



# RideScore

ACTIVE SCHOOLS

An  
**Australian-first**  
ride and scoot to  
school program



# A first of its kind in Australia, the RideScore Active Schools Program (RideScore) has significantly boosted the number of children scooting and riding to school.

At its core, this innovative program uses robust technology providing real time notifications to parents when their children have arrived safely at school and when they leave to come home, while energising children to ride and scoot to school.

The RideScore platform allows WeRide and the Sunshine Coast Council to make riding and scooting to school the norm again by addressing key barriers for parents, incentivising and exciting students while delivering reduced car dependence and traffic congestion around schools.

## Key outcomes



**55%** Increase to cycling and scooting to school



**57,635** individual trips recorded



**201,400** kilometers travelled by bike or scooter



**57,635** car trips to school replaced by active transport



**29.5** tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved



## About the program

Riding to school rates on the Sunshine Coast reflected state and national trends, with numbers of children choosing to ride and scoot to school falling significantly since the 80's. Sunshine Coast Council committed to reversing this trend and partnered with WeRide Australia to develop and deliver a new approach.

With funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments, the Sunshine Coast Council and support from Stockland, a trial of RideScore was undertaken across eight primary schools to support healthy and active lifestyle choices for students and their families, and reduce peak time congestion around schools

The national RideScore trial embraced technology to develop an innovative approach to encourage students to ride to school. It is the first program of its type in Australia to automatically record students bicycle/scooter trips, provide real-time information on safe arrival/departure to parents and to also reward students as they ride/scoot to and from school.

RideScore was designed to be a scalable framework which could be expanded to other local governments wishing to adopt the program to encourage more children scooting and riding a bike to school nationally.



***'Love this program! So great and appreciate the notifications letting me know the kids made it to school safely.'***



## What is RideScore?

### The Australian first program utilises:

- Smart beacons to alert parents automatically when their child arrives and departs school through the dedicated RideScore app\*
- Direct messaging, information and simplified registration through app-based technology
- Milestone rewards and special events to engage and encourage students
- Advanced use of mapping to identify safer routes to school
- Bicycle rider education.

\* a key design feature is that young children are not required to have their own phone to participate in the program.



# Evaluation of RideScore Active Schools program

Deakin University was engaged to undertake a full evaluation of the RideScore program.

The evaluation had four aims:

1

Evaluate the impact of the RideScore program on children's active travel behaviour.

2

Assess program uptake by primary aged children in the intervention schools.

3

Understand the benefits of RideScore.

4

Assess the feasibility of scaling up the program to other schools.

## Schools selected for the RideScore trial

- Eight schools were selected to participate in the trial and four schools as control schools (no trial).
- Schools were selected based on several factors including, local infrastructure home locations within a 2 km radius, known traffic congestion issues, and school willingness to participate and promote active travel were all considered to ensure a 'real-world context.'

***'Absolutely fantastic program .... it would be great if all council areas around the country get on board to encourage kids to get active. '***

## Evaluation protocol

Key outcomes measured by the evaluation included :

- Participation rates in riding and scooting to school recorded through the app
- Physical number of bikes and scooters at the school through bike counts (in school bike sheds) between Term 1 (prior to the program announcement) and Term 2 (four months following implementation)
- Parents perceptions from all eight schools were recorded to assess whether the program made a difference and to understand how it worked for their families.

## Results

**There was an increase in riding and scooting to school in the RideScore trial schools and a decrease in the comparison schools during the same period.**

RideScore resulted in an increase in cycling and scooting to school of

**55%**

Adjusting for school enrolment and attendance, between Term 1 (T1) and Term 2 (T2), participating RideScore schools, relative to control schools:

- experienced an average percent increase of 55.2% .

### What does this mean?

RideScore was effective in getting kids to ride or scoot to school.

This intervention effect was statistically significant ( $p=0.01$ ).

