

## **TravelSmart Households in the West: New ways to achieve and sustain travel behaviour change**

Jill Tideman<sup>1</sup>, Belinda Wotton<sup>1</sup>, Elizabeth Ampt<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, SA, Australia

<sup>2</sup> Steer Davies Gleave, SA, Australia

### **1. Introduction**

In this paper we propose to provide the context and rationale for the approach taken to implementing the ambitious and innovative project, *TravelSmart Households in the West*. The project is currently being implemented in an area containing about 65,000 households in a portion of the western suburbs of Adelaide, and will not be completed until the latter half of 2007. In addition to the stated project objectives, this intervention offers an enormous opportunity to learn and really 'push the envelope' in terms of understanding how to be more effective in influencing households to adopt sustainable travel behaviours that result in a lasting reduction in car use, and assist in building new understandings of the dynamic of sustainable behaviour change.

After outlining the project context, objectives and describing the project target area, a high-level review of some behavioural change models is provided. This is not intended to be a comprehensive literature review, but rather reflects a pragmatic exercise that has sifted and selected material that seems applicable and valuable in helping to 'push the envelope'. This paper reflects how our approach has been shaped by key principles and lessons from past experience with travel behaviour change in Adelaide, and incorporates additional lessons gleaned from the behavioural sciences. Finally the project methodology is described including aspects that continue to evolve as the project is implemented.

### **2. Background**

Climate change associated with increasing greenhouse gas emissions is widely recognised as one of the world's most serious challenges (Government of SA, 2006a). Transport is a key contributor to this, accounting for a 29 percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Australia between 1990 and 2003. Of the total amount of transport related greenhouse gas emissions in 2003, road transport made up about 90 percent. The Australian Greenhouse Office states, that by 2010 this is projected to increase by 53 percent over the 1990 levels (AGO, 2005).

To arrest this trend, in 2001, the Australian Transport Ministers developed a long-term strategy and national action plan entitled "Lowering Emissions from Urban Traffic: a national integrated strategy". A key objective in this plan was to develop programs Australia-wide that encouraged people to take fewer trips by car (NTS, 2000). In South Australia (SA) this objective has become embodied in key government policy directions (South Australia's Strategic Plan & SA Draft Greenhouse Strategy) for a more environmentally sustainable transport system to improve the environment, health, safety and accessibility of the SA community (Government of South Australia 2005 & 2006a). Based on the results of feasibility studies in SA between 1996 and 2002, as well as other national and international experience, travel behaviour change programs are viewed as offering significant potential for decreasing the demand for private car travel (Transport SA, 2002 a & b; Perkins & Giannakodakis, 2001).

Building on these policy directions, the SA Government has recently taken the bold step with the introduction of a draft *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Bill*. The

Bill proposes to legislate an ambitious target of reducing total greenhouse emissions by 60 percent of 1990 levels by 2050 (Government of SA, 2006b).

## **2.1 National Travel Behaviour Change Project**

The SA Government was awarded funding from the Australian Government's Greenhouse Abatement Program (GGAP) to be a partner in the National Travel Behaviour Change Project (NTBCP). The design, implementation and independent evaluation project, "TravelSmart Households in the West" (THITW) forms the SA component of the NTBCP.

The NTBCP, a partnership project between Queensland, Victoria, SA and the Australia Capital Territory (ACT), is being conducted over a four-year period (July 2003 – December 2007), and will be followed by a six-year period (to June 2013) of monitoring to establish that the emissions reductions achieved during the implementation phase are at least maintained during the Kyoto reporting period. The aim of the NTBCP is to apply a variety of travel behaviour change methodologies on a large scale, specifically demonstrating the contribution that voluntary travel behaviour change methodologies can make to reducing transport sector greenhouse gas emissions (AGO, 2006).

