



Victoria Walks Inc.  
C/- VicHealth, 15-31 Pelham Street Carlton 3053  
PO Box 154 Carlton South 3053 Australia  
P: 03 9667 1326 F: 03 9667 1375  
E: [info@victoriawalks.org.au](mailto:info@victoriawalks.org.au)  
[www.victoriawalks.org.au](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au)  
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### **Submission City of Port Phillip Sustainable Transport Strategy, Walking Plan and Bike Plan**

Victoria Walks welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the City of Port Phillip Sustainable Transport Strategy, Walking Plan and Bike Plan.

Victoria Walks is a walking health promotion body primarily funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). Our vision is for vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible. Our mission is to promote the health of all Victorians by increasing the number of people who walk every day.

Victoria Walks congratulates the City of Port Phillip for continuing to take a leading role creating walkable communities and urban spaces. We commend the City for challenging the traditional road user hierarchy and giving walkers top priority. It is obvious that the City has an excellent understanding of and commitment to the many benefits of walking and walkability.

Victoria Walks supports the intent of the Walking Plan to improve walking infrastructure and motivate people to walk more often to more places. The impressive lists of actions will go a long way to achieving the four key goals of the plan.

As a general comment, Victoria Walks agrees that walking to public transport can contribute to people getting the recommended 30 minutes of daily exercise. However, it is important to note that the 30 minutes of daily exercise is the minimum required for adults



to attain good health. Children however, require 60 mins of daily moderate intensity physical activity for good health. We believe that walking, and incidental play, provide children great opportunities for physical activity. In fact, activities like walking to school and around the neighbourhood can burn more kilojoules than organised sport and other outside school hour activities.

Encouraging and enabling walking for children is extremely important as patterns established during childhood tend to follow into adulthood. Those who take up healthy behaviours in childhood, such as walking, are more likely to continue these practices as adults. Furthermore, children's independent mobility is also important as it provides a range of social and cognitive developmental opportunities that may not be provided by other forms of play. Independent mobility helps them to learn how to deal with situations, how to make decisions, explore and have fun.

Whereas Council recognises the impact of children being driven to school has on congestion, we believe that more specific attention should be given to the end goal of getting children walking. The Walking Plan should result in children walking to school, friends, shops and parks and socialising on their streets whenever and wherever they can. To achieve this, we need to get children's families and the general community walking and wanting to see children walking and playing on streets and in public spaces. Children walking around their neighbourhood, particularly independently is one of the strongest indicators of a walkable community.

Please see further below comment relating to the specific Strategies of the Walk Pan.

Victoria Walks looks forward to seeing Port Phillip becoming a better place to live, work and visit as a result of the Walking Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Ben Rossiter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Ben Rossiter  
Executive Officer

### **Strategy 1. Develop a Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN)**

Victoria Walks commends the City for the intention to develop a Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) that integrates the transport network, land use planning and building design. Developing a PPN will provide a sophisticated methodology for improving the walkability of Port Phillip.

### **Strategy 2. Prioritise the crossing of roads and local streets**

The ability of pedestrians to cross roads and local streets is a key factor in walkable communities. Traditional approaches to traffic management have resulted poor pedestrian amenity with signalised crossings in the particular acting as barriers to walking. Victoria Walks acknowledges the leading role that Council has played in improving the ability of pedestrians to cross roads, particularly through initiatives such as the groundbreaking Greenlight Project.

In building on the work already undertaken by Council in this area, Victoria Walks recommends when retrofitting roundabouts with zebra crossings they are done in the style of the Cecil and Coventry Streets roundabout (that is, zebras are not set back from the intersection).

We also recommend exploring the possibility of installing pedestrian user-friendly intelligent crossings (puffin) when looking at issues relating to making signalised crossings more responsive to pedestrians.

We recommend installing stop signs, or at the very the least stop lines, at the exits of all laneways so that cars must give way to pedestrians who are crossing laneways entrances while walking on footpaths. It is our understanding that without stop signs/lines cars do not have to give way to pedestrians.

### **Strategy 3. Improve the walking environment at key destinations**

Victoria Walks is encouraged by the acknowledgment that improving the ability of people to walk in and around key destinations will generate activity and make places more vibrant and attractive.

### **Strategy 4. Improve walking directions**

Victoria Walks agree that dedicated way-finding signage for walkers are extremely important. We also recommend that Council explores options for developing fun, visually appealing and interesting way-finding signage specifically aimed at children (and their families) to inspire them to explore their neighbourhoods on foot.

Victoria Walks is pleased that Council will investigate developing local walking maps that will distributed through mobile phone applications and other media. Victoria Walks suggests Council discuss the possibility of partnering in Victoria Walks' *Walking Maps* (in development) which will bring together a range of different maps for different purposes. Whether people want to explore what is at their doorstep, take a scenic stroll around Victoria's premier destinations or schedule a 30-minute walking meeting around their workplace, the site and mobile applications will excite and inspire them to explore Victoria on foot. Walking Maps will include a combination of public walks (e.g. local council) and those created by community members to load, rate and share.