### More:

The difference in the daily average bike count was an increase of 279.6 bikes and scooters in the RideScore schools and a decrease of 6.2 bikes and scooters in the control schools (T2 compared to T1).

There was also a greater percent change in children riding and scooting in the RideScore schools over the intervention period, relative to the control schools (38% vs -4.3%).

### BIKE COUNTS, DAILY AVERAGE, AT TERM 1 (T1) AND TERM 2 (T2)

	Shed Count T1	Daily Avg T1	Shed Count T2	Day Avg T2	Difference T2-T1 total	Difference T2-T1 Daily Average	Percent Change T2-T1
RideScore	3676	735.2	5074	1014.8	1398	279.6	38.0
Control	722	144.4	691	138.2	-31	-6.2	-4.3

Source: Sunshine Coast Council and The University of Canberra. Riding to school is inclusive of both bicycle and scooter as these are not separated in the program.

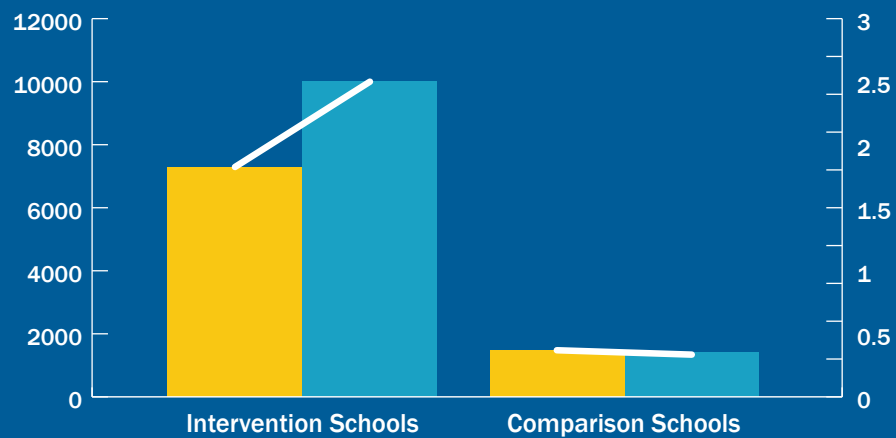


February



June

Percent change

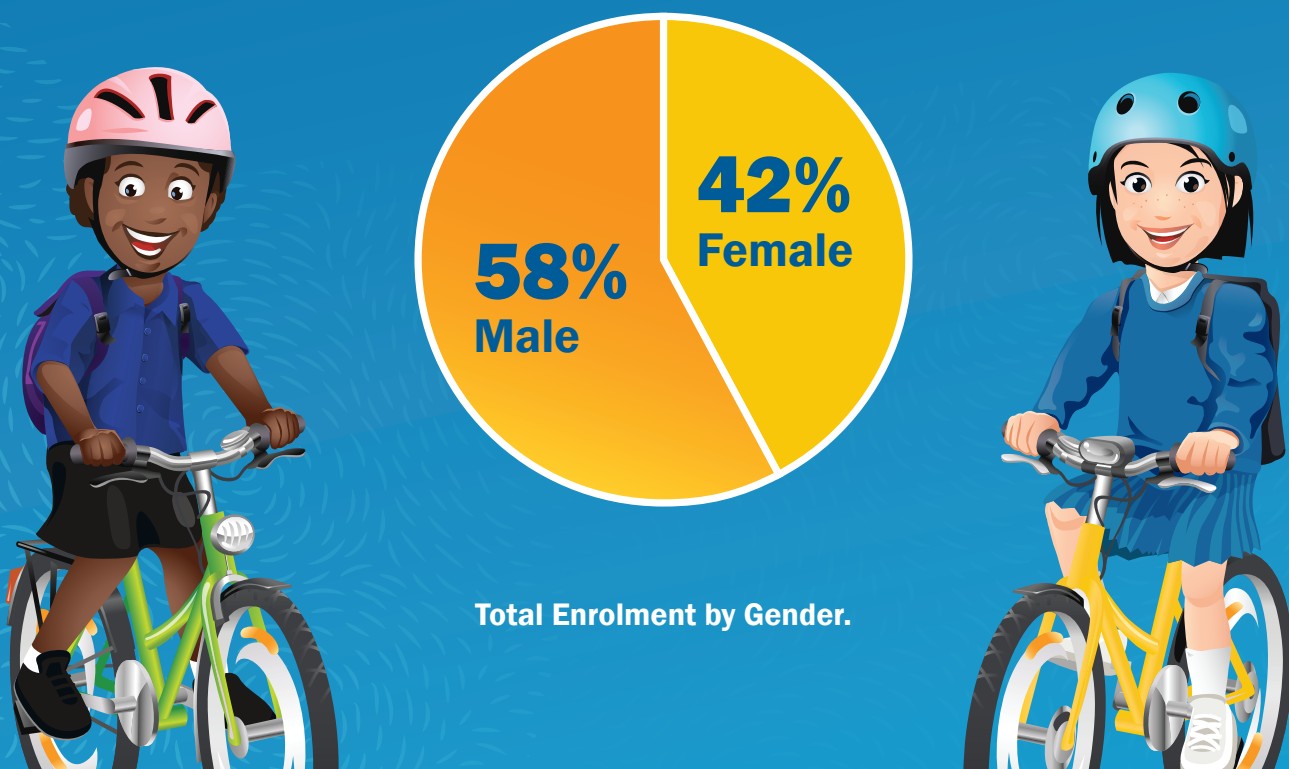


**Bike count averages and percent change, intervention (RideScore) and comparison (control) schools, Term 1 and Term 2.**

### The extent of program uptake by primary aged children in the intervention schools.

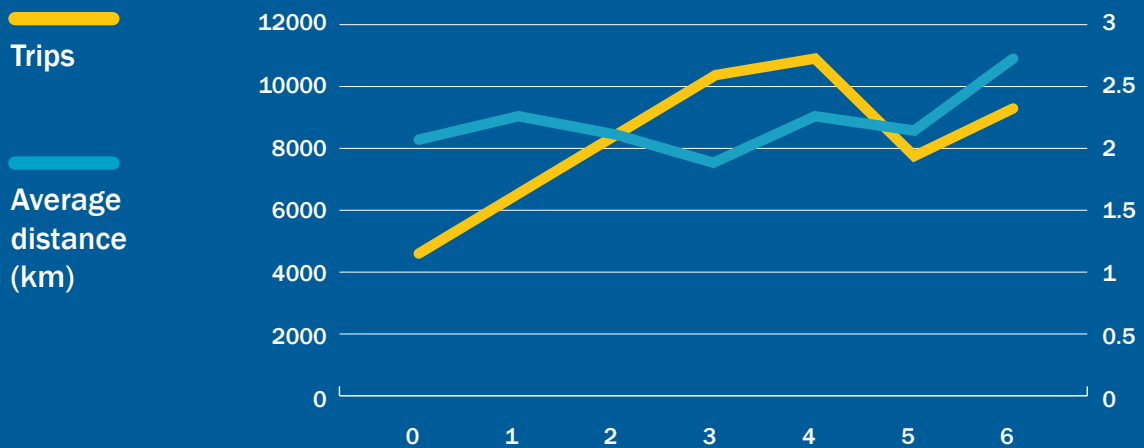
#### Who rode in the RideScore trial program?

- 1,470 students registered in the RideScore trial (23% of eligible school population)
- 1,309 students were supplied with beacons (20% of the eligible school population) and
- 1,200 students registered and rode or scooted to their school at least once (19% of the school population)
- 80% of children registered by week 5
- 42% of registrations were female who rode or scooted to school. Boys generally rode or scooted more than girls.