Under the NTBCP Agreement there are travel behaviour change projects on a large scale using a range of methodologies in each of the participating jurisdictions of Victoria, SA, the ACT, and Queensland. Each State is undertaking a different range of approaches with the aim of maximising the opportunity to improve levels of knowledge and understanding. In addition, this national project allows for synergies to develop between the projects and it provides opportunity for improved information exchange allowing for a significant increase in understanding of the role of voluntary behaviour change in effective travel demand management across Australia.

## **2.2 Project Objectives for TravelSmart Households in the West**

The objective of the THITW project is to deliver a quality household-based voluntary behaviour change program that aims to reduce car use in about 23,000 households in the targeted western areas of Adelaide over a two-year period (mid 2005 – mid 2007). At a more detailed level the project aims to:

- *lead to sustainable change* in travel behaviour and hence reduction in kilometres travelled by cars.
- *directly engage people* (households) within their cultural context, capturing interest across all socio-demographic groups and where participation is voluntary;
- build on *accepted models of behaviour change*, and in particular demonstrate how the specific barriers and benefits of behavioural change are addressed;
- *provide tools and techniques* which are targeted at the most significant barriers to behavioural change, so that they are easy to use, suited to individual circumstances and motivate individuals to actually make simple incremental changes in their travel behaviour;
- be *effective and efficient on a broad-scale*;
- enable *statistically valid independent measurement* of the resulting behaviour change;
- be *monitored during delivery and ensure that continuous improvement* is integrated into the methodology over the life of the project;
- *build strong partnerships with key stakeholders*, such as local government and others;
- be *innovative and influenced by previous experience* with travel behaviour change in SA, current best practice from interstate and international projects and;

As the project forms part of the NTBC project the key focus is a reduction in greenhouse emissions by reducing car use. Hence, an independent evaluation has been commissioned to measure changes in vehicle kilometres, and Sydney University's Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies is undertaking this.

## 2.3 Underpinning Principles

Underpinning these project objectives, is a set of principles which relates to the key ways in which the number of kilometers travelled by car can be reduced. These include:

- using the car smarter (more efficiently) e.g. planning activities ahead and 'trip chaining', ride-sharing etc.
- less need for car travel e.g. by encouraging use of local shops, services and activities
- substituting car trips by more environmentally friendly options – walking, cycling or using public transport
- eliminating the need for some car travel – e.g. telecommuting, banking, bill paying etc on the internet or by telephone

Previous work in SA in this area has shown that households use all of these strategies to reduce their dependency on the motor vehicle. Experience thus far in the Adelaide context is that change is most effective if people are offered a range of options, however using the car more efficiently seems to be the most effective (Perkins & Giannakodakis, 2001).

## 2.4 Target area

An area (suburbs named in Figure 1) has been identified in the western and north-western region of metropolitan Adelaide focussing on activity centres of Glenelg, Henley Beach, Kilkenny and West Lakes.

THITW is being delivered in an area which has not previously been exposed to a travel behaviour change program, is large enough for statistically significant changes to be obtained, and has characteristics that are important for travel behaviour to change in that there are alternatives available to car based transport and accessibility to vibrant retail, business and activity centres.

Briefly, the target area is about 4.5 percent of the total area of metropolitan Adelaide, or 13 percent of the population. The THITW target area is large and diverse consisting of approximately 65,000 dwellings, housing more than 140,000 residents (ABS, 2002).

This scale and diversity not only brings with it variety but the complexity of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds also provide challenges. Table 1 compares selected demographic statistics for the greater Adelaide

Figure 1: TravelSmart Households in the West target area



metropolitan averages, with the targeted Western Suburbs.

