



Perth workplaces getting TravelSmart

Employees at two major workplaces in Perth have reduced their car commuting by a fifth. More businesses and government agencies are following their lead in getting TravelSmart.

Fewer car trips is good news for the environment, health and business. Promoting cycling, public transport and other travel options through a green transport plan is the key. TravelSmart Workplace is helping make it happen.

Meeting the challenge

It's a big challenge changing the travel habits of Perth commuters. Four out of every five currently get to work by car, creating traffic congestion on our roads and adding to air pollution.

Yet many of these trips could be made by public transport, cycling or walking.

Fewer car trips means:

- Less traffic on the roads and better access;
- Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants;
- Healthier people as more walk and cycle;
- Reduced car use and parking costs for individuals and business;
- Positive public profile by showing corporate responsibility.

Organisations like the Water Corporation are showing it can be done - see page three.



Making it happen

Ten organisations in 16 offices with a total of 5,280 employees are promoting greener transport through TravelSmart Workplace.

They are developing or implementing green transport plans to reduce the car trips they generate. The plans are based on travel surveys, audits of transport facilities and services and feedback from staff.

A shift away from car commuting is encouraged by providing information on travel choices, improving facilities for cyclists, managing car parking and facilitating car pooling.

Finding out more

There is an active TravelSmart Workplace network of people involved in managing work-related travel. Quarterly forums provide opportunities to hear from a range of

speakers and share ideas that work.

This newsletter is part of the information process and will be supported by a series of fact sheets with practical advice - for example on being a 'cycle-friendly' employer.

TravelSmart Workplace is a joint effort by the Department of Environment and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI). It complements three other TravelSmart programs - Community, Local Government and Schools. TravelSmart motivates people to use travel alternatives through information and encouragement - aimed at achieving balanced, sustainable transport.

What's inside

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The hidden costs of car parking

Providing parking for staff may be costing employers more than they realise. And it encourages staff to drive to work.

Car parking can use up valuable space, it's costly to provide and maintain, and the way it is used affects accessibility for staff, clients and service providers.

These 'downsides' for business were highlighted by DPI's George Brown at a recent TravelSmart Workplace forum.

George, who is DPI's Principal Policy Officer responsible for parking policy, said the key for employers and local councils is to manage parking as part of a broad approach to providing access for people and goods.

"A 'free' parking bay is a perk for many employees, but this encourages car commuting. If parking is readily available and free at workplaces, it is little wonder that many staff drive."

He said the important questions for anyone managing workplace

'If parking is readily available and free, it is little wonder that many staff drive to work'

parking are:

- Who do you want using your carpark?
- For what purpose?
- For how long?

"Providing parking on the basis of need rather than as a 'perk' makes good business sense," George said.

"Developing a green transport plan enables employers to look at parking as part of the bigger picture, considering the range of travel options and problems together.

"Managing parking demand can encourage and achieve greater use of travel alternatives."

Ways to reduce parking demand

at workplaces include:

- Charge for use of parking bays (user pays to cover costs).
- Give public transport, cycling and walking similar support to car commuting, e.g. offer a travel allowance or salary package option.
- Use existing parking more efficiently, including shared parking and car-pool bays.
- Improve and promote travel alternatives, e.g. provide bike parking facilities and information on public transport services.
- Spread demand by offering flexible work arrangements.
- Offer a guaranteed ride home (taxi voucher) for staff who use alternatives to their car and then have to work late unexpectedly.

Facts on parking in Perth

- Over 410,000 employees (or 81%) drive to work.
- There are 54,000 commuter parking bays in central Perth, Northbridge, East Perth and West Perth.
- The average car in Perth spends 97 per cent of its life parked.
- The average car is used for 52 minutes each day.
- Each ground-level car bay costs about \$1,000 to build and \$100 to \$200 pa to maintain
- There are 1,000,000 motor vehicles in Perth and on average each has two spaces provided for it, in addition to the home garage - that's three million parking spaces.



George Brown

How the Water Corporation went greener

The Water Corporation's Leederville office was the first Perth workplace to develop a green transport plan; and their efforts are continuing under the TravelSmart Workplace program.

Richard Kreider of the Corporation's Environmental Resources Awareness group says promoting greener transport is part of the organisation's commitment to a better environment.

The group involves staff in managing their environmental impacts at work and has driven the Corporation's green transport plan.

The Water Corporation employs over 2,000 staff with about 760 at its head office in Leederville, where it wanted to manage growing parking pressure while promoting greener travel.

