

# 3.

## ACTIVE TRAVEL



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### Active travel objectives

We will create a city where active travel is the easy choice, with:

- more people of all ages cycling and walking for work and other trips
- bike riders and pedestrians interacting safely
- increased physical activity and health
- a strong economy
- reduced spending on health care.



Active travel is travel that involves physical activity—walking or cycling. The ACT Government has long recognised the importance of increasing the uptake of active travel in the Territory and is exploring the establishment of a taskforce to promote and develop physical activity and its associated health, wellbeing, economic, environmental and transport benefits.

Cycling and walking are healthy forms of transport that use energy, land, financial and material resources wisely, with minimal impact on neighbourhoods, city and town centres, urban bushland, air and water quality. They offer a low-cost form of transport and improve access to services and activities for people with otherwise limited transport choices. Both walking and cycling are low-impact ways to be physically active and obtain health benefits, including a healthy weight.

For most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be incorporated into everyday life. Of the ACT community, 43% of citizens over the age of 18,<sup>23</sup> 19% of Year 6 children<sup>24</sup> and 16% of high school children<sup>25</sup> did not participate in sufficient physical activity to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines, which recommend adults put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week and children and young people be moderately to vigorously active for

at least 60 minutes every day. 58% of ACT adults and 22% of children were overweight or obese in 2008.<sup>26</sup> Physical inactivity is the fourth leading contributor to the overall burden of disease in Australia.<sup>27</sup> The direct health care costs of the contribution of physical inactivity to coronary heart disease, breast and colon cancer, stroke, depression, type 2 diabetes and falls is \$1.5 billion in Australia each year. Under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health the ACT has a target that by 2015, 60% of adults and 20% of children meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines (from 50% and 15% in 2009).<sup>28</sup>

### 3.1 Where we are now

The ACT has significantly higher cycling participation rates than the national average with around 22% of the ACT population riding a bike in a typical week. 46% of children under 10 and 43% of 1–17 year olds ride each week.<sup>29</sup> 40% of Canberrans work less than 10km from home, a distance easily cycled, meaning there is potential for these cycling trips to become more regular.

Canberra has an extensive network of off-road shared paths and on-road cycle lanes, where people can cycle in comfort and safety.<sup>30</sup>

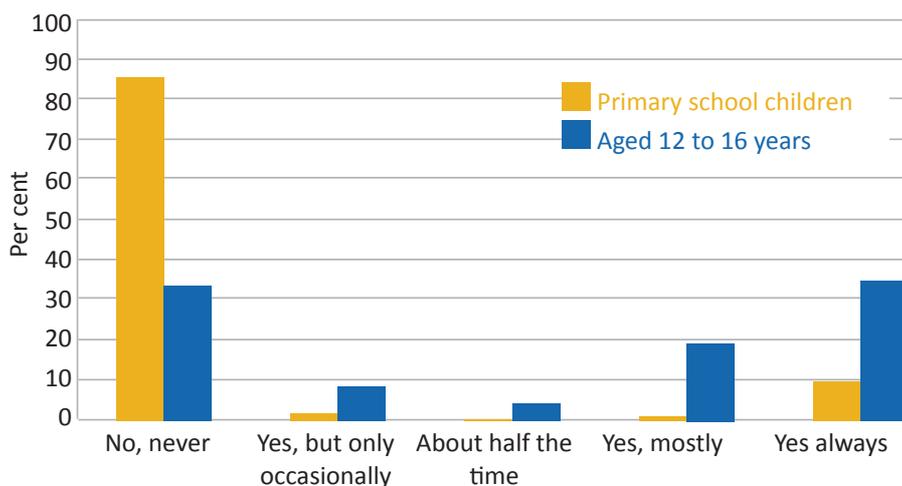
The findings of a walking benchmarking survey conducted in late 2010 in partnership with international non-government organisation Walk21 identified current levels of walking and physical, social and institutional barriers that limit walking in Canberra. Survey respondents said they walked to stay fit or for pleasure rather than as a form of transport.<sup>31</sup> Key findings were:

- people are generally very happy with the open spaces in their own neighbourhoods
- Canberrans walk an average of 26 minutes a day

