



BICYCLE
NETWORK



Merri-bek
City Council

Bicycle Network and Merri-bek City Council

Open Streets Trials 2022



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Acknowledgement of Country

Bicycle Network and Merri-bek City Council acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pay respects to their Elders past and present, as well as to all First Peoples' communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Open Streets 2022 Report

This report has been prepared by Bicycle Network and reviewed by Merri-Bek City Council. For enquiries regarding Open Streets please email ride2school@bicyclenetwork.com.au For enquiries regarding Ride & Stride, please email zerocarbon@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Key Findings

1.1.1 Active Travel

Active travel increased on the days of the Open Streets trials. Across the three schools, an average increase of 19% was recorded through HandsUp! Counts when compared to baselines recorded at the schools earlier in the year. The highest rates recorded at each school was 70%, 74.7%, and 54% at Merri-bek, Brunswick North West, and St Oliver Plunkett respectively. High numbers of survey respondents also reported using active travel more on trial days.

1.1.2 Perception of Safety

Across the three schools an average of 76% of respondents reported that the street felt safer than usual on the days of the trials.

97% of respondents said that the street felt safe on Open Streets days compared to 40% on typical school days.

1.1.3 Future Open Streets

93% of parents/guardians and residents supported future Open Streets.

Across all schools there was strongest support for Open Streets every week, with 34.5% of respondents indicating they would like to see them held weekly. Breakdowns of rates are provided for each school below.

1.1.4 Traffic

Traffic surveys were commissioned by Merri-bek City Council and carried out on five days per school (each Open Street day and a control day in the week prior and post). Results showed limited impact on surrounding streets, with some survey sites showing a decrease in traffic volumes, and others showing increases. Where increases were observed, traffic volumes fell within the range of capacity for local streets.



1.2 Summary Overview

After conducting Open Streets at two schools within the City of Merri-bek area in 2021, Bicycle Network and Merri-bek Council expanded their partnership to deliver Open Streets trials as part of Council's Ride & Stride program at three schools in Terms 3 and 4 2022.

Trials took place at Merri-bek Primary School, Brunswick North West Primary School, and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School. Each trial took place on one day per week over three weeks.

Bicycle Network's Open Streets trials tackles congestion, road safety concerns, and physical inactivity on the school run by restricting vehicle access outside school gates during drop off and pick up times. The initiative involves implementing a temporary road closure on one or more roads surrounding a school for a short period at the start and end of the school day, over a designated number of days across three weeks. These areas are opened up to people using bikes, scooters, on foot, etc. so that active travel is a more appealing and safe way for students and parents to get to school, with drop off zones for people that need to use cars resettled in nearby locations that can better handle high numbers of motor vehicles.

The trials involved diversion of car traffic in the vicinity of the schools' entrances whilst allowing parents, students, and the general public walking or riding to move freely, confidently, and safely through the space.

The data collected before, during, and after implementation at each school demonstrate the success of the trials, and highlight the appetite for further Open Streets initiatives within these school communities.



2. Bicycle Network's Open Streets initiative

2.1 Open Streets

Based on the successful 'School Streets' model developed by local councils and Sustrans in the UK, Bicycle Network's Open Streets initiative tackles congestion, poor air quality, and road safety concerns that many school communities experience.

Streets and drop-off areas near schools are opened up to people on bikes and foot so that active travel is a more appealing and convenient way of getting to and from school. Drop-off zones for people using cars are resettled in areas that can better handle high numbers of motor vehicles.

The initiative is tailored to each specific school, providing a taste of low-stress trips to school, happier and healthier students, and a calmer environment for local residents.

Bicycle Network launched Open Streets in Australia in 2021, with Merri-bek Council being the first LGA hosting one.

2.2 The problem

Parents' perceptions of child safety whilst entering and exiting schools has been on the decline in recent years, in large part due to the number of parents driving their children to school. Unfortunately this perception often translates to more parents choosing to drive the school run, increasing congestion and road safety issues and perpetuating the issue. In Merri-bek City Council's Ride & Stride school profile surveys, parents identified car traffic around the school gates as one of the top three barriers to letting their children walk or ride to school at all three schools.

2.3 The Solution

Open Streets are timed road occupations around schools for one hour in morning, and one hour in the afternoon. By restricting car traffic, Open Streets aims to break down the barriers to active travel. It reduces dangers to school children, improves parent/guardian perceptions of safety, and thus promotes increased active travel to school. It also provides the opportunity to foster local community connection by utilising a space often dominated by motor vehicles to come together and enjoy this unique experience.

