Brisbane Council School Travel Program

In Brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town/Region</th>
<th>Brisbane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Brisbane Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td>Parents, Students and Teachers travelling to and from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation(s):</td>
<td>Primary Schools throughout Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of Project</td>
<td>Council has been delivering the Active School Travel Program since 2004 and it is ongoing</td>
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Key Outcomes

- People engaging in regular physical activity
- Positive health impacts
- Modal shift to active transport
- Improved safety
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced traffic congestion

Overview

School related traffic is a major contributor to rush hour congestion, impacting upon the efficient operation of the road network, causing slow journey times, poor air quality and road safety issues. Taking children to school by car also has a major impact on their health, levels of inactivity and independence skills. Active School Travel (AST) is a Brisbane City Council program that aims to change travel behaviour and reduce traffic congestion by increasing the number of families who walk (either some or all of the way); cycle; car pool or use public transport on the journey to and from school. The program develops and implements a School Travel Plan which is a framework of measures and initiatives that provide families with the information, motivation and opportunity to adopt these active travel modes.
Outcomes
The AST initiative began in 2004 and to date a total of 75 schools have participated in the program. A further 21 schools will participate on the program in 2010. A number of initiatives have been implemented to achieve a reduction in the number of car trips made to and from Brisbane schools. Some of the key initiatives in the AST program include:

- **Walking Wheeling Wednesday** which is a weekly campaign to encourage students to actively travel to school every Wednesday. The success of this initiative has been exceptional with extremely high levels of students ‘actively’ travelling. In addition, a ‘spill over’ effect is achieved with most students’ choosing to actively travel for the whole week.

- **Park & Stride** is an initiative which encourages students who have no alternative but to be driven to school to walk part of the way. A site is selected which is 5 or 10 minutes walking distance from the school and parents are encouraged to drop their children off there. This alleviates the congestion experienced around the school gates, making it safer for everyone else on foot and allows the child to walk to school with parents and friends. Walking some of the way gives the child an opportunity to have some physical activity in addition to learning vital pedestrian skills.

- **Walking School Bus** which is a group of children walking to and/or from school with trained and approved Walk Leaders from the school community. The ‘bus’ walks along a set route to and/or from school, picking up or dropping off children along the way at designated stops, similar to a normal bus route.
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- **Car Pooling** is encouraged as a means of reducing the number of car trips on the journey to and from school, particularly as the vast majority of cars travelling to and from school have only one family. The benefits are promoted to families, including the time and cost savings of not having to do the ‘school run’ every day.

- **RACQ ‘Streets Ahead; Road Safety Program’** is part of the AST program. RACQ officers visit schools with Crash Test Dummies ‘Crunch’ and ‘Bingle’ to teach students how to be safe pedestrians and passengers. Each Streets Ahead presentation is interactive and engaging, and encourages children to be actively involved to demonstrate and practise correct road safety behaviours. Crunch and Bingle make road safety fun and interesting for children, making it easier for them to learn how to be safe road users and to remember key concepts when in real-life situations.

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*RACQ ‘Streets Ahead; Road Safety Program’*
- **Public Transport (PT) Orientation** is an activity educates students how to use buses safely and how to behave safely at bus stops. Providing students with these skills will motivate some parents to allow their children to use public transport to get to school.

- **Bike Skills Training** is offered as part of the AST program to primary school years five and six classes. The training is delivered to each class in the chosen year level in four one-hour sessions. Bike training skills training provide students with the skills and knowledge to enable them to:
  - improve their cycling competency;
  - improve their cycling confidence;
  - safely cross the road (from footpath to footpath)
  - understand the Queensland road rules;
  - demonstrate to their parents that they have attained sufficient skills to allow them to cycle to and from school.
Bike Cage Construction

To increase casual rates of cycling, each school on the program receives a secure bike storage area. This added security is aimed to alleviate student’s and parent’s fear of bicycle theft and/or vandalism, thus removing a commonly perceived barrier to cycling to school. The bike cage is usually officially opened by the local Councillor as part of an assembly with involvement from students, teachers and parents.