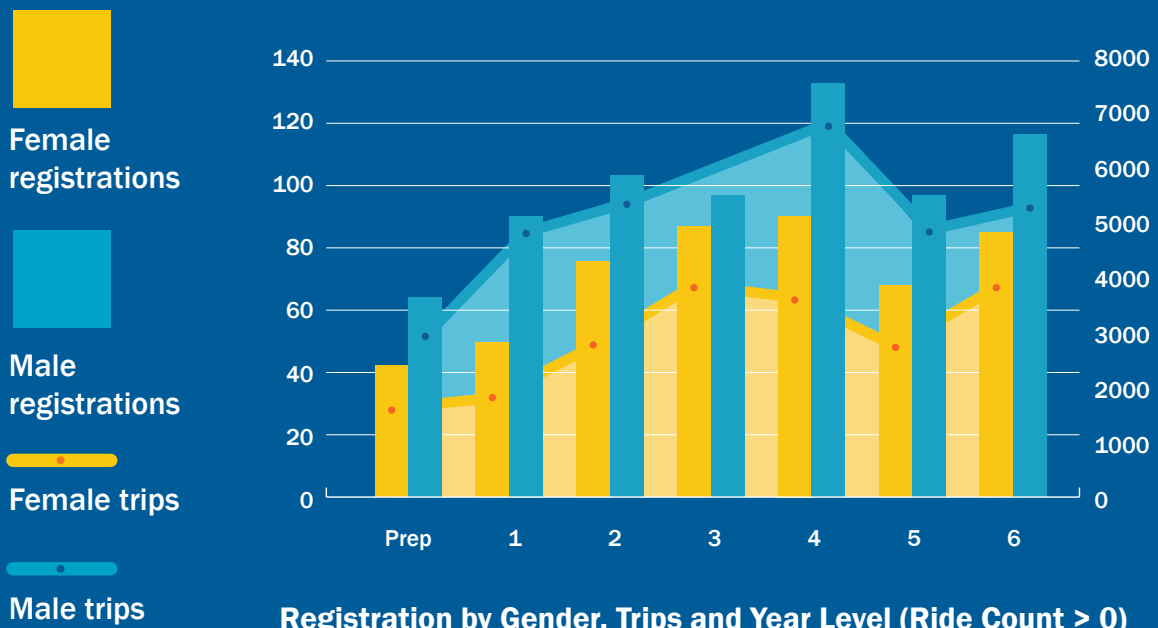


**Total Enrolment by Gender.**

During the evaluation period, there were **1,200** students actively riding and scooting to and from school. Both the number of trips undertaken and the average distance ridden increased progressively through the year levels. Year 4 students in particular show strong participation.



