

## Merriang Special Development School in Action

Key Priority Area: **Active Travel**

Type of Funding: **Extracurricular**



<b>School Overview</b>	Merriang Special Developmental School (MSDS) is a dual campus school that caters for the learning and developmental needs of students who have a diagnosed intellectual disability. A significant number of the students experience multiple disabilities, particularly autism spectrum disorder.
<b>Project Goal:</b>	MSDS goal is to introduce a Bike Education program that links with the new School Strategic Plan of increasing student engagement in community orientated activities. Through exposure to a safe riding skills program and environment within the school grounds that build skills competence and confidence, students will transfer these skills to riding out in the community more often.



Merriang Special Development School consulted both students and parents in their school community to understand the types of programs they would like to see enhanced within the school. Bike Education was identified as a priority, so the learning specialist teacher and occupational therapist 'took the reins' of the project and started to plan what was required to implement an appropriate and successful program.



The information gathered through a school audit of their current equipment and bike activities, informed the implementation of a new and improved Bike Education program plan that saw their newly developed undercover basketball court transformed into a bike track and traffic school. The repurposing of the court at regular intervals during lunch breaks throughout the week saw many students practicing their riding skills in a safe and structured environment.

Bike Education was introduced into the Physical Education curriculum and the ACHPER Victoria Expert Support Service staff assisted with the delivery of a Professional Development session. The session covered topics such as the correct fitting of helmets and mounting/dismounting bikes safely. The Active Schools funding enabled the purchase of

adapted bikes and scooters, along with traffic control equipment they could use for their traffic school at lunchtimes. The foundations to safe cycling in the community are now in place with a sustainable program that will support students' skills, knowledge, independence and confidence to explore riding opportunities beyond the school gate.

Active School Strategy	Impact
<b>Environment:</b> Purchase traffic lights, bikes, trikes, scooters, signage and rumble strips to set up a mobile traffic school on site.	<i>The introduction of the traffic school and having a dedicated area to ride supported student learning of road rules that were transferable to riding in the community.</i>
<b>Staff Professional Development:</b> Organise ACHPER Victoria Expert Support Service staff to deliver a Bike Professional Development session to inform and upskill staff in correct helmet fitting and some simple riding tips.	<i>Teacher knowledge and confidence grew in many areas of safe bike riding including how to fit students with the correct helmet; supervising students riding their bikes in the traffic school, giving students tips on how to ride their bikes/trikes and scooters safely and how it translates to riding outside of school.</i>
<b>Program Delivery:</b> Colour-code, fit and allocate different sized bikes and helmets to each student. Ensure the colour of the fitted bikes and helmets are recorded for quick student identification.	<i>The colour-coding system has ensured bikes and helmets are distributed quickly to students, maximising student time to refine skills. Through the pre-fitting of bike sizes, students are always riding a suitable bike, allowing them to build their confidence.</i>

Want to know more? Contact [activeschools@achper.vic.edu.au](mailto:activeschools@achper.vic.edu.au) or access our online community [here](#).