**Table 1: Basic Demographic Statistics for the Specified Target Areas**

Statistic	Adelaide SD	Targeted Suburbs
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	1826.9	81.6
Total Population	1,072,585	140,846
Total number of households	420,045	64,709
Average household size	2.4	2.3
Median weekly household income	\$600-\$699	\$600-\$699
Median age	37	39
Percentage of persons 14 years and younger	18.8	17
Percentage of persons 65 years and over	14.6	14
Percentage of total labour force unemployed	7.9	11
Percentage of occupied dwellings not owning a motor vehicle	10.9	11
Average number of motor vehicles <sup>1</sup> owned per occupied dwelling	1.41	1.3
Percent driving to work of total employed persons (of persons travelling to work)	70.5	65
Percent taking public transport to work of total employed persons (of persons travelling to work)	7.4	6
Percent walk or bicycle to work of total employed persons (of persons travelling to work)	3.1 (3.8)	4

(Source: 2001 Census Basic Community Profiles and Snapshots State Suburbs. ABS, 2002 available at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au) . Retrieved on: 1 July 2006).

### 3. Models and Theories of Behaviour Change

The ‘discipline’ of Travel Behaviour Change (TBC) has been primarily the preserve of transport professionals, and approaches taken have mostly been from the “the comfort zone” of practical experience in transport policy development and implementation. Consulting the community in decision-making processes for example, as part of planning and constructing a new piece of transport infrastructure, is very different from influencing people’s complex choices, habits and behaviour related to how they use their cars for transport. Over recent years, community involvement processes have become part of the transport professional’s toolkit, however by adopting some of the approaches in this toolkit, we have failed to recognise strongly enough or appreciate the real challenges in influencing people’s travel behaviour. Often the underlying assumption is that ‘involving’ people leads to behaviour change. In this paper we will demonstrate how we have attempted to apply some of the models and lessons from those disciplines and from experts who work in areas of understanding human behaviour, social psychology and community change, to truly achieve sustainable change in the way people use their cars.

Health, environmental and road safety promotions and education have adapted ideas from the behavioural and social sciences. In the field of travel behaviour change, application of behavioural and social sciences is still in its early days (Seethaler and Rose 2003 & 2005). There are various theories and models that explain behaviour and suggest ways to achieve change. They help understand the nature and dynamics of the targeted behaviours and can identify processes for changing behaviour. They also provide insights and new ways of thinking (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2005). However, when approaching this area, it is difficult not to be overwhelmed by the multitude of theories, models and frameworks – all of which appear, at least on the surface, credible and many of which seem to have application and appeal. The dilemma is what is the ‘right’ model, and which approach could be applied to the complexity of individual decisions, habits and

behaviours that result in seemingly unending permutations and combinations of travel choices?

In facing this dilemma the factors we have considered in assessing the range of theories and models have included:

- that there is recognition that influencing behaviour occurs at a number of levels (from the individual to the community)
- that we have sought to elicit key principles (from social psychology) that form part of the approaches which successfully influence behaviour change
- that the importance and role of individual relationships within a community context is more fully recognised and exploited
- that the importance of applying principles of psychology to carefully crafted communication strategies, at both an individual and community level is also addressed.

The following sub-sections focus on these factors more specifically.

### **3.1 Influencing behaviour at both an individual and a community level**

The behavioural science literature tells us that there are three broad levels of influence for behaviour:

- at the individual,
- interpersonal, and
- community level.

Clearly there is interaction across all of these.

At the individual level a model commonly referenced in the travel behaviour change literature is the *Stage of Change* theory (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Fergusson et al, 1999). Recent work by Professor Stradling and colleagues in the UK have been applying this model to better understand if it is possible to target the most likely 'segments' of the community with respect to their readiness for reducing their car use (Stradling et al, 2005).

At the interpersonal level (and also within a community context) people are both influenced by, and are influential in, their social environments. A basic premise is "that people learn not only through their own experiences, but also by observing the actions of others and the results of those actions" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2005).

For community level change there are three broad categories of conceptual frameworks, which can be summarised as follows;

1. **community development or community organisational** models – where the emphasis is on empowering communities to take action through active participation and development process
2. **diffusion** of innovations or change models that focus on how new ideas or social practices spread within and between communities
3. **organisational change** models focussing on processes and strategies to maximise the chances that policies and programs will be adopted and institutionalised within formal organisations

It is the first two of these that seem to have most direct relevance to TravelSmart. It has been widely documented that information based campaigns do not stimulate lasting behavioural change (Seethaler and Rose 2003, Mc Kenzie-Mohr 1999). Staats et al suggest that interventions that combine information, feedback and social support (in which they include social interaction and commitment as the key techniques) have the greatest likelihood of accomplishing lasting (environmental) behaviour change (Staats et al, 2004).