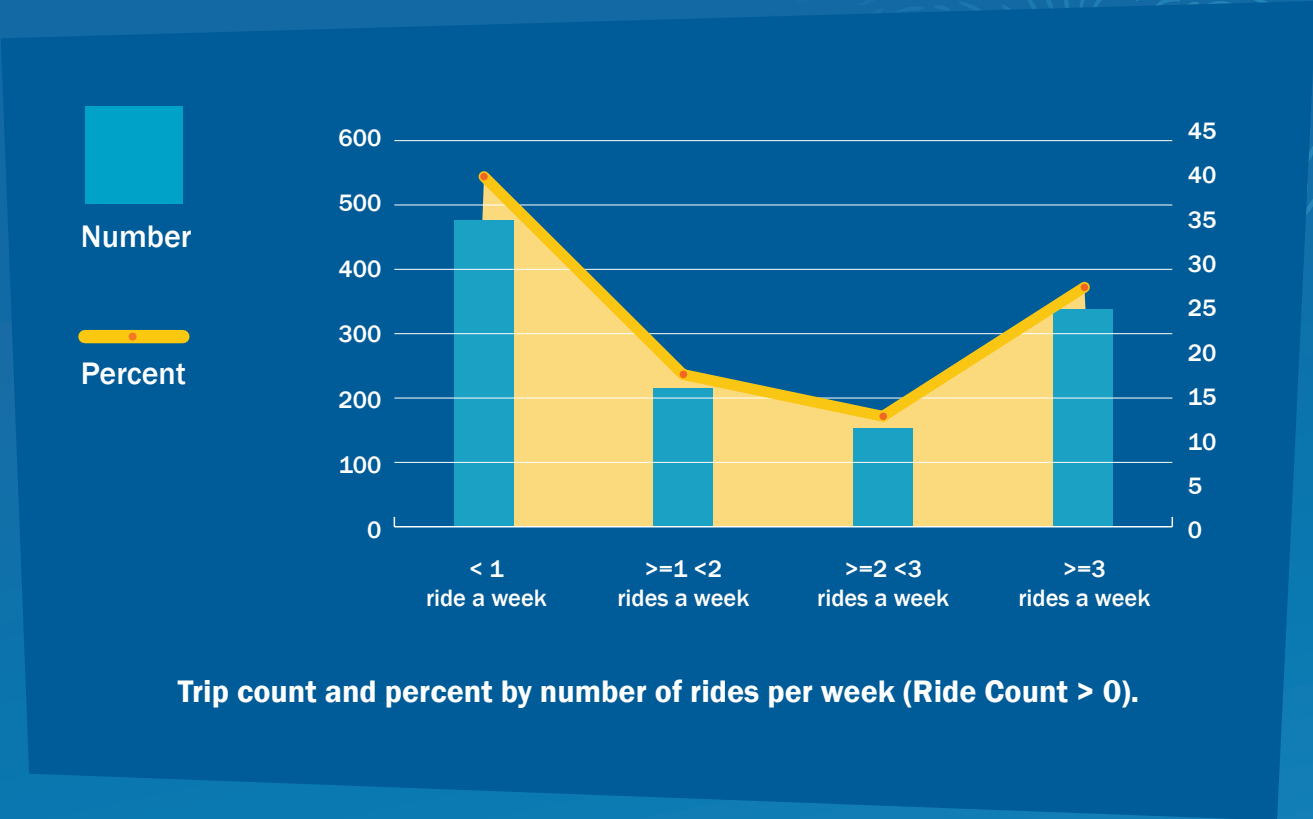
Trips by Year Level by Average Ride Distance (Ride Count > 0)



Registration by Gender, Trips and Year Level (Ride Count > 0)



In total, **57,635** trips were recorded during the trial. The average distance travelled per day was 3.49 km (to and from school). Children across all schools travelled a total distance of 201,403 kilometres or the equivalent of circumnavigating the earth five times.



	Total Trips	Avg trip Distance (km)	Total Distance (Km)	CO2 Saved (Kg)	Total Hours
Total	57,635	3.49	225,460.4	33,029.9	22,546.0

1: CO2 is based on 146.5 g/km (National Transport Commission, 2022).  
 2: Total hours were based on an average speed of 14 kph (Thompson et al, 1997).

A total of **29.5** tonnes of CO2 was saved and **57,635** car trips to school were replaced by active travel during the trial.

