

Bicycle Queensland MEDIA RELEASE

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Kids go back to school – on their bikes!

Here is one more data point that illustrates the bike-riding boom that has gone with the COVID-19 pandemic - Ferny Grove State School now needs a second bike rack, because their current rack has been full every day since students returned to school.

Ferny Grove State School Principal, Brett Shackleton, said that more families are travelling to school together by bike and that it's now common to see a bottleneck at most gates in the school as keen cyclists try to get a good spot in the bike racks.

"We've had to provide temporary bike racks just to make do in the interim," Mr Shackleton said.

Riding to school is important because 39% of Queenslanders are not getting enough exercise and screen time dominates the home school environment. The bicycle commute is a simple way for communities to get their 60 minutes of accumulated physical activity a day and combat screen fatigue.

Trends illustrated in Queensland's Healthy Weights Strategy show that the rate of childhood obesity has not changed since 2007–08 and adult obesity since 2011.

Bicycle Queensland's Director of Education, Patrick Trowse is thrilled so many kids are riding to school again.

"Commuting to school not only covers the daily exercise needs, but also gives students an opportunity for growth and development.

"As bike paths and racks fill up, it is time to push for improved conditions for cycling, so that even more families will consider riding to school," Mr Trowse said.

He encourages schools to apply for the Community Road Safety Grants to support communities with the development and delivery of effective road safety education and awareness initiatives. Funding of up to \$20,000 is currently available.

Every \$1 invested in cycling infrastructure returns almost \$5 to Queensland in health benefits and reduced traffic congestion.

Landsborough State School successfully applied for the grant in 2019 and received \$3560. They are using the funding to engage an external provider who brought in bikes and taught cycling skills and road safety. Clontarf Beach Primary School's Business Manager, Valerie

Edwards also used funds from the grant to engage Year 2 and Year 4 students in cycling education.

“It was great to be able to offer a free service to students promoting road safety,” Mrs Edwards said.

Mr Trowse said Bicycle Queensland are working with schools to assist them in making the most of this funding to improve conditions for cycling in their communities.

“In turn this will showcase cycling’s transformational power as an uplifting force for community and individual health,” he said.



Image: Ferny Grove State School bike cage overflowing

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For interviews and images

Please call Patrick Trowse on 0402 196 723. For more information go to www.bq.org.au

Community Road Safety Grant information <https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/road-safety/community-road-safety-grants>