Widening the scope: delivery of travel behaviour change initiatives by local government in Victoria

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ABSTRACT

The TravelSmart program in Victoria has developed a grants program to facilitate the delivery of small-scale travel behaviour change projects by local government. Since its inception in 2004, the program has resulted in 13 individual Councils receiving grants to deliver 16 different small-scale travel behaviour change projects. A series of workshops and training has been introduced recently and has assisted local government in delivering travel behaviour change projects with no prior experience in doing so.

The approach taken to these small-scale projects differs from that taken for the delivery of traditional large-scale TravelSmart projects funded by State government, in both the evaluation and delivery methodologies used. The projects are showing positive results not only in encouraging a modal shift away from single occupant vehicle travel, but also in increasing the capacity of local government to deliver travel behaviour change projects. The program has also resulted in more resources being directed towards the travel behaviour change field, as well as a stronger partnership between local and State government in Victoria.
1 Introduction

Over recent years, increasing attention has been given to voluntary travel behaviour change programs in Australia. Such programs aim to achieve a significant and sustainable change in personal travel behaviour from single car occupancy to more sustainable modes of travel (public transport, walking and cycling), smarter car use (carpooling) and, in some cases, travel substitution (working from home).

Most State led voluntary travel behaviour change programs operating in Australia come under the collective name of TravelSmart. The Victoria TravelSmart program led by the Department of Infrastructure involves working with local communities, schools, universities and workplaces.

In Victoria, the TravelSmart program has traditionally been led and delivered by State government. However since 2004, a grants program has been established by the Victorian government allowing local councils to submit project applications to deliver TravelSmart initiatives in their local area. This grants program forms the subject of this paper. Two grants rounds have been initiated, with the first in 2004 and the second in 2005.

This paper follows a logical sequence, with section 2 outlining the process involved in the establishment and operation of the grants program, section 3 providing insight into the different projects delivered by local government as a result of successful grant applications, and section 4 detailing the workshops and training that has been made available to local governments to assist them in delivering their specific TravelSmart projects. Section 5 then presents the results to hand of the projects led by local government and section 6 provides some concluding remarks.

2 Process involved

Funding for the TravelSmart grants program for local government was provided by:

1. Department of Sustainability and Environment ($250,000)
2. Sustainability Victoria ($150,000)
3. Australian Greenhouse Office, Department of Environment and Heritage ($100,000)

The Department of Infrastructure manages the program which is integrated with other TravelSmart initiatives. Funding was used principally for the allocation of grants, with the exception of $25,000 which was used to provide workshops and training opportunities for councils to assist them in delivering their projects. This capacity building aspect is discussed further in section 4 of this paper.

The process involved in establishing and delivering the TravelSmart grants program for local government incorporated several steps. These were developed to ensure that local governments were able to develop and deliver projects within a realistic timeframe, and to ensure that project selection and project planning was robust. Figure 1 illustrates the process involved.

Local government’s submissions were evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of a considered delivery and evaluation methodology.
2. Demonstration that the project fits into council’s broader priorities and plans.
3. Demonstration that the project will be maintained past the funding period.
4. Level of innovation offered by the project.
5. Ability of council to match the requested funding amount (in-kind and/or financial).
6. Demonstration that application represents a small-scale travel behaviour change project.

Step 2 involved establishing a panel to evaluate the applications and to select those councils to be allocated funding. Step 3 then allowed for sufficient project planning by local governments.
Figure 1 – Process involved in the TravelSmart grants program for local government

Steps 4 and 6 relate to the requirement for local governments to conduct an evaluation of the delivery of their projects (step 5), in order to determine whether a change in travel behaviour occurred. This involves comparing the results of the baseline (or ‘before’) evaluation with the results of the follow-up (or ‘after’) evaluation. Local governments were encouraged to conduct the ‘before’ and ‘after’ evaluation 12 months apart so that seasonality effects are minimised. Further detail on evaluation methods is discussed in section 5 of this paper. Reporting by local governments is the final step in the grants program, which also includes a process where feedback is sought from local governments so that the program can be refined further for similar investment in future years.
3 Overview of projects

The small scale travel behaviour change projects delivered by local government typically fall into one of the three TravelSmart streams (workplaces, communities, and education). However, there are links in some of these projects to other State government led programs, with some projects demonstrating a high level of innovation in the approach that they have taken.