## What was the implementation of the RideScore trial like?

### High levels of participation!

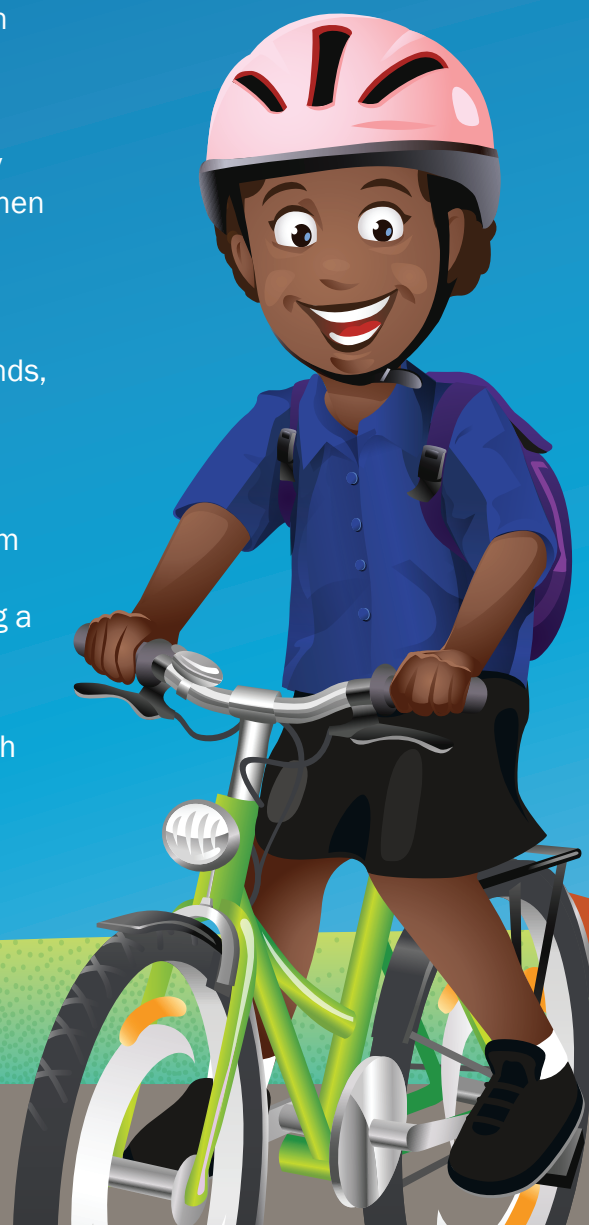
- Program reach = **23%** of parents registered their children
- Almost **1 in 5** children across all grades participated in RideScore
- **19%** of children rode at least once.

### Parents reassured

- The reliability of real time push notifications provided parents with peace of mind and reassurance on their child's time of arrival at, and departure from, school
- School representatives and parents overwhelmingly had positive perceptions of the program
- Interviews strongly suggest that RideScore parents were satisfied with the notifications.

### Benefits for children

- Parents report that RideScore had a positive impact on children's active travel behaviour
- Children were riding or scooting to school more
- Parents with children who were already riding regularly when the program started, rode more on rainy days, when sick and days they 'felt lazy'
- Parents noted that exercise was not the only benefit. Many children enjoyed increased confidence, independence and the social aspect of riding with friends, all of which contribute to positive child development
- Importantly, children were motivated to ride to school more because of the incentivisation component of RideScore and the pleasure or satisfaction derived from riding itself – whether it was socialising with friends, enjoying the freedom of riding independently, or having a good start to the day, and
- For some children, participating in RideScore afforded some unique benefits including improved mental health and becoming trimmer.



## Benefits for families

- Benefits ranged from convenience, parents having more time and saving money to enhanced health and wellbeing and strengthening family relationships
- Parents riding to school with their children benefitted from the exercise and spending more time with their child, which strengthened their relationship. In some cases, it took less time for families to bike to school than drive, providing a healthier experience of being outside and not stuck in a traffic jam at the school gate (less stress)
- Parents who allowed their children to ride to school independently reported having more free time. They also developed confidence in their child riding independently. Allowing their child to ride to school could be more convenient and less stressful as they were able to avoid traffic congestion and risk outside the school gate, and
- In some cases, families reported becoming more active and riding on the weekend. Riding also became embedded in family routines.

***‘My children, not only ride to school now every single day but they come home and they ride their bike up and down the street. So, they’ve dropped the iPads and the TV, and whatever else happens in the house and they are out until the streetlights come on every day unless they’ve got sports.’***

## Incentives and gamification

RideScore used milestone incentives, school and class-level leader boards and special events (‘gamification’) to motivate children to ride or scoot to school. At the core of children’s motivation was acquiring points (trips to school), as points were linked to recognition and receiving prizes when a milestone was achieved.

