

Submission to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment: December 2005

Submitted on behalf of The Health Promotion Service, Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS), December 2005.

Contact person: Michelle Daley. Email michelle.daley@email.cs.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 9515 9072

A. Brief Summary:

I. Broad Issues

There are a number of broad issues around urban planning and the built environment that impact on active recreation and active travel by children and young people.

Urban planning trends have discouraged walking and cycling

Suburbs are now designed on the assumption that community members will travel by car. Urban sprawl has created neighbourhoods with low street connectivity and therefore low walkability. New housing developments are usually poorly serviced by public transport and other essential infrastructure for young people

Road safety issues

Differences between state and local government priorities and responsibilities result in a lack of co-ordination, which can constrain critical decisions and lead to inaction where improvements are warranted. There is an inherent conflict between policy goals of increasing speed and traffic flow and implementing traffic calming to achieve improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Lack of children's independence

Australian and international research indicates that children's ability to walk and play in their local neighbourhood is decreasing due to parental restrictions on their independence.

Perception of risk

Many parents are afraid to let their children walk through their local neighbourhoods and to school because of the fear of traffic and/or unrealistic risk perceptions of 'stranger danger'.

Stimulating, safe play areas for young children

The trend towards medium and high density housing and smaller or absent back yards has substantially reduced the available play space for children. There are inadequate play spaces and parks available to children and young people in their urban environments.

Public spaces and the needs of youth

There are not enough recreational spaces for young people to 'hang with their friends'. The physical environment is not typically engaging for youth, as their needs are not taken into account sufficiently in the planning, design and development of urban spaces.

II. Program Example: The Central Sydney Walk To School Research Program

In our work with students, parents and teachers of 24 schools we have identified a number of factors that both help and hinder increased levels of physical activity in children. The main research question is: can a multifaceted health promotion intervention increase the proportion of upper primary students who walk all or some of the way to and from school, and the frequency and duration of their walking?

The full submission further outlines survey findings from the Program and details the main factors that can help or hinder increased walking by children:

Schools and their vicinities

The land use, traffic flow, and immediate environment around schools affect their actual and perceived levels of safety. In NSW there is little policy attention or substantial funding to ensure safe walking routes to schools.

Parent Journey To Work

Parents' car journey to work is strongly associated with children being driven to school. To shift the school journey from driving to walking and/or active travel requires a similar shift in the parent journey to work.

Perception of Distance

65% of the students live within 1.5 kms of their school, but the walking rates drop off sharply when students live more than 0.5 kms away from school. A distance more than half a kilometre is perceived, by many parents and children, as too far to walk.

Parent limitations on children's independence

We found that parents who drive their children to school are more likely to not let their children walk alone near where they live. A significant number of children aged 10-12 years lack the opportunity to develop confidence and independence exploring their local community.

Use of Public Transport

Most (but not all) of the schools in our Program have fairly good public transport close by, but many parents were not aware of it or had not used public transport to go to school. A further reason for the low use of public transport may be the current eligibility requirements of the Student Transport Scheme.

Hazards To Safe Walking

Identifying and fixing safety hazards in the physical environment is one of the several important contributions that state and local governments can make to increase the rates of walking and to reduce car use around schools.

III. General Recommendations

Mixed land use and housing density

There is consistent evidence that urban density, mixed land use and high street connectivity are associated with increased walkability.

Street connectivity and design

Street designs that connect ('neotraditional' designs) can encourage active transport, as many possible and more direct routes are available for any given trip.

New housing developments

Service, transport and infrastructure planning and provision needs to be in place upfront for new housing developments or existing suburbs experiencing increased housing density.

Infrastructure for Active Transport

There should be walkable and rideable distances between key destinations such as shops, home, schools and public transport. Priority and space should be given to pedestrians and cyclists.

Schools

Schools need to have nearby public transport and to have safe and accessible walking and cycling paths that link to the local community.

Student Travel Scheme

It would be worthwhile to rethink the rationale and eligibility requirements of the Student Travel Scheme to encourage more active travel by students and parents, and to reduce car use for the school run.

Provision of parks and green spaces

Parks should be planned near residential areas and have well designed, stimulating amenities with safe routes leading to and from them.

Design and provision of urban spaces for youth

Young people should have an authentic opportunity to be involved in the planning, design and development of their local urban spaces to ensure that such spaces accommodate their needs and are of interest to them.

B. Full Submission

I. Introduction

Sydney South West (SSW) Area Health Promotion Service is an active part of the health service for residents of the central and south-western Sydney areas. Health promotion is concerned with improving the general health of the community through reducing the environmental, organisational and social risks to public health. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment.

A number of SSW program areas focus on improving the health of children and young people especially through strong partnerships with schools, local government and other sectors of the health service. Working with children and young people is a health service priority because early intervention is important for establishing healthy behaviours from a young age.

The current public health need to prevent overweight and obesity has focused attention on the importance of promoting the healthy growth and development of children and young people. A core function of the Health Promotion Service is promoting increased physical activity, including the proportion of the children and young people who meet the National Physical Activity Recommendations (Australian Department of Health and Ageing 2005). The physical environment, including the built environment is the context in which people live, and should therefore be considered in policies and programs to improve health.

II. Broad Issues

There are a number of broad issues around urban planning and the built environment that impact on active recreation and active travel by children and young people.

