My Active Life Project Findings - Political and Media Talking Points

We have collated four key messages arising from this research that we think may be of interest to politicians, the media, or the general public. They could be used as a starting point for press releases, offered as topics for interviews or news articles, or brought into consultation sessions with a local council member or Member for Parliament. They may also provide useful context to social commentary, reporting or policy development for issues such as inclusive sports or accessibility in urban planning.

### Insight 1: Access to recreation and assistive technology is a protected human right.

Access to recreation is a legally protected right in Australia under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Access to assistive technology for mobility, including adapted bikes, is also protected under this act. For more information see: [DDA – Sport and Recreation](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/projects/disability-rights-sport-and-recreation-page) and [HumanRights.gov – Accessible Technology](https://tech.humanrights.gov.au/accessible-technology).

### Insight 2: Adapted cycling is an important means of recreational and social inclusion.

Adaptive bikes offer a range of benefits for people with disability and their families (see report pages 15-17), including:

* + Participation in recreation, leisure or competitive sport with community, family members or friends.
  + Increased range and independence in outdoor mobility.
  + Increased physical fitness, confidence, and social capital.

### Insight 3: Access is key.

While adapted bikes can support inclusion, they can be difficult to transport and use in public spaces (see report p. 22). A standard adapted bike is 800mm wide and 850mm tall. Narrow footpaths, parked cars, unattended e-scooters, and pavement furniture such as café chairs and tables can make it difficult or even dangerous to ride an adapted bike. Additionally, access to recreation requires attention to systemic factors including the affordability of recreation activities, the accessibility of locations and transport, and the impacts of inclusive versus exclusionary attitudes and practice (see report p. 80-81).

### Insight 4: Accessible bike programs require appropriate funding to meet demand.

Many rides of adapted bikes have complex disability and require a solution that is individually tailored to their needs (see report pages 20-21). With improved recreational goal setting under the NDIS, custom cycling solutions are in high demand. However, there are significant labour and resourcing costs involved in fitting, prescribing, making, and trialling a custom adapted bike, and increasing community awareness of adapted cycling options. Much of this work is non-billable under the NDIS, and custom bike providers like the TAD Australia Network are currently reliant on a volunteer workforce to meet demand. Increased funding and tailored funding models will be needed to ensure the growing community of adaptive riders can access affordable support and equipment into the future.

### Practice Recommendations

Practice recommendations for **Governments, local** **councils and urban planners** include:

* Consider options for secure parking and transportation of adapted bikes in addition to wheelchairs and mobility scooters. This includes considerations for the width and height of storage bays, as adapted bikes are larger and heavier, and cyclists with disability may have more difficulty in manoeuvring or lifting their bike.
* Creating maps of accessible and inclusive cycling routes.
* Ensure that all new or updated cycling facilities consider accessibility and safety for all users, including pedestrians with and without disability, people using mobility aids, and those using adapted cycling equipment.
* Encourage the inclusion of non-standard cycles in bike rental and bike-share schemes.
* Understand the complex costs of operating the custom assistive technology services that provide adapted bikes, and work in partnership with these organisations to ensure sustainable funding and infrastructure supports remain available.

Practice suggestions for **community members** include:

* Educate local businesses (e.g., cafes, restaurants) about the minimum width that pavements should be kept clear to accommodate wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and adapted bikes.
* Maintain the pavement space outside of your business or home, and report hazards (e.g., cracked pavements, overgrown hedges/nature strips, and abandoned items) to your local council.
* Contribute to inclusive recreation spaces by being mindful of cyclists with disability when you are using the road or cycle paths.

### Recommended Resources

Some external resources for accessibility in cycling and urban design include:

* [C40: How to grow cycling by improving equity and accessibility](https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-grow-cycling-by-improving-equity-and-accessibility?language=en_US).
* [Wheels for Wellbeing: A guide to inclusive cycling](https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/FINAL-v3.pdf) (Opens as a pdf).
* [United Nations: Good Practices in Accessible Urban Development](https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/good_practices_in_accessible_urban_development_october2016.pdf) (Opens as a pdf)

[Henderson-Wilson, Andrews, Wilson & Tucker (2022): Global Benchmarking of Accessible and Inclusive Cities](https://universaldesignaustralia.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/258-879-1-PB-1.pdf) (Opens as a pdf).

This handout was developed as part of a commissioned project investigating inclusive sport and recreation in the TAD Australia Network *‘My Active Life’* program. If you would like more information about this project, please email [assistivetech@deakin.edu.au](mailto:assistivetech@deakin.edu.au).

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