

TravelSmart SA benefits Dover Gardens Primary School

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing physical activity, improving knowledge of public transport and addressing road and personal safety issues were just some of the key highlights for Dover Gardens Primary School when they recently participated in the TravelSmart SA.

TravelSmart SA is a Transport SA initiative that is run in conjunction with local councils and schools. The program has been developed as part of an ongoing strategy to reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions in South Australia, in line with the Kyoto Agreement.

One of the major trip generators is the journey to and from school, with over 70 percent of children in Adelaide's metropolitan area making the trip to school by car. The program helps raise student awareness of how travel choices impact on health, physical activity, the environment and the community. The classroom-based activities also concentrate on monitoring how students are currently travelling to school and provides ideas for students on how to plan and implement strategies for reducing car use for all trips.

When schools agree to take part in the program, teachers are given an overview via a TravelSmart SA Introductory Workshop, with TRT being provided for the day. Schools receive a curriculum resource as well as ongoing support from a TSA Education consultant. Parents and caregivers are also encouraged to participate by filling out a simple Travel Diary to record their travel information. This process is designed to help families monitor and reduce the number of car trips they make.

After completing the Travel Diaries, results are collated and each participant is given a travel summary that outlines important information about their travel patterns and includes an approximation of their household vehicle's of the greenhouse gas emissions. Included in this pack is localised travel information and tips on how students and their families can make small changes to their travel behaviour and reduce the amount of trips that make by car.

As well as learning about the impact of travel choices on the environment and the community, students also learned that a reduction in personal car trips meant an increase in physical activity and health benefits. DECS Active for Life program, currently being run in South Australian schools, supports TravelSmart SA and the focus on travel behaviour change as a strategy to lead to increased physical activity.

Principal Jenny Woodley was delighted with the outcomes of Dover garden's participation

“After taking part in the TravelSmart SA program, more students appear to be walking to school”, she said. “It appears there are fewer cars on the road outside the school and many students talk about walking as a form of transport, and catch the bus with their families to more destinations.”

“Students from the school also took part in the Marion Learning Festival and conducted a Travel Survey, which was a major success. Through the TravelSmart SA program, the school is much more aware of public transport and walking as transport options when going on excursions.”

To further encourage TravelSmart SA choices and to promote Travel Behaviour Change in schools, a Walking School Bus is being trialled in two metropolitan schools, in conjunction with the City of Mitcham.

If your school is interested in being involved in the TravelSmart SA program, or you would like further information, please contact Transport SA Metropolitan Region, on 8226 8222.