



## ACTIVE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

### 2012 Survey Findings

# MAIN FINDINGS

- ❖ The vast majority of parents surveyed have a bicycle in their household, whilst just under six in ten had cycled in the last year.
- ❖ Parents associate children riding a bike to school with a range of advantages, from the positive impact that it can have on their child's health, to the role it can play in promoting their child's independence.
- ❖ Nine in ten parents agreed that cycling is a good way to get fit, and that it is important for children to learn to ride a bike.
- ❖ Whilst seven in ten parents surveyed think it is important for children to be able to independently ride a bike, close to half do not believe that it is safe for children to ride a bike to school.
- ❖ There are some clear barriers to children riding a bike to school. Eight in ten parents surveyed agreed that there is too much traffic on the roads and there are not enough bike paths for children to cycle safely to school.
- ❖ Close to 60% of parents surveyed drive their children to school.
- ❖ Whilst nine in ten parents surveyed indicated that their child knows how to ride a bike, just over one in ten children are currently riding a bike to school.
- ❖ The reasons parents do not allow their children to ride a bike to school are centered around safety and the dangers posed by traffic and other road users.
- ❖ Parents surveyed indicated that they would be more likely to let their children ride a bike to school if safety, and the dangers posed by traffic and other road users was changed or improved.
- ❖ In spite of the relatively high proportion of parents surveyed who felt confident about teaching their child to ride a bike, 45% believe it is important that children receive formal cycle training.
- ❖ Close to a quarter of parents surveyed believe their child's school encourages children to ride a bike to school.
- ❖ In general, parents surveyed agreed that the Federal Government should be doing more to encourage children to ride to school.

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In February 2012, The National Heart Foundation in collaboration with the Cycling Promotion Fund conducted an online survey with a random sample of 1,005 Australian parents with school aged children in relation to children and riding bikes to and from school.

## ACCURACY OF RESULTS

This survey was based on a sample of Australian adults. As it is not a census, some level of error is inherent in the results. This error can be quantified statistically to give a margin of error - essentially, this means that, with 95% confidence, a given range contains the true result at a population level.

The error margin was 3.1%, meaning that, with 95% confidence, a result, plus or minus the error margin (i.e. 50% ±3.1%), contains the true result at the population level.

## PROFILE OF PARENTS

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	51.2%
Female	48.8%
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 24	0.8%
25 to 29	5.9%
30 to 34	8.7%
35 to 39	19.4%
40 to 44	27.2%
45 to 49	20.8%
50 to 54	11.9%
55 to 59	3.6%
60 to 64	0.9%
65 to 69	0.6%
Over 70	0.3%
<b>State</b>	
NSW	26.6%
VIC	34.6%
QLD	14.9%
SA	10.7%
WA	9.2%
NT	0.2%
TAS	2.9%
ACT	1.0%
<b>Total Household Income</b>	
Below \$25,000	4.2%
\$25,000 - \$40,000	9.2%
\$40,001 - \$55,000	8.8%
\$55,001 - \$70,000	12.0%
\$70,001 - \$85,000	10.9%
\$85,001 - \$100,000	13.9%
\$100,001 - \$120,000	14.4%
Over \$120,000	16.8%

## PROFILE OF CHILDREN

<b>Number of children</b>	
One	21.9%
Two	48.1%
Three	20.5%
Four	6.2%
Five or more	3.4%
<b>Gender of children</b>	
Male	52.4%
Female	47.6%
<b>Age of children</b>	
Under 5 years	1.3%
Five	6.9%
Six	8.2%
Seven	7.6%
Eight	8.3%
Nine	6.3%
Ten	7.5%
Eleven	5.8%
Twelve	7.5%
Thirteen	9.1%
Fourteen	7.4%
Fifteen	8.2%
Sixteen	7.4%
Seventeen	7.9%
Eighteen	1.1%
<b>Year level of children</b>	
Prep	6.0%
Grade 1	9.6%
Grade 2	8.2%
Grade 3	8.2%
Grade 4	6.8%
Grade 5	6.7%
Grade 6	4.8%
Year 7	7.9%
Year 8	9.2%
Year 9	7.5%
Year 10	8.5%
Year 11	6.9%
Year 12	10.2%
<b>Type of school children attend</b>	
Public school	67.7%
Private school	28.0%
Other	4.4%