Urban planning trends have discouraged walking and cycling

Land use planning trends have resulted in urban environments that encourage sedentary living and discourage walking and/or cycling. Suburbs are now designed on the assumption that community members will travel by car. The creation of large shopping centres with car parks, combined with poor public transport provision, has built car dependency into many communities. Suburbanisation has also resulted in longer travel distances to workplaces, shops and other services.

Urban sprawl has created neighbourhoods with low street connectivity and therefore low walkability. This increased reliance on car travel leads to poor social connectedness, as people are generally not seen 'out and about' in their local neighbourhoods. New housing developments are usually poorly serviced by public transport and other essential infrastructure for young people such as schools, health services, recreational areas, parks and local shopping. These types of services are rarely in place prior to development and population expansion. Lower income, outer suburbs often have the worst access to public transport and leisure facilities. Lack of transport can decrease access to jobs, shops, educational opportunities and social connections. Conversely, good public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure leads to improved access to essential services and subsequent community strengthening.

Road safety issues

There is a complexity of planning issues affecting the built environment that pose barriers to active travel for children, young people and their families. The lack of co-ordination in decision-making between levels of government is problematic, particularly in relation to zoning around schools and related traffic issues. Differences between state and local government priorities and responsibilities result in a lack of co-ordination, which can constrain critical decisions and lead to inaction where improvements are warranted. For example, the RTA is responsible for major arterial roads, which often pose the greatest safety risk and local councils are responsible for local roads. A number of local schools were established well before further urban development such as major arterial roads and industrial areas, which now adversely impact on the safety of local school environment. There is an inherent conflict between policy goals of increasing speed and traffic flow on one hand, and implementing traffic calming to achieve improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Lack of children's independence

Australian and international research indicates that children's ability to walk and play in their local neighbourhood is decreasing due to parental restrictions on their independence. Paul Tranter has compared levels of independence allowed to children by parents. He found that 37% of 10-year-old Australian children were allowed to travel alone to places other than school, compared to 80% of 10 year old German children. If children from 10 years and up are not allowed to walk to a friend's house, play in the park or go to the shops alone, they are missing out on important opportunities for social and emotional development. In addition, if children are not

allowed to explore their surroundings and interact with the local community, they cannot develop the skills that adolescents and adults need to assess and deal with possible dangers.

Perception of risk

Many parents are afraid to let their children walk through their local neighbourhoods and to school because of the fear of traffic and/or unrealistic risk perceptions of 'stranger danger'. The media representation of 'stranger danger' grossly exaggerates the real risk of an event occurring, and this in turn fosters parental over reaction and a tendency to quarantine their children rather than teach them the skills to deal with such a risk, however low. For example, a recent front-page headline in The Daily Telegraph (December 2005) announced "Evil at the School Gate", but most of the material in the following article was about inter student disagreements in high schools, not 'stranger danger'. Parental fears, encouraged by non factual media articles, mean that many children are driven to school, which in turn increases the numbers of cars on the road, making it less safe for others.

Stimulating, safe play areas for young children

Activities in children's leisure time are increasingly structured. The trend towards medium and high density housing and smaller or absent back yards has substantially reduced the available play space for children. Over the past decade the average Australian house block has shrunk by 15% but the average house size has increased by the same margin. There are inadequate play spaces and parks available to children and young people in their urban environments, to compensate for the lack of yard space. Many parents are reluctant to let children play unsupervised in local parks.

Avoiding the possibility of injury often reduces the stimulation and level of challenge of children's play areas. As fertility rates decline and children become a smaller percentage of the population, there is a concern that children's needs may become less prevalent and this will result in an environment less adapted to them.

Public spaces and the needs of youth

The local neighbourhood is an important environment through which young people learn socialisation and independence, yet they have increasingly been perceived by some as 'intruders' in public and private spaces in their own neighbourhoods. They are often portrayed in the media as deviant and threatening, so when young people gather in groups at shopping centres and other public facilities some people in the general community react with fear and hostility.

There are not enough recreational spaces for young people to 'hang with their friends'. Further, the physical environment is not typically engaging for youth, as their needs are not taken into account in the planning, design and development of urban spaces. Young people (aged 11-16) often have differing needs from the rest of the community - they are often too old for playgrounds, but not old enough or do not have enough money for the kinds of recreational spaces that are available for adults. If state and local governments are to plan and encourage youth-inclusive neighbourhoods, young people need to be involved in the urban planning process.

For further research findings about young people, social planning and urban geography, the committee is encouraged to review the work of Karen Malone, the Asia Pacific Director of the UNESCO-MOST 'Growing up in Cities Project'.

III. Specific program example: The Central Sydney Walk To School Research Program

A current program focus within the Service is the promotion of 'Active Travel', recognising that active commuting by walking, cycling and/or public transport can help children and young people increase their levels of physical activity. The Central Sydney Walk To School Research Program is conducted by the Health Promotion Unit, Sydney South West Area Health Service, Eastern Zone, in partnership with local primary schools and local Councils and is funded by NSW Health from 2004- 2007.

This part of the submission will briefly describe the Program, and summarise its key findings that are relevant to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Children and Young People and the Built Environment. Recommendations that flow from this discussion will be grouped with the general recommendations to the Inquiry in the main body of the submission.

As the Program has research and intervention elements, we believe our research findings and our program experience can assist the Parliamentary Inquiry. In our work with students, parents and teachers of 24 schools we have identified a number of factors that both help and hinder increased levels of physical activity in children. Further analysis of these factors may be of assistance.

