



What drive us to drive, walk or cycle to work in Albury?



What reasons, attitudes and issues contribute to Albury residents' choice of transport to work and what strategies are likely to encourage more people to walk or cycle to work?

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Aims:

To investigate the factors that influence Albury City residents' choice of transport to work and determine strategies to increase the proportion that walk or cycle to work.

Methods:

This qualitative study used interviews with representatives from major employers and three focus groups, including employees and purposively sampled councillors, senior council staff, a police officer and ambulance officer. Transcripts were thematically analysed for emergent themes.

Findings:

Car is still 'king' and are considered integral to our lifestyle. Cycling, walking and public transport is apparently mediocre and unfashionable transport. Fears of assault and road accidents and the perception active transport is unfashionable inhibit active transport to work. More active transport infrastructure is necessary. However, political realities in providing better infrastructure are a limitation. Better workplace culture, policies, programs and facilities are required. Unfortunately, in many cases in Albury, these are non-existent. Lack of time, inconvenience and dependent children are barriers to active transport, yet health benefits for active travellers are an enabler. Suggestions of campaigns to change attitudes and behaviour and tax reforms would stimulate active transport to work.

Implications for practice:

Regional representative committees comprising of government, business and community can work together to advocate for and implement change in active transport to work options. Education around road rules and culture change campaigns to engender harmony on roads and promoting the viability of active transport to work appear worthy. Media restraint could reduce unnecessary fear of assault and inciting hatred among road users. Improving active transport infrastructure, supporting tax reforms and incentives for active transport show promise.

Key words:

regional, active transport, cycling, walking, work

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Brendan Pearson is working in Health Promotion in Murrumbidgee Local Health District in the areas of healthy weight programs and healthy built environments. He has strong interests in non-communicable disease prevention and believes built and natural environmental factors are major determinants of health as we are products of our environment.