The conclusion drawn from this and also certainly reflected as a core principle in community-based social marketing led by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, is that initiatives which are most effective in maximising the opportunity for creating sustainable behaviour change are those that work on two levels, the community level, and involve direct contact with people (McKenzie-Mohr, 1999). It is at the community level that the TravelSmart approaches to date have perhaps been weakest and why in South Australia we have chosen to pursue and focus on ways of substantially improving community engagement strategies and processes as part of our TravelSmart approach to maximise the achievement of travel behaviour change and reduce car use.

### **3.2 Tipping point strategies and community behavioural change**

Of the three conceptual frameworks for community level change referred to above (community development, diffusion and organisational change) the one that focuses on **diffusion** of innovations or change models, and how new ideas or social practices spread within and between communities, seemed to have high relevance to the area of travel behaviour change. Malcolm Gladwell's (2000) work, *"The tipping point: how little things can make a big difference"* illustrates and explores these ideas in much greater detail and others, and particularly those in the field of market research, have gone on to adapt and translate Gladwell's work.

Gladwell proposes three critical principles that he believes cause systems to 'tip' from one point of equilibrium to another, eliciting community and social change (Gladwell, 2000). He stresses the fact that systems actually tip quite dramatically and rapidly, and that the change agents act as if they are viruses, spreading change rapidly. The four tipping point principles are:

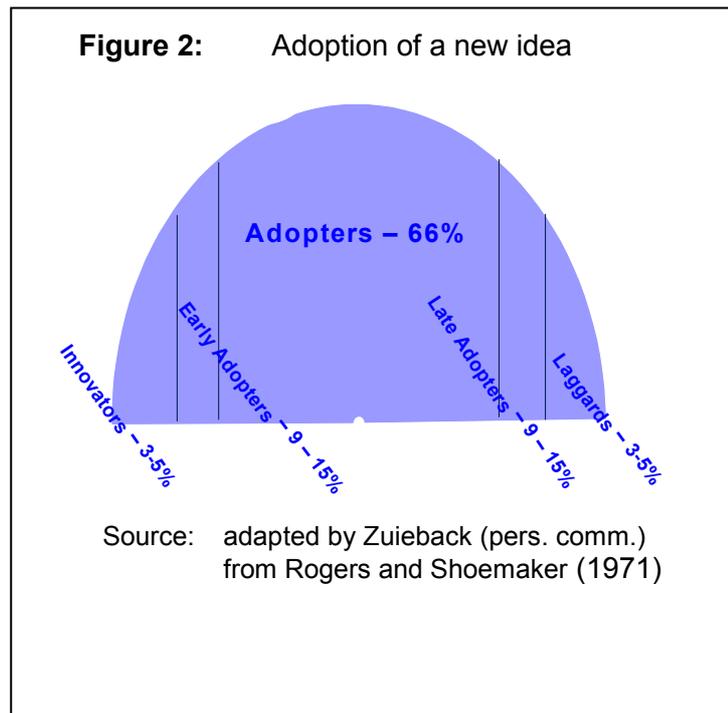
- **Law of the Few** - based on the fact that it takes very few people to adopt a new idea for the ideas to spread like a virus in a community. These few critical people have influence, credibility and are highly connected across the target community.
- **Stickiness Factor** - is related to the power of the message. The message resonates to deeply held values of people and is quickly linked to the adoption and implementation of the new message, whether that is to a new product or to a new way of behaving in a community. In many ways the stickiness factor is the hardest to create.
- **Power of Context** - recognises that small shifts in the environment can have profound impact on adopting new ideas and behaviours. Again, the shifts in the environment are deeply anchored to core emotions and values of people. Shifting violent crime rates in New York City by addressing broken windows, graffiti, and other messages of chaos created powerful shifts in behaviour and is a good example
- **Size of the group** – based on work in anthropology and social psychology where it has been determined that 'influence' is more optimal in groups of up to 150 people, as this represents the maximum number of individuals that can have genuinely supportive relationships.

