



# Media Release

## “VICTORIA WALKS FOR A CAR FREE DAY”

**Tuesday 21 September, 2010**

Victoria Walks is joining people around the world who are walking, riding a bicycle, taking a tram or catching public transport to work on September 22 for International Car Free Day.

Tim Lane (Victoria Walks Board member and sports broadcaster) and Ben Rossiter (Victoria Walks Executive Officer) will be joining Gavin Jennings, Minister for the Environment & Climate Change to walk and race cyclists, tram and train travellers, and car drivers across the CBD on Wednesday, 22 September.

“The car free race is a fun way of highlighting a serious issue – physical inactivity. We are sitting in cars, in front of the television or at work more than ever before. The lack of physical activity is taking a heavy toll on the health of the whole community” explained Dr Ben Rossiter.

Research indicates that 61% of Australian adults are overweight or obese as are 25% of children aged 5–17. The total cost of obesity to the Australian economy is estimated to be \$37.7 billion, which includes \$1.5 billion of direct health costs.

The cost of congestion to Melbourne is projected to rise from \$1.2 billion (2005) to \$3 billion by 2020.

“We have to accept that building roads to ease congestion does not work, the only way to ease congestion is to reduce our dependency on cars. We want people to get active and commit to walking wherever possible, particularly for short trips” said Dr Rossiter. “Imagine how much more vibrant Melbourne could be with fewer cars, slower traffic and more people walking”.

“As walking is such a social activity, the walkers may not win the race, but it is a fair bet we will have the most fun trying” said Dr Rossiter.

“We need to make Melbourne more walk-friendly and a good start would be lowering the speed limit in the CBD, if Sydney can lower the speed limit to 40 km/h why can't we?”

“People who walk feel better and are more likely to know people around their neighbourhoods and workplaces. It is easy to stop for a chat while walking”.

The race to Parliament House will start from the corner of Collins and Spencer St, inside Southern Cross Station in Melbourne at 8.30 am, Wednesday, 22 September.

Further Information: Dr Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer, 0425 805 578 or 9667 1339

Victoria Walks is a walking promotion body funded and supported VicHealth and governed by an independent Board. Victoria Walks envisages vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible. Its mission is more Victorians walking every day. [www.victoriawalks.org.au](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au)