Aims and rationale

The Program aims to increase the proportion of upper primary school students who walk all or some of the way to and from school. The main research question is: can a multifaceted health promotion intervention increase the proportion of upper primary students who walk all or some of the way to and from school, and the frequency and duration of their walking?

The benefits of increased levels of walking between home and school are greater levels of physical activity in students and parents, increased road safety skills and independence of students, less traffic congestion around schools, and reduced car emissions.

Participants and research design

Just under 2000 students and their parents, in 24 public primary schools in the inner west and inner southern area of Sydney are involved. The Program is working with Year 4 and 5 students (aged from 10-12 years) and their parents and teachers in 2005, and with Year 5 and 6 students (aged 11-13 years) and their parents and teachers at the same schools in 2006. The schools are diverse in terms of size, socio economic status, and cultural mix; some are on busy roads, others have quiet, leafy surrounds.

Twelve schools, with about 1000 students, are part of the Walk To School (intervention) group. This group is receiving a set of activities to encourage more walking. The other 12 schools, also with about 1000 students, are in the Healthy Lunch (control) group, and they are receiving activities about healthy eating at school. The schools were randomly allocated to the two groups.

As well as seeking to increase the numbers of students walking, we are also collecting and using data from surveys we have conducted with Years 4 and 5 students and their parents to **inform and tailor** the Program's activities to meet the differing needs of the schools. As well we are **evaluating** the effects of the Program by comparing the walking and driving rates in the intervention and control groups. The student and parent surveys have been conducted in all of the 24 schools in the Program.

Program activities

Program activities to encourage more walking include: a classroom exercise where students map their routes from home to school on a large scale map, the Footsteps newsletter for parents (copies attached: see Appendix 1), classroom teaching on road safety, feedback to schools on their own survey results, development and distribution of a Travel Access Guide (TAG) for each school, (a copy of the Five Dock Public School TAG is attached: see Appendix 2) and a safety audit or survey of each school and its vicinity by the local council. The safety review seeks to identify and address hazards in the physical environment around the school. The involvement of local Councils is a important part of the project.

Survey findings

Key survey findings are:

- **56%** of students were driven to school, **37%** walked all the way, and **5%** used public transport (aggregated data from all 24 schools). In our survey, going to school by car is the main way of travel.
- There is a large variation in the percentage of those who go by car and those who go on foot, from school to school. The highest percentage of students who go by

car is 69%, and the lowest is 12%. The highest percentage of students who go on foot is 69%, and the lowest is 22%.

- Factors associated with car use are parent's journey to work, parental attitudes to walking to school, number of cars available in the household, and distance from home to school. Parents who do not use a car to get to work were significantly less likely to drive their children to school.
- Some of the reasons that parents gave to explain why they drove their children to school instead of walking are: **parents are driving to work** after they take their children to school, busy streets are seen as **unsafe to cross**, there is not enough **time** in the morning, a **lack of convenient** public transport, and a perception that they live **too far away** from school to walk.
- There are significant differences in parental attitudes to walking to school and the safety of the school vicinity between car users and non-car users. Parents who agreed with the statement that their child did not have the road safety skills needed to walk to school were significantly more likely to drive their children to school.
- Only 5% of students in our survey used public transport to go to and from school. Of the students in our study, 29% live within 0.5 km of their school, 24% live between 0.5-1km, 13% live between 1 and 1.5 km, 10% live between 1.5-2 kms, and 22% live more than 2kms away from school.

Factors that can help or hinder increased walking by children:

Schools and their vicinities

The 12 schools in our intervention group differ in terms of their surrounding vicinities. The land use, traffic flow, and immediate environment around schools affect their actual and perceived levels of safety.

One of the schools in our Program has factories across the road and directly against its boundaries, several are located on heavily used roads that lack sufficient and safe crossings, and near most of the schools there are physical hazards (narrow footpaths, inadequate crossings, streets with poor visibility etc) that make walking challenging for experienced pedestrians let alone children.

Educational authorities are responsible for the upkeep and safety of the site of their schools, but it is difficult for them to have influence over the broader factors in the school's immediate vicinity. These factors affect the safety and amenity of the surrounding environment and can discourage parents and students walking to school. A more systematic way of developing and ensuring safe vicinities and routes to school is needed. This will require additional collaboration between government departments and between levels of government in order to give the safety of children on their way to school the priority it deserves. Other European countries have developed considerable infrastructure to develop safe walking routes to school. In NSW there is little policy attention or substantial funding to ensure safe walking routes to schools.

Parent Journey To Work

Parents' car journey to work is strongly associated with children being driven to school. To shift the school journey from driving to walking and/or active travel requires a similar shift in the parent journey to work. The two journeys are interdependent. This is why our Travel Access Guides (TAGs) for schools also contain information on travel to additional destinations. Workplaces need to encourage active travel, instead of the many current practices (eg workplace car parking spaces, provision of a car for work travel, but no comparable reimbursement for travel by public transport or bicycle,) which act as incentives for car use. Our study also shows that students who are driven to school spend less time walking to places nearby (eg the park, a friend's house or to the shops).

Perception of Distance

65% of the students live within 1.5 kms of their school, but the walking rates drop off sharply when students live more than 0.5 kms away from school. A distance more than half a kilometre is perceived, many parents and children, as too far to walk. If parents do not encourage walking, it is unlikely that their children will either perceive or experience walking as an everyday activity.

