

Report Card

JUNE 2017

➤ **Victoria Walks** is an independent walking health promotion charity. Our vision is that people walk whenever and wherever possible, within strong and vibrant communities, with resulting health benefits.





Change to Walking,
Warrnambool City Council

Change to Walking,
Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Emma Hamilton (Treasurer), Trevor Budge, Sue Fitzpatrick, John Hicks, Daniel King, Justin Madden and Blayney Morgan. The Board is supported by a small but enterprising team of staff led by Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer).

This report summarises Victoria Walks' activities and highlights from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

Overview

A productive year saw Victoria Walks expand our influence and reach, develop new programs, review our achievements and thoughtfully plan for the years to come. As the organisation's profile and impact continues to grow, so too does the strong community appetite for safer, more walkable and liveable streets, and interesting places to walk.

Highlights 2016/17:

- Delivered the VicHealth-funded **Change to Walking** program applying behavioural insights approaches to test whether 'nudges' can change behaviours to increase walking for short trips, in partnership with Bendigo, Darebin, Geelong, Warrnambool and Yarra Ranges councils.
- Completed the **WalkSpot** project with funding from a TAC Community Road Safety Grant. The project was delivered in a partnership with CrowdSpot with the support of VicRoads and 14 metropolitan councils. It resulted in nearly 9,000 submissions (spots, comments and supports) onto an online map identifying places where people feel safe and unsafe walking.
- Delivered **Let's Walk Braybrook** in partnership with the City of Maribyrnong with support from the Victorian Government to increase accessibility and local participation in walking, with a specific focus on women.
- Expanded our **Official Supporters Program** welcoming on board the local government authorities of Darebin, Manningham, Monash and Hobart which joined Ballarat, Bendigo, Casey, East Gippsland, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Warrnambool, and Whitehorse, and the Bus Association Victoria.
- Developed our **Corporate Supporters Program** with Intrapac Property and Safe System Solutions joining us.
- Held two **supporter networking events**. The first in September 2016 featured the Hon. Luke Donnellan, Minister for Roads and Road Safety as the keynote speaker, while the other in March 2017 had one of the world's leading urban planners, Brent Toderian (former Chief Planner of Vancouver) involved in a Q&A session with supporters.
- Released **Planning for Pedestrian Accessibility at Level Crossing Removals and Railway Stations**, a report by David Mepham Consulting into the impact of level crossing removal projects on local pedestrian accessibility. The report includes Victoria Walks' recommendations for the planning and design of major urban rail projects and railway stations.
- Expanded our **fee for service capacity** through which Victoria Walks was involved in reviewing master plans, conducting transport and urban design 'walk-shops', conference and forum presentations, and promotions through our social and digital media channels.
- Held the fourth **Smart Urban Futures** national conference in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria. This two day event featured leaders and visionaries from municipalities, business and research and attracted more than 160 delegates.
- Released the **Safer Road Design for Older Pedestrians** report, through funding from a TAC Community Road Safety Grant.
- Continued to be active in the **international walking community**, with our Executive Officer delivering keynote and plenary presentations at international conferences, and continuing as the Vice-President of the International Federation of Pedestrians.
- Developed **Victoria Walks Strategic Plan 2017-2020** setting goals to mobilise walkers to grow walking participation; develop our walking and walkability leadership; develop partnerships that strengthen our mission; increase our organisational effectiveness and build our revenue sources.
- Successfully completed our final core funding grant from VicHealth for the period 2014-2017.

Our work

Social media

Our presence on social media continues to connect people with walking through meeting their needs for walking content, inspiring walking conversations, and building an engaged walking community.

By posting content that is informative, inspiring and interactive and a small number of targeted page promotions our followers on Facebook increased by 15,000 to more than 50,000. The popularity of the page is a leading example of effective digital engagement and the envy of many health promotion, government and community agencies.

Visits to our Walking Maps website (www.walkingmaps.com.au) more than doubled since the previous year. The site now has more than 400 high quality walks, with the most popular viewed over 275,000 times.

Our Twitter followers increased by 30 per cent and our LinkedIn company page has garnered a good pool of well-connected professionals.