- Children’s motivation was sparked by wanting to be at the top of the leader board or wanting to be ranked higher than their friends or siblings
- Parents unanimously reported that their children ‘liked’ or ‘loved’ the incentives, and
- Key stakeholders and school representatives also highlighted the success of the incentives and gamification.



## Key success factors for the program

- **Council perceived as a trusted/credible organisation**
- **Reliability of the push notifications**
- **Security of children's information**
- **External program champion to the school.** RideScore is a school-based program but was implemented and managed by Council
- **Collaboration between Council and the Schools.** Although the Council was the driving force behind the program, the school supported and facilitated its implementation
- **Characteristics of the program champions.** The quality of Council staff delivering RideScore was a major success factor
- **Easy for schools to implement.** The support from Council was 'excellent' with schools able to facilitate and promote the program but were not responsible for all resourcing
- **Timely response of council staff.** One of the strongest themes in the interviews was the timely response of council staff to issues arising in the field and this reflected council's ongoing commitment and dedication to the program
- **Accuracy of the trip.** RideScore is reliant on correct attachment of beacons to bikes or scooters and. Council was on top of any anomalies that may have occurred
- **Stakeholder confidence in the program.** A key strength of RideScore was the confidence that stakeholders placed in the program which benefitted from substantial investment by Council and WeRide in development and testing of the app-based program
- **Using multiple strategies to engage parents and children.** The need to engage parents using multiple strategies was recognised early and ongoing promotion and a presence in the school was key to getting children enrolled.

These factors all worked together and contributed to the program's successful implementation in the eight RideScore trial schools.



## What's needed to roll-out RideScore nationally?

### Moving forward

The quantitative results show that the program was highly effective in increasing the number of children wheeling to school in the intervention schools relative to the comparison or control schools. This was also true accounting for changes in school enrolment numbers.

Compared to other voluntary active travel programs, the program had good uptake and implementation logs suggest that the program was implemented consistently across schools. The qualitative results shed light on the myriad benefits to children and families.

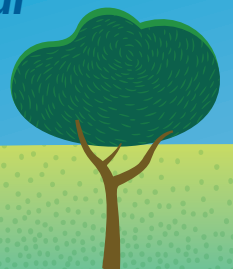
Based on the evidence, RideScore is highly worthy of upscaling to other schools, however, consideration needs to be given to the grades and schools that should be targeted (e.g., geography) and the administrative, financial and human resource supports that would be required to maintain the integrity of the program in its delivery across sites.

***'So, it's been really good at giving my daughter some motivation to get ready to leave sooner so she can do something fun on the way to school.'***





*'I just wanted to take the time to say a big thank you to the ridescore team! My 6 year old is now riding everyday to school. He has grown in confidence and fitness and has been very motivated to achieve the goals and win the prizes. It's a wonderful scheme and as a parent it's been a wonderful addition to our daily routine.'*





## Notes on this report

This summary highlights key findings from the full evaluation conducted by Deakin University academics (initially University of Canberra) and findings from the program evaluation conducted by AECOM and commissioned by the Sunshine Coast Council.

Designed and delivered by the Sunshine Coast Council in partnership with WeRide Australia and supported by the Australian and Queensland governments with additional support from Stockland, the RideScore program has successfully addressed the challenges for local independent travel, and is now being expanded to more schools every year.

The program was first introduced in 2017 in a single school as a proof of concept by Council officers to support cycling and scooting to school before being developed as a national trial.

## Program partners



The 'RideScore ACTIVE SCHOOLS' logo is contained within an orange, rounded shape. It features a white icon of a person riding a bicycle on the left. To the right of the icon, the word 'RideScore' is written in a large, white, cursive font, and 'ACTIVE SCHOOLS' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

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ACTIVE SCHOOLS

