Safe Active Street Case Studies

Proven Benefits Across Australia

Safe active streets are low-speed (30 km/h) neighbourhood routes that make local streets safer and more comfortable for people walking, wheeling and riding, while still allowing vehicle access. Using simple traffic-calming features—like raised intersections, slow points, narrowed road widths, tree planting, formalised parking and clear bike markings—they reduce speeds, discourage through-traffic and create inviting, connected corridors to schools, parks, shops and transport hubs.

Common internationally and now growing across Australia, safe active streets offer an affordable, evidence-based solution where off-road paths aren't practical. The following case studies show how this approach is already delivering real safety and liveability benefits in a range of communities.

Case Study A: Pierce Street, South Toowoomba (Qld)

Project completion date: 21 June 2024
Location: South Toowoomba, part of the West Creek Active Transport Corridor connecting to the CBD

Purpose & context:

- The Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) identified a missing link in its active transport network and chose Pierce Street to pilot a "Safe Active Street" (SAS) model.
- The design was inspired by overseas "cycle street"/shared street models and previous West Australian examples.
- The broader goal is to increase walking and cycling, reduce reliance on cars and integrate healthy transport into city growth.

Design treatments:

- A universal 30 km/h speed limit for all vehicles on the street.
- A terracotta-coloured "shared travel lane" (central painted zone) where cyclists ride in the centre of the lane. Cars must remain behind until safe to overtake with 1m clearance.
- Streetscaping: semi-mature trees planted, formalised on-street parking instead of free-flowing parking, speed humps and raised platforms to calm traffic.
- Link to active transport network: connects to the cycle-bridge over Alderley Street and joins two main bike paths.

Outcomes / benefits:

- Though long-term data is limited (project launched mid-2024), the design features are expected to lower vehicle speeds and collision severity (due to 30 km/h zone) which research shows improves active user safety.
- The project has already received industry recognition: awards for innovation and project of the year in late 2024.
- Local commentary indicates positive perception among cycling users.
- Because the street ends in a cul-de-sac and has limited existing through-traffic, the local disruption to cars is minimal but the benefit to active travel connectivity is high.

Further information:

Toowoomba Regional Council: Safe Active Street
[www.yoursay.tr.qld.gov.au/west-creek-pierce-street-alderley-street-cycleway]

Case Study B: Whitfield Street Safe Active Street, Bassendean (WA)

Project completion date: Construction completed October 2020; opened January 2021
Location: Town of Bassendean (Perth Metro) – 2.3 km link between Guildford Road and Sandy Beach Reserve near the Swan River

Purpose & context:

- Part of the Safe Active Streets Pilot Program by the Department of Transport (WA) and local governments.
- Designed to connect schools, shops, recreation nodes (primary school, skate park, reserves) and regional shared paths in a neighbourhood context.
- Reinforced the principle: local streets can be re-oriented for active travel, rather than only main bike paths.