Parent limitations on children's independence

In response to the question, 'during the day, do you allow your child to walk on their own near where you live' 13% of parents answered 'mostly', 40% answered 'sometimes' and 46% said 'never'. We also found that parents who drive their children to school are more likely to not let their children walk alone near where they live. This data means that a significant number of children aged 10-12 years lack the opportunity to develop confidence and independence exploring their local community.

Use of Public Transport

Most (but not all) of the schools in our Program have fairly good public transport close by, but many parents were not aware of it or had not used public transport to go to school. As a strategy to decrease car travel to school and to work we are developing a Travel Access Guide (TAG) for each of the 12 schools. TAGs give people information on how to get to places by walking, cycling and using public transport, and relying less on cars. Our evaluation findings will indicate if this strategy is useful, and the Inquiry may wish to consider if TAGs for schools should be developed more broadly to encourage more active travel.

A further reason for the low use of public transport may be the current eligibility requirements of the Student Transport Scheme. Students in Years 3 –6 are eligible for free public transport to and from school if they live within 1.6kms radial distance or 2.3kms by the most practical walking route from school. Our research indicates that a substantial proportion of students who live within 1.5kms of their school are driven to school regularly. A further disincentive for public transport use is that as parents believe they need to accompany their children on the bus or train, they need to buy a ticket themselves, thus cancelling out the financial benefit of the Student Travel Scheme.

Hazards To Safe Walking

Identifying and fixing safety hazards in the physical environment is one of the several important contributions that state and local governments can make to increase the rates of walking and to reduce car use around schools. Hazards identified in our study include narrow and broken footpaths, traffic lights with insufficient crossing times, industrial areas next to schools, lack of pedestrian crossings, and pockets of

residential land 'marooned' by busy roads. Buildings that are being demolished and/or redeveloped often bring hazards to their surrounding environments. Builders and their equipment at times take over the footpath, block access with large scale vehicles and building supplies and require walkers to detour onto the road.

Part of the complexity of remedying the hazards is that different government departments have different priorities- some see increased traffic flow as a priority, others see better amenity for people walking, traffic calming and advocacy for the needs of pedestrians as being their core business. Councils frequently have a backlog of minor and capital works improvements, and insufficient funds to fix the hazards in a timely way.

IV. General Recommendations to the Inquiry:

- **Mixed land use and housing density:**

There is consistent evidence that urban density, mixed land use and high street connectivity are associated with increased walkability. A diverse land use mix leads to shorter travel distances between places of interest and daily activities. *(The committee are referred to the report: Gebel et al (2005) Creating Healthy Environments: a review of the links between the physical environment, physical activity and obesity. NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity).* Copies of the report are available at www.coo.health.usyd.edu.au

- **Street connectivity and design**

Street designs that connect ('neotraditional' designs) can encourage active transport, as many possible and more direct routes are available for any given trip. Centrally located shops and schools can encourage walking to such locations, and also make school recreational facilities easily accessible to the community outside of school hours.

- **New housing developments**

Service, transport and infrastructure planning and provision needs to be in place up-front for new housing developments or existing suburbs experiencing increased housing density. An added advantage is that cycling and walking infrastructure is less expensive to install at the time of development, compared to retrofitting. Solutions to car dependency need to combine reducing the need to travel with the provision of regular, reliable, affordable public transport and a supportive environment for walking

and cycling. Residential, commercial and business areas need to be connected by good transport infrastructure and systems.

- **Infrastructure for Active Transport**

A good cycling and walking environment is one that is connected, conspicuous, convenient and comfortable. There should be walkable and rideable distances between key destination such as shops, home, schools and public transport. Priority and space should be given to pedestrians and cyclists with clearly marked, good quality routes linking these destinations. End of trip facilities such as bicycle racks should be routinely provided at public facilities. For more detailed information, the Committee is referred to the document: *Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling (2004). NSW Department of Planning.*

Available from: <http://www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au/cycling.html>

- **Schools**

Schools need to have nearby public transport and to have safe and accessible walking and cycling paths that link to the local community. Safe walking and cycling routes to school can encourage children to establish lifelong active travel habits. Increased frequency of public transport would make it more feasible for many parents to walk with their children to school and then use public transport to travel to their workplace.

- **Student Travel Scheme**

It would be worthwhile to rethink the rationale and eligibility requirements of the Student Travel Scheme to encourage more active travel by students and parents, and to reduce car use for the school run. Parents may be more likely to use public

transport to go to school and to then continue their journey to work if their children are eligible for the Student Travel Scheme. Reducing the distance eligibility requirement from 1.6km (radial distance) and 2.3km (most practical walking route) to 1km may encourage more active travel and reduce car use.

- **Provision of parks and green spaces**

Children need opportunities to explore their natural environment. Parks should be planned near residential areas and have well designed, stimulating amenities with safe routes leading to and from them.

- **Design and provision of urban spaces for youth**

Young people should have an authentic opportunity to be involved in the planning, design and development of their local urban spaces to ensure that such spaces accommodate their needs and are of interest to them. They should have access to a variety of safe, stimulating meeting places where they can congregate without undue harassment or intervention by adults, both in their immediate environment and in neighbouring communities.

