



WA gold mine sets new health standards

By Nathan Deans and John Pica*

In 2009 bicycle sales (1,154,077) in Australia significantly outperformed car sales (937,328) by a massive 23%.

But does this mean we're on the right track?

Around half Australia's population is insufficiently active, which significantly increases its risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 Diabetes and obesity.

A lack of physical activity also increases the chances of breast and bowel cancer, depression and anxiety.

Physical inactivity is second only to tobacco as the most important health risk in Australia.

The National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most (but preferably all) days for adults. It also suggests 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day for children and youths.

Cycling is becoming increasingly popular in Australia and – with petrol prices expected to continue to rise – provides a cheap, healthy and environmentally friendly option for the many short trips Australian's make each day.

Between 2001-2006 the number of Australian's aged 15 years and older who cycled in the previous 12 months increased by 244,500, with 1.7 million having done so in 2006.

Over 50% of car trips in Australia are under five kilometres and 30% are under 3 km, yet transport is responsible for 34% of household greenhouse gas emissions.

Alternatively, if Australian's were to start cycling these short trips under 5 km, the impact on household greenhouse emissions could be significant (not to mention contain health benefits).

Incentives provided

Last year was a significant one for cycling infrastructure, with a \$40 million Bike Paths Fund being part of the Commonwealth's stimulus package. There was also substantial state government investment.

But providing funding and infrastructure is really only a job half done as the community now has to be encouraged – or perhaps challenged – to make the changes and begin viewing cycling as a viable

alternative to car travel (especially those short 3-5 km trips that account for half of Australia's current transportation habits).

Body Active Consultancy (BAC) has recently started phase three of the BOSS Program at Newcrest Mining Ltd's Telfer operation in WA.

The aim of the program is to reduce the risks of musculo-skeletal injuries in the workplace.

Each month, BAC accredited exercise physiologist John Pica travels to site to promote health in the workplace.

Holistic approach

The design of this customised workplace health program has been done in conjunction with the WA Health Calendar.

BAC has successfully gained sponsorship to run "Cycle Instead Bikeweek" in Telfer with Byrnegut Australia Pty Ltd.

This year Bikeweek is from March 21–28. It is an annual event which is now into its 25th year and has effectively shown how the sport engages the community with various cycling activities.

The WA transport department has assisted BAC in an attempt to increase the amount of Telfer employees who cycle to work.

As part of the sponsorship, the department has donated several dozen water bottles and other promotional merchandise like bike pumps, bike computers, bells, repair kits and towels.

Currently there are



More employees are being encouraged to get on their bikes.

between 20-30 Byrnegut employees who regularly cycle between the campsite and the worksite (about 3 km each way) and through the Telfer Bikeweek program BAC is looking to double these numbers and has set a target of at least 50 individuals to make this a regular part of their workday routine.

*Deans and Pica are with BAC.

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