

walk the BLOCK

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VICTORIA'S WORKFORCE SET TO TACKLE WORKPLACE PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

Thousands of Victorian workers will be stepping away from their desks and onto their feet on Tuesday to participate in Victoria Walks' inaugural Walk the Block.

Workplaces from Mildura to Orbost and Warrnambool to Wodonga have registered to take part in the event that aims to combat workplace physical inactivity.

A staggering 73% of Victorian workers report inadequate physical activity. That is, less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day¹. "What we're doing—through Walk the Block—is showing employers how easy it is to change that. Activities like a simple walk around the block each day will go a long way towards fixing what has become a huge problem in Victoria," explains Victoria Walks Executive Officer, Dr Ben Rossiter.

Dr Rossiter said he was impressed at the number of workplaces that will be walking on Tuesday. "We have had thousands of registrations covering the entire state," he said. Regional workplaces scattered all across Victoria will join thousands of metro workers in the walk. "We're so thrilled that the serious issue of workplace physical inactivity is being tackled so enthusiastically and so widely across Victoria," he added.

Joining the thousands of walkers around various blocks in Victoria will be the Department of Health, Department of Transport, TAC, VicRoads and a number of charities including Heart Foundation, Cancer Council of Victoria, BreastScreen Victoria and many more.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle will lead the City of Melbourne Councillors around the block in the CBD while a further 25 local governments around the State will follow suit.

VicHealth, which already leads the way in promoting workplace physical activity has commended Victoria Walks on the initiative. "Finding smarter, healthier ways to be active at work is essential," said Acting CEO Associate Professor John Fitzgerald. "Illnesses related to an inactive lifestyle are a major public health concern in the 21st century. Anything employers can do to encourage more activity in the workplace is one more step in the direction of overcoming the problems associated with modern inactive lifestyles," he continued.

Victoria Walks also suggests four simple workplace-walking initiatives:

- In your stride - quick and easy tips to keep staff moving at work
- Walking meetings - step out for active and productive conversations
- Walkabout inductions - for new staff to learn their surroundings
- Walking groups - regular walks for fit and friendly workplaces.

After the event, each initiative will be sent to workplaces with accompanying resources about how they can easily implement walking into their workplace.

Dr Rossiter insists the key to Walk the Block is to have fun. "Grab some workmates, go for a walk, have fun and talk about how to get more active at work, every day," he said.

**Walk the Block will take place on Tuesday 17 May at workplaces across Victoria.
Visit victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock to find out more.**

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¹WorkSafe Victoria WorkHealth checks, May 2010

