



## **New campaign urges local councils to make cycling easy & safe to keep Aussies moving**

**EMBARGO – NOT FOR RELEASE BEFORE 1AM, THURSDAY 23 JULY 2020**

Cycling advocacy group We Ride Australia has today launched a new campaign to urge local councils to improve cycling infrastructure so more people can walk and ride during and post coronavirus.

The [\*Let's Keep Moving\*](#) campaign centres around an animation, which highlights how we have changed our travel habits during the coronavirus pandemic and how the community has benefitted as families and individuals walk, scoot or ride in their local neighbourhoods.

We Ride's Stephen Hodge said these healthy habits could dwindle as work, school and other activities return unless walking and cycling infrastructure changes are made.

"Transport data\* from around Australia has clearly shown significant increases in walking and cycling during COVID-19 across our towns and cities nationwide, which is really positive to see," Mr Hodge said.

"But without the appropriate, connected paths that allow people to continue to walk and ride when they return to work, fears about virus infection will create greater congestion on the road as people avoid public transport and take their cars instead."

Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA<sup>1</sup>) data shows that in Melbourne, like most Australian capital cities, more than 40% of all trips are less than three kilometres. In the regional centres of Victoria, around 50% of all trips are three kilometres or less.

"The large number of short trips made across Australia each day is a massive opportunity to convert some of them to walking and cycling if we make those modes convenient and safer," Mr Hodge said.

"This is our chance to reset what is 'normal' and create healthier and more liveable cities and communities that provide safe and connected active travel networks, especially now as commuters think about how they move in a world where we live with coronavirus."

The *Let's Keep Moving* campaign is supported by VicHealth, Heart Foundation, Victoria Walks and Bicycle Network.

VicHealth Executive Manager, Programs Group Kirstan Corben said: "It's been incredibly positive to see so many people out walking and cycling in their local neighbourhoods during the coronavirus pandemic. Councils have an important role to play in ensuring people sustain these healthy habits when school and work resumes.

"Installing pop-up bike lanes and footpaths is a golden opportunity to ensure more people are able to walk and ride safely to local destinations, like the shops, school and work, while getting that healthy dose of physical activity at the same time."

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<sup>1</sup> <https://public.tableau.com/profile/vista#!/vizhome/VISTA-Trips-timeseriesAccess/Trips-methodoftravel>

The [Let’s Keep Moving](#) campaign calls on all Australians to ask their local Council what the plans are for better footpaths and bikeways.

Councils are responsible for local paths and 8 in 10 roads in Australia and decisions to invest federal stimulus funding to improve local infrastructure will facilitate walking and cycling by the entire community.

The video aims to support Councils who make the decision to commit to connected, convenient and safe options for walking and cycling.

**Key points:**

- \*Local bike paths and footpaths have seen increases of up to 300% in traffic during the COVID pandemic.
  - Melbourne trails have seen increases of between 138% and 778% in bicycle traffic on eight principal trails in April compared to the annual count conducted in November 2019<sup>2</sup>
  - On Brisbane’s Kedron Brook bikeway, numbers are up about 300%<sup>3</sup>
  - Hobart has recorded increases as high as 270 per cent on bike paths<sup>4</sup>
- 538 Councils across Australia are responsible for the vast majority of local roads, paths and bikeways and have been provided with funding for local roads and community infrastructure.
- Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney are installing pop-up footpath extensions and bike lanes to facilitate safe distancing during COVID-19.
- With over 2 million car trips in Sydney each day less than 2 kilometres, the opportunity to make it easier to walk to local destinations is significant.

**Let’s Keep Moving video**

The video can be seen at [www.weride.org.au](http://www.weride.org.au) and is linked to a national ‘Council-finder map’ and further information on the benefits of walking and riding.

- Full version: <https://vimeo.com/440520054>
- 30 second version: <https://vimeo.com/440517683>
- 15 second version: <https://vimeo.com/440519872>

*\*Please follow the relevant advice on personal protective measures for coronavirus in your state.*

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<sup>2</sup> ‘More people out on bicycles: Recreational activity surveys during COVID-19 and comparison with pre-lockdown activity levels.’ Bicycle Network, May 2020: [https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID_report_final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://bq.org.au/news/riding-a-bike-is-39-times-better-than-going-to-the-gym-queenslanders-say/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2020/05/11/covid-count-shows-bikes-are-booming/>