We know that Canberra is a great place to live for physical activity, but there are still many ways that we can all support Canberrans to be more active, healthy and happy.

In 2015, the Canberra community participated in the Urban Wellbeing Survey (University of Canberra 2014), an investigation of how satisfied people are with aspects of their local neighbourhood as well as active travel behaviours and public transport use.

What is Active Living?
A way of life that integrates physical activity into daily life through:
- Walking and cycling for transport (active travel)
- Sport and recreation
- Walking and cycling to access public transport

Why is Active Living important?
Moving more and sitting less helps improve our physical and mental health, and reduces our risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes (Australian Government Department of Health 2014).

How active are Canberrans?
In the ACT 49.6% of adults are not sufficiently active for health.

Highest level of inactivity was in Tuggeranong (57.4%) and Weston Creek (55.7%)
(Heart Foundation 2016)

What is the natural and built environment and how does it influence Active Living?
The natural environment encompasses land, natural resources, climate, atmosphere, water, ecosystems and biodiversity.
The built environment is the physical structures and supporting infrastructure where people live, work and play.

There is growing recognition that the natural and built environment influence active living

This advisory document has been developed with assistance from the ACT Government under the Healthy Weight Initiative
Barriers and recommendations to support Active Living across the ACT

Walking and Cycling
What the community said
As many as 75% of Canberrans in most parts of the ACT agreed there are alternative routes to reach a destination. However, between 30% and 40% of Canberrans did not agree there are adequate crossings and signals on busy roads.

The main barrier to cycling in the ACT was appearance at destination with two thirds of participants reporting that ‘cycling means it’s difficult to make sure I am clean and well-dressed at my final destination’.

More than a quarter of participants in all ACT regions were not satisfied with the adequacy of lighting in their neighbourhood. The level of disagreement was as high as 50% in North Canberra.

Recommendations
Undertake audits to identify where pedestrian crossings might be needed, particularly around public places such as schools, shopping centres and playgrounds.
Locate lighting for night time safety on cycling and walking paths, meeting places, crossings, signage, public transport stops and other well used night time areas.

Children’s Playgrounds
What the community said
More than a third of participants in Tuggeranong and Woden reported they did not perceive children’s playgrounds to be clean and safe.
There was large variation in satisfaction with the variety of play equipment in children’s playgrounds across Canberra. The highest level of dissatisfaction occurred in North Canberra and Woden.

Recommendations
Locate and design children’s playgrounds to have clear natural surveillance and multiple entry/exit points.
Incorporate the Active Living Principle of ‘environments for all’ in the design of children’s playgrounds to provide an appropriate range of play equipment for different ages and abilities.

Public Transport
What the community said
The main barriers to public transport use across the ACT were:
• Takes too much time
• Too complicated

Recommendations
Design for clear, safe and accessible routes to public transport stops.
Provide amenities such as seating, lighting and bicycle lock up facilities at public transport stops.

The low density and dispersed nature of the ACT means private vehicles are the predominant mode of transport.

Proximity to Destinations
What the community said
Tuggeranong, Belconnen and Weston Creek had the lowest percentage of amenities, services and facilities within a ten-minute walk from home.

Recommendations
Ensure travel links are safe, attractive, direct and convenient for all people (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, people with prams, and those with a walking aid device or wheelchair).
Address the Active Living Principle ‘connected places’ by improving connections between streets with sufficient crossings, safe and attractive alleys, and signage that identifies the direction and distance to local public destinations.

References


Lessons from Crace

Crace (suburb of Gungahlin, Canberra) was designed on best practice to create an attractive and safe neighbourhood that fosters enhanced health and wellbeing.

Results from participants living in Crace indicate that not only do people in Crace have a range of services, facilities and amenities within a 10 minute walk from home, they are also likely to walk there.

There are several aspects of the design of Crace that enable residents to have greater opportunity to be active in their local neighbourhood.

Walking and shared paths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>ACT region with highest level of agreement</th>
<th>ACT region with lowest level of agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance between intersections is usually short</td>
<td>Crace 82.5%</td>
<td>Gungahlin 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuggeranong 46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative routes</td>
<td>Crace 82.5%</td>
<td>Nth Canberra 79.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Woden 35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared paths</td>
<td>Crace 93.0%</td>
<td>Gungahlin 81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weston Creek 48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are in decent condition</td>
<td>Crace 93.0%</td>
<td>Sth Canberra 76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weston Creek 65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are conveniently located</td>
<td>Crace 93.0%</td>
<td>Gungahlin 41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belconnen 22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures derived from analysis of the Urban Wellbeing Survey data

Connected Places

Many design features of Crace support walkability.

A high percentage of participants from Crace agreed there are short distances between intersections and alternative routes to get to different destinations.
Children's playgrounds, parks and open spaces

Agreement with characteristics about playgrounds, parks and open spaces*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>ACT region with highest and lowest level of agreement, compared with Crace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Playgrounds</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good variety of equipment</td>
<td>Crace 76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located in several places</td>
<td>Crace 92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and safe</td>
<td>Crace 89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and open space</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough places to sit or rest</td>
<td>Crace 77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and safe</td>
<td>Crace 80.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures derived from analysis of the Urban Wellbeing Survey data

**Where can I find out more?**

- ACT Active Living Principles – advisory document
- Benefits of Infrastructure to Support Active Living – advisory document
- Statement of Planning Intent. Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate – Planning. ACT Government
- Incorporating Active Living Principles into the Territory Plan, Information Paper August 2016. ACT Government
- Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 348. Incorporating Active Living Principles in the Territory Plan September 2016. ACT Government