The following graph (Figure 2), adapted by Zuieback from the original work of Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) also referred to by Gladwell, illustrates the ease with which people adopt new ideas or practices (Zuieback pers. comm. 2006 and Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Zuieback has integrated some of the ideas and work of both Rogers and Shoemaker and Gladwell and as outlined below provides some direction as to how to practically adapt these models and ideas to community change.

As Figure 2 indicates, Innovators are a small percentage of the population and essentially the incubators for new ideas. They rarely have much influence on the idea actually being

adopted, but without them it would be difficult to bring new ideas to a community. Most people often struggle to see how their ideas could be applied. Early adopters are of critical importance (connectors, mavens and salespersons, in Gladwell's terms). Their genius, according to Gladwell, is that they can take the idea from the innovators and transform them so that they are understandable and comfortable to the adopters; they bridge the gap between innovators and adopters. Through their influence, the ideas 'tip' by being adopted by 66 percent of the population. The late adopters and laggards are just slower in adopting new ideas, and in fact the ideas must be well embedded in the culture before they are willing to take them on.

In the Australian TravelSmart context Woodruff et al (2005) compared what might be viewed as the commonly adopted approach to TravelSmart community projects in Australia, which is also recognised as application in part of Socialdata's Indimark approach (overview given in Perkins and Giannakodakis 2001). Woodruff et al (2005), postulate that based on recent experience in Melbourne, a more effective community engagement process could assist in achieving more sustainable travel behaviour change. In Table 2 the key features of a more effective community engagement approach are compared with the more commonly adopted "TravelSmart communities" approach.



**Table 2:** Comparison of a commonly adopted TravelSmart methodology and a more effective community engagement approach

<b>TravelSmart communities approach *</b>	<b>Community engagement approach</b>
Short term	Long term
Focus on those ready to change	Focus is on whole community
Limited contact	Uses formal and informal networks
Bias towards those receptive	Messages and delivery adapted
Use of existing material	Develops material to suit needs and values
Take learning to new projects	Iterative approach within project

\* as used in Victoria, Queensland and WA  
Source: (Woodruff et al, 2005)

### **3.3 Synergy between application of social psychology with carefully crafted communication strategies**

So far in this paper some theories and models of behavioral change have been canvassed particularly related to strategies which 'infect' communities with new ideas and create social and/or behavioural changes. Other practitioners have explored the application of learning principles, principles of persuasion (Seethatler and Rose, 2003, 2005) and community based

social marketing approaches (McKenzie-Mohr, 1999), which have clear relevance to travel behaviour change methods.

In all these approaches the synergistic effect of well-crafted communication strategies, materials and skills is emphasized as a fundamental and integral part of influencing behavioural change. Doug McKenzie-Mohr's work (1999) cogently demonstrates the links between human communication and persuading or influencing people to adopt lifestyles more supportive of sustainability. His checklist for effective communication covers requirements such as a need for vivid personal and concrete messages, knowing your audience, using credible people to deliver the message, framing your message around potential loss to individuals, rather than what might be saved, being specific and clear about desired behaviours and importance of modeling desired behaviours.

At the more detailed level, Seethaler and Rose (2003) have explored and translated Cialdini's six principles of persuasion in to practical communication and social marketing strategies, aimed at increasing the personal involvement of target populations in TravelSmart. The work of Madonik (2001) and CRIA (2006) complements and supports these approaches. These practitioners draw attention to the importance of understanding how people like to communicate, and especially how they receive and process information and accommodating these factors in successfully influencing attitudes and behaviour Madonik (2001). In the whole range of communication tools; written and verbal, the particular importance of non-verbal cues in the communication process is identified.