**TABLE 5: BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL**

<b>Offers cheap transport option</b>	20%	of Canberrans live less than 5km/15 minutes bike ride from their workplace
	22%	of Canberrans live between 5 – 10km/15 – 30 minutes bike ride from their workplace (ABS, 2006)
	2.2%	of Canberra households are without a motor vehicle
	22%	of Canberra households have one car and more than one person (ABS, 2006)
	65%	of Canberrans have a bicycle (Australian Bicycle Council, 2004)
<b>Increases public transport's financial viability</b>	0.8km	Distance easily walked to bus stop within 10 minutes
	3.2km	Distance easily cycled to bus stop within 10 minutes
	1500%	Increase in catchment when bike riders catch bus
<b>Reduces parking costs</b>	\$92,820	Land value on-surface car parking space, Civic (@\$2600 x 35.7m2)
	\$17,707	Land value on-surface car parking space, town centres (@\$496 x 35.7m2)
	\$489	Annual cost to maintain one on-surface car parking space
	10	Bikes able to be parked in one car parking space
	\$121 million	Car spaces (cost of land and construction for surface car park) not required by 3957 bike rider commuters (676 Civic)
	\$1.9 million	Annual operating costs saved by commuter bike riders (including lighting, repairs to pavement and equipment, sweeping). <sup>32</sup>
<b>Health benefits</b>		Reduced health system costs
		Reduced risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancers
		Improved mental health and wellbeing
<b>Environmental benefits</b>		Minimal greenhouse gases emitted
		Reduced dependence on imported oil
<b>City vitality</b>		Increased economic vitality of town centres
<b>Economic benefits</b>		Increased employee productivity
		Reduced congestion
		Reduced noise levels
		Reduction in road space consumed
<b>Social inclusion</b>		Community cohesion
		Reduced isolation
		Increased safety

**FIGURE 9: PROPORTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WALKING TO SCHOOL UNACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT**



- more Canberrans consider walking as a form of leisure or exercise than a form of transport
- key barriers to walking more include safety fears, conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, lack of lighting and uneven paths; these barriers are particularly important to women, people with mobility restrictions and older Canberrans.

The survey also found that over 85% of ACT school children under the age of 12, and over 30% of young people aged between 12 and 16, never walk to school unaccompanied by an adult (see Figure 9).

### 3.2 Active travel policy context

The ACT Government has undertaken a broad range of initiatives to encourage more people to walk and cycle and to support those who already do. By building a better city which fosters the integration of active travel options into everyday life, more Canberrans will lead fitter, healthier lives and our city will become more vibrant.

The ACT Government is a signatory to two key active travel documents: the International Charter for Walking and the National Bicycle Strategy. On 1 November 2010, the ACT Government became the first government in Australia to sign up to the International Charter for Walking.

The charter was developed by the international non-government organisation Walk21. It incorporates eight principles for action to encourage walking in cities and foster healthier communities.

1. Increased inclusive mobility.
2. Well-designed and managed spaces and places for people.
3. Improved integration of networks.
4. Supportive land use and spatial planning.
5. Reduced road danger.
6. Less crime and fear of crime.
7. More supportive authorities.
8. A culture of walking.

The National Bicycle Strategy 2011–2016 aims to double cycling use in Australia by 2016 and sets out six priorities for action:

1. **Cycling promotion:** promote cycling as both a viable and safe mode of transport and an enjoyable recreational activity.
2. **Infrastructure and facilities:** create a comprehensive network of safe and attractive cycle routes and end-of-trip facilities.
3. **Integrated planning:** consider and address cycling needs in all relevant transport and land use planning activities.
4. **Safety:** enable people to cycle safely.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation:** improve monitoring and evaluation of cycling programs and develop a national decision-making process for investment in cycling.
6. **Guidance and best practice:** develop nationally consistent technical guidance for stakeholders to use and share best practice across jurisdictions.

These national and internationally recognised walking and cycling strategies have already been incorporated into ACT planning documents and will continue to guide our design and delivery of programs and projects.

