

## Information Sheet 3: Benefits of Active Transport and Walking

### What is “active transport”?

*“Active transport relates to physical activity undertaken as a means of transport. It includes travel by foot, bicycle and other non-motorised vehicles. Use of public transport is also included in the definition as it often involves some walking or cycling to pick-up and from drop-off points. Active transport does not include walking, cycling or other physical activity that is undertaken for recreation.”*

Be Active Australia: A Framework for Health Sector Action for Physical Activity 2005-2010

[http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/nphp/publications/documents/nphp\\_baa\\_aug05\\_no\\_cover.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/nphp/publications/documents/nphp_baa_aug05_no_cover.pdf)

### The need to put walking back into transport

Transport plays an essential role in economic and social development of the country. It provides access to workplaces and services, increases mobility and reduces isolation. However, it has become a defining feature in every aspect of daily life with increasing social and economic costs.

- Motorised road transport has increased rapidly in the last decades.
- Cars and other vehicles have usually been given priority over walking and cycling routes.
- More trips are being made by car whilst the share of trips by foot, bicycle or public transport has declined.<sup>1</sup>
- There is a growing recognition of the adverse health and environmental effects of transport choices and systems.

Transport systems in communities affect our health and safety and that of the environment. The car oriented design inherent in transportation systems and perceived lack of choice by individuals has seen increasing reliance on the car, associated traffic congestion, less walking of short distances and increased sedentary behaviour as we spend more time driving.

Walking should be a primary and vital transport mode, part of every journey, yet it has been virtually forgotten as we have increasingly become a car-dependent culture.

Ideally the places where people work and live should support walking and other forms of active transport as part of getting to and from the work place (as well as during lunch breaks), shopping, entertainment and for recreation.

Putting walking back into transport requires action by individuals, workplaces, local councils and governments.

Individuals and workplaces can use events such as Walk to Work Day as a catalyst to start walking programs and to build walking into everyday activities and transport arrangements. There are a number of programs already operating which aim to change the way we travel.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Transport Economics. Urban Transport – Looking Ahead. Information Sheet 14.Canberra (ACT):BTE, 1999

## **TravelSmart and Walking**

TravelSmart is a national program which aims to reduce the reliance on cars and promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Travel Smart activities occur across Australia and details can be found at:

<http://www.travelsmart.gov.au>

<http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/employers/toolkit.html>

## **For More Information**

For other useful State/Territory specific sites on active transport programs and walking go to:

SA -

[http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/personal\\_transport/walking/index.asp](http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/personal_transport/walking/index.asp)

Victoria -

[http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/pages/Active\\_Transport?OpenDocument](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/pages/Active_Transport?OpenDocument)

NSW -

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/trafficinformation/managingtraveldemand/transportaccessguides/>

Queensland -

[http://www.roadsafety.qld.gov.au/qt/LTASinfo.nsf/index/rs\\_pedestrians\\_walkingfortransport](http://www.roadsafety.qld.gov.au/qt/LTASinfo.nsf/index/rs_pedestrians_walkingfortransport)

Tasmania -

<http://www.metrotas.com.au/html/News/pr-PartnershipToPromote.html>

WA -

[http://www.stcwa.org.au/papers/STC\\_walking\\_policy.doc](http://www.stcwa.org.au/papers/STC_walking_policy.doc)

ACT-

<http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/transportplan/>