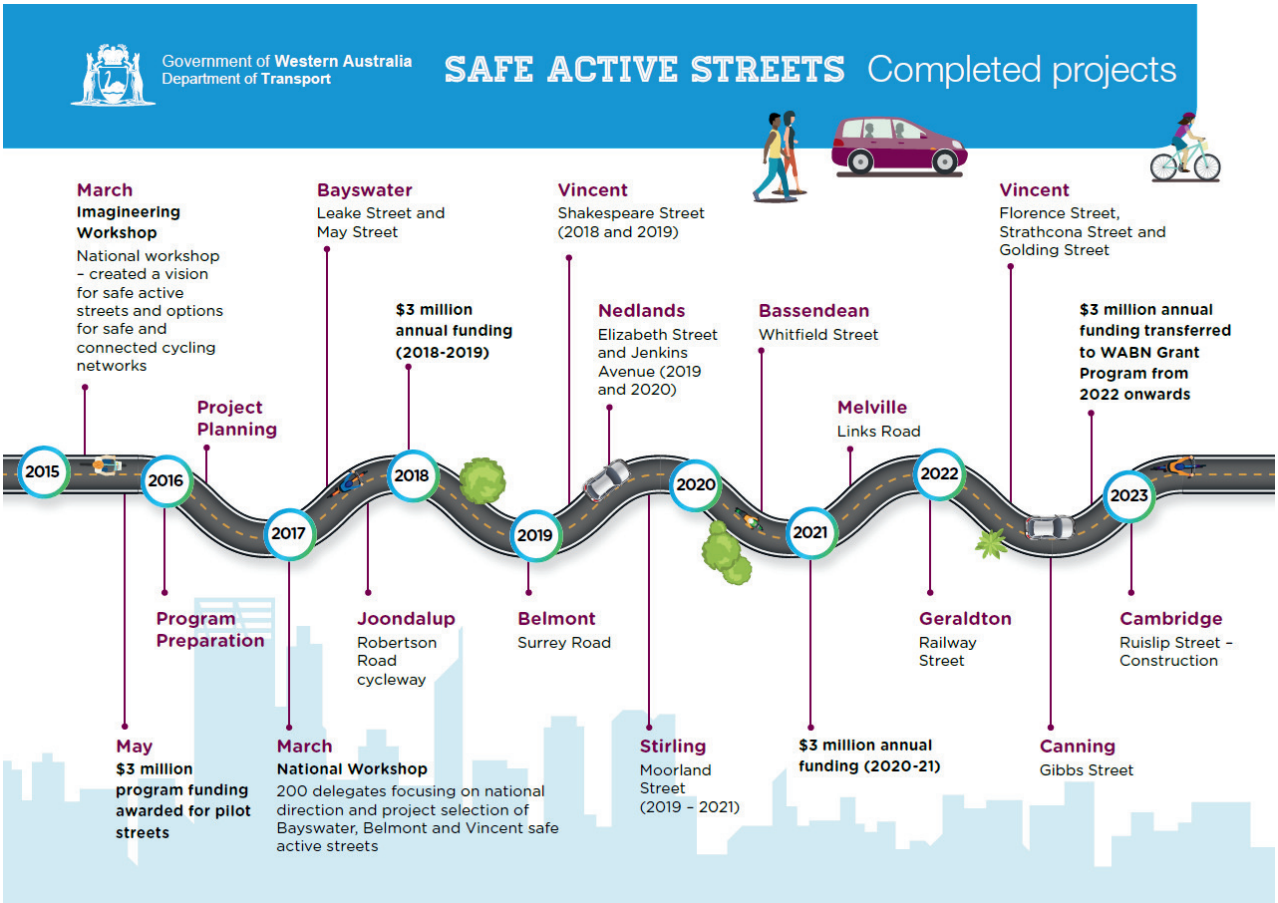
Design treatments:

- Introduction of a 30 km/h speed zone.
- Traffic calming: raised plateaus, slow-points, red asphalt surfacing on main sections.
- Amenities: bike repair station, water fountains and shaded rest areas along the route.
- Wayfinding signage installed, clear linkages to local facilities and the river path.

Outcomes / benefits:

- Video surveys were carried out at strategic points along the Bassendean Safe Active Street to monitor pedestrian and cyclist movements. The recorded footage was analysed to quantify activity levels for both groups. Interim evaluation results show that walking increased across all four sites on weekends and at two sites during weekdays.
- Cycling also increased at 3 out of 4 sites during the week, and at all sites during the weekend.
- Vehicle volumes declined at 4 of 5 measurement sites; 85th percentile speeds dropped (e.g., from 45 km/h down to ~33 km/h at one site).
- Community feedback: use by children, mobility scooters; improved “feel” of street as a shared neighbourhood space.

The Department of Transport's (DoT) Safe Active Streets Pilot Program in WA commenced in 2015, and since that time has seen the construction of 12 safe active streets across Perth and regional WA. Others are outlined in the diagram below.



Further information:

Department of Transport WA: Safe Active Streets
[www.transport.wa.gov.au/active-transport/programs-initiatives/safe-active-streets-pilot-program]

Case Study C: Active Streets for Schools (ACT)

Program timeframe: Pilot began circa 2015-16; expanded to over 65 schools by 2023-24
Location: Across the ACT via the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and partner agencies

Purpose & context:

- Focused on school-precinct treatment to make walking, riding, scooting to school safer, reducing school-zone congestion and increasing independent active travel.
- Enabled through the "Ride or Walk to School" and "Safe Cycle" programs layered over built-in infrastructure improvements.

