

### Political parties are silent when it comes to protecting seniors

There has been a 31 per cent increase in pedestrian deaths in Victoria over the past year compared to the preceding 12 months.

Thirty-eight walkers have been killed in Victoria over the past 12 months-compared to 29 in the previous 12 months. This increase is largely due to more senior walkers being killed. Over the past 12 months, 20 pedestrians over 60 years of age were killed compared to 14 the year before.

Over the same period, the number of fatalities for all other road user groups have fallen. There are now more walkers being killed on our roads than vehicle passengers.

“Research shows that seniors are very careful walkers and are not at fault in most crashes” said Ben Rossiter, Victoria Walks Executive Officer, “rather, it is bad road design or poor driver behaviour that is killing them”.

“New analysis of five years of official crash statistics by Victoria Walks shows that about half of all pedestrian crashes occurred at intersections and in 60 per cent of cases walkers are hit by turning vehicles, even though turning drivers are required to give way” said Dr Rossiter.

Dr Rossiter said it was disappointing to hear authorities including Victoