



# Report card: June 2014

## About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks is an independent walking health promotion charity, established by VicHealth in 2009, working to get more people walking more every day.

### Victoria Walks:

- provide walking and walkability leadership
- support local community action to increase walking and walkability
- promote walking through educational resources, events and online activities.

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Blayney Morgan (Treasurer), Sue Fitzpatrick, Daniel King, Trevor Budge and Ben Rossiter (Secretary and Executive Officer).

This document summarises the activities and highlights from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

## Supporting local action

This year we welcomed three new Walkability Action Groups (WAGs) working to increase neighbourhood walking and walkability:

- Apollo Bay – supporting local residents to make Apollo Bay safer, more enjoyable and more accessible for all.
- Great Ryrie Primary School – supporting the school community to encourage children to walk, ride and scoot more often.
- Active Travel Park Orchards – working with residents and Manningham Council to promote active ways of getting around their suburb.



## Highlights

Over the past year, Victoria Walks has continued to grow, to extend its reach and to have its expertise widely sought. We have raised the profile of walking issues as well as established or consolidated a number of collaborative partnerships promoting safer, more walkable and liveable communities.

Victoria Walks has significantly improved the capacity to influence policy and legislative reform. We have produced high-quality research and peer-reviewed resources of international standard, which dramatically increased our work with local government and enhanced our leadership role to national and international audiences.

### Highlights include:

- Engaged active transport consultant Dr Jan Garrard to conduct a comprehensive study, *Senior Victorians and walking: obstacles and opportunities* in partnership with the Council on the Ageing.
- Launched *Smart Steps for Councils* online walking information toolkit and developed *Measuring Walking – a Guide for Councils*.
- Held the successful two-day conference *Smart Urban Futures* in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria, attracting almost 200 delegates.
- Held the *Getting Communities on Their Feet* walkability seminar for council officers.
- Developed a ground-breaking audit tool for vision-impaired pedestrians with Vision Australia and Guide Dogs Victoria, and road safety experts.
- Refreshed our *Walking Maps* ([www.walkingmaps.com.au](http://www.walkingmaps.com.au)) desktop and mobile sites and increased the total number of walks to over 1000, including more than 200 high-quality 'staff picks'.
- Developed a *Class Walkability Project (Smart Steps for Primary Schools)* enabling students to audit their neighbourhood and work to make it better for walking.
- Delivered a *PLANET* (Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure) training course in partnership with Bicycle Network and the Heart Foundation.
- Supported Victoria's 12 *Healthy Together* communities to increase walking in school, workplace and community settings.
- Developed new *Smart Steps* resources, including *Walk Together Group*, *Map Your Route to School* and *Walks Around My School Class Project*.
- Launched *Smart Steps for Secondary Schools* Geography walking and walkability curriculum resources for years 7 and 9 and VCAL years 11 and 12, in partnership with the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria.
- Held the *Walk the Block* event and *Smart Steps for Business* campaign in *Healthy Together Communities* to combat workplace physical inactivity.
- Increased our international profile with our Executive Officer joining the Board of the International Federation of Pedestrians and the International Technical Committee for the XVth International Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities (Walk21), Sydney, 2014.

Supported by



# Our work

## Building a community for walking

Victoria Walks continued to build a community for walking through our continuously evolving digital ecosystem. Visits to the Victoria Walks website increased by 23% and to Walking Maps by 64%. Most pleasing was a 290% increase in the number of likes of our Facebook page and the level of reach and engagement with content.

## Media activity

Victoria Walks was included in more than 60 newspaper articles, opinion pieces and radio interviews. Highlights included interviews televised on ABC News24, 7 News and 10 News, and a 'Walk this Way' feature in the *Sunday Age* Traveller segment.

## Conferences, forums and events

Victoria Walks presented at many conferences and forums, including:

- 'Online walking maps, social media and walkable communities', Walk21, Munich, 2013
- 'Smart Steps to creating walkable neighbourhoods', Walk21, Munich, 2013
- 'Smart Steps to a walkable world: using walking and local areas for Geography fieldwork and action plans', Geography Teachers Association of Victoria 47th Annual Conference, Melbourne, 2013
- 'Reflections on our changing journey: past, present and future', Smart Urban Futures conference, Melbourne, 2014.

## Workshops and committees

Victoria Walks participated in a number of government workshops and committees, including:

- Victorian Trails Strategy 2014 – 24 consultation forums
- Principal Pedestrian Network Demonstration Project
- Road Safety Action Group Inner Melbourne
- Linking Urban Design, Sustainable Transport and Healthier Communities forum (Municipal Association of Victoria)
- LGA Small Infrastructure Grants Workshop (Transport Accident Commission)
- VicRoads Boulevard Policy stakeholder working group
- Local Government Designers' Forum Think Tank on Open Space Strategies.

## Submissions

Submissions to influence policy and practice at state and local levels included:

- Plan Melbourne, Metropolitan Planning Strategy
- Review of the State Planning Policy Framework
- Route 96 project (Public Transport Victoria)
- Draft Bayside Road Safety Strategy
- Draft Glen Eira Walking Strategy 2013–2016
- Princes Bridge Northbound Bike Lane, City of Melbourne.

## Memberships

- Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council
- International Federation of Pedestrians
- Safe Speed Interest Group
- Melbourne Transport Forum (Associate Member)
- Cycling Reference Group (Victorian Government)
- Australian Health Promotion Association.



## The year ahead

### The year ahead offers many exciting challenges to build on the work of our first five years:

- Develop position statements on footpath cycling, shared paths and urban speeds, and work with key organisations to combat the push to increase the age limit for footpath cycling.
- Work with the Transport Accident Commission, Department of Health, Municipal Association of Victoria, VicRoads and a local council to deliver a safer road design demonstration project for older pedestrians.
- Hold the second Smart Urban Futures conference in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria.
- Produce a research report on design of road environments to make them safer for older pedestrians to walk, funded by the Transport Accident Commission.
- Work with VicRoads on key policy initiatives including their Managing Competing Demands Policy and Road Use Strategy.
- Continue to support Healthy Together *Communities* to increase walking in school, workplace and community settings.
- Work with Roadhouse Technologies to market the WalksRides mobile app, to help councils promote their walks, rides and natural assets to residents and visitors.
- Promote our work and leadership role to national and international communities through Walk21, Sydney, 2014.

## Thank you

Victoria Walks would like to acknowledge VicHealth for its significant funding and support, Department of Health (Victoria) funding to support the 12 Healthy Together Communities, and the City of Melbourne for reduced-rent office space in its City Village hub.

We would also like to thank Herbert Smith Freehills, Dr Jennie Oxley (Monash University), Dr Jan Garrard (active transport consultant), Council on the Ageing, Vision Australia, Municipal Association of Victoria and the individuals who generously donated to our community appeal ([www.givenow.com.au/victoriawalks](http://www.givenow.com.au/victoriawalks)).