By making it easier for more people to ride and walk instead of driving cars, we can improve the physical and mental health of our communities and facilitate more sustainable ways of travelling.

The last several years have seen considerable and lasting shifts in daily routines, growth of interest in walking and cycling for transport, and a renewed acknowledgment of the value of community. Open Streets provides a flexible framework to respond to the need in Melbourne's suburbs for safer and more friendly streets.

The Open Streets trials carried out in partnership with Merri-bek City Council across 2021 and 2022 demonstrate the community's appetite for safer, more people-oriented streets, as well as the potential for trials to create longer-term behavioural change.

2.4 Bicycle Network

With almost 50,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the top five member-based bike riding organisations in the world. With a 40-year history, we are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

Operating nationally, we have a measurable, successful, and large-scale impact in community participation and the promotion of healthy lifestyles through bike riding.

We achieve this through:

- + Improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, legislation, data, policies and regulations.
- + Delivering successful, large-scale and measurable behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work.
- + Providing services that support bike riders through nation wide membership
- + Running mass participation bike riding events such as the Great Victorian Bike Ride and United Energy Around the Bay.
- + Being a key national spokesperson on issues relation to cycling and physical activity.

Organising National Ride2School Day every year, which sees more than 350,000 Australian school students ride, walk, scoot or skate to school, and is a great introduction to and celebration of active travel. The event also achieves widespread media attention across Australia.

Open Streets is a Bicycle Network and Australian first initiative that offers communities an opportunity to reshape neighbourhood streets to be safe and accessible for everyone.

2.5 Merri-bek City Council's Ride and Stride Program

Merri-bek City Council (MCC) launched their Ride & Stride program in 2021 to deliver tailored behaviour change initiatives to local primary schools, aimed at increasing walking and riding trips to school. Ride & Stride is part of MCC's Zero Carbon Merri-bek Strategy, and supports their goal to see 80% of all trips to school be made via sustainable forms of transport by 2030.

The Ride & Stride program delivers a wide range of initiatives to local schools, supporting children, families and the local community to transition to walking and riding for school journeys and local trips. By developing and fostering a culture of healthy, active travel in young people, the Ride & Stride program hopes to drive generational change towards a safer, more sustainable transport network in Merri-bek.

Through Ride & Stride, MCC partners with active travel-oriented organisations and businesses to deliver initiatives that address specific barriers to getting people travelling actively to school. Open Streets is one of the key initiatives delivered under this program, and to date BN have worked with each of Merri-bek's Ride & Stride schools to deliver Open Streets trials.



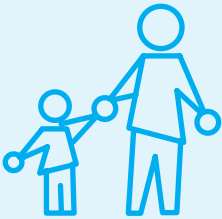
3. 2022 Open Streets Schools

School average figures



44%

Across the three schools, 44% of students walked or rode to school on a typical day in early 2022. This is a stark contrast to the 84% of students who said that they would like to walk or ride to school.



87%

of families across the Ride & Stride schools lived within a 10 min ride or 20 min walk from school (2kms).



1.1km

was the average distance of that families live from school.

3.1 Schools context

The City of Merri-bek is located in Melbourne's inner north, stretching from Park St in the south to the Metropolitan Ring Road in the north, and bounded on the east and west by Moonee Ponds Creek and Merri Creek respectively. Merri-bek is home to a diverse community composed of people from a range of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Its built environment is also diverse, and includes varied access to transport infrastructure. It is serviced by two train lines which run approximately along its eastern and western edges respectively, and four tram lines. None of these tram lines run beyond Bell St to the north. There is also a greater density of bicycle infrastructure closer to the Melbourne's CBD, though Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, Merri Creek Trail, and the Upfield Shared Path serve as safe, separated conduits for north-south travel.

The 2022 Ride & Stride schools were Merri-bek Primary School, in Coburg, Brunswick North West Primary School, in Brunswick West, and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, in Pascoe Vale.

At the beginning of their participation in the program, each Ride & Stride school conducts a survey of the school community to develop a travel profile and determine base rates for active travel.

3.2 Overall average figures



63%

Average active travel across all HandsUp! Counts at all schools¹



19%

Average recorded increase compared to base rate of 44%

63% of students used some of active travel for their journey to school of the days of the Open Streets trials. While 19% more students were actively travelling, this equates to an approximately 43% increase in the active travel.