*Please note: Respondents with more than one child were randomly asked to answer the survey questions based on their eldest/youngest child.*

# CYCLING BEHAVIOUR

## PARENTS' CYCLING BEHAVIOUR

- ❖ Overall, six in ten of the parents surveyed had ridden a bike in the past year.
- ❖ A third had not cycled for over 12 months.
- ❖ Of those that had ridden a bike in the past month, just over 60% made on average, one to two trips per week. The type of journey most likely to be made was for recreation or exercise (85%).
- ❖ *Males were more likely than females to have ridden a bike in the past month, and parents aged under 35 years of age were also more likely to have ridden.*

### Last time parent a bike

Never	1.2%
More than a year ago	32.5%
More than a month ago	18.3%
In the last 4 weeks	9.3%
In the last 3 weeks	3.2%
In the last 2 weeks	10.1%
Sometime in the last 7 days	18.2%
Can't remember	7.3%

### Frequency of cycling

1 or 2 trips	61.1%
3 to 5 trips	22.5%
5 to 10 trips	9.1%
More than 10 trips	2.9%
Can't remember	4.4%

### Reasons for cycling

For recreation or exercise	84.8%
To or from shopping	19.8%
To visit friends or relatives	12.7%
To or from school, university or study	11.7%
To or from work	11.0%
For some other reason	2.9%
Can't remember	0.5%

*Q: When did you last ride a bicycle?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

*Q: What is your best estimate of the total number of separate bike trips you make per week?*

*For what purposes did you ride a bicycle?*

*Base: Rode a bike in the last month (n=409)*

## BIKES IN HOUSEHOLD

- ❖ The vast majority of households surveyed have at least one bike in working order (93%).
- ❖ One in ten households do not have a bike that is suitable for a child to ride.

### Number of bikes in household

	TOTAL	ADULT	CHILDREN
One	13.8%	37.6%	39.8%
Two	26.1%	34.8%	33.7%
Three	21.4%	8.5%	9.7%
Four	18.8%	3.4%	4.5%
Five or more	12.6%	1.8%	2.1%
None	7.3%	14.0%	10.2%

*Q: How many bicycles in working order are in your household?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## CHILDREN'S TRAVEL TIME TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Just under half of all parents surveyed stated that on average, it takes their child 10 minutes or less to get to and from school (46%).
- ❖ Just under a third indicated that their child travels between 11 and 20 minutes, whilst 19% stated their child travels over 20 minutes.

### Time taken for children to get to and from school

Less than 5 minutes	12.2%
5 - 10 minutes	33.4%
11 - 20 minutes	32.9%
More than 20 minutes	18.9%
Not sure	2.5%

*Q: How long does it normally take for your child to get to and from school?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## METHOD OF TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL

- ❖ The vast majority of parents surveyed indicated that their child travels to and from school by car (63%).
- ❖ Just over a quarter of children walk, one in five use public transport, whilst just over one in ten ride a bike.
- ❖ *The students most likely to ride a bike to school were male, take between 5 and 10 minutes to get to school, and whose parents ride bikes.*

### How children get to and from school

Family vehicle	58.6%
Walk	25.5%
Public transport (bus, train etc)	20.7%
Bike	11.0%
Carpool	4.0%
Other	2.7%

*Q: On most days, how does your child get to and from school?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## DECISION MAKER IN HOW CHILD TRAVELS TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Just over two-thirds of parents surveyed stated that they solely make the decision as to how their child gets to and from school, whilst a quarter make this decision with their child.
- ❖ Only 5% indicated that their child decides how they travel to and from school. This only marginally increases with age, with still only one in ten children over the age of 16 deciding how they get to school.

