

- Reward active travellers through:
 - o Providing a social place to meet at the end of their trip (e.g. staff room), provide water and a place to chat
 - o Consider earlier finish times for active travellers – they can get away before the traffic rush.
- Get involved in Walk Safely to School Day and National Walk to Work Day. Visit www.walk.com.au
- Get involved in Ride to Work Day and National Ride2School Day. Visit www.ride2work.com.au and www.bv.com.au/general/ride2school
- Provide a safe, weatherproof place to store bikes and scooters to encourage the use of these as a means of travel to your organisation
- Part way is OK – so identify and promote ‘park and walk’ parking areas close by to reduce traffic congestion and pollution around your facility
- Establish how far other local facilities are from yours, then promote e.g. ‘5 minute walk to the closest shop’, ‘10 minute walk to the local park.’ Challenge people to walk or cycle to these nearby locations
- Consider hosting a bike education program to increase skills, safety and confidence in bike riding. Contact Bike SA (www.bikesa.asn.au), SAPOL or your local OPAL Council Team for available programs and how they may be able to assist you
- Your local OPAL Council Team could assist you with a walkability survey around your venue to identify hazards and barriers to active travel. Check out <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/HFW-Walkability-Checklist.pdf>
- When hosting an event or meeting, give directions to the location identifying walking and cycling routes and public transport options rather than car parking information
- Consider that people with a disability may need more support to actively travel to your venue, discuss with your OPAL Council Team how you can make active travel accessible to all.

What is OPAL?

OPAL is about everyone in our community working together to create all kinds of ways to eat well and have fun being active.

The way OPAL comes to life in each community will depend on your input and enthusiasm. New information about healthy eating and physical activity will regularly be provided to help you make healthy choices in your life. Your council will also be supporting you by coordinating activities and making changes to local services to make sure healthy choices are easier for you and your family.

To find out more and become involved, call the **City of Charles Sturt** OPAL Council Team on **(08) 8408 1132**.

Visit opal.sa.gov.au

OPAL by EPODE is a joint program of Australian, State and Local Governments.

Make it long term

You could:

- Develop an active travel policy that outlines your organisation’s commitment to promoting active travel to your venue. This may include a review of current policies that inhibit active travel
- Make changes to the environment that will make active travel easier e.g. add bike parking facilities, or change school drop off points to make it less congested around the school entrance
- Incorporate active travel planning in your organisation’s planning e.g. consider how can you promote active travel to your venue, how staff can role model active travel behaviours, etc.
- Set up a community action group around active travel. Community action groups can identify how the local community can become a place where active travel is easier through auditing facilities and working with the local council to enhance the local environment.

THINK FEET FIRST.

STEP, CYCLE, SCOOT TO SCHOOL.

Stakeholders Action Sheet

Every twelve months, OPAL introduces a new healthy lifestyle message to our community. The current message is ‘Think Feet First – step, cycle, scoot to school.’, designed to encourage parents and students to think about how they travel to school and around their community.

What you need to know

- Active travel involves walking, cycling or other non-motorised modes of travel.
- Being active every day is important for everyone.
- Active travel to school offers an opportunity to incorporate additional physical activity into children’s daily routine.
- Active travel can contribute to all the physical, mental and social benefits of being active.
- Most children, when asked, would love to walk, cycle or scoot to school.
- If children actively travel to school they are more likely to actively travel to other destinations.

You can really make a difference by getting involved - see over.

Tools Available

- ‘Morning Catch Up – step, cycle, scoot to kindly.’ poster for early childhood and pre-schools.
- ‘Morning Catch Up – step, cycle, scoot to school.’ poster for primary schools.
- ‘Real Social Network – step, cycle, scoot to school.’ poster for secondary schools.
- ‘Think Feet First.’ – parent information brochure.
- ‘Think Feet First.’ – children’s information brochure (aimed at 9-13 year olds).



Why ‘Think Feet First.’?

Physically active children are healthier, happier and more socially connected than children who have more sedentary lifestyles.

However, changes in Australian lifestyles, urban environments and transportation systems have led to reduced physical activity among children. Active travel, in particular, has declined dramatically where car travel has become the predominant form of transport.

Active travel refers to travel between destinations by walking, cycling or other non-motorised modes. Children who actively travel to school have higher levels of physical activity and improved fitness compared with children who do not walk or cycle to school.

In addition, young people who walk, cycle or scoot to school are 30% more likely to actively travel to other neighbourhood destinations. This indicates that by promoting active travel to and from school, further physical activity benefits can be achieved.