Action plan gets results

A staff travel survey in 1998 found that 64 per cent drove to work even though there were other options. Most staff also took the car for business trips. But the Leederville train station is only a short walk away and a major bike route runs close by - alongside the Mitchell Freeway.

With support from the Conservation Council's Smogbusters program, a green transport plan was prepared. The goal was to reduce car driver commuting by ten per cent.

"The plan encourages more people to use alternatives by providing information on car parking, car pooling, public transport, cycling and walking," Richard says.

The green transport plan was launched in November 1999 and resulted in:



Pictured from left are Richard Kreider and Mike Thorman and Meg Anklesaria, Water Corporation; David Wake, DPI and Danny Burkett, Water Corporation.

'Water Corp staff reduced their car commuting by 23 per cent'

- Improved end-of-trip facilities for cyclists - with more bicycle parking and lockers.
- Car parking bays allocated to employees who committed to car pooling regularly.
- An intranet bulletin board that facilitates car pooling.
- A workplace access guide to travel options.
- Smogbusters breakfasts to encourage and reward green commuting by staff.
- Bus and train timetables at the reception desk and kiosk.
- Articles in the corporate

newsletter on travel options and green transport plan initiatives.

- Encouragement of participation in cycling programs - teams have taken part in the annual Statewest cycling challenge.

A survey in February 2001 found that car-as-driver commuter trips had fallen by 23 per cent. A survey in March this year revealed that car use had crept up a little, showing that efforts have to be sustained.

"Much has been done by interested staff with minimal resources," Richard says.

"It is now time to review the plan and find ways to mainstream green transport within the Corporation, while building on our successes to date."

The Water Corporation is participating in TravelSmart Workplace this year.

Making travel plans work

The findings of a recent UK study have highlighted the importance of financial incentives and parking controls to shift staff travel choices away from the car.

Twenty organisations with successful green transport plans (called travel plans in the UK) were asked "How can workplaces drive down car traffic?"

The study included major companies, local councils, hospitals, a university and a shopping centre. All had reduced car driver commuting by 18 per cent or more through their travel plans, which contained a mix of measures to make car-free travel alternatives more competitive options.

What works

The greatest reductions depended on financial incentives or disincentives and the level of car parking available.

The report said restraining parking was a hallmark of high achieving travel plans. It said staff

parking permits, reducing parking spaces or charging for parking were effective, but could prove contentious.

The most successful travel plans combined parking limitations with a high number of 'carrots' - positive measures to support alternative travel. These could include improvements to travel alternatives and information and incentives to use them.

The report said management support and dedicated staff time were critical and, over time became part of the organisation's culture, with travel plan goals integrated into corporate objectives.

The most effective plans had a 'champion' - a travel coordinator with a hands-on role in pushing forward initiatives and ensuring that they ran effectively.

For more on the Making Travel Plans Work study go to <http://www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/travelplans/guides/index.htm>

TravelSmart Workplace Forums

Every quarter you have the chance to meet with others involved in managing work-related travel through the TravelSmart Workplace Forums.

The latest was on May 29, the topic was public transport. Gary Merritt and Jenni Vile of Transperth provided an overview of Perth's public transport system and suggestions on promoting it in the workplace.

The next forum will be: **Carrots and Sticks for Greener Commuting** on Wednesday August 20 at 10.30am at the QV1

conference centre, Level 2, 250 St. George's Terrace, Perth. You can walk, cycle or catch the Red CAT.

Ian Ker of ARRB Transport Research will look at incentives and disincentives in car commuting. Hear how fringe benefits tax and employment conditions currently favour car use. Find out what your organisation can do to promote greener travel options.

To register for any forum or for more details please contact David Wake, e-mail david.wake@dpi.wa.gov.au or ring 9216 8351.

Resources

TravelSmart on the worldwide web

There is now a national web site dedicated to promoting smarter travel choices, launched by the Australian Greenhouse Office earlier this year.

Included is an Employers Toolkit, providing advice on preparing a green transport plan. You will find it online at www.travelsmart.gov.au

The WA TravelSmart site at www.dpi.wa.gov.au/travelsmart offers an outline of local TravelSmart programs and maps and brochures on being TravelSmart.

The workplace pages are currently being updated.

Contacts

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It's how you get there that counts

TravelSmart Workplace is a joint initiative of the Department of Environment and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. TravelSmart Workplace helps businesses, local councils and government agencies manage the travel they generate. The program is supported by the Australian Greenhouse Office.