### Who decides how children gets to and from school

Parent	68.2%
Parent and child together	25.3%
Child	4.7%
Other	1.9%

*Q: Who decides how your child gets to and from school?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## PERMISSION TO RIDE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Of those parents whose child does not currently ride a bike to school, just under 40% indicated that their child has previously asked if they could ride a bike to school.

### Children ever asked permission to ride a bike to and from school

Yes	37.6%
No	60.1%
Unsure	2.4%

*Q: Has your child ever asked you if they could ride a bike to and from school?*

*Base: Child not currently riding a bike to school (n=894)*

## EVER RIDDEN A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Of those parents whose child does not currently ride a bike to school, a quarter indicated that their child has in the past ridden a bike to and from school.

### Children ever ridden a bike to and from school

Yes	25.3%
No	74.4%
Unsure	0.3%

*Q: Has your child ever ridden a bike to and from school?*

*Base: Child not currently riding a bike to school (n=894)*

## WHERE DO CHILDREN CYCLE

- ❖ Of those parents whose child rides a bike to school, just over half indicated that their child rides on the foot path and over 30% ride on cycle/shared paths.
- ❖ Overall, around 18% of children ride on a road to get to and from school.

### Where children mainly cycle to and from school

Foot paths	50.5%
Cycle / shared paths	31.5%
Roads with on road bike lanes	9.0%
Roads without on road bike lanes	9.0%

*Q: On which of the following surfaces would you say your child mainly cycles to and from school?*

*Base: Child rides a bike to school (n=158)*

## **BARRIERS / ENABLERS OF CYCLING**

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## CHILDREN KNOW HOW TO RIDE A BIKE

- ❖ The vast majority of parents surveyed indicated that their child knows how to ride a bike (92%).

### Children's cycling ability

Can ride a bike	92.2%
Can not ride a bike	6.4%
Unsure	1.4%

*Q: Does your child know how to ride a bicycle?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## TEACHING CHILDREN TO RIDE

- ❖ Over 80% of parents surveyed said that they were confident about teaching their child to ride a bike.
- ❖ *Parents who ride a bike themselves were more likely to say that they were confident in teaching their child to ride a bike. Men were also more likely than women to say that they were confident.*

### Parents confidence in teaching children to ride

Very confident	43.4%
Quite confident	43.4%
Neither confident nor not confident	7.6%
Not very confident	3.5%
Not at all confident	0.3%
Did not teach child(ren) how to ride	1.6%
Unsure	0.3%

*Q: How confident did you feel about teaching your child to ride a bicycle?*

*Base: Child knows how to ride a bike (n=927)*

## IMPORTANCE OF FORMAL CYCLING TRAINING

- ❖ In spite of the relatively high proportion of parents who feel confident about teaching their children to ride a bike, 45% of parents surveyed say that it is important that children receive some type of formal cycle training.

### Importance of formal cycling training

Very important	13.0%
Fairly important	31.8%
Not very important	36.9%
Not at all important	11.9%
Unsure	6.3%

*Q: In your opinion, how important is it that children receive formal cycle training?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL CYCLING TRAINING

- ❖ Overall, just over one in ten parents surveyed stated that their child has received some form of formal cycling training.

### Children participated in formal cycling training

Yes	10.9%
No	88.6%
Unsure	0.5%

*Q: Has your child received any formal cycle training?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## REASONS FOR RIDING A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Over 40% of parents surveyed allow their child to ride a bike to and from school because of good weather conditions and the distance needed to travel.
- ❖ Parents were also likely to be influenced by their child having access to foot paths/cycle paths and knowing their child is safe when travelling to school by bike.