Benefits of physical activity

Children and young people who are physically active are more likely to be active adults, resulting in health benefits throughout their life.

Children who are physically active experience improved cardiovascular health, increased bone density and are leaner compared to physically inactive children. Reductions in stress, anxiety and depression and enhanced social skills and self esteem are also associated with physical activity in children.

However, what matters to children is that being active is fun and provides a chance for them to be with their friends, creating opportunity for vital social interaction.

How active are our children?

Many children do not meet the national guidelines for physical activity and therefore do not acquire the benefits. These guidelines recommend that children should accumulate at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

Based on data from the 2007 Australian Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, only 32% of Australian children aged 9-16 years met these guidelines.

The recommended physical activity guidelines can be achieved through combinations of play, recreation, physical education activities, sport and active transport. Active travel has the potential to make a substantial contribution to children's daily physical activity.

Children's participation in active travel

Rates of active travel have declined significantly, in 1970, 55% of young people walked to school – by 1994 this fell to just 22%. It is estimated that further falls have been experienced since this time. In the same period, cycling to school decreased from 7.5% to 3.5% and car travel increased from 14% to 55%.



An international study of 6-9 year olds found that Australia had lower levels of walking and cycling and higher levels of car travel than children in Canada and Sweden, despite having a better climate for active travel.

Efforts to increase children's active travel are likely to result in net gains in children's levels of physical activity and in the proportion of children achieving recommended levels of physical activity.

Benefits of active travel

Increasing levels of active travel provides a range of benefits to children and their families through:

- increasing levels of physical activity (and therefore the associated physical, mental and social health benefits)
- helping children maintain healthy weight
- more road safety experience
- engagement in more social time with family and friends
- greater connectedness to the local neighbourhood
- establishing lifelong active travel habits.

There are also broader benefits to the local community including:

- reducing the number of injuries due to motor vehicle crashes
- reducing environmental damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles
- encouraging less cars on the streets and around the school making it safer for everyone
- reducing inequalities in children's health associated with physical activity and obesity as active travel is free and accessible to all.

What about safety?

When promoting active travel to school, one of the major barriers is the perceived risk. However, data indicates that an Australian child is nearly twice as likely to be killed as a car passenger than as a pedestrian and more than four times more likely to be killed as a car passenger than as a cyclist. In addition, data shows that countries with high levels of active transport have low pedestrian and cyclist fatality rates.

Being active on the way to school is a great way to teach kids the road safety principals of Stop, Look, Listen and Think. Children under the age of 12 years can ride their bike on the footpath and this provides a great way for them to build confidence before riding on the road.

Other safety concerns revolve around fear of strangers. However, statistically speaking, children are more likely to die in car crashes than at the hands of a stranger. Australian data indicates that the risk of a child being a victim of either a traffic or stranger harm has decreased over the past 30 years.

For more road safety information visit http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/roadsafety/safe_road_users

References available on request.

Support from OPAL

Your local OPAL team is keen to work with your organisation to make active travel an easy choice for children and families. We encourage you to contact OPAL if you require assistance or wish to discuss how your organisation can support the community to 'Think Feet First'.

How to get involved

Whether you are from a childcare centre or preschool, school or retailer, general practitioner or sporting club, health service or recreation centre, we all have a role to play in making our community one where families and young people can enjoy being active.

Here are some ideas on how you can get involved with the Think Feet First theme.

Spread the message

You could:

- Promote 'Think Feet First – step, cycle, scoot to school.' by putting up the theme posters around your organisation
- Display the 'Think Feet First.' theme brochure and distribute this to parents involved with your organisation
- Make use of the student 'Think Feet First.' brochure. This outlines how students can play a role in active travel to or from school
- Use your newsletters and other communication channels to promote the 'Think Feet First.' message. Your local OPAL Council Team can assist you with newsletter articles and adverts
- Talk about active travel to your venue at meetings, inductions and when providing information for new clients
- Set up a 'Think Feet First.' noticeboard. Place information about alternative parking areas and relevant environmental issues. Use it as a place to recognise those that actively travel, display students' artwork and other information that demonstrates your commitment to active travel.

Your centre's involvement

Your organisation could:

- Promote safe walking and cycling routes to your venue. Maps are available from <http://sa.gov.au/subject/Transport,+travel+and+motoring/Cycling/Cycling+maps>
- Use the Cycle Instead journey planner to plan your walking or cycling routes close to your venue. Visit : <http://maps.sa.gov.au/cycleinstead/>
- Positively encourage active travel to your venue e.g. nominate one day per week where everyone is encouraged to walk to your venue or part of the way