Submitted by:

Michelle Daley
Senior Health Promotion Officer
Health Promotion Service
Sydney South West Area Health Service

Denise Fry
Project Officer
Health Promotion Service
Sydney South West Area Health Service

Submitted on behalf of The Health Promotion Service, Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS), December 2005

List of Appendices.

- 1. 'Footsteps' newsletters from Central Sydney Walk to School Research project**
- 2. Travel Access Guide (TAG) for Five Dock Public School**

Footsteps

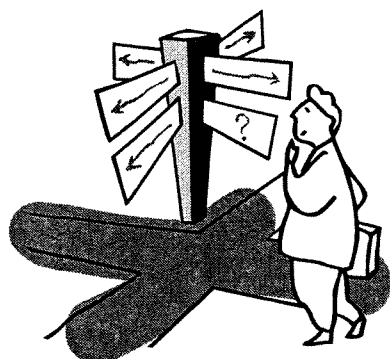
Newsletter of the Central Sydney Walk to School Research Program

Term 1 Survey Results for your School

In the last edition of Footsteps we gave you some preliminary results from the Student Survey conducted in Term 1 on how Years 4 and 5 students travel to and from school. Those results were collected from all 24 schools in the Program. We are currently putting together a specific report for each of the 12 schools in the Walk to School group. This report will contain data and results collected from the Student and Parent Surveys at your school.

We will come to your school to present this information and talk it over with you- we can come to a parent meeting, to a school assembly, to a P & C meeting- whatever suits your school community best. We're interested to hear your views on the information and about travelling to and from school in general. I will organise this meeting with Year 4 and 5 teachers and the Principal at your school, so let them or me know your views.

Active Travel – and how you can do it



Active travel is about people using walking, public transport and cycling to get to and from places, and relying less on cars. Active travel to school is a practical way to fit physical activity into busy lives, to reduce traffic congestion, to improve air quality and to have a chat with your children, all at the same time! But how do you do it? If you are on your way to work after you do the school run, active travel may seem difficult. To help, we are producing a **Travel Access Guide** for your school.

This **Travel Access Guide** or **TAG** will provide information on how to go to and from your school by walking, public transport, and/or cycling. The TAG will have a map of the school, with public transport information, including where to catch the bus or train, the routes of the buses and trains, and how far it is from the bus stop or train station to school. We have been meeting with teachers and parents at each school to make sure the **TAG** is informed by local knowledge. All parents at the school will receive a copy of the school TAG.

Each school will be able to use their TAG for general information purposes, such as Kindergarten Orientation and school newsletters. We hope the TAGs will encourage parents and students to walk to or from school at least some days of the week, and to also use active travel for other activities, such as getting to sport, after school activities or visiting friends.



Fathers- you can walk with your kids too!!

Our Parent Survey asked the question 'when your child walks, who do they walk with?' Only a very small percentage (about 5%) of Years 4 and 5 students walked to school with their fathers. Is this because it's mostly mothers who are organising the 'get ready and out the door to school' morning routine? Our survey shows that many mothers, as well as fathers, are in the workforce. Sharing the morning tasks more between both parents will give you more time and flexibility to fit in walking at least part of the way to school on some days of the week.

Dads – don't miss out on walking with your children! Why not reorganise your morning routine even one or two days a week so you can walk with your child? Walking to school is a good time for parents and children to have a chat, to explore your neighbourhood, and to greet and meet other people in your local area.



Active Travel saves money

Active travel not only improves the air and exercises the muscles; it also can save you money. How much does it cost a week to run a car? The answer is lots. A more specific answer comes from the NRMA, the road and motoring association. It has worked out the weekly running costs for several popular car models. (see www.mynrma.com.au) These costs include depreciation, registration, third party and vehicle insurance, NRMA membership, fuel, tyres, and service and repairs.



For a light car the costs are from **\$106-\$145** a week

For a small car from **\$125-273** a week

For a medium car from **\$150-\$279** a week

For a 'people mover' car from **\$165-\$291** a week

For **buses**, you can buy a TravelTen ticket for 10 trips (handy for the working week). There are five TravelTen tickets available based on different travel distances.

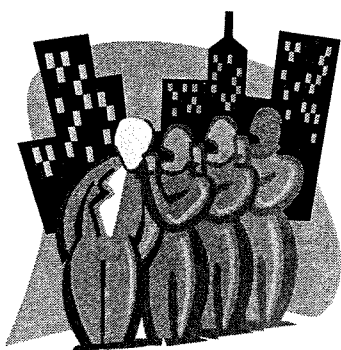
They are:

Blue (up to 2 sections)	\$12.70 adult	\$6.30 concession
Brown (up to 5 sections)	\$21.30 adult	\$10.60 concession
Red (up to 9 sections)	\$27.90 adult	\$13.90 concession
Green (up to 15 sections)	\$36.10 adult	\$18 concession
Orange (up to 16+ sections)	\$44.20 adult	\$22.10 concession.

How much does public transport cost? The Transport Infoline website has this information (www.131500.com.au).

For **trains**, a 7 day RailPass for Strathfield to the City costs \$25.

So, the minimum weekly cost for a medium car is **\$150**, and the most expensive bus ticket for a week is **\$44.20**. Do you really need that second car?



We want to hear from you!

Got something to say about travelling to and from school? Are there things that could help you and your children walk to and from school and use active travel? Let me know, either by phone, fax or email.

Denise Fry

Central Sydney Walk To School Research Program

Health Promotion Unit

Sydney South West Area Health Service (Eastern Zone).