#### **4. Lessons from previous experience in Adelaide**

In line with the project objectives and to satisfy key project aims the approach taken first and foremost built on previous experience (Ampt, 1998, & 2003). Several factors for effective implementation were seen as critical for successful behavioural change.

The scale of delivery needed to be such that it could achieve measurable change and create sufficient 'impact' or 'project presence' in the community. In the past, the length of delivery has generally been less than six months and all experience (and the literature) was pointing to the fact that the time required for meaningful community engagement and to influence human behaviour should be maximised (within the constraints of funding and practical delivery considerations).

In addition to this, previous project experience in Adelaide had shown that building a supportive and receptive environment for change within the community, was fundamental because people most listen to, and are influenced by, family, friends and credible others. Evidence illustrating the importance of role models within the community has been provided from previous work documented by Ampt (1999 & 2003), Ampt & Rooney (1998).

Finally, from the South Australian experience and the vigorous debate nation-wide about the real and identifiable impact and value of travel behaviour change interventions the critical lesson was that the chosen indicator of achievement of outcomes (reduction in number of kilometres travelled by private car) should be measured independently and not by those involved in delivery of projects and in a way that was rigorous and allowed transparent assessment.

#### **5. Principles derived from theory and past experience**

From the models and theories of behaviour change, and in light of lessons learnt from previous experience with travel behaviour change interventions in Adelaide, some principles have been distilled which we are endeavouring to apply in a practical and workable sense to the methodology of THITW.

These are as follows:

1. That providing information only has a limited effect on behaviour change and we need to work on 2 levels – with the *community* and directly with *individuals*.
2. That the practical application of ‘tipping point’ strategies, which can rapidly infect social and behavioural change in communities should be explored.
3. Communication strategies, materials and skills, are developed and delivered in a way that maximises the opportunity for influencing change.
4. People in the community need to shape the work of the project, especially if the change is to continue and be sustained once the formal project is complete.
5. That we need to find ‘early adopters’ in the community and work with them, support them and in turn our work will be informed by them. In particular, messages need to be designed to capture the passion and attention of the early adopters.
6. That we need to identify and build upon the work of affiliate organisations and then harness existing passions of the community.
7. To successfully ‘go to scale’ in the community, we need to find ways that encourage and lead to more conversations and ongoing involvement.
8. That if people make a commitment they are more likely to act.
9. Feedback and follow-up is important, especially to sustain change (after the completion of the project).

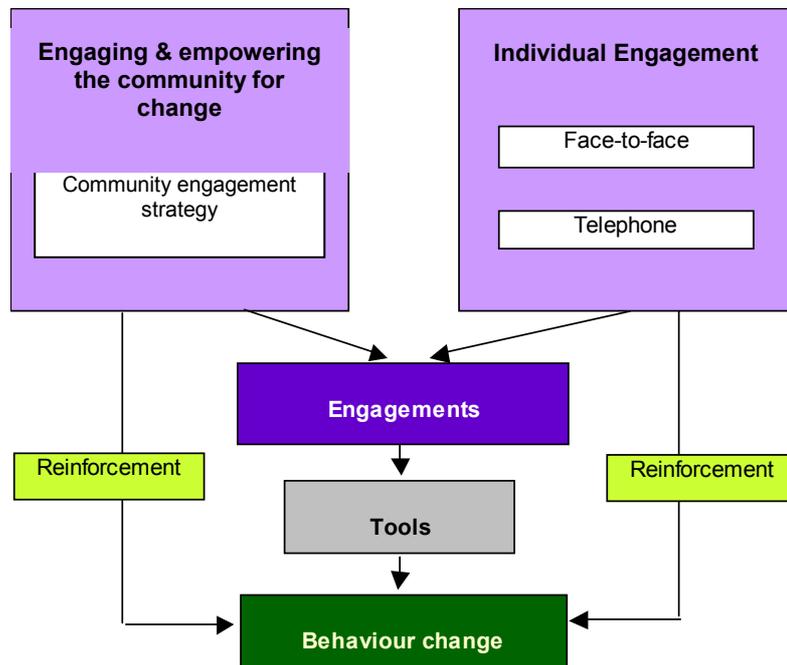
## **6. Application of principles to methodology for TravelSmart Households in the West**

