



Media Release

“SYDNEY A CLEAR STEP AHEAD OF MELBOURNE”

Thursday 16 September, 2010

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore and the NSW Premier have announced a range of changes to make it “safer and easier for pedestrians” in the Sydney city centre. Key changes include:

- Reduce the speed limit in the City Centre to 40 km/h
- Create 10 km/h shared zones in streets and laneways to safely mix uses
- Improve pedestrian priority at major pedestrian intersections and reduce wait times for pedestrians in peak periods;

“Many see Melbourne as the walking capital of Australia, but we will pretty quickly lag behind Sydney if we don’t do more to make Melbourne’s streets safer for pedestrians” said Dr Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer of Victoria Walks.

“The City of Melbourne has the highest incidence of pedestrian injuries in Victoria yet the CBD speed limit remains at 50 km/h, this is ridiculous” explained Dr Ben Rossiter. “The short distance between traffic lights means many drivers simply race to the next set of stop lights which makes our streets feel like racetracks”.

In the five years between 2005 and 2009, 12 pedestrians were killed, 412 seriously injured and 522 sustained other injuries in the City of Melbourne, 68% of these occurred in the CBD.

86% of the pedestrian fatalities or injuries in the City of Melbourne occurred in 50-60 km/h speed zones.

“With over 60% of Australian adults overweight or obese we need to get more physically active and walking”, Dr Rossiter said. “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 to 40 km/h why can’t we?”

“Let’s give pedestrians more priority and make Melbourne a more vibrant, social and safer place to work, live, shop and visit”.

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 the only effective way to ease congestion is to reduce our dependency on cars” said Dr Rossiter. “There is enormous health, social, environmental and economic benefits to walking for every day purposes”.

Further Information: Dr Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer 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