Ph 9515 9061 Fax 9515 9056

denise.fry@email.cs.nsw.gov.au

Footsteps

Newsletter of the Central Sydney Walk to School Research Program

How do your students get to school – by car or on foot?

In August and September parents of Year 4 and 5 students received reports on our Term 1 student and parent surveys. The reports described the survey results on how Year 4 and 5 students travelled to and from school in Term 1. The Term 4 student survey conducted in November will tell us if there has been an increase in the number of students walking to and from school. We thought all parents at school might be interested in the results from the Term 1 survey, so here is a summary about your school.

At Newtown Public School

- 46% of Year 4 and 5 students were driven to school
- 43% walked all the way
- 4% used public transport
- 30% of students live less than 0.5km away from school, 30% live 0.5 –1km, 9% live 1- 1.5kms, 15% live 1.5-2kms, and 18% live more than 2 kms from school.

Newtown PS's rate of walking is higher than the **average rate of 37%** (combined data from all of the 24 participating schools in our Program).

Schools are Different

A major finding of our survey is the large variation between schools in the percentage of those who walk to school and those who are driven. Those driven to school ranged from **12% to 69%**, and those who walked ranged from **22% to 69%**.

This means that different strategies are required for each school to meet the particular needs of each school community and the surrounding environment.



AND A BIG THANK YOU to Year 4 and 5 students and their teachers for completing the Term 4 student survey in November 2005. We plan to analyse the data and give you results on how students travel to and from school in the second week of December.

Footsteps wants to publish parent and student contributions!

What do you see and hear as you walk to school?

Send your piece to: denise.fry@email.cs.nsw.gov.au

or to the address or fax below.

Taking the Sidetracks



Take the sidetracks in your local area and discover the nooks, the crannies, and the odd corners of bush and old buildings that are often just around the corner.

Sydney is full of the unexpected, a jumble of old and new. Ruth Park has described the city's sandstone bones as poking out of the ground and the foundations of buildings. For a big city, there is a surprising amount of bush, and a lot of birds and mammals who make it their home. And of course there is the harbour, at least three big rivers and one largish one, and innumerable creeks and gullies that run down into them.

Sydneysiders spent the first 180 years of the city's life either building factories next to or tossing rubbish into these creeks and rivers. In the last few decades we have started to clean up our rivers and creeks and regenerate the surrounding bush. People value having public space along the rivers and harbour, and want to preserve it.

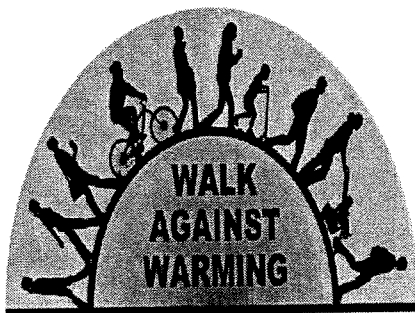
Out and about in your area

Community groups and councils have led the way, developing parks and walking areas for everyone to enjoy. Many councils produce maps and guides to their local parks and bush areas, to encourage people to use them more. We need to preserve local landscapes as well as historic buildings if we are to see and understand how the different layers have developed in our local communities.



So find a park or a walking track in your local area where you haven't been before, pack something to eat and drink, and take the family out on the weekend. Walk along the Cook's River or its tributary the Wolli Creek, see the old brick towers and the replanted native flora in Sydney Park, sniff the mangroves while you stroll around Iron Cove on the Bay Walk, explore Mason Park wetlands and count the birds, find the Bark Huts Reserve and the Cox's Creek Channel, watch the pelicans on Blackwattle Bay. Discover the land that's under the city.

Walk Against Warming- 3 December 2005



Join with people all over the world, and do something about climate change.

To mark the International Day of Action on Climate Change, there will be a **Walk Against Warming** in Sydney on Saturday 3 December 2005. The march will leave Sydney Town Hall at 11am and walk to Hyde Park North.

There'll be walks in all capital cities and some regional towns in Australia, and walks in many places in countries in Europe, Canada, USA and South America.

For more information go to the website www.walkagainstawarming.org or contact mcook@ncccnsw.org.au and ph 9279 2522.

Footsteps

Newsletter of the Central Sydney Walk to School Research Program

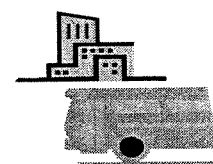
Holiday time....

Holidays are just around the corner, and it's a perfect time to do all the things you have been too busy to do during the rest of the year. Things like:



Going to a place in Sydney you haven't been before – a beach, a national park, a swimming pool or a museum. City walking can be as much fun as bush walking – and there's more opportunities for coffee and ice cream!

Going on a ferry ride, or the bus or train. Holidays (when it doesn't matter if you are a bit late or not) are a good time for kids to learn about using public transport. Do they know how to buy a ticket, the bus route numbers near home, which train platform to go to?



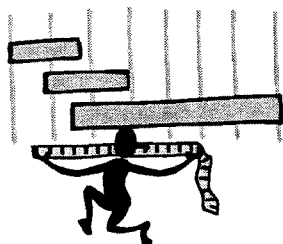
Reminding your kids to **stop, look and listen** when they are crossing roads, and to use traffic light and pedestrian crossings. When you walk with them, you can assess how ready they are to walk on their own. Remember that up to the age of 10 children should walk with an adult, and should hold an adult's hand while crossing the road. If your child is about 10 years old, they are probably ready to start walking on their own in your neighbourhood, to a friend's house, or perhaps to the local shops to buy the bread or milk.