Due to funding constraints, the 2004 projects were limited to a one year timeframe in which both the delivery and evaluation were to occur. Experience indicated this to be potentially restrictive, and projects funded in 2005 are to be delivered over an 18 month period. However, there are still some projects that are to be delivered within a 12 month timeframe due to the initial funding restrictions on timing.

A brief description of each of the 16 projects can be found in Table 1. The total cost of each project consists of both the funding provided by State government along with the contribution made from local government and any other sources (i.e. developers, universities, etc).

A visual representation of the project locations across Victoria is shown in Figure 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Name</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Description of project</th>
<th>TravelSmart grant ($)</th>
<th>Council contribution ($ &amp; in-kind)</th>
<th>Total cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banyule City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td>Development and implementation of a green transport plan for staff at the Austin Biomedical Campus in Heidelberg. Development of a green transport plan kit tailored to enable Banyule City Council to develop and implement a green transport plan for its own Council offices.</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>18,800</td>
<td>48,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinia Shire Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td>Establishment of new community bus routes that will complement existing and planned public transport services, by filling in gaps where there is no public transport and by connecting up with existing public transport services.</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>68,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darebin City Council</td>
<td>Jul 04 – Jun 05</td>
<td>Recruitment of volunteers to “buddy” with the elderly, new migrants and refugees to help familiarise them with public transport in a practical way. Extension of an existing incentive scheme developed for council staff, applied to the wider community to encourage residents to pledge to make two less drive alone trips each week using a website (<a href="http://www.goingplaces.darebin.vic.gov.au">www.goingplaces.darebin.vic.gov.au</a>).</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td></td>
<td>49,700</td>
<td>37,300</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobsons Bay City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td>Provision of public transport, walking and cycling information packs to Williamstown residents in conjunction with the provision of community events (i.e. free breakfasts and workshops) in order to raise the awareness and promote the benefits of using public transport and cycling into the CBD.</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td>Distribution of personalised travel packs to students at Kangan Batman TAFE in Broadmeadows, in conjunction with minor capital works to improve the pedestrian linkage from the nearby railway station to the TAFE.</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td>Development and dissemination of sustainable transport kits for students moving from grade 6 students to year 7, containing information on school bus routes, bike racks, etc.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td>Distribution of personalised travel packs to students at two campuses of Victoria University in Footscray. Development and implementation of a green transport plan for university staff. Use of a range of tools to support both staff and students in choosing sustainable modes of travel.</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Name</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Description of project</td>
<td>TravelSmart grant ($)</td>
<td>Council contribution ($) &amp; in-kind</td>
<td>Total cost ($)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moreland City Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td>Promotion of public transport in and around the Coburg activity centre through the provision of information to shoppers, commuters, employers and employees. Improvement of safety and amenity of stations and small infrastructure changes in order to improve pedestrian linkages. Development and promotion of a ‘Riding School Bus’ for a local primary school, in conjunction with the installation of sufficient bicycle racks and the development and implementation of an incentive scheme for Riding School Bus volunteers.</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>108,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td></td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nillumbik Shire Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td>Development and implementation of a school travel plan for Eltham High School with a specific aim to increase walking and cycling to the school.</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>61,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonnington City Council</td>
<td>Jul 04 – Jun 05</td>
<td>Provision of pedometers, shopping carts and other incentives, in conjunction with the installation of bicycle racks, to encourage residents living within a 1km radius of the Glenferrie Road shopping precinct in Malvern to walk and cycle.</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>51,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool City Council</td>
<td>Jul 04 – Jun 05</td>
<td>Promotion of cycling routes within and around Warrnambool through improved marking and signage, provision of secure bicycle parking, conduct of safety audits on existing and proposed routes, and production and distribution of a local cycling map to households.</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington Shire Council</td>
<td>Nov 05 – May 07</td>
<td>Development and implementation of a carpooling scheme initially for council staff, then for four major employers in the Shire. Supported by the development and provision of information brochures and fact sheets as well as incentives such as priority car parking for carpooling participants and guaranteed ride home programs.</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea City Council</td>
<td>Jul 04 – Jun 05</td>
<td>Development and implementation of a carpooling program and internet page containing sustainable transport information for residents in an outer residential estate. Development of a school travel planning approach to two new schools to assist in the adoption of sustainable travel so that driving to school does not necessarily become ingrained in daily activity.</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>23,500</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 05 – Dec 06</td>
<td></td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>40,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>464,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>442,800</strong></td>
<td><strong>907,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Capacity building

