities are located in the right place; and what options you have to provide more facilities. A facilities review template is available for download here [Facility review](#) [▶](#)

Refer to index on page 10 for web address.

– Set targets

Set targets, making them specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related. Your main target will be to increase participation in safely walking and riding to your organisation or venue. For example, you could set targets that aim to increase the proportion of young people using public transport, or safely walking or bicycle riding to school at least once a week. You can also set targets for participation in specific initiatives.

– Determine how you will get there

The ideas and suggestions in these active travel resources will help you to enable and motivate greater participation in walking and bicycle riding in your community.




Things to do

There are many things you can do to encourage young people to actively travel. These can include organized events where whole groups are asked to walk or cycle on a particular day. Competitions between groups can also be motivating. Using resources, like maps, to look at where improvements in the environment could make active travel safer, can also be a great way to engage young people and increase participation. It's also important to make sure that young people know about road safety.

(Things to do - continued)

– Learn about road safety

Road safety is taught as part of the PDHPE syllabus. Transport for NSW has developed teaching resources for high school students. [On the move](#)  Refer to index on page 10 for web address.

– Use maps to consider walking and cycling routes with young people

1. Find a map covering the area in which your venue is located
2. Plot where the young people live on the map and the location of other popular places
3. Plot the safe walking and bicycle riding routes from home to the venue. Prioritise routes that are completely separated from traffic.
4. Young people can identify interesting points along the routes.

– Take part in Walk Safely to School Day and/or Ride2School Day if available

Your organisation can participate in Walk Safely to School Day or Ride2School. Walk Safely to School Day (WSTSD) is an annual, national event when all school students will be encouraged to walk and commute safely to school. It is a community event seeking to promote road safety, health, public transport and the environment. Ride2School is a national program that supports over 2,000 schools across Australia.

– Organise a Walk / Ride on Wednesday

'Walk / Ride on Wednesday' aims to build on the progress made during events like Walk Safely to School Day and Ride2School Day to make walking/cycling to school or your venue a more regular occurrence.

– Think of your own things to do


Be creative! Have a discussion about what would really help young people travel actively in your area.

(Things to do - continued)

– Offer travel information

Offer information to parents and carers about active travel. This could be through the Parents and Citizens committee, newsletters or events.

– Consider accessing an existing program

For cycling, some organisations offer support. These include Bicycle NSW and Bicycle Network. The Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety has road safety tips for cyclists on their website. [Staying Safe](#)  *Refer to index on page 10 for web address.*

There are also a number of organisations that provide bicycle skills courses.

These include:

[AustCycle](#) 

[BikeWise](#) 

[Bicycle NSW](#) 

Refer to index on page 10 for full website addresses.





Pull it all together in a plan

Use the template document provided to write up your plan. Once you have completed it, share it with other interested stakeholders. Get feedback and make any necessary changes.

(Pull it all together in a plan - continued)

– Resources

Click on the links below to access some resources to help you and your working group prepare a plan to encourage active travel:

[Active Travel Action Plan – Template](#) ➤ [Active Travel Action Plan – Example](#) ➤
[Hands up survey form](#) ➤ [Active Travel Survey](#) ➤ [Facilities Review](#) ➤

Refer to index on page 10 for full website addresses.

You may not need to use all these resources, only use those that will help you achieve what you want. Your plan needs to reflect the local needs of the community group, local safety issues and conditions. Additional support is available from Health Promotion Staff of Local Health Districts, the Road Safety Education Officers from the Department of Education, or Road Safety Officers with local government.

– Promote your plan

Now your plan is ready, you can promote it by:

- Sending your plan to stakeholders (e.g. local council, sporting clubs, facility managers, parent and carer groups) and ask them what they can do to help
- Write a short piece for the school or organisation newsletters (e.g. clubs, shopping centres)
- Make the plan available on local web-sites of community organisations or your school
- Ask your local newspaper to do a story on your plan.

– Evaluate your plan

You will want to know if you have made progress towards your targets. The following are a set of easy, practical ideas to help you monitor and evaluate your progress:

- Conduct a 'Hands Up' survey every few months.
- Conduct a survey before and after the active travel plan has been implemented.
- Count how many bicycles and scooters are parked outside your venue.
- Count how many young people participate in any initiatives you run.

That's it!

Once you have the information, share your success with everyone. You can also repeat some of your initiatives, and continue to monitor how things are going.

Index for website links

Introduction

Active Travel Action Plan – Template ➤

<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/ActiveTravelActionPlanTemplate.docx>

Develop a plan

'Hands Up' survey form ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_HandsUpSurvey.pdf

Active Travel Survey ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_ActiveTravelSurvey.pdf

Facilities Review ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_FacilitiesReview.pdf

Things to do

On the move ➤

<http://www.onthemove.nsw.edu.au>

Staying safe ➤

<http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/safety-around-schools.pdf>

AustCycle ➤

<http://austcycle.com.au/>

BikeWise ➤

<http://www.sydneybikeskills.com.au/>

Bicycle NSW ➤

<http://bicyclensw.org.au/events/courses/skills/beginner/>

Pull it all together in a plan

Active Travel Action Plan – Template ➤

<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/ActiveTravelActionPlanTemplate.docx>

Active Travel Action Plan – Example ➤

<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/ActiveTravelActionPlanExample.pdf>

Hands up survey form ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_HandsUpSurvey.pdf

Active Travel Survey ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_ActiveTravelSurvey.pdf

Facilities Review ➤

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/1802_FacilitiesReview.pdf