It's going to be a very hot summer, so try to plan outdoor activities either early or later in the day, and to head for the shade between 11.am and about 3 or 4pm. Don't forget hats, sunscreen, shirts and water for everyone.



People travel from all over the world to holiday in Sydney-and we live here all the time! Let's enjoy this wonderful environment of ours.

Results of the Term 4 student surveys

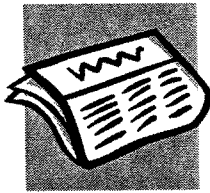


Thanks to all students and teachers who helped with our Term 4 Survey, which collected data on how Year 4 and 5

students travelled to and from school, for 5 days in a school week. The full results will be available next year. Here is a snapshot of the results:

At Camdenville Public School

- **42%** of Year 4 and 5 students walked to school and **48%** walked home
- **43%** went by car to school and **41%** went home by car
- more students are walking to school in Term 4, compared to 34% in Term 1 2005.



The headlines say

Some parents may have seen recent articles run in the Daily Telegraph. The articles listed a number of incidents reported by School Principals to the Department of Education. The 'Tele' concluded that 'there is an alarming outbreak of stranger danger' (p1, 5/12/05).

A closer reading of the Daily Telegraph article shows that not all of the incident reports were verified (ie they are things that people thought might have happened, rather than things that actually happened), and many incidents were disagreements or conflicts between students in secondary schools. Some incidents were complaints that subsequent police investigation showed to be hoaxes.

Does this list of incidents mean it is too dangerous to walk to school? 'Stranger danger' is alarming, but it is well to remember that statistically it is a very rare occurrence and that it has not increased over time. The Walk To School Program encourages parents to walk with their children, and for older children to walk with friends and neighbours. As children grow, they need to develop road safety skills, and to be confident and independent. These skills are as vital for children's health as good food and love from their parents.

What do the experts say?

At the Creating Child Friendly Cities Conference held in Melbourne recently, several experts discussed the growing trend in Australia for parents not to allow their sons and daughters to go out alone at all, and how this affects the development of young people. "This takes away children's capacity to develop the sorts of skills that would help them assess the dangers" said Associate Professor Karen Malone who is the Director of UNESCO's Growing Up in Cities Project for the Asia Pacific region, and in the Education Faculty at the University of Wollongong.

**CREATING
CHILD
FRIENDLY
CITIES**

Thank you and see you next year!

Thank you to parents, students, teachers and school principals for their involvement with the Central Sydney Walk To School Research Program in 2005. Thank you for all your efforts with the student and parent surveys, and the other work that teachers and parents have done in encouraging students to walk more. Next year we will be working with Year 5 and 6 students and their teachers and parents. There will also be more surveys in Terms 1 and 4 on how students and parents travel to school and work. Best wishes to everybody and have a happy and safe holiday!




Happy Holidays

Produced by Central Sydney Walk to School Research Program
Health Promotion Unit (Eastern Zone), SSWAHS, Level 9 KGV Building, Missenden Rd, Camperdown 2050
Ph: 9515 9061 Fax 9515 9056 Email: denise.fry@email.cs.nsw.gov.au