A total of $25,000 was allocated for a capacity building component to be delivered in conjunction with the travel behaviour change projects run by local governments.

Local governments were consulted on what activities they thought would be most useful to build their capacity to deliver travel behaviour change projects. Ideas were also proposed to local councils from the TravelSmart team within the Department of Infrastructure in Victoria. As a result, a schedule of capacity building activities was developed that took into account the stage that local governments would be likely to reach with their projects over the coming year. It was decided that in order for this component of the program to be useful to local governments, it would be best undertaken when the projects were in the ‘before’ evaluation or early delivery stages.

Topics covered in the capacity building program included:

- Travel survey design and methods (planning, methods, sampling, design, administration, and data manipulation), introduced through a workshop held by The Urban Transport Institute (TUTI).
- Carpooling and Car Sharing (establishment, promotion, experiences and lessons learnt), with presentations by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), La Trobe University, and the Cities of Port Phillip and Yarra.
- Developing green transport plans, school travel plans, and TravelSmart Universities programs, introduced through a workshop held by TravelSmart Victoria.
- Other local government experience of developing and delivering small-scale travel behaviour change projects (experiences and lessons learnt), with presentations by the Cities of Darebin, Stonnington, Whittlesea, and Warrnambool.
- Local government development of small-scale travel behaviour change initiatives following a large scale State led TravelSmart Communities project, with presentations by the Cities of Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley.
- TravelSmart Congress, comprising a 3 day event involving all TravelSmart jurisdictions in Australia.
- Principles of Persuasion, involving a workshop held by The Urban Transport Institute (TUTI).

Local governments were also able to attend a conference of their choice that was relevant to the field of travel behaviour change, in order to assist them in delivering their projects.

5 Project outcomes

5.1 Evaluation and delivery of small scale travel behaviour change projects

Small scale travel behaviour change projects are somewhat different to the traditional large scale TravelSmart Communities projects delivered at a State government level. Apart from differences in the scale of the projects, the main differences are in the evaluation and delivery methodology used.

With a much smaller budget available for evaluation, the small scale projects led by local government have opted for much simpler evaluation methods such as, traffic counts, bicycle parking counts, as well as qualitative methods such as testimonials and focus groups. The disadvantage in this, however, is that assumptions often need to be made when estimating the reduction in Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) arising from the project, since trip distances are often not measured.

The delivery of small scale travel behaviour change projects is often focused on a single transport mode rather than attempting to encourage increased usage across all sustainable transport modes. This also
results in specific population groups being targeted. These may be community groups (i.e. new migrants in the City of Darebin), organisation specific groups (i.e. university students in the Cities of Hume and Maribyrnong), or geographically clustered groups (i.e. residents in the Cities of Warrnambool, Hobsons Bay and Stonnington). This means that a much smaller population is exposed to a specific travel behaviour change intervention, in contrast to the ‘blanket’ approach commonly adopted for large scale TravelSmart Communities projects.

5.2 Embedding travel behaviour change in local government

One of the objectives of the TravelSmart grants program for local government is to build the capacity of staff in local government to deliver travel behaviour change projects, as discussed in section 4. The grants program has also demonstrated that not only are small scale travel behaviour change projects viable, but that they can be funded largely from within council budgets. This has been shown in Table 1, where the total project cost is often twice the amount provided by State government.

Another positive outcome of the projects has been the creation of new staff positions at six of the councils involved. Whilst these positions are not all titled as Sustainable Transport Officers (due to their location within Council), the creation of these new positions establishes greater potential for similar projects to be developed in the future.

