



Seven in eight trips on public transport need to shift to keep essential workers safe

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Independent modelling has shown that eighty-four per cent of all trips in peak on public transport will no longer be possible and will need to shift to meet physical separation guidelines designed to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19.

To meet this reduction in Sydney, 600,000 peak hour trips on public transport would need to drop to 94,000 trips and in Melbourne they would need to drop from 382,000 to just 58,000.

Liam Davies, Senior Transport Analyst at the Institute for Sensible Transport outlined the task ahead,

"It is difficult to overstate the scale of this challenge. Never before in Australia's history has there been a requirement for peak hour public transport to shed 7 out of every 8 passengers.

"We looked at how public transport loads could be reduced during peak hours," said Davies.

The size of the changes required in Sydney alone are substantial:

- 213,000 passengers would need to avoid public transport during peak hours
- 206,000 would need to continue to work from home,
- An additional 82,000 people would need to travel an average of 5km to work by bicycle.

In Melbourne:

- 137,000 passengers would need to avoid travel during peak hour
- 131,000 would need to continue to work from home,
- More than 54,000 people would need to travel an average of 5km to work by bicycle.

Dr Ben Beck from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University said,

"If a significant volume of trips usually taken by public transport are replaced by car-based travel, this will have substantial, and potentially irreversible, negative consequences on the health of our people and the health of our cities.

"It is essential, and not optional, that we rapidly invest in infrastructure to support healthy and safe walking and cycling. Walking and cycling have huge benefits for our physical health, our mental health and the environment," Dr Beck said.

We Ride Australia's Stephen Hodge said,

"This modelling shows what changes are needed to facilitate safe trips to work around Australia.

"It also supports the investment needed for pop-up bike lanes and extra space for pedestrian traffic, so these choices are easier and safer for all who wish to walk or ride to work,

"The alternative to getting this right are very concerning for us all, with gridlocked roads and unsafe conditions hampering governments efforts to get us all back to work safely" Hodge said.

Scenarios of the situation in each Australian greater metropolitan area has been developed under three scenarios, current physical distancing of 4 m² per person and two more relaxed distancing scenarios.

The Institute for Sensible Transport was commissioned to undertake the modelling for We Ride Australia (the Australian Cycling Environmental and Health Foundation).

The Institute for Sensible Transport is an independent transport consultancy that conducts transport modelling for government and provides advice on sustainable mobility, transport innovation and policy development. See www.sensibletransport.org.au

We Ride Australia – the national independent voice for bike riding

We Ride Australia builds on 20 years of advocacy and is the operating name of the Australian Cycling Environmental and Health Foundation. See www.weride.org.au

Media contact:

Interviews available with:

- Liam Davies, Senior Transport Analyst, Institute for Sensible Transport,
- Dr Ben Beck, Head of Sustainable Mobility and Safety, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, and
- Stephen Hodge, Director – National Advocacy, We Ride Australia.

Media contact: Stephen Hodge, We Ride Australia, M: 0411 149 910, E: stephen@weride.org.au