### Reasons why children allowed to ride a bike to school

Weather or climate	46.9%
Distance	44.1%
Foot paths / cycle paths	39.6%
Personal safety	37.8%
Easy access to a bicycle	36.9%
Amount of traffic along route	36.0%
Safety of intersections and crossings	35.1%
Time	33.3%
Speed of traffic along route	29.7%
Crossing guards	29.7%
Road surfaces	27.9%
Child's before and after school activities	25.2%
Other children riding bicycles	22.5%
Adults to bike with	18.0%
Air pollution	15.3%
Convenience of driving	12.6%
Other	0.9%

*Q: Which of the following issues have affected your decision to allow your child to ride a bike to and from school?*  
*Base: Child rides a bike to school (n=158)*

## CONCERN ABOUT CHILDREN RIDING A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ The main concerns expressed by parents surveyed were centered on safety and the dangers posed by traffic and other road users.
- ❖ Parents were likely to rate personal safety, speed/volume of traffic or lack of safety of intersections/crossings as key reasons for not allowing their child to ride to and from school.
- ❖ By contrast, only a small proportion mentioned issues which are not related to concerns about other traffic.

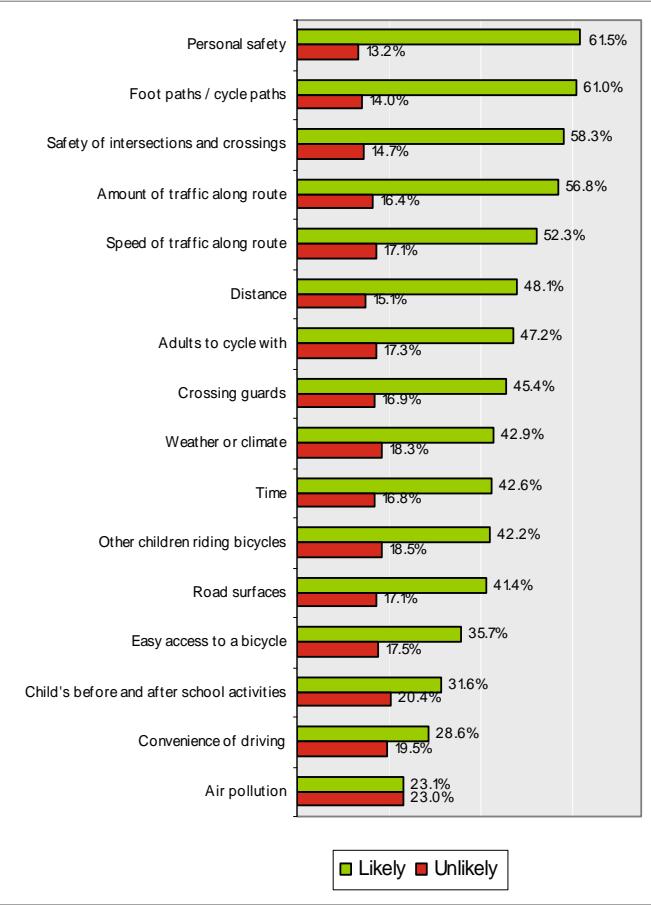
### Reasons why children are not allowed to ride a bike to school

Personal safety	50.9%
Amount of traffic along route	50.3%
Safety of intersections and crossings	44.0%
Speed of traffic along route	42.2%
Distance	40.8%
Foot paths / cycle paths	27.3%
Weather or climate	26.5%
Time	20.9%
Road surfaces	15.0%
Adults to bike with	11.3%
Convenience of driving	10.9%
Child's before and after school activities	10.6%
Crossing guards	8.4%
Other	7.7%
Age of child	3.2%
Easy access to a bicycle	2.8%
Other children riding bicycles	2.6%
Air pollution	2.6%
No bike storage facilities	2.1%

*Q: Which of the following issues have affected your decision to not allow your child to ride a bike to and from school?*  
*Base: Child not currently riding a bike to school (n=894)*

## LIKELIHOOD TO ALLOW CHILD TO RIDE A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Once again, a common theme preventing parents from allowing their child to ride a bike to or from school centered on road and safety issues.
- ❖ Parents were likely to indicate that they would be more likely to let their child ride a bike to and from school if personal safety, foot paths/cycle paths, safety of intersections/crossings, or speed/volume of traffic was changed or improved.