Bike cage
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Last updated 15 June 2009

- **Active Travel Maps**
  Specific active travel maps are produced for each school. The maps show details of public transport services in the area, cycle and walking routes. Approximate walking distances are marked on in minutes, e.g. 5 minutes walk, 10 minute walk, making it easier for children and their parents to understand the length of the journey.

- **Road Star and Assembly Presentations**
  Road Star is the Active School Travel mascot who appears at launch events and school assemblies to promote active travel and generate interest and excitement amongst the children. The Active School Travel Program is launched at a school assembly and this forum is used throughout the year to promote initiatives and keep the AST profile raised.
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- Adopt a Cop is an initiative which pairs a school up with their own police officer. We have found a police presence can give reassurance to parents to allow their child to actively travel.

- Active School Travel (AST) E-News is a monthly newsletter sent to all participating schools. It provides information on current AST activities; best practice models for initiatives and publishes the Walking Wheeling Wednesday statistics allowing schools to compare results and achievements.

- Legacy Program has been established to provide schools with an additional two years of support in further developing and maintaining their travel plan.

Successes (2008-2009)
- 24.8% decrease in car trips, from 68.5% to 43.7%;
- 19.1% increase in students walking to school, rising from 19% to 38.1%;
- 3.1% increase in students cycling to school, rising from 3.9% to 7%;
- 2.5% increase in students carpooling with other families, rising from 4.4% to 6.9%; and
- 82% of parents reported an increase in their child’s road safety awareness.
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Individual Successes (2008-2009)
- Stretton State College and Ashgrove State School achieved 96% participation level on a Walking Wheeling Wednesday;
- 84% of Milton State School Year 5 Students attended bike skills training;
- Wynnum West & Wilston State Schools achieved a reduction in sole family car trips to 35%; and
- Walking School Buses implemented at Ashgrove, Morningside, Sandgate and Wilston State Schools.

Mode Shift Achieved

Figure 1: Active School Travel International Results Comparison

International comparison of absolute % increase results in active mode share

BCC  25%  Northern Ireland  17%  TravelSmart  10%  London  6%  Auckland  3%
## Figure 2: Walking Wheeling Wednesday Results, April 2009 – Change in the level of “active” student travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Active Travel to school Pre-AST</th>
<th>Active Travel to school April</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Actively Travel to school PreAST</th>
<th>Actively Travel to school April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bracken Ridge</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>Oxley</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Central</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Patric Terrace</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Lake</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>Rainworth</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumdale</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Delayed launched</td>
<td>Sacred Heart</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilhaca Creek</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>S. Ambrose’s</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lota</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>S. Andrew’s</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>S. John Vianney’s</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>S. Peter Chanel</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater Del</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>Toowong</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Crosby</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Waller’s Hill</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balmoral SHS</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>76%</td>
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</table>
Learnings
Based on learning’s and feedback over the years, the program has undergone continual development. A comprehensive evaluation is undertaken at the end of each year which highlights both successes and areas for improvement. In the 2007-2008 evaluation report found some of the successes to be the consistently high participation rates throughout the year in the Walking Wheeling Wednesday with a demonstrated ‘spill over’ to other days of the week.

Costs
The annual cost of the program is $750k. The 2007 AST program was independently evaluated by Ian Ker to establish the economic benefits of the program and to evaluate the program methodology.

“Even on a conservative basis, the benefits of the 2007 Brisbane City Council Active School Travel program exceed the costs by a factor of between 2.7 and 4.6. This assessment strongly supports maintenance and expansion of the Active School Travel Program”. (Ker, 2008)

Marketing
We have a wide range of supporting resources to assist schools and their Active School Travel Officer throughout the process. In addition we have a large selection of branded materials which are used as incentives to encourage active travel. Some examples include:

- Walking Wheeling Wednesday Cards;
- Backpacks;
- Water bottles;
- Stickers;
- Flashing bike lights; and
- Bike tags.

Benefits
- Reduction in school traffic, from around both the school gates and from clogging up the wider road network;
- Improved road safety;
- Decrease in greenhouse gasses;
- Increase in physical activity levels;
- Improved health;
- Independence skills; and
- Better awareness.

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Last updated 15 June 2009