

Walking Attitudes and Behaviours amongst Respondents in the Perth Metropolitan Area February 2009

**Prepared for:
Department for Planning and Infrastructure Walking Unit**



Government of Western Australia
Department for Planning and Infrastructure



**Health Promotion Evaluation Unit
School of Exercise, Biomedical and Health Sciences
Edith Cowan University**

Summary of results: Walking Attitudes and Behaviours amongst Respondents in the Perth Metropolitan Area, February 2009

In 2008, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's Walking Unit commissioned the Health Promotion Evaluation Unit at Edith Cowan University to conduct a study to monitor walking related attitudes, intention and behaviour amongst Perth metropolitan residents. In August 2008, a total of 401 residents (54% female) participated in a 20 minute computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) survey comprising of 22 questions.

The survey questions investigated respondent's knowledge of (1) engagement in physical activity for health benefits (2) the transport mode used to travel to work or study (3) participation in walking for recreation (4) amount of trips walked for transport (5) information on why respondents chose to walk instead of driving (6) common walking destinations (7) barriers to walking and (8) what might encourage them to walk more.

Overall, the results of this study support the high level of car dependence of adults travelling to work and study. It was found that this car dependence was in contrast to participants desire to become less car dependent and also denied the participants the considerable health benefits of regular physical activity in the form of walking and add to the problems of pollution and traffic congestion.

The following recommendations were made:

- Continued promotion of walking for transport especially amongst people living within 2 km of their place of work or study.
- Encouraging the use of active transport amongst people who live greater than 5km from their work or place of study.
- Promotion of identifying destinations, such as shops and parks where people can walk instead of drive. It is further recommended to investigate motivations behind decisions to substitute these trips, particularly around the ease of walking compared with driving.
- Reinforce the public's positive attitudes towards walking instead of driving and the desire to reduce car use.
- Promote the continued investment in infrastructure for walking and public transport that would support and facilitate substitution of car trips with walking.
- Further investigate the barriers to walking for transport

Key Findings:

(1) Engagement in physical activity for health benefits.

- 66% indicated the need to walk five or more days per week to obtain health benefits
- 87% indicated the need to accumulate a minimum of 30 minutes walking each day to obtain health benefits
- Overall, 59% of respondents understood the need to walk for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week to obtain health benefits

(2) The transport mode used to travel to work or study

- 57% (n=227) of respondents travelled to work, study or both on a normal day
- On average, these respondents travelled approximately 30 minutes from their place of residence to their place of work/study.

- Table 5: Distance from place of residence to place of work/study

	Place of Work	Place of Study
	n=206	n=29
	%	%
1km or less	4	-
More than 1km to 2km	7	3
More than 2km to 5km	8	14
More than 5km to 10km	14	10
More than 10km to 20km	30	35
More than 20km	32	24
Unsure / Don't know	5	14

*Table only includes respondents who travel to work, study or both

- Table 6: Main method of travel from place of residence to work/study (n=227)

	%
Own car / drive self	74
Train	8
Other private vehicle*	5
Walk	4
Bus / CAT bus	3
Other	3
Cycle	2
Car as passenger / get dropped off	1

* Other private vehicle = company car, truck/van/ute or motorbike

Table only includes respondents who travel to work, study or both

(3) Participation in walking for recreation

- 74% of respondents walked at least weekly for recreation or leisure
- 22% walked daily or twice daily in this way.

- **Table 8: Recreational Walking (n=401)**

	%
Twice Daily	3
Daily	19
Few times a week	38
Weekly	14
Fortnightly	3
Monthly	3
Less than once a month	3
Don't walk	17

(4) Amount of trips walked for transport

- 4% of respondents reported walking to their place of work or study. However, for those who lived within 10kms of their work or study, 10% and 25% respectively walked as their main method of transport.
- 53% of respondents overall reported replacing a short car trip with walking at least once a week
- 60% of respondents replaced a short car trip with walking at least once a month.
- Of those respondents who replaced a short car trip with walking more than once a month, the most common distance walked instead of driving was up to 2km (65%) and the most common walking time between 5 and 40 minutes.

(5) Information on why respondents chose to walk instead of driving

- Of the respondents (n=237) who replaced a short car trip with walking more than once a month, the most frequently mentioned reason was for general exercise or to improve health.

- **Table 14 : Reason for short walk instead driving (n=237)**

	%
General exercise/ to improve health	68
Save on fuel / money / parking	31
Recreational / leisure purposes	27
Environmentally friendly	11
Convenience / parking / traffic / distance (other)	11
Don't have car/don't drive (other)	9
Companion / family / friend to walk with	6
Exercise the dog	4
Alternative transport	3
Save wear on the car	1

* Multiple response question

(6) Common walking destinations

- 60% of respondents overall replaced a short car trip with walking at least once a month
- **Table 13: Destinations respondents usually walk to (n=237)**

	%
To the shops	89
To a friends/family place	25
To the park/beach/river	22
To and from public transport	11
To get to / from school / TAFE / Uni	10
To post box/church/library	5
To get to / from work	5
To the video store	4
To gym	3

* Multiple response question

(7) Barriers to walking

- Lack of time and weather conditions were the most frequent reasons given for not walking short journeys in the past month.
- **Table 17: Main reasons for not walking short journeys (n=401)**

	%
Lack of time	24
Weather conditions - too hot / too cold	16
Prevented by health, injury, invalid	9
Nowhere to walk to	7
Do walk/always walk	7
Too lazy / lack of energy / hard work	6
Heavy shopping - carrying something	4
Hard with children	2
Does not drive	2
Don't know	2
Work commitments	1
Inconvenience –	1
Too old	1
Unsafe	1
Too unfit	1
The terrain - too hilly	1
Motivation (lack of)	1
Don't want to	1
Active enough	1
Other	.6

(8) What might encourage them to walk more

- **Table 18: Reasons to walk more - short journeys (n=401)**

	%		%
Need/want to exercise / get fit	26	Walking partner	2
Nothing would	24	Don't know	1
Better weather	18	Babysitter-children	1
Already walk enough	8	Don't have/lost drivers licence	.7
Have more time	8	A dog	.7
A destination	3	Footpaths	.5
No car or other vehicle/petrol prices	3	Other	.4
Health	2	Work/break from work	.4
Want to save money	2		

Attitudes towards Walking

- A high number of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - o 'I would like to use my car less often', 78%
 - o 'If I could, I would definitely walk to work or place of education', 73%
 - o 'Travel to work or place of education is a good opportunity to exercise', 69%
 - o 'Walking is a practicable alternative to driving your car over short distances', 66%
 - o 'Public transport should be the main form of transport to work or place of education', 59%

Recall of Walking related messages

- Within the last six months, 33% of all respondents recalled seeing or hearing a walking message or slogan, with just over half (53%) recalled seeing or hearing the 'Find 30' message

Children – main method of travel to place of education and reasons for not walking or riding

- 72% of respondents did not have children aged between five and 17 years of age in their household.

- **Table 21: Children - main method of transport to school/college (n=206 children)**

	%
Car as passenger/get dropped off	60
Walk	19
Bus/CAT bus	12
Train	5
Cycle	3
Other	1

- **Table 22: Children - main reasons for not walking or riding to school/college (n=92)**

	%
Too far to walk/cycle to school	71
The child is too young	11
Concerned about child safety/stranger danger	8
Easier/get dropped off on way to work	6
Concerned about child crossing the road	4
Child too lazy	3
Child doesn't have a bike	0
Child doesn't know how to ride a bike	0

*Multiple response question