### **Strategy 5. Improve the accessibility and safety of our streets**

Victoria Walks urges Council to continue and expand its important program to reduce speed limits for vehicles. Victoria Walks supports approaches to lowering speed by design, that is, 'design speed'.

Victoria Walks supports Council's efforts to encouraging cycling in Port Phillip and believes that more bicycles on the roads generally mean a safer walking environment. However, with the significant rise in the number of cyclists over recent years bicycle parking has become an increasing problem that is impacting the safety of walkers, particularly those who are visually impaired, while also negatively impacting the quality of public space.

Victoria Walks believes that as bicycles are vehicles they belong on the road, both in terms of riding and parking. We recommend that Council move to providing on street (not footpath) parking for bicycles. This may mean converting on street car parking into bike parking corrals. Victoria Walks also recommends limiting and possibly reducing the number of shared paths, particularly where they have been installed on existing footpaths. Much conflict between pedestrian and cyclists could be avoided with less shared paths. However, Victoria Walks very much supports the principals of shared space/zones (not paths) where pedestrians have priority (such as Tram stop 135 on Jacka Blvd).

Between 2005 and 2010, in Victoria the registrations of motor bikes grew by 45%.<sup>1</sup> Over recent years there has been marked increase in the number of motor bikes legally and illegally parking on footpaths in inner Melbourne. Victoria Walks believes that Victoria Road Rules are outdated and should be revised to disallow the parking of motorcycles on footpaths under any circumstances. The organisation also believes current laws relating to motor bikes are poorly enforced in two key areas:

1. Not enough attention is given to issuing infringements to motor bikes that are parked in ways that obstruct pedestrians, delivery vehicles and public transport users.
2. The vast majority of motor bike riders who park on footpaths, illegally ride their motor bikes on the footpath to park

Victoria Walks recommends Council:

1. Advocate for a change in Road Rules to disallow motor bikes from parking on footpaths and examine whether local laws may be enacted to bar such practices.
2. Enforce laws when parked motor bikes block footpaths.
3. Advocate to Victoria Police to issues infringements to motor bikes riders who ride on footpaths to park.

Victoria Walks strongly recommends greater attention be given to enforcing laws aimed at keeping footpaths accessible, such as when cars block footpaths over driveways and crossings, goods are placed on footpaths, vegetation on footpaths and cafe seating etc.

### **Strategy 6. Create places for people**

Victoria Walks commends Council for recognising the importance of streets as public spaces where people meet, socialise and live. Victoria Walks acknowledges the leading work that Council has undertaken in developing streets for living and supporting the community to build stronger neighbourhoods, which is an essential ingredient of walkability.

### **Strategy 7. Integrate walking with public transport**

Improving the amenity and connections between walking and public transport is critical to increasing the level of walking-for-transport. Safe and convenient access to public transport for people of all abilities is critical to increasing walking levels.

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<sup>1</sup> *Motor Vehicle Census, Australia, 31 Mar 2010* Australian Bureau of Statistics February 2011.

Victoria Walks is concerned about the level of sometimes unnecessary pedestrian fencing that is being installed at public transport stops and crossings around metropolitan Melbourne. Victoria Walks recommends Council work with public transport providers and VicRoads to ensure that fencing is only installed if appropriate. Fencing is often installed unnecessarily and at the expense of slowing traffic speed and volume and increasing the interaction (e.g. eye contact) between walkers and other road users (as occurs at Tram stop 135).

**Strategy 8. Advocate for walking improvements**

Victoria Walks commends Council for the intention to advocate to partners, particularly the State Government, on walking issues and to continue to collaborate with partners on strategies and actions of the Walking Plan.

**Strategy 9. Improve coordination across Council**

Victoria Walks recognises the progressive approach Council has taken to walking through planning processes and looks forward to seeing the PPN being developed according to the Road Use Hierarchy.

**Strategy 10. Promote and raise the profile of walking**

Victoria Walks would welcome opportunities to work with Council to promote and raise the profile of walking, build a mass supported base for walking and support the community to engage in walkability issues.

**Strategy 11. Improving walking through behaviour change**

Victoria Walks supports Council intention to work with schools and businesses to develop and implement travel plans.

**Strategy 12. Measure and monitor walking levels**

Effective measuring of walking, along with evaluating and monitoring the impact of investments is essential to improving walkability and increasing walking levels. Victoria Walks congratulates Council for the intention to regularly complete Making Walking Count surveys and undertaking annual pedestrian counts.

Given that many Bicycle Victoria's 'Super Tuesday' counts are specifically aimed at cycling and cycling routes, Victoria Walks is concerned that adding walking to a cycling survey may not reveal an accurate picture of walking.