5.3 Results to date

At the time of writing this paper, only four of the sixteen projects had been completed. A summary of the results contained in the final reports submitted to date is provided below.

5.3.1 City of Darebin

Following the recruitment of 18 volunteers (including 2 wheelchair bound), over 200 elderly residents, new migrants and refugees were taken on public transport ‘adventure’ trips in order to familiarise them with using public transport in a practical way (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3 – New migrants at Jolimont railway station](image)
Of the older adults that participated in the program, some moved from either *not confident* or *not at all confident* to *confident* or *very confident* in using public transport. The program also opened up a new social experience for participants, with comments such as:

“The trip reminded me that there’s an alternative and it’s sometimes better”

“Nice to get into the city and go down arcades I haven’t been to for years”.

A trip to St Kilda using public transport was also arranged with a group of 40 Liberian migrants. A previous trip had taken place in 2004, but because they had travelled there on a charter bus, the migrants had no idea how to get back there by on their own. Less than one month after this ‘adventure’ trip, a family had returned to St Kilda by themselves (Myers, 2005).

### 5.3.2 City of Stonnington

A survey of residents within a 1km radius of the Glenferrie Road shopping precinct in Malvern (see Figure 4) revealed that a large proportion would strongly consider walking or cycling to the shopping precinct if given the right incentives and motivators. This was demonstrated through observations of residents using green shopping bags, pedometers and shopping carts, following their distribution as promotional giveaways and prizes as part of the travel behaviour change project delivered by the council.

![Figure 4 – Glenferrie Road shopping precinct in Malvern](image)

This project also saw frequent usage of newly installed bicycle racks and public seating. A significant decrease in the number of occupied car parking spaces around the shopping precinct was also observed (Mikedis, 2005).

### 5.3.3 City of Whittlesea

A sustainable transport internet page developed for residents in Laurimar estate (see Figure 5) proved to be popular with over 1,000 hits in five months. This steadied out to approximately 100 per month and is expected to continue to hold steady or gradually reduce without a renewed publicity and awareness campaign.
Figure 5 – Laurimar estate residents learning about the project

The carpooling scheme developed for residents in the estate failed to attract enough registrations to become fully operational. However, several barriers to carpooling were identified as a result of a public information feedback process. An unintentional, but welcome, outcome of the project was the development of carpooling software for the City of Whittlesea, leading to travel behaviour change occurring within the council (Buckland, 2005).

6 Conclusion

The TravelSmart grants program for local government has resulted in the successful delivery of 16 small-scale travel behaviour change projects by 13 individual councils in Victoria. This has involved a ‘call for applications’ process with councils supported by a series of capacity building activities to assist them in delivering their travel behaviour change projects.

Due to the success of this grants program in Victoria, South Australia has begun embarking on a similar process. The City of Darebin in Victoria has also adapted a similar model through the allocation of grants to not-for-profit organisations (such as bicycle user groups, community health centres and universities) for the delivery of small-scale travel behaviour change projects in the local community.

The recently released ‘Meeting Our Transport Challenges’ (State of Victoria, 2006) document, outlines a commitment to TravelSmart of $30 million over the next ten years. This includes a continuation of funding towards this grants program for local government.

7 References


8 Acknowledgments

The following individuals are acknowledged for their delivery of the small-scale travel behaviour change projects outlined in this paper:

Robyn Evans and Michelle Herbert - Banyule City Council
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Matt Aquilina and Anne McLean - Hobsons Bay City Council
Lawrence Seyers - Hume City Council
Ron Crawford and Melissa Sparrow - Knox City Council
Suzanne Cleary - Maribyrnong City Council
Gael Reid and Daniel Paez - Moreland City Council
Rebecca Petit and Jacky Close - Nillumbik Shire Council
Simon Mikedis - Stonnington City Council
Suellen Paton - Warrnambool City Council
Renee Heath and Sheryl McHugh - Wellington Shire Council
Iain Buckland and Janene Parrent - Whittlesea City Council

Yana Kletsel from Metlink is also acknowledged for her assistance in providing public transport timetables, brochures and tickets for the relevant projects.