*Q: Would you be more likely to let your child ride a bike to and from school if this problem was changed or improved?*  
*Base: Child not currently riding a bike to school (n=894)*

## SCHOOLS ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO RIDE A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Overall, close to a quarter of parents surveyed believe their child's school encourages riding a bike to and from school.
- ❖ Over half of all parents surveyed stated that their child's school neither encouraged nor discouraged children from riding a bike to and from school.
- ❖ *Parents whose child attends a public school were more likely to believe their child's school encourages riding a bike to school, than those who go to a private school.*
- ❖ *Parents of primary school aged children were also more likely to believe their child's school encourages riding a bike to school, than those with secondary school aged children.*

## Parents perception of schools encouraging children to ride a bike to and from school

Strongly encourage	5.8%
Encourage	18.0%
Neither encourage nor discourage	50.9%
Discourage	3.6%
Strongly discourage	2.7%
Unsure	19.1%

*Q: In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage riding a bike to and from school?*  
*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## PROMOTING/ENCOURAGING MORE CHILDREN TO RIDE A BIKE TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Similar to the barriers preventing children from riding a bike to school, parents believed efforts focused on safety are needed to promote and encourage children to ride a bike to school.
- ❖ Over 20% indicated better or more bike paths/lanes are needed.
- ❖ One in ten mentioned bike and safety education and/or training.

## Efforts needed to promote and encourage riding a bike to school

Improve safety	23.7%
Bike paths/lanes	21.5%
Education/training	12.7%
Other	12.4%
Nothing	9.2%
Advertising/promotions/programs	8.2%
Bike storage/facilities	8.2%
Riding groups/supervision	7.5%
Incentives	2.5%

*Q: In your opinion, what efforts, if any, are needed to promote and encourage riding a bike to school? (OPEN VERBATIM)*  
*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

# ATTITUDES TOWARDS CYCLING

## PERCEPTIONS OF CYCLING

- ❖ Close to eight in ten parents surveyed associated riding a bike with health and fitness and two thirds described it as 'fun'.
- ❖ Over half viewed riding a bike as having a positive impact on the environment, being of relative low cost and associated it with road safety concerns.
- ❖ Issues such as it being impractical or complicated were not highly associated with riding a bike.

### Words and phrases that best describe views about cycling

Improves health/fitness	79.4%
Fun	63.1%
Environmentally good	59.7%
Low cost	58.0%
Road safety concerns	53.8%
Helps to build confidence	32.7%
Personal safety concerns	29.1%
Convenient	27.7%
Exciting	23.9%
Risky	20.9%
Challenging	18.3%
Makes feel vulnerable	12.3%
Impractical	6.4%
Complicated	3.0%

*Q: Thinking about riding a bicycle generally, which, if any, of the following would you say best describes your views about riding a bicycle?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## BENEFITS OF CYCLING

- ❖ Parents surveyed feel that the main benefit of children riding a bike to and from school is that it improves their health (82%).
- ❖ There is a fairly strong sense amongst parents that riding a bike to and from school helps children to develop their freedom and independence, improves road awareness and is 'part of growing up'.

### Perceptions of benefits of cycling for children

Improves health	82.0%
Increases independence	69.1%
Improves their road awareness	63.1%
It is part of 'growing up'	62.6%
Less dependent on being driven around by adults	55.3%
Good for the environment	52.7%
Freedom	45.1%
Reduces pollution	41.1%
Reduces spend on other forms of transport	35.7%
Reduces congestion	31.3%
Other	1.6%

*Q: In your opinion, what do you consider to be the main benefits, if any, of children riding a bike to and from school?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## AMOUNT OF FUN RIDING A BIKE TO SCHOOL IS FOR CHILDREN

- ❖ Over 80% of parents surveyed believe riding a bike to and from school is fun for children.

### Parents perception of how much fun riding a bike to and from school is for children

Very fun	42.3%
Fun	44.1%
Neutral	11.7%
Boring	1.8%
Very boring	0.0%

*Q: In your opinion, how much fun is riding a bike to and from school for your child?*

*Base: Child rides a bike to school (n=158)*

## HOW HEALTHY RIDING A BIKE TO SCHOOL IS FOR CHILDREN

- ❖ The vast majority of parents surveyed believe riding a bike to and from school is healthy for children.

