

School Travel Survey

Go Active 2 School was launched in May 2012 at Denistone East Public School. This involved working with the City of Ryde Council, Ryde Hornsby Health Promotion, NSW Police, NSW Department of Education and Communities and Cancer Council NSW to improve the safety, health and fitness of students and ease traffic congestion around our school. Parents were sent a link to the online *School Travel Survey* to find out the travel behaviours of our students and to determine if any changes had taken place since starting *Go Active 2 School*.

First of all, congratulations!

We had a good response with over 200 parents completing the survey. So now we have a picture of how our students from K-6 travel to and from school every day and any changes that have taken place since starting *Go Active 2 School* and *Walking Wednesdays*.

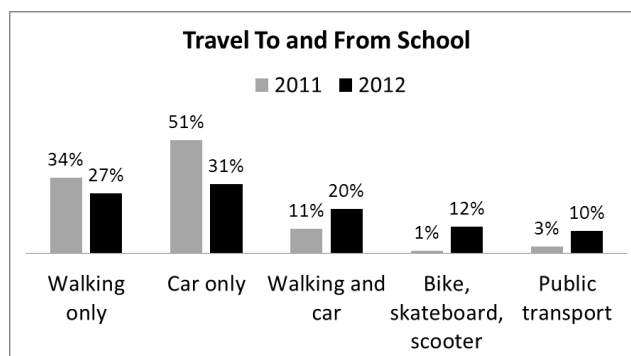
Let's look at a brief snapshot of responses.

Who Drops Off and Picks Up Our Students Each Day?

It won't surprise anyone to find out that parents do the bulk of transporting children to and from school each day. The majority (65%) are mothers. Fathers play a big role with rates of 14%, and 8% of children are accompanied by their grandparents.

How Do Our Students Travel To and From School Each Day?

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of students using active modes of transport to travel to and from school each day. Almost **70%** of students are now using active modes of transport, which has increased from 49% in 2011. The number of students being driven to and from school has declined from 51% in 2011 to 31% in 2012. This is a fantastic result!

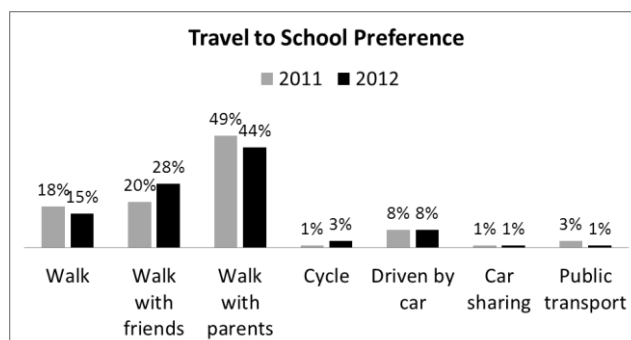


Is It Too Far To Walk?

While there may be many reasons why children don't walk to school, distance was not necessarily the major factor. Approximately two thirds (**66%**) of parents thought that their children **could** walk the distance to school.

How Do Parents Prefer Their Children To Travel To School?

Most parents would **prefer** their children to walk to school. The results show that the travel to school preferences for parents has remained fairly consistent over the past year.



Over 90% of parents said that they would prefer their children to walk, ride a bike or catch public transport to and from school. Of those, 44% of parents would like to walk with their children to and from school and 28% of parents wanted their children to walk to and from school with friends.

Safety

While most of the school community (76%) agreed that they lived in a safe neighbourhood, there were still concerns about the school journey. Some parents had concerns about their child's

safety on their journey to and from school. However, 56% believed that their child did have the required road safety skills to get to and from school proficiently.

Parent's Employment

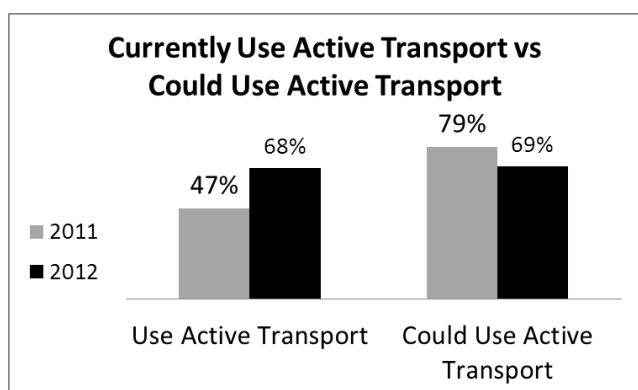
Parent's employment is a crucial ingredient in the travel to school journey. In 2011, 33% of parents felt that their work commitments were a barrier to walking their children to and from school. In 2012, there has been an increase to 55% of parents identifying this as a barrier. Many parents take their children to school via their way to work. Time allocation is hard to manage in the mornings and afternoons and the number of Australians spending excessive hours at work has risen over the years, which may explain this increase.

"It is hard for families where both parents work full-time"

Interestingly, 74% of parents who work outside their home travel to work by car.

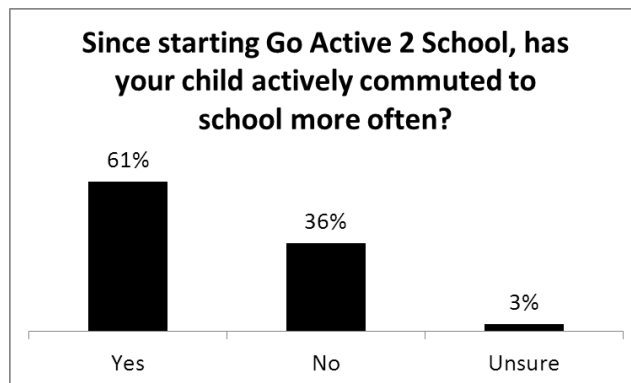
The Big Picture

From the survey results it's clear that parents are positive about wanting to improve children's health, independence and connection with the surrounding environment. While 69% of parents believed they *could* use active modes of transport to travel to and from school, 68% were reported to be *using* these modes of transport. This is an exceptional result!



Over 60% of parents reported that the *Go Active 2 School* project had led to their children walking, cycling or catching public transport to and from

school more often. Plus **78%** of children like walking to and from school!



Positives of the Go Active 2 School Project

"It's encouraged us to try harder to walk to school"

"Parent participation has increased, there's generally a good atmosphere on the streets surrounding the school"

"Reduce carbon emission and encourage children to be active"

"Good for health and road safety skills"

Improvements that could be made to the Go Active 2 School Project

"More signs for reminding people"

"Improve the footpaths to make walking easier, including trimming the trees"

Where to Next

The aim of *Go Active 2 School* is to increase active transport even if it's by one day more a week thus reducing traffic problems and improving health and wellbeing.

If you find it hard to walk to and from school why not try actively commuting on a Wednesday as part of Denistone East's *Walking Wednesday* initiative? Or even try parking the car further away and walking part of the way to school. Remember active kids are healthy kids!

Thanks to all those parents who completed the online surveys.