What is a Local Government TravelSmart Officer?

TravelSmart Officers work within local governments to promote and provide sustainable transport options for their local community. They work with the community and government bodies to identify, develop and implement programs, strategies and initiatives that encourage and promote smarter and more sustainable travel options.

Car traffic in Western Australia has increased over the past ten years and transport surveys consistently demonstrate that over 75 per cent of residents believe this makes their neighbourhood a less pleasant place to live. Four in five people want public transport, cycling and walking to be given priority over cars when planning for their local area.1 Employing a TravelSmart Officer is one way local governments can address community concerns about increasing car use.

In 2006 approximately 3.7 million private car trips were made per day in Perth and car use is increasing faster than population growth.2

What are the benefits of employing a TravelSmart Officer?

Local governments are responsible for managing local road networks, cycling, pedestrian and recreational facilities in their locality. Increasingly, local governments want to discourage car use and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use within their local community to reduce local traffic problems and to improve the experience of residents and visitors. A TravelSmart Officer can help local governments to achieve this goal.

Many Western Australian local governments employ a TravelSmart Officer, or have a position that performs a similar role. Some of the benefits of employing a TravelSmart Officer include:

- **Health** – They assist in promoting and planning neighbourhoods and facilities that encourage people to choose active transport. (For more information refer to the [What is Active Transport? factsheet](#);
- **Economic** – They can acquire grant funding to improve and promote infrastructure for active transport;
- **Environmental** – They generate greenhouse gas savings and a reduction in noise and air pollution for councils by decreasing single occupancy car trips;
- **Social** – They foster community cohesion through their work with educational institutions, local employees and community groups;
- **Safety** – More people walking and cycling results in a better awareness of all road users, greater community contact and more ‘eyes on the street’;
- **Congestion** – They advocate for a range of actions that serve to reduce local congestion; and,
- **Access for all** – Walking and cycling are low cost activities that are available to the whole community.

What do TravelSmart Officers do?

A TravelSmart Officer’s key role is to advocate for changes in the way we travel.

TravelSmart Officers:

- Provide specialist knowledge about ways to improve facilities for cycling, public transport and walking;
- Organise community events;
- Seek grant funding;
- Work with local schools, employers and institutions to achieve sustainable transport outcomes;

2 Department of Planning (2011), internal communication based on estimates from Main Roads WA Road Operations Model calibrated using Perth and Regions Travel Survey data.
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- Create positive media opportunities; and,
- Instigate policy changes that favour active transport.

What have TravelSmart Officers achieved so far?

Local governments have been employing TravelSmart Officers since 2000. As a result local governments have implemented some great sustainable transport initiatives, including:

- The City of Melville Travelsmart Officer has helped to shape and develop innovative projects tailored to the City including the SMARTi Canning Bridge Precinct traffic reduction program and the school parking policy;
- The City of Stirling has developed Women on Wheels an innovative cycling program which is tailored to the needs of women in the community, teaching them a range of cycling skills and providing follow up activities to encourage them to keep riding;
- The City of Belmont has worked closely with local schools to establish and sustain the TravelSmart to School program;
- The City of Geraldton-Greenough was the first regional council to engage a TravelSmart Officer. They were also the first local government to extend their TravelSmart Workplace program to include local businesses and have promoted a range of active transport programs within their community;
- The City of Joondalup encourages their staff to adopt sustainable transport options through the promotion of travel alternatives, the provision of pool bikes and public transport passes for work related travel;
- The City of Cockburn has implemented a range of community events and programs that have promoted active transport including: Rusty Riders, the Coogee Cruisers walking group, the Freo-Cockburn TravelSmart Trek and a host of activities during Bike Week and Walk Week;
- The City of Rockingham has developed an Integrated Transport Plan, a Bike Plan and Bike Week events including the annual family ride through the City;
- The City of South Perth has introduced separated pedestrian and cycle paths and bicycle parking in Sir James Mitchell Park;
- The Town of Victoria Park has a workplace program that provides staff with a bicycle if they commit to riding to work for a year as well as implementing a range of walking and cycling infrastructure throughout the community;
- The City of Swan and the City of Subiaco have both introduced a travel allowance scheme to encourage staff to choose active transport to work;
- The City of Nedlands has amended its town planning scheme to facilitate the installation of end of trip cycling facilities in new developments (where appropriate);
- The City of Perth has provided a dedicated bicycle parking facility at the Elder Street Car Park and is in the process of implementing a bike plan.

How do I hire a TravelSmart Officer?

Any local government can hire a dedicated TravelSmart Officer. The Department of Transport (DoT) supports TravelSmart Officers through the coordination of regular meetings and professional development sessions for the TravelSmart Officer Network. Officers are able to undertake their work with the full support of a range of travel demand management professionals with a broad knowledge of best practice initiatives in the field. The DoT can also assist with recruitment and training if required.

To attract and retain a suitably skilled full-time TravelSmart Officer, a salary range of $55,000 - $65,000 per annum should be budgeted. Some smaller local governments employ a part-time TravelSmart Officer or share the officer with another Local Government or institution.

To find out more contact:

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Website: www.transport.wa.gov.au/travelsmart

About the Physical Activity Taskforce

The Physical Activity Taskforce (Taskforce) was formed in 2001 to oversee the development and delivery of a whole of government, whole of community approach to increasing physical activity levels in Western Australia.

The Taskforce brings together the expertise of a number of state government departments, local governments, leading academics and non-government representatives.

www.beactive.wa.gov.au