### Parents perception of how healthy riding a bike to and from school is for children

Very healthy	57.7%
Healthy	36.0%
Neutral	4.5%
Unhealthy	0.9%
Very unhealthy	0.9%

*Q: In your opinion, how healthy is riding a bike to and from school for your child?*

*Base: Child rides a bike to school (n=158)*

## APPROPRIATE AGE FOR CHILDREN TO RIDE A BIKE WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION

- ❖ Parents surveyed stated that on average, children should be over 11 years old to ride a bike to and from school, and over 10 years old to ride a bike for fun and recreation without adult supervision.
- ❖ Just over 8% would not feel comfortable for children of any age to ride a bike to and from school without adult supervision.

### Appropriate age for children to ride a bike without an adult

	To and from school	For fun and recreation
Under 5 years	0.4%	3.7%
Five	1.0%	4.9%
Six	0.8%	2.9%
Seven	3.2%	6.1%
Eight	4.1%	11.6%
Nine	3.7%	4.9%
Ten	23.0%	21.5%
Eleven	7.5%	5.7%
Twelve	20.5%	15.1%
Thirteen	11.0%	7.8%
Fourteen	8.0%	4.4%
Fifteen	4.7%	3.1%
Sixteen	2.8%	2.5%
Seventeen	0.4%	0.4%
Eighteen	1.0%	1.1%
I would not feel comfortable at any age	8.2%	4.5%

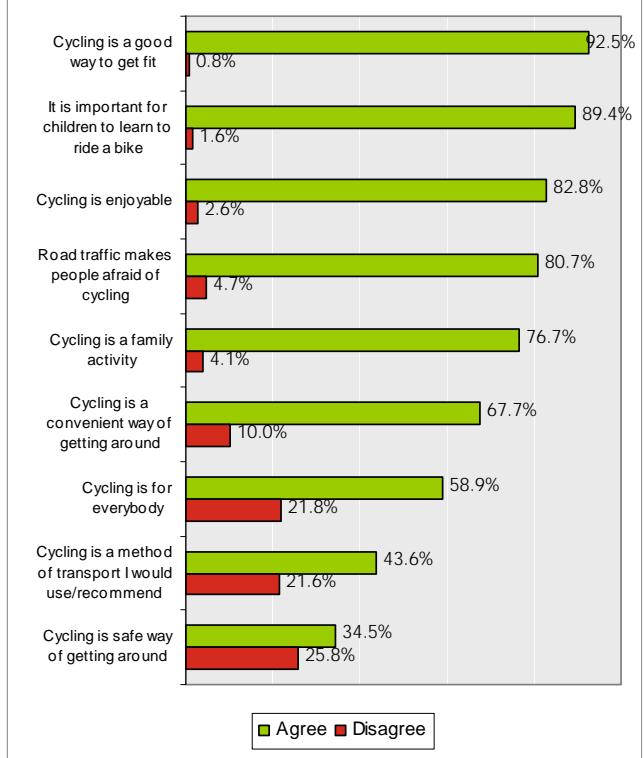
*Q: At what age do you feel it is appropriate for children to ride a bike to and from school without an adult?*

*At what age do you feel it is appropriate for children to ride a bike for fun and recreation without an adult?*

*Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## ATTITUDES TO CYCLING

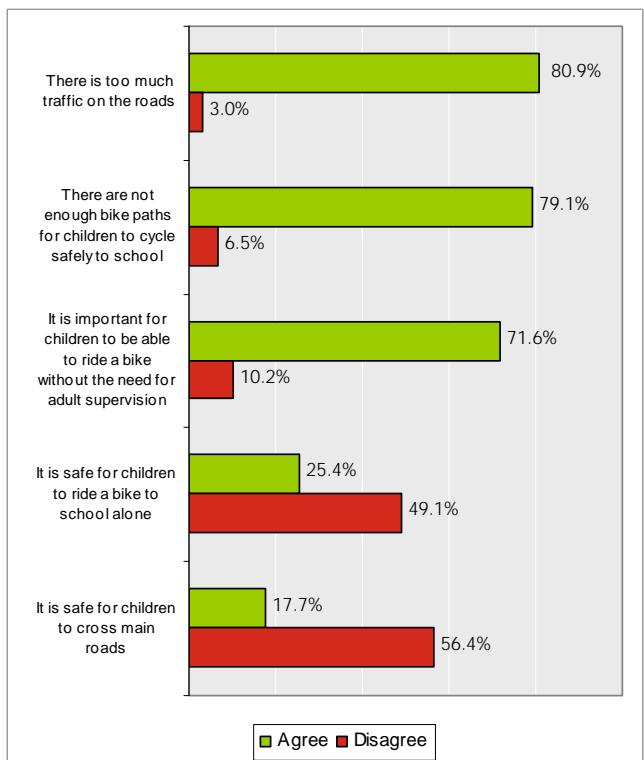
- ❖ Around nine in ten parents surveyed agreed that 'cycling is a good way to get fit' and 'it is important for children to learn to ride a bike'. Just over 80% agreed that 'cycling is enjoyable'.
- ❖ However, there are also some clear barriers to cycling. Eight in ten agreed that 'road traffic makes people afraid of cycling', and a quarter disagreed that 'cycling is a safe way of getting around'.



*Q: For each of the following statements please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree.  
Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## ATTITUDES TO CHILDREN AND CYCLING

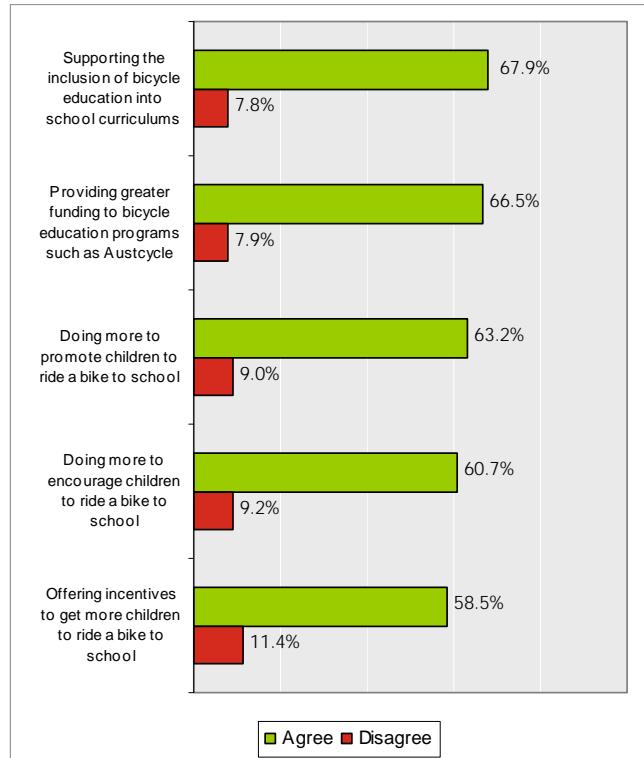
- ❖ Whilst just over 70% of parents surveyed agreed that 'it is important for children to be able to ride a bike without the need for adult supervision', close to half disagreed that 'it is safe for children to ride a bike to school alone'.
- ❖ Around eight in ten agreed that 'there is too much traffic on the roads' and 'there are not enough bike paths for children to cycle safely to school', whilst over half disagreed that 'it is safe for children to cross main roads'.



*Q: For each of the following statements please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree.  
Base: All respondents (n=1,005)*

## WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING

- ❖ Close to 70% of parents surveyed agreed that the Federal Government should be supporting the inclusion of bicycle education into school curriculums. Two-thirds agreed that the Federal Government should be providing greater funding to bicycle education programs.
- ❖ Over 60% agreed that the Federal Government should be doing more to promote children to ride a bike to and from school, and to encourage children to ride a bike to and from school.



*Q: And finally, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the Federal Government should be...?*  
Base: All respondents (n=1,005)