Within the TravelSmart Households in the West project implementation, these principles have been translated into a methodology that consists of two strands:

1. Engaging and empowering the community for sustainable change
2. Directly engaging with individuals / households directly in conversation

The strands are in parallel and interlinked and are represented in a summary diagram in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: Summary of THITW methodology



### 6.1 Engaging and Empowering the Community for Change

Our experience in working with community organisations to achieve individual engagements in 2005, as well as our research and testing over the period since the end of January 2006, has given us important insights into the way the community can be engaged and empowered, to be ready for the TravelSmart message (reducing private car kilometres). These insights reiterate the importance of providing more than just information, as information only has a limited effect on behaviour change we need to work on 2 levels – with the *community* and directly with *individuals*.

The parallel initiatives of engaging/empowering the community for change and individual engagement, means that the context provided for the community through infectious agents, will be supported by ongoing conversations at a large scale.

The aim of engaging and empowering the community for change' is *to have individuals and households expecting and looking forward to the opportunity to reduce car kilometres as well as people in the community shaping the project*, to encourage the change to continue and be sustained once the formal project is complete.

The project has continued to investigate several strategies for achieving this aim to rapidly infect social and behavioural change in communities, and chose a modification of the Tipping Point Strategy (Gladwell, 2000).

In using Gladwell's approach, strategies are being refined to find 'early adopters' in the community and work with them, support them and in turn they will inform our work. In particular, messages are being crafted and refined to capture the passion and attention of the early adopters.

The community engagement approach, upon which our methodology is based, is also the underpinning philosophy for the development of the project's 'legacy-building' process. Building a 'legacy' is the term used to describe the process for identifying and building upon the work of affiliated organisations and the harness existing passions of the community. At this preliminary stage of the project, it is not possible to anticipate the actual form of the legacy, although we expect that it will consist of activities and values that will continue to disseminate and reinforce the TravelSmart philosophy after the project has been completed.

At this stage in project development/implementation it is too early to provide detail description of the methodology or report success or limitations of this strategy. The specific components of this are continuing to evolve and further details will be available when this paper is presented.

## 6.2 Individual Engagement through Conversation

In summary, the individual engagement process, which in essence, ultimately focuses on a personal conversation or series of conversations, is outlined in Table 3. In THITW, individuals (and households) are considered to be actively participating or engaged in the project when they agree to receive 'tool/s' to assist them in making the changes they have identified.