Did Open Streets make your usual journeys...

Easier? _____ 36%

No impact? _____ 25%

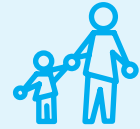
Harder? _____ 39%

We ask this question to determine if we're causing significant problems without realising. It being easier or having no impact on difficulty of journeys for 61% of respondents is a satisfactory outcome.⁴



60%

Rode more



46%

Walked more



2.5%

Used public transport more

Survey responses show that Open Streets had an impact on travel choices, with high numbers of families riding and walking more on active streets days.²

17.5% of respondents also signalled an intention to walk or ride to school more often in the future.³

¹ Not able to collect HandsUp Counts on all days. No 2nd and 3rd week figures were recorded at BNWPS. We are confident that numbers presented are not overinflated because of not being able to gather data for these weeks, as evidence from the other schools showed participation increased over the three weeks.

² The total here is over 100%. This is possible because respondents were invited to "select all that apply." Across three weeks there were opportunities to travel in different ways. The results may also reflect families traveling together using different modes, e.g. one sibling walking and another scootering.

³ This figure is not particularly high but across the three schools 53% of respondents indicated they already walk or ride most days, and while this is higher than base rate it is probably accounted for by selection bias of those choosing to participate in survey.

⁴ While 40% is a big number to make the school journey harder for, there are a few caveats:

- This question was only asked in post-event survey. 40% does not represent 40% of all survey respondents but respondents to post-event survey, i.e.. approx. 12% of total survey respondents.
- Based on written comments we received we would estimate that the majority of people for whom it was harder were those who had to drive/could not make other arrangements on the OS days.
- The journey being harder because of Open Streets is typically because of factors outside our direct control (short of not running the program at all). For example, we heard in written comments from families who drop their children at school before the parents then drive to their place of work.
- If we can make it easier for 36% to travel actively, over time this will make it easier for those who must drive to school.

Perception of safety

In schools' Ride & Stride surveys, parents consistently nominated traffic around school gates as one of the top things that stops them letting their children travel actively to school. Across all schools, 90% of survey respondents felt that the street outside their school was congested at least sometimes, while 64% felt that it was congested often or always. Open Streets aims to change habits but ultimately to reconfigure the space into one where people can feel safe to engage with it differently.



97%

of survey respondents felt that the street felt safe during Open Streets trials, compared to only 40% who felt it was safe on a typical school day.

93% of respondents across all schools would like to see Open Streets regularly in the future.

How often?



3.3 Observational Data

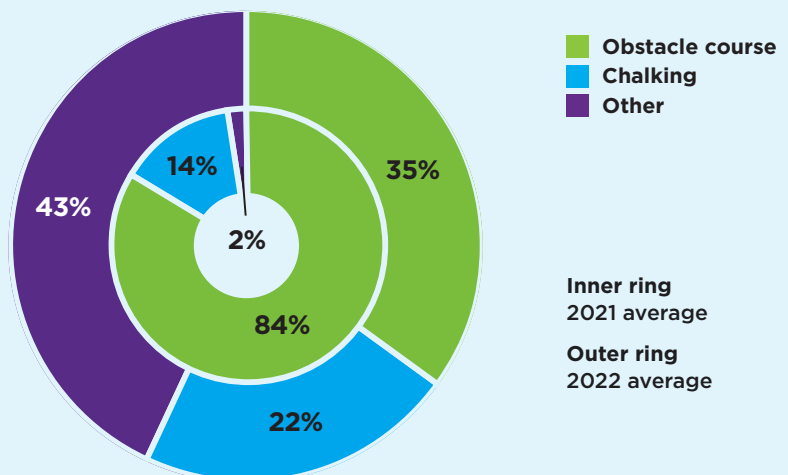
A number of recreational resources were strategically placed across the study areas during each Open Streets event, which encourage schoolchildren to engage with the road space. Layout and activities varied slightly across schools but in general consisted of: (i) an obstacle course comprised of alternating ramp and slalom sections; (ii) chalk for drawing on the road; and (iii) skipping ropes and hula hoops, which were offered to kids who did not ride but wanted to use the space for play. Additional activities included handball courts drawn with chalk, soccer or other ball games, and a magnetic darts board which were used on an ad hoc basis depending on students' desires or what school staff supplied.