Design treatments:

- Raised pedestrian crossings, children's crossings, refuge islands, access to public transport/pram crossings, improved footpaths.
- Wayfinding - stencils on footpaths around schools ("Active Travel" motifs) to promote routes.
- Educational campaigns and tracking tools in schools (active travel tracker cards for students) to build behaviour change.

Outcomes / benefits:

- An evaluation spanning 2012–2022 identified a consistent upward trend in student active travel rates and improved perceptions of safety around schools.
- The ratio of children walking or cycling compared to being driven increased from 2.3 to 2.5 in pilot schools between May 2015 and November 2016.
- Parental support remained strong throughout the program.
- Infrastructure improvements contributed to steady reductions in traffic volume and speed around schools during early implementation.

Further information:

Transport ACT: Active Streets
[www.transport.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1124851/Active_Streets_Report.pdf]

Case Study D: Mackay Cross City Link (QLD)

Project completion date: December 2018 (constructed in stages from late 2013 to mid2014)
Location: Mackay City Centre to Paget Industrial Area – Queensland

Purpose & context:

- The Mackay Cross City Link was developed as an innovative active transport project to provide a safe, connected, and off-road route for walking and cycling through Mackay's CBD.
- It repurposed a disused rail corridor to create a valuable community asset, improving access between residential areas, the city centre, and the Paget Industrial Area.

Design treatments:

- 4.8 km length, 2.5 m wide shared path for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Constructed in stages (2013–2014) at a cost of $1.62 million, jointly funded by Queensland Government and Mackay Regional Council.
- Integrated with the Bluewater Trail and other paths for network connectivity.
- Supporting infrastructure: secure bike parking, lighting, wayfinding signage, mapping.
- Community programs: bicycle education for school children, social rides, and engagement activities.

Outcomes / benefits:

- Around 170 daily users recorded in 2017; half of pedestrians and 30% of riders used the path on weekdays.
- Surveys show 11% of pedestrians and 20% of riders would not have walked or cycled without the path.
- Increased walking and cycling frequency, contributing to health and wellbeing.
- Strong community engagement and parental support.
- Encouraged mode shift from car to active transport for some users.

Further information:

TMR Queensland: Mackay Cross City Link
[www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Cycling/Infrastructure-projects/Mackay-Cross-City-Link]

Case Study E: Liebig Street Pedestrian Priority Project (VIC)

Project completion date: 2019 (stage 1 completed December 2017; full transformation by 2019)
Location: Liebig Street, Warrnambool City Centre, Victoria

Purpose & context:

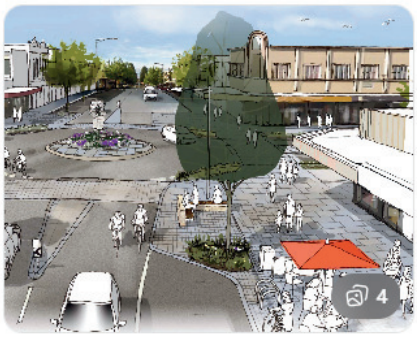
- Revitalise the CBD main street by prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, reducing vehicle dominance, and supporting local business and public life.

Design treatments:

- Raised mid-block "wombat" pedestrian crossings.
- Narrowed traffic lanes, widened footpaths (for alfresco dining), landscaping, street furniture, public art.
- Reduced speed limit (from ~40 km/h to 30 /h) to create a better pedestrian environment.

Outcomes / benefits:

- Vehicle speeds (85th percentile) reduced from ~38.3 km/h in 2018 to ~25.4 km/h by 2021.
- Reported increased pedestrian activity and positive business feedback.
- Improved streetlife vibrancy, safer walking environment, and a stronger local economy.



Further information:

Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand (CWANZ) website
[www.cwanz.com.au/resource/safer-speeds-case-studies-warnambool-victoria/]

For more information

Visit noosa.qld.gov.au or
visit 9 Pelican Street, Tewantin.

Contact mail@noosa.qld.gov.au
Call 5329 6500