### 3.3 A compact city to connect people and places

The ACT Government is committed to integrated transport and land use planning. It is working to create a more compact city with apartments, offices and retail spaces close together and a vibrant public realm with plazas, paths and streets that encourage relaxing, walking and cycling—and use of public transport. A compact city generates fewer vehicle trips, creates economic efficiencies by reducing the need for expenditure on roads and car parks and is more socially inclusive, healthy and sustainable.

The government has incorporated the principles of the International Charter for Walking into the Estate Development Code to: create streets suitable for public transport; locate bus stops alongside the shared path network; connect the shared path network with the open space network and community facilities; and light the shared path network. The ACT Planning Strategy contains strategies to create a more compact city that connects people and places.

### 3.4 A safe environment to support active travel

Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure design standards are constantly amended and updated to take account of national and international best practice in infrastructure design. The ACT applies 40 km/hr speed limits in school zones, work sites and areas such as hospitals and universities. Trials of 40 km/hr zones have begun in some town centres and may expand to other areas from 2012 once the trial has been evaluated. Transport planning studies and group centre and corridor master

planning will explore opportunities to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety through initiatives such as separating cyclists and pedestrians and lower speed zones in areas of high pedestrian volumes. We will deliver safety awareness programs for all transport users.

### 3.5 Infrastructure

A sustainable, compact city incorporates good quality walking and cycling infrastructure that is well-maintained, safe, accessible, well-lit and signposted. The infrastructure should offer direct routes to destinations, including public transport, and have end-of-trip facilities such as bike parking, showers and change rooms. Amenities like drinking fountains, lighting and seating can make walking and cycling routes more attractive and accessible.

Canberra has one of the most extensive walking and cycling networks in Australia, comprising off-road shared paths, on-road cycle lanes and roads. All ACT footpaths are available for use by pedestrians and cyclists. The network has been significantly expanded over the past 10 years. A walking and cycling master plan was completed for Gungahlin in 2005 and is being constructed as new areas are developed. In 2011–12, the government will develop a commuter cycle master plan to identify priority commuter routes connecting people to employment, schools and other key destinations.

Cycle parking and end of trip facilities are mandatory requirements for any new development in the ACT. Developers can reduce the number of car parking spaces in their development by providing bike parking above the standard minimum. The government will continue to work with businesses to improve cycling end-of-trip facilities, and investigate the potential role of government and the private sector in supplementing end-of-trip facilities at major destinations.

*A sustainable, compact city incorporates good quality walking and cycling infrastructure that is well maintained, safe, accessible, well lit and signposted.*



Electric bikes and mobility scooters are going to become an increasing part of the transport mix in Canberra as our population ages and we look at healthier, more active ways to travel. The government will consider parking and charging points for mobility scooters and electric bikes at group centres as part of the ongoing master planning program.

Infrastructure priorities to support active travel include:

- Expand and improve the network, particularly to encourage cycling as a genuine choice for travel to work, school and any other trip.
- Develop a master plan for a commuter cycling network to guide infrastructure investments and right of way improvements both on- and off-road between suburbs and major work destinations. Priority investments will include higher quality infrastructure, lighting, signage and segregation where appropriate.
- Consider infrastructure implications of a growing number of electric bikes.
- Complete walking and cycling networks in the town centres and major employment areas.
- Trial a shared space (a place where all road users share a low speed street space) in a location identified in a master plan or transport planning study by 2013.
- Complete the Centenary Trail to guide walkers and cyclists through urban and nearby rural areas of Canberra.
- Explore opportunities for private sector involvement in the development of public end-of-trip facilities such as the King George Station centre in Brisbane.
- Work with NGO partners like Pedal Power to audit the current provision of bicycle parking facilities and develop a program to enhance them.

- Continue the shared paths construction, lighting and maintenance program and the footpath lighting program.
- Continue the graffiti management program.

### 3.6 Partnerships and promotion

The ACT Government will pool expertise and resources with government, business and community organisations to achieve greater efficiency and capacity to plan and develop active travel. This will include working closely with our government and non-governmental partners to embed principles to support active travel in our policies, programs and activities, continuing to support the City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy, and supporting walking groups, community initiatives and other programs aimed at increasing active travel.