Parking racks and bike fixing hubs, which had been used at previous school trials, were not included in the 2022 trials.

At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, the other activities were the most popular activity, with 48 per cent of children using these resources across the survey times. The split between activities was consistent across the three schools in 2022. The biggest change from 2021 was the growth in "other" activities. This is due to use of hula hoops and skipping ropes, which is discussed further in section 7. *Learnings*.

Chalking was the second most popular activity among schoolchildren, comprising 22% of the on-road activities during the trials. Parents also used the space to talk and socialise.

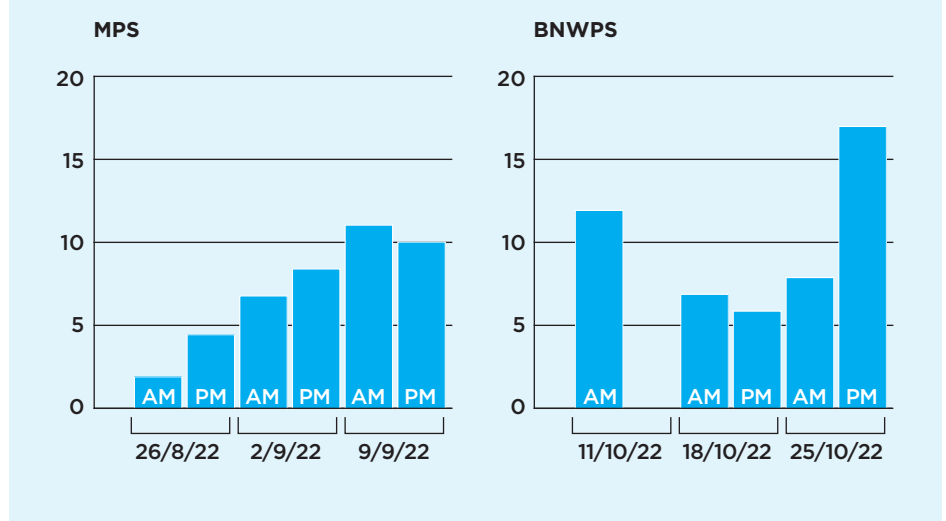
Open Streets - Averages



Parents actively travelling

While there is no baseline comparison, we observed a systematic increase in the average number of parents actively travelling with their children throughout the Open Streets trial period at two of three schools. This is consistent with an overall rise in active travel amongst the schoolchildren and may be due to parents becoming more familiar with the trial as it progressed.

Parents actively travelling

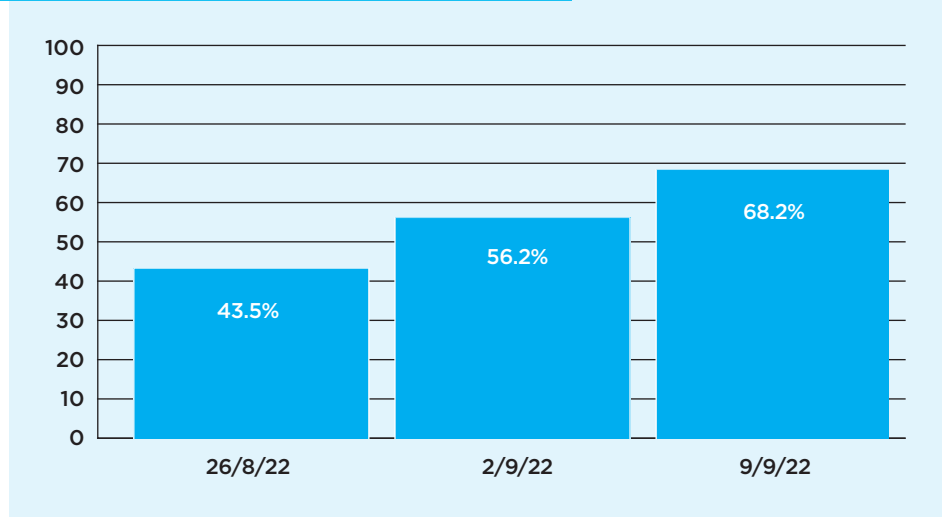


Parents' use of Open Street space

As with previous trials, we noted initial hesitation from parents in using the Open Street space for socialising and participating with children in activities. In the afternoon period prior to school dismissal, despite the road space being open, many parents waited for children on the kerbside as would be expected during normal school days. This may have been due to a lack of familiarity with the initiative, or simply an instinctual behaviour to avoid the road.