**TABLE 3:** Summary Steps in Individual Engagement Process

<b>Initial contact</b>	Potential participants receive a carefully crafted letter explicitly describing the purpose of the project, what we want people to change and the benefits. This letter also provides credibility to the second phase of the engagement process, when they are contacted in person.
<b>Engagement</b>	<p>There is a face to face (or over the telephone) conversation in which a key component is to lead to consider, and desirably commitment to try, if only in a small way, another option to always using the car.</p> <p>This engagement approach is used to get participants to identify their key problems in getting around Adelaide and helping them to explore other options that may solve these problems, which have clear personal benefits to the individual.</p>
<b>Commitment</b>	<p>If possible, the conversationalist, at least, attempts to achieve a verbal commitment by the participants, to make a commitment to try an alternative to using the car, usually for a specific journey or task.</p> <p>This commitment is often secured during the agreement to accept a 'tool' which compliments this verbal commitment.</p>
<b>Tools offered</b>	<p>The participant receiving a 'tool' to assist in changing the way they use the car. The tools currently offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local information</b> – provides householders valuable information about services and activities in their local area to allow sufficient trip chaining.</li> <li>• <b>Households travel diary</b> - Travel Blending® diary that tracks household travel in order to provide suggestions that could save time, money or offer greater independence. A second diary is also offered as a way to monitor changes that may have occurred and provides feedback to households which involves feedback on current travel pattern and options to consider to reduce car use</li> <li>• <b>Personalised journey planner</b> –individually tailored Journey plan for a public transport, cycling or walking trip that substitutes a current car journey</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TravelSmart Access Guide</b> – a map of cycling, walking and public transport options within the western suburbs to assist in choosing alternative methods for getting around the local area.</li><li>• <b>Reinforcement</b> - Letter confirming and reinforcing actions (travel behaviour change) agreed in conversation (confirming their own idea to change). This may also include post-cards to give to friends and family about TravelSmart to assist in 'spreading the word' (to encourage diffusion and lead to more conversations)</li><li>• <b>Memory Jogger</b> – a three-day simple 'prompt' diary where people record their travel in the simplest terms and feedback is provided through a conversation. Conversation will focus on ways to make changes – simpler version of travel blending®</li><li>• <b>Kilometre Monitor</b> – records odometer readings of household vehicles once a week for several weeks to track their vehicle kilometres travelled. It provides participants with the flexibility and independence to make their own choices about changing they way the get around</li><li>• <b>Shopping List</b> – a prompt to prioritise the shopping journey to encourage trip chaining.</li><li>• <b>Working From Home</b> – simple, short brochure which covers all the aspects of working at home (how to consider OHS&amp;W requirements and approaching employers)</li></ul>
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The importance of feedback and follow-up to sustain change is highlighted in the reinforcement mechanisms of the project. Reinforcement can occur internally (i.e. people are happier) or externally (change is made easier by the advent of some external assistance i.e. they are provided with a 'tool'). The project also follows up with five percent of all participating households to provide further advice, feedback and reinforcement to encourage a sustained change in behaviour.

Finally, a key element in order for the behaviour change to 'tip' is that the messages, understanding and action are diffused widely throughout the community. The conversationalists actively encourage participants who have changed their behaviour to spread the work and encourage, enthuse and 'infect' others.

During project implementation a particular area of focus for continuous improvement in the methodology has been on improving the quality of the communication strategies, materials and skills of project staff. In particular Professor David Sless and his team at the Communications Research Institute Australia provided a systematic process to test the various elements of the 'conversation process' (letter, conversation and tools). This approach assisted in determining areas of improvement to produce more effective resources to maximise the desired outcome of engaging participants to reduced car use (CRIA 2006).

## 7. Conclusions

As a result of a need for, and a strong desire, to 'push the envelope' in terms of improving our understanding of how to more effectively influence households to adopt sustainable travel behaviours that result in a lasting reduction in car use we have tried some new approaches. As the project is still only partially implemented, and continues to evolve over the more than 2-year time span, our success is yet to be proven.

In applying some principles derived from social psychology and lessons from previous work in Adelaide we have focussed on two specific areas in improving our methodology. These include:

1. working at a community level to prime the individuals for change, create a supportive environment for change and most importantly empowering the community and its influential people to drive change in a way that is most meaningful for them, and
2. ensuring that the communication strategies, materials and skills, are also designed and delivered in a way that maximises our opportunity for influencing change.

It is our belief that these two aspects in particular work symbiotically in a mutually beneficial way.

At the time of preparation of this paper, the delivery of the project was in full swing and aspects of the approach were continuing to be refined and improved. In twelve months time information will be available on what has worked well, what could be improved and what could be done differently.

In an ambitious and large-scale project such as this, where real innovation is being attempted there are enormous challenges to be faced. With continuous improvement and quality assurance processes forming important elements of our project, evolution and refinement will continue throughout the term of the project to maximise lasting travel behaviour change within the western community of Adelaide.

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- Doug McKenzie-Mohr, Rita Seethaler and Barbara Madonik whose discussions have helped in shaping our thinking and approaches

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