Workshops and committees

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

- Victorian Transport Users Forum, VicRoads
- Towards Zero Road Safety Leadership Symposium, TAC
- Physical Activity Taskforce, VicHealth
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning, City of Maribyrnong
- Green Exercise Partnerships Workshop, Department of Health and Human Services
- Smart Roads Reference Group, VicRoads
- Strategic Framework for Sport and Active Recreation consultation forums, Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Pedestrian Serious Casualty Area workshops, VicRoads.

Submissions

Victoria Walks prepared a number of submissions to Victorian Government agencies and local councils to promote urban planning and infrastructure that supports walkability, including:

- *Victoria's Draft 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy*, Infrastructure Victoria
- Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail, Mitchell Shire
- *Valuing Sport And Recreation, A Framework For The Future – Discussion Paper*, Sport and Recreation Victoria
- *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2017-27*, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
- City of Melbourne Council Plan
- *Protecting the Yarra River (Birraring) Discussion Paper*, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Media activity

Victoria Walks generated more than 400 media stories (including broadcast syndications), including over 130 television reports.

The release of our report ***Safer Road Design for Older Pedestrians*** attracted over 150 stories, including the front page of the Herald Sun ('Red Light State', 8 September 2016). Similarly, the release of our ***WalkSpot*** project resulted in many news stories including page two of The Age ('Melbourne's worst places for walking', 20 June 2017).



Herald Sun, 8 September 2016



Conferences, forums and events

Victoria Walks presented at many conferences and major forums during the year, including:

- *Walk21* (Plenary) Hong Kong, October 2016
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- *2WALKandCYCLE Conference* (Keynote), Auckland July 2016
- *2WALKandCYCLE Conference* (Plenary), Auckland July 2016
- *Smart Urban Futures* (2), Melbourne, March 2016
- *Central Highlands Prevention Forum*, May 2017
- *Positive Ageing Network*, Municipal Association of Victoria, August 2016
- *Urban Ideas Playground*, Melbourne Knowledge Week, May 2017
- *Creating a Walkable Community: City of Hobart Workshop* (Keynote), November 2016.



The Hon. Richard Wynne, Minister for Planning and Kellie-Ann Jolly, Chair of Victoria Walks at Smart Urban Futures

Ben Rossiter plenary presentation at Walk21 Hong Kong

The year ahead

2017-2018 promises to be another year of exciting challenges and opportunities for Victoria Walks. We plan to:

- Complete research into young people's perceptions of walkable communities and independent mobility in partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.
- Deliver the **Change to Walking** Program 2017-2018 to build on and refine the evidence from the positive outcomes of *Change to Walking 2016-2017*, with funding from VicHealth.
- Work with Parks Victoria to develop and promote a series of walks to encourage women, and those for whom they care (e.g. children, older people and people with a disability) to utilise parks for their health and wellbeing.
- Refine the **Let's Walk** Program by implementing the outcomes and learning from last year in collaboration with a new council partner.
- Partner with Melbourne Water and the Yarra Riverkeeper to develop a digital walking map for the community. This will highlight key features of the Yarra River to help explain the complexities of the river.
- Hold the fifth **Smart Urban Futures** national conference in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria in March 2018.
- Commence a new three-year project-based VicHealth grant to continue our work encouraging more walking for transport and recreation.
- Develop our research agenda and priority areas for advocacy and policy development; and collaborate with other non-government agencies that share our interest in walking supportive communities and infrastructure.
- Support VicHealth's **Walk to School** Program and deliver workshops on active travel to school.
- Continue to build local government sector capacity to develop and deliver policy and approaches to increase walking and walkable environments.
- Expand our **Supporters** Program, holding two annual support events and ensuring our work remains valuable and relevant to our supporters.
- Enhance our online presence by strategically and creatively engaging our walking community to promote walking and walkability.

Acknowledgements

Victoria Walks acknowledges and thanks the following organisations:

- VicHealth for its significant core and project funding since 2009.
- The City of Melbourne for provision of reduced-rent office space in 'City Village'.

Victoria Walks Official and Corporate Supporters



We also thank our key partners, including the Municipal Association of Victoria and the many individuals who assist in fundraising and generously donate to our community appeals.