

Minimising Pedestrian-Cyclist Conflict on Paths



Information Note No 10

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Travel behaviour change

Most urban transport strategies include targets for reducing the level of reliance on the private car for a range of economic, social and environmental reasons. The result of this is strategies to increase the use of walking, cycling and public transport for gaining access to goods, services, facilities and opportunities (e.g. employment, recreation, education and social interaction).

The strategies often include the provision of walking and cycling facilities. But there is rarely specific recognition that shared facilities run the risk of greater user conflict as usage increases. This risk is exacerbated by the lack of attention paid to providing new users with the skills necessary to walk or cycle comfortably in a shared environment.

Voluntary travel behaviour change programs are not only multi-modal, but are specifically aimed at providing people with the information and skills necessary to make the new travel activity a convenient and congenial one. They have, therefore, the potential to achieve increases in walking and cycling activity without corresponding increases in user conflict on paths.

All successful initiatives that reduce the level of reliance on the private car in towns and cities will reduce the external pressures on walking and cycling space, including allowing cyclists to make better use of the roadway itself, rather than being 'forced' onto paths. Most, however, do little to provide pedestrians and cyclists with the skills necessary to share off-road facilities.

Travel behaviour change has the ability to reverse the current trend for increasing car driver and passenger trips by raising walking, cycling, and public transport participation. This is progressed without a large investment in infrastructure or services.

The main issues (see *Overview*) addressed by this Information Note are:

- user behaviour: awareness
- user behaviour: operational
- speed
- shared strategy/planning
- network continuity.

Travel behaviour change principles

Voluntary travel behaviour change achieves reduced car usage (and correspondingly higher levels of walking, cycling and public transport use) by:

- providing people with information to correct misperceptions about the cost, convenience and amenity of alternatives to the private car
- providing people with opportunity and incentive to try alternatives
- in some cases (e.g. workplace, schools) making selective improvements to facilities to enhance walking, cycling or public transport options.

Almost everyone is involved in some form of travel every day – whether it is travelling to work, school, shops, to entertainment or to sport.

TravelSmart is about reducing our reliance on cars and making smart choices about other forms of transport. We can all play a part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the quality of life for ourselves and our communities.

Voluntary Travel Behaviour Change is important for many reasons, but also provides people with the skills needed to share new environments (AGO 2005).

Travel behaviour change programs are based on the cumulative importance of small changes in travel choices made by individuals. It recognises that not all people are in a position to make changes (see box overleaf) but encourages those that can to make informed choices based on the availability and cost of the opportunities available to them.

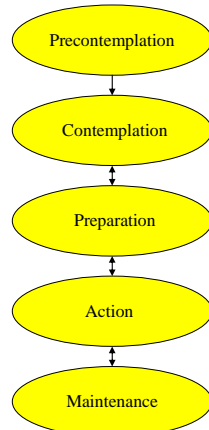
A major benefit to the individual is often a substantial reduction in the cost of transport (car travel), which is important to households – in Australian cities, 15-20% of household expenditure goes on transport (mostly on car ownership and operation).

Voluntary travel behaviour change initiatives contain no element of compulsion or regulation and are generally well-received by the community.

Principles of voluntary travel behaviour change

Not all people are equally ready to change their travel behaviour. Individuals may be at any a number of stages:

- precontemplation
- contemplation
- preparation
- action
- maintenance.



A person in the **precontemplation** stage is not seriously considering changing their activity patterns in the near future. Precontemplators may be resistant to change and unaware that current behaviour patterns are problematic.

Individuals in the **contemplation** stage are aware that changing their behaviour patterns, for example to include more physical activity, may be of benefit. They are seriously considering changing their behaviours but are not yet committed to taking action.

In the **preparation** stage, some behavioural changes have been made within the last year and the individual intends to make further changes in the near future.

The greatest observable change occurs in the **action** stage. Individuals in this stage are actually engaging in a different pattern of behaviour. However, this stage can be short lived, and to complete their behavioural change, an individual must move to the next stage.

Maintenance is considered to be occurring when the behavioural change has been maintained for at least six months. Maintenance may continue indefinitely unless the new behaviour becomes less

Figure 1

TravelSmart in Australia

Most voluntary travel behaviour change initiatives in Australia operate under the TravelSmart banner. Started in Western Australia in 1996, with a pilot project in South Perth, TravelSmart is now a national program with activities in most States and Territories (AGO 2005).



Travel behaviour change is an important option with a proven effectiveness (Ker 2004) including:

- 8%-14% reduction in car use (households)
- 5%-20% reduction in car use (workplace)
- up to 50% reduction in car use (schools)
- increases in walking, cycling and public transport.

A variety of TravelSmart interventions can be employed, including ones aimed at households, workplaces, schools and major destinations.

Household initiatives

Household based initiatives attempt to influence travel behaviour for all purposes by working with individuals and households. Individualised marketing used in Perth, a leader in the field, has resulted in households changing from car driving to walking, cycling and public transport. Studies carried out in other parts of Australia, Europe, UK and US have also resulted in similar outcomes (Queensland Transport 2005).

Workplace travel plans

Workplace initiatives focus primarily on the journeys to and from work, which may have large economic and environmental benefits as they are mainly in peak periods. Studies have shown that car use has declined as a result of workplace travel plans, but there is little information on their effectiveness in smaller organisations (Queensland Transport 2005).

Schools

A school travel plan is often a partnership involving the school, education and transport officers from the local authority, the police and the health authority. The concept is relatively new in Australia but it has generated interest in the UK and Europe (Queensland Transport 2005). School travel planning can play a useful role in improving traffic safety around schools.

Destinations

Some destinations (universities, hospitals, shopping centres and airports) have large numbers of other users, not just employees. TravelSmart can influence their travel behaviours as well as those of employees.

Experience with travel planning at Australian universities has been patchy, particularly in terms of implementation. Overseas experience has shown that having a choice of options available, on a daily basis, as well as financial incentives are key factors (Queensland Transport 2005).

References

AGO 2005, *TravelSmart Australia: A Better Way To Go*. Australian Greenhouse Office: Canberra, ACT. <http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/index.html>. This website provides links to State/Territory TravelSmart and a range of other travel behaviour change resources.

Ker, I R 2004, *Household-Based Voluntary Travel Behaviour Change: Aspirations, Achievements and Assessment*. Transport Engineering Australia.

Queensland Transport 2005, *Easy Steps: A toolkit for planning, designing and promoting safe walking*. PB and ARRB Transport Research FOR Queensland Transport: Brisbane, Queensland. (Yet to be released/published).