The ACT Government has provided funding to community organisations to promote and support active travel projects in schools and workplaces. Two recent successful partnerships are:

- ACT Government funding for the Heart Foundation's Walking Group Program and 'Come and Try' physical activities program
- the Find Thirty every day<sup>®</sup> campaign, which encourages people to be sufficiently active for good health by doing 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week. Joint social marketing activities are underway to promote the shared benefits of active travel, such as Bike and Ride/Find Thirty every day<sup>®</sup>.

### 3.7 Active travel to school

The Active Travel to School project has been developed through the ACT Government's Healthy Futures, Healthy Children Program, and the National Partnership Agreement for Preventive Health (NPAPH). The project will work

across government and the community sector over the next four years to increase safe walking and cycling and support programs that promote walking and cycling to school to the school community. The pilot program will commence in 2011–2012.

### 3.8 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The annual Transport for Canberra report card will be supported by new data on pedestrian and cyclist travel in Canberra, including:

- pedestrian interception surveys at key destinations on an annual basis to identify distances travelled and routes used
- regular benchmarking in partnership with the international pedestrian network Walk21
- monitoring shared paths to identify areas where improvement is required
- review of transport modelling capability.

**TABLE 6: HOW TRANSPORT FOR CANBERRA WILL HELP YOU WALK AND CYCLE**

I don't walk or cycle because	How Transport for Canberra will help you walk or cycle
<b>It's too dangerous</b>	Continue building shared paths and on-road cycle lanes. Investigate extending the 40km/hr zones. Skills training for school children and adults as part of Active Travel to School. Enhanced lighting for community paths. Enhanced maintenance program.
<b>It's too hot and I get sweaty</b>	Encourage increased provision of end-of-trip facilities with lockers, showers, irons and hairdryers. Continue tree planting to shade paths.
<b>It's too cold and dark</b>	Compared to many European cities where cycling rates are high even in winter, Canberra's weather compares favourably. A wide range of quality warm cycling clothing and bicycle lights are now available. Enhanced lighting program.
<b>It's too hilly</b>	Bicycle paths are selected to travel on the least steep routes. As your fitness improves, you will find the hills get smaller!
<b>There's nowhere to park my bike</b>	The bike parking program will provide more bike rails. Government will encourage the development of end-of-trip facilities.
<b>It's too far</b>	Over 80% of Canberra's houses are within easy cycling distance of local shops. The Bike and Ride program will increase opportunities to park bikes at bus stops and complete the journey by bus. The commuter cycle master plan will help create more direct routes between major destinations.
<b>I'm too old</b>	Canberra's shared paths offer gentle alternatives to cycling on the road. Cycling is a low-impact form of exercise, recommended for all ages.
<b>I'm not fit enough</b>	Canberra's shared paths give you the chance to start out slowly and build up your fitness level. Bicycle user groups offer a range of cycle rides to help you gain confidence.
<b>I don't have enough time/ it's inconvenient</b>	Cycling and walking, or using Bike and Ride to catch the bus, offer great value-for-time by providing an opportunity to fit physical activity into your day.



### 3.9 Active travel actions

#### **ACTION 18**

Complete shared paths in the town centres and major employment areas and develop a master plan for a commuter cycle network with high-quality cycling infrastructure that is safe and well signposted, offering direct routes to destinations and integrated with public transport.

#### **ACTION 19**

Investigate new types of transport infrastructure and services including shared spaces, segregated lanes, priority at intersections, electric bikes and public cycle parking facilities in the city.

#### **ACTION 20**

Release an Active Travel to School Strategy in 2012 to support students, teachers and school communities to increase active travel to school by 2016.

#### **ACTION 21**

Amend design guides and update standards to prioritise active travel by updating minimum standards and engineering drawings to facilitate the development of accessible bicycle and pedestrian focused infrastructure (including end-of-trip facilities), shared spaces and active streets.

#### **ACTION 22**

Deliver road safety awareness programs for motorists, motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians to reduce crashes and crash rates and engender a culture of sharing the road system with others.

#### **ACTION 23**

Explore the establishment of a taskforce of government and external stakeholders to promote, and develop programs to support, physical activity and its associated health, wellbeing, economic, social inclusion, environmental and transport benefits and establish a whole-of-government working group to implement active travel projects that support physical activity.