After some encouragement from Bicycle Network team members, parents moved to the road space with confidence. Overall, we noted a systematic increase in the proportion of parents standing on roads across the trial period.

Parents standing on road (%MPS)



4. Merri-bek Primary School

Aug 19th - Aug 26th - Sep 2nd



4.1 Key figures



65.4%

Active Travel on event day, on average. Highest rate 70.6%



16.4%

average increase on event days

On the days of the Open Streets trials, on average 65.4% of students used some form of active transport to get to school (e.g. walk, bike, scoot, or skating). This is a 23.3% increase in active travel when compared to a normal school day in 2022

50%

of respondents said that they rode more



40%

of respondents said that they walked more



100%

of survey respondents felt that Blair St was safe to walk or ride on trial days, compared to only 43% on typical days

97.5%

of respondents would like to see Open Streets regularly in the future.

How often?

- 23% daily
- 38% at least weekly
- 28% at least monthly
- 6% at least once a term
- 2.5% at least annually
- 2.5% never

87.9%

of respondents were very satisfied with the events.



Average satisfaction=



What do the students say?



It's more fun and less petrol is being used.
- Rosie



I like riding bikes and skating to school.
- Raffi



I like the extra time with friends and it's a good start to the day.
- Anon

4.2 Traffic monitoring



A Blair Street and De Carle Street

Turning movement counts were completed during all three Open Streets days. However as the cameras used for the surveys were stolen, the data from two of the days is unusable. We have analysed the data from the one Open Streets below.

On the Open Streets day, vehicle movements at the Blair Street and De Carle Street intersection decreased by 89 vehicles in the morning and 25 in the afternoon.

We have then analysed the traffic volumes on each approach.

Within the north approach of De Carle Street, traffic volumes increased by 4 vehicles in the morning and 31 in the afternoon.

The eastern approach of Blair Street was closed during Open Streets which resulted in a decrease of 139 vehicles in the morning and 107 vehicles in the afternoon.

Within the south approach of De Carle Street, traffic volumes decreased by 9 vehicles in the morning and increased by 38 in the afternoon.

Within the west approach of Blair Street, traffic volumes decreased by 37 vehicles in the morning and 12 in the afternoon.

Whilst the north and south approaches of De Carle Street experienced an increase of traffic volumes on the afternoon of the Open Streets, the traffic volumes of 237 and 216, respectively were still within the preferred maximum of 300 vehicles for a local street. It is likely that this increase in traffic volumes was a result of vehicles detouring from Blair Street during the Open Streets event.

B Blair Street and Barrow Street

Turning movement counts were completed during all three Open Streets days. However as the cameras used for the surveys were stolen, the data from two of the days is unusable. We have analysed the data from the one Open Streets below.

On the Open Street, vehicle movements at the Blair Street and Barrow Street intersection increased by 35 vehicles in the morning and 80 in the afternoon.

We have then analysed the traffic volumes on each approach.

Within the north approach of Barrow Street, traffic volumes increased by 42 vehicles in the morning and 76 in the afternoon.

Within the east approach of Blair Street, traffic volumes decreased by 5 vehicles in the morning and increased by 4 in the afternoon.

Within the south approach of Barrow Street, traffic volumes increased by 20 vehicles in the morning and 49 in the afternoon.

Within the west approach of Blair Street, traffic volumes decreased by 11 vehicles in the morning and 26 in the afternoon.

The increase of traffic volumes on the west approach of Blair Street is surprising given Blair Street was closed to through traffic during the Open Streets event. It is likely that some drivers attempted to drive down and then undertook a u-turn and were counted twice in the survey i.e. turning into and out of the western approach of Blair Street.

The other increase in traffic on the northern and southern Barrow Street approaches are also surprisingly high. Whilst the total traffic volumes on Open Streets days are still generally in the order of 300 vehicles per hour, Council would prefer to rely on a full data set (across all three days) before drawing conclusions.

5. Brunswick North West Primary School

Oct 11th - Oct 18th - Oct 25th



5.1 Key figures



74.4%

Active travel in week one



24.7%

increase

On the first day of the Open Streets trials, 74.7% of students used some form of active transport to get to school (e.g. walk, bike, scoot, or skating). This is a 24.7% increase in active travel when compared to a normal school day in 2022.