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM FIVE DOCK PUBLIC SCHOOL


A HEALTHY, SAFE AND GREEN WAY TO GO

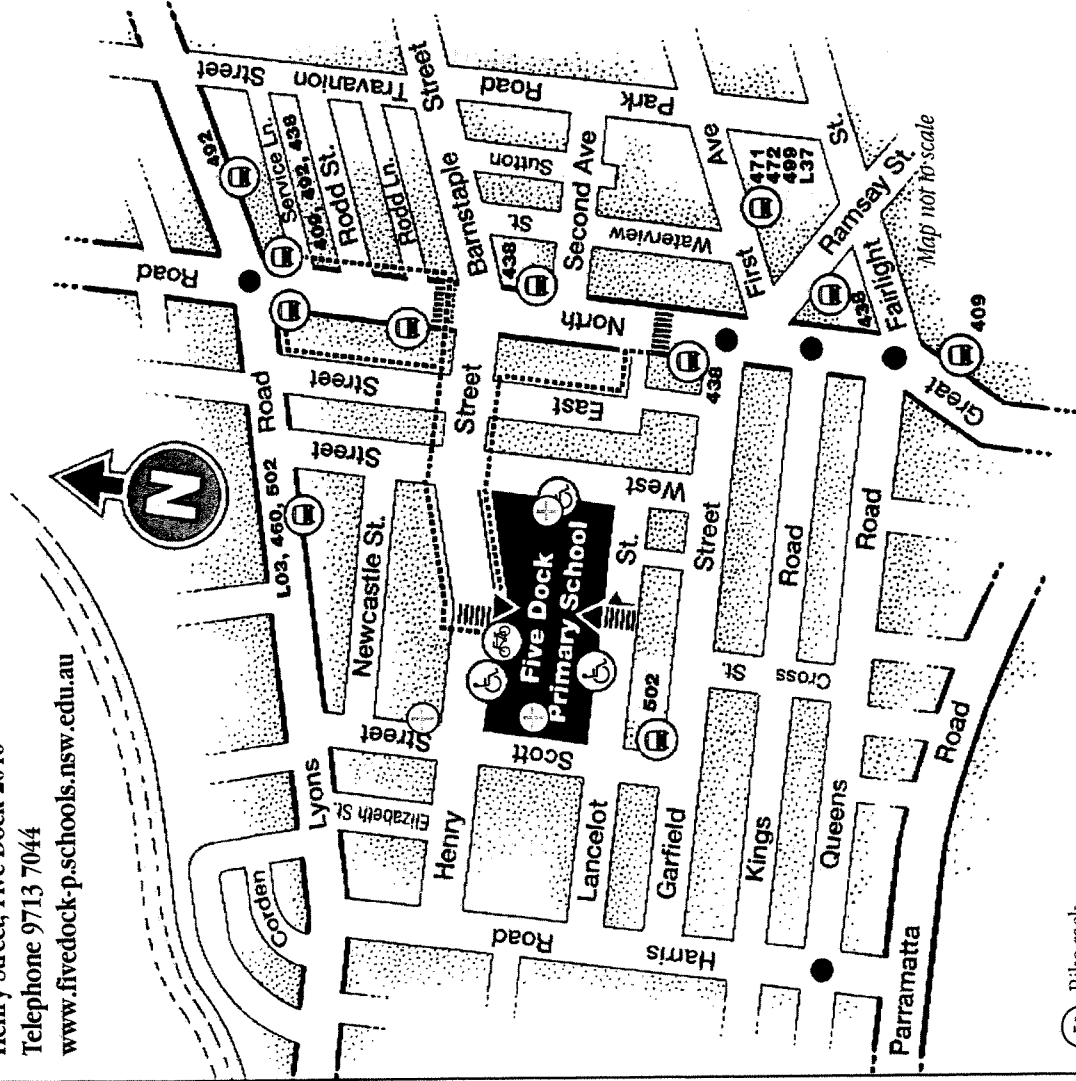
Five Dock Public School
Henry Street, Five Dock 2046
Telephone 9713 7044
www.fivedock-p.schools.nsw.edu.au









-  Five Dock Public School is a walk of 2 – 5 minutes from nearby bus stops.
-  Bus 438 (Abbotsford to Circular Quay) goes down Great North Rd.
- Buses 437 (Five Dock to Circular Quay), 471 and 472 (Five Dock to Rockdale via Haberfield and Ashfield) and 460 (Five Dock to Concord Hospital) stop in First Ave.
- Buses 409 (Burwood to Hurlstone Park), 492 and 499 (Drummoyne to Rockdale and Hurstville via Five Dock) go via Great Northern Rd and Lyons Rd.
- Buses 502 (Bayview Park to City via Drummoyne) and L03 (Mortlake to City via Drummoyne) go via Lyons Rd.
-  Ashfield station is the closest train station to Five Dock Public School.
- Buses 409, 471 and 472 stop at Ashfield station and 492 and 499 stop at Burwood and Campsie stations.

131500
www.131500.com.au

For information about buses, trains and ferries, including bus stops, timetables, maps of routes, fares, and student travel passes contact the Transport Infoline, telephone 131500 or www.131500.com.au

-  For information on bicycle routes in local areas and across Sydney contact Bicycle NSW on 9281 4099 or www.bicyclensw.org.au and the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) on 1800 060 607 or www.rta.nsw.gov.au/bicycles.htm



-  Bike rack
-  Suggested walking routes
-  Bus stop
-  Points to drop off children
-  School entrances
-  Disabled parking
-  Traffic lights
-  Pedestrian crossing



City of Canada Bay Council

SYDNEY SOUTH WEST
AREA HEALTH SERVICE
NSW HEALTH

This Travel Access Guide (TAG) provides information on travelling to and from **Five Dock Public School**. It shows parents, students, and the wider school community how to get to and from our school, and how to enter and leave the school safely.

We encourage parents and students to use active travel to get to and from school. Active travel is about people using walking, public transport and cycling to get to places, and relying less on cars.

Our school has nearby public transport. This TAG will help you find out how to use public transport to go to and from school.

Benefits of using active travel to go to and from school include:

- Reduction of traffic congestion around the school
- A safer school environment
- An opportunity for physical activity for parents and students.

A safe journey to and from school

Safety for children is our priority. When arriving at school, we ask you to use the pedestrian crossing and the recommended school entrance in Henry Street, or the children's crossing (with flags) and the recommended school entrance in Lancelot Street.

For those who drive, we ask you to use the points in Henry, Lancelot and West Streets (that are marked on the TAG) to stop your car and to drop off children. Please make sure children get out of the car on the footpath side of the road. Please do not drop off children in front of the No Stopping signs or in the school car park, and do not park across people's driveways in streets adjacent to the school.

As an alternative to dropping off children directly outside the school, we suggest you park a block or two away and walk with your child to school. This way your child can practise their road safety skills with you.

We recommend that children up to ten years of age walk with a parent or another adult, and that children should hold an adult's hand while crossing the road.

Going to and from school – a good opportunity to do some walking

Children and young people need at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity (like walking) a day on most days of the week to stay healthy. Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day to maintain their health. (National Physical Activity Guidelines for children, young people and adults, Australian Department of Health and Ageing, 2004. For further information telephone 1800 020 103 or see their website www.healthyschools.gov.au).

Walking some or all of the way to and from school is a good way for parents and children to do some of this physical activity and learn more about the local environment; and it means less traffic congestion around our school.