

Fact Sheet for Local Government

Leveraging federal funding to improve local communities

Active options for better and healthier local communities

The Challenge for Local Governments

Local Governments across Australia face a number of issues that impact on the health, public safety, economic development and livability in their communities, including transport. The challenge is to provide a transport system which is affordable, operates fairly and efficiently, offers a choice of transport modes, and supports a competitive economy, as well as balanced regional development.

Active transport, including walking and cycling, offers rational, economic solutions to real issues such as:

- The cost to Councils of increasing demand for roads, parking and other vehicle infrastructure
- Increasing traffic congestion = decreasing livability, mobility, and quality of life for residents
- The effect of increasing petrol prices on communities and families
- The increasing use of cars to drive short distances, such as to school, where safety and congestion become an issue for children, local residents and other road users
- Providing mobility options for people with no or little access to cars, such as older Australians, people with low incomes and young people.

Investment in walking and cycling makes sense

Increased mobility

An integrated network of shared paths and bicycle lanes leading to facilities and services will increase residents' mobility and decrease isolation. In addition, creating conditions to make it easier for people to cycle to bus stops and train stations can significantly improve transport opportunities for many people.

Supporting local businesses

Increasing facilities for cycling and walking can boost the viability of local small businesses. People who can walk or cycle to shops are more likely to shop regularly with local retailers.

Manages congestion around schools

Providing safe access to kids to walk and cycle to school not only decreases congestion around schools and demand on parking but also increases physical activity, improves road safety skills and fosters a greater sense of community and social connectedness. People are happy to walk – a survey by VicHealth found that 61% of children being driven to school would prefer to walk.

Better community health

A link exists between the built environment, health and wellbeing. Research demonstrates that people who live in neighbourhoods which are cycling and walking friendly are more likely to be physically active and enjoy a better quality of life.



“When ‘health’ is integrated into planning, the choice for people to be active becomes more convenient, easy, safe and enjoyable”

National Heart Foundation
Healthy by Design: a Planners' Guide to Environments for Active Living

Improve community safety

Cycling and walking friendly neighbourhoods encourage activity, foster social interactions and reduce the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by providing natural surveillance, improving the quality of life for everyone.

Restoring a sense of community

Communities which are cycling and walking friendly are also communities where people are more likely to know each other and look out for each other. People who are socially isolated or disconnected from others have between two and five times the risk of dying from all causes compared to those who maintain strong ties with family, friends and community.

Good for country and city

Regional towns and cities are compact enough to achieve a high uptake of cycling and walking; combined with the rapidly growing economic effect of cycle tourism, local communities can reap big benefits for from a modest investment. Reduction of congestion and an improved sense of community are winning factors for any metropolitan area.

Councils making a difference

- The City of Gosnells in WA invested their entire year's R2R funding on improving their shared paths to improve access, enhance mobility and improve safety. The Council has won numerous national awards for their innovation and commitment to sustainable development whilst its support for liveable neighbourhoods has helped create the lifestyles that people want. By encouraging people to use the streets and creating a greater sense of visibility they are committed to 'designing out crime'.
- Wangaratta was one of the first councils to develop a cycling strategy 14 years ago and today has a 99km network of bicycle paths, valued at \$4.5million dollars.

Funding for Active Communities

All Roads to Recovery funding, including the one-off additional funding received in June 2006, can be used for real improvements and lasting change in local jurisdictions. Many councils have used Roads to Recovery funding to improve their cycling and walking facilities. The cycling sector is able to supply information, real world examples and strong arguments to inform Councils in their efforts to develop better built environments.

Contact us now for help and support when planning healthy, active communities in your local government area



Did you know?

- A single car space can fit up to 14 bicycles
- Average cost for one kilometre of: freeway \$13m, tram track \$8m, off-road cycle path \$150,000, on-road bike lane \$20,000 (when marked on existing road)
- Cycling has become the 4th most popular physical activity in Australia
- More bicycles are sold each year than cars, more than 1 million in each of the last 5 years!
- Walking and cycling are the most environmentally friendly means of getting around neighbourhoods and communities

Contact:

The Cycling Promotion Fund

A cycling industry initiative
Web: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au
Tel: 03 98185400
Email: speidel@cyclingpromotion.com.au

Cycling Promotion Alliance

Web: www.cyclingpromotionalliance.com.au

Bicycle Federation of Australia

Web: www.bfa.asn.au

Australian Bicycle Council

Web: www.abc.dotars.gov.au