62.5%

of families said that they rode more (including scoot/skate) on Open Streets days.



34%

of families said that they walked more on Open Streets days.



95%

of survey respondents felt that Culloden St and Shetland Ave were safe to walk or ride along on trial days, compared to only 26% on normal school days.

92.5%

of respondents would like to see Open Streets regularly in the future.

How often?

- 35% daily
- 34% weekly
- 19% monthly
- 4% every term
- 1% yearly
- 7.5% never

88% of

respondents were very satisfied with the events.



Parents and residents gave the trials 4.78 out of 5 stars



What do the students say?



The activities and peacefulness.
- *Rayma*



There's no cars so you can roam freely.
- *Ella*



I like to hang out with my friends, and I like walking to school.
- *Angel-Rose*

5.2 Traffic monitoring



A Culloden Street and Wales Street

Traffic movement counts at this intersection were completed. However, the validity of the count was questioned and cannot be relied upon as the recorded movements indicated that Culloden Street catered for standard traffic volumes during Open Streets days.

B Culloden Street and Melville Road

On Open Street days, 89 fewer vehicles drove past the school gates in the morning and 81 in the afternoon. It was also noted the Open Street prevented 32 vehicles from turning right into Culloden Street from Melville Road in the morning. This unintentional benefit helps prevent delays to the tram service on Melville Road.

C McGregor Avenue and Wales Street

On Open Street days, vehicle movements at the McGregor Avenue and Wales Street intersection increased by 10 vehicles in the morning and decreased by 5 in the afternoon.

We have then broken down the traffic volumes on each approach.

Within the north approach of Wales Street, traffic volumes decreased by 2 vehicles in the morning and 6 in the afternoon.

Within the east approach of McGregor Avenue, traffic volumes increased by 17 vehicles in the morning and 5 in the afternoon.

Within the south approach of Wales Street, traffic volumes increased by 5 vehicles in the morning and decreased by 10 in the afternoon.

The traffic volume changes at the intersection of McGregor Avenue and Wales Street were marginal. The highest recorded traffic volume of 123 vehicles was recorded on the south approach of Wales on the morning of an Open Streets day is well within the preferred maximum of 300 vehicles for a local street.

6. St Oliver Plunkett Primary School

Nov 3rd - Nov 10th - Nov 17th



6.1 Key figures



48.5%

Active Travel on event day, on average. Highest rate 54.1%



21.5%

average increase on event days

On the days of the Open Streets trials, on average 48.5% of students used some form of active travel to get to school (e.g. walk, bike, scooter, or skating). This is a 21.5% increase when compared to a normal school day in 2022.

38%

of families said that they rode more on Open Streets days.



65%

of families said that they walked more on Open Streets days



97%

of survey respondents felt that Landells Rd was safe to walk or ride on trial days, compared to only 50% on normal school days

88%

of respondents would like to see Open Streets regularly in the future.

How often?

- 16% daily
- 29% weekly
- 33% monthly
- 7% every term
- 3% at least annually
- 12% never

90% of

respondents were very satisfied with the events.



Parents gave the trials 4.8 out of 5 stars



What do the students say?



I love how we can have fun and relax after school with friends.
- Sienna

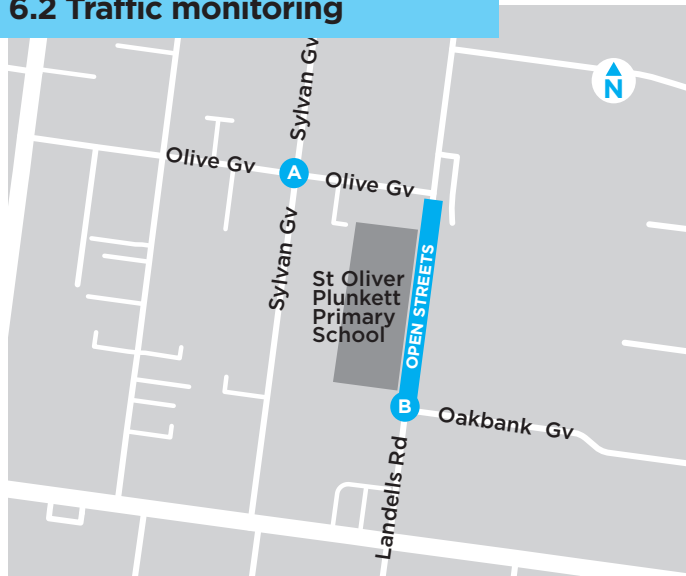


You don't have to worry about cars.
- James



Playing with the hula hoops and skipping ropes.
- Mikaela

6.2 Traffic monitoring



A Olive Grove and Sylvan Grove

During Open Street events, the total vehicle movements at the Olive Grove and Sylvan Grove intersection increased by 24 vehicles for both the morning and afternoon.

We have analysed the traffic volumes on each approach.

Within the north approach of Sylvan Grove, traffic volumes increased by 11 vehicles in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

Within the east approach of Olive Grove, traffic volumes increased by 11 vehicles in the morning and 15 in the afternoon.

Within the south approach of Sylvan Grove, traffic volumes increased by 45 vehicles in the morning and 33 in the afternoon.

Within the west approach of Olive Grove, traffic volumes decreased by 20 vehicles in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

The highest recorded traffic volume of 147 vehicles was recorded on the south approach of Sylvan Grove on the morning of an Open Streets day. The increase of 45 vehicles (which is equivalent to one vehicle every minute or two) was likely attributed to the road closure on Landells Road during the Open Streets event. Given the total vehicle volume (147 vehicles) is just less than half of the preferred peak hour capacity of a local street, the Open Streets events are unlikely to have created any traffic congestion on that day.

B Landells Road and Oakbank Grove

On Open Street days, Westbound traffic on Oakbank Grove remained constant, while eastbound traffic increased by 11 vehicles in the morning and 25 vehicles in the afternoon.

We have then analysed the traffic volumes on each approach.

The Landells Road north approach was closed to vehicle traffic. On the Open Streets days, the traffic volumes decreased by 208 vehicles in the morning and 184 in the afternoon.

Within the east approach of Oakbank Grove, traffic volumes increased by 10 vehicles in the morning and 22 in the afternoon.

Within the south approach of Landells Road, traffic volumes decreased by 115 vehicles in the morning and 106 in the afternoon.

The total peak hour vehicle volumes on Oakbank Grove during Open Streets events were 65 and 79 vehicles which is well within the peak hour capacity of a local street (300 vehicles). The increase in vehicle volumes using Oakbank Grove is marginal when compared to the reduction of vehicle movements in Landells Road. It is therefore likely that drivers were aware of the road closure on Landells Road and either used other streets as a detour or chose not to drive on Open Streets days.

7. Learnings

Throughout the Open Streets trials at Merri-bek schools in 2022, we learned a few things about how people react to Open Streets at their school and how to get the most out of the Open Street for everyone.

Activating the space with equipment for all

This year we asked schools to bring out skipping ropes and hula hoops for students to use in the space. This was a great way to activate the space and create a more inclusive environment for students who hadn't ridden. Many parents and teachers also got involved in skipping and hooping! Some schools even brought out speakers to play music each morning. Encouraging schools to contribute to activating the space was a great way for all students to participate, regardless of how they travelled to the Open Street.

Extra on the day engagement to encourage parents to linger for schools with lower base active travel rates

Each school community has its own habits and culture, with some schools encouraging parents to spend time at school drop off, and others preferring a quicker drop off routine. For these schools, car-based drop off can become the norm, and it can be a bigger task to ask parents to spend time in the morning at drop off time during an Open Street. In 2022 we responded to this challenge by experimenting with ways to entice parents to linger and found a coffee cart to be effective.

Bicycle Network partnered with Coffee Rider & Co., who serve coffees off the back of a converted cargo bike, encouraged both teachers, parents and residents to hang around at our trial with St Oliver Plunkett Primary. Parents and teachers reported increased sense of community from meeting and chatting with other community members in the morning.

Teachers and Principals participating in activities in the street added to the activation. Seeing more familiar faces encouraged students to get involved, and having executive staff get involved lends credibility to the initiative for parents and other teachers.

Bicycle Network's Ride2School App and HandsUp! Counts

We rely on school staff to conduct HandsUp! Counts (active travel measurement) on Open Streets days.

HandsUp! Counts are a very easy way to gather and monitor schools' active travel rates. The main learning from this year is to induct and train the schools' staff in gathering HandsUp! Counts earlier in the process. Bicycle Network has [extensive resources \(inc. videos\)*](#) on how to gather HandsUp! Counts and use the app. Earlier training will ensure more consistent data gathering throughout the Open Streets days.

Weather has less of an impact than we might expect

With the Open Streets at Merri-bek Primary School beginning in early August, we were still coming out of a wet winter. While we were lucky to not get any extremely rainy days, we did experience rain in the hours before school and some drizzle during Open Streets times on a number of

mornings. We were pleased that there was still a strong turn out and high active travel rates despite this.

The only day when weather had a clear significant impact was the third week at St Oliver Plunkett Primary School. This was the wettest Open Street day, yet we still saw active travel rates higher than the school's base rate (38% compared to 25%).

Ultimately, it's not about walking or riding every single day, but about taking that option when you can. Many families prepared for wet weather on Open Streets days, through clothing, umbrellas and mud guards. We can encourage families to think ahead if wet weather is forecast on Open Streets days through working with the school to send out reminders via schools online notification platform.

If we experience significant weather events, BN & MCC will always ensure the safety of those participating in the Open Street is prioritised and will cancel or stop the events at any point prior to or on each day as required.



*<https://bicyclenetwork.com.au/rides-and-events/ride2school/hands-up-counts/>

8. Forms of Data Collection

Multiple forms of data were collected throughout the trials to understand the impact of Open Streets on the schools and local communities. Through the use of counts, surveys and observational data, we can ensure we capture an accurate set of results for each trial. The forms of data collection are listed here.

8.1 HandsUp! Counts

HandsUp! Counts is a key tool to measure the number of students actively travelling to school each day. Students are asked to raise their hand in response to the mode of travel they used on their journey to school (or the largest part of it). This is recorded in the Ride2School App. A HandsUp! Count was taken on each of the trial days with Merri-bek Primary School and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, and on the first trial day at Brunswick North West. The purpose of this is to track changes in the number of students walking, scooting riding or driving to school across the three weeks compared to a base rate. Getting students involved in data collection can also deepen their engagement with the ideas behind active travel initiatives.

HandsUp! Counts are gathered on Bicycle Network's Ride-2School App. Schools can gather the counts per class and/or per school. Students can gather the counts, as much as school's staff. All previous counts are stored in the app and in the school's profile, allowing the school's community to review their active travel rate's evolution throughout the years.

8.2 Surveys

We conducted pre-event, on the day, and post-event surveys with parents and local residents, as well as kids surveys on event days. Across the three schools, 292 'adult' surveys were collected, and 123 kids surveys were collected.

8.2.1 Pre- and post-event surveys

Through a pre-event survey, information was gathered on existing values and attitudes regarding active travel, safety, and wellbeing of students and families at drop-off and pick-up times. These surveys also gathered feedback and questions on the upcoming trials, which BN & MCC could seek to address prior to the trial launching. This survey was distributed to an audience of parents and local residents. This survey was sent to residents along with the planned activity notification two weeks prior to the first trial day, and to the school community through the schools messaging system two week prior, and again 2-3 days prior to the first event day.

A post-event survey focused on perceptions of, and variance in behaviour in response to the trials. It was sent to the school community 7 days after the final trial day, and to residents 7-10 days after the final trial day.

8.2.2 On the day surveys

A simple, concise survey was taken during trials with parents, teachers, and local residents, to gain insights into attitudes surrounding the trial at that point in time as well as future implications.

Survey responses were collected over the three trial days at each school in both the morning and afternoon. The on the day survey was also made available to residents through a letterbox drop conducted between the first and second trial days.

8.3 Social Observation

An observation report was taken over the trial days to gather information on how the community interacted with the street space and activities provided. We were interested in capturing information on students and parents, but also younger siblings below primary school age and the general public moving through the space.

8.4 Traffic Monitoring

To understand the impact that the events had on vehicle movements within the immediate road network, Merri-bek City Council commissioned surveys at two or three critical intersections near schools that ran Open Streets events in 2022.

The single day surveys were undertaken between 7am and 10am as well as between 2pm and 5pm at the critical intersections one week prior to the Open Streets event, across the three Open Streets days and one week after Open Streets.

The traffic volumes are taken as the average across Open Streets days and non Open Streets days i.e. one week before or after the Open Streets events.

All of the surveyed streets are classified as a local street in Council's Integrated Transport Strategy which have a preferred capacity of 3,000 vehicles per day. The peak hour usually accounts for 10% of the daily vehicle volumes so on local streets, we expect that the vehicle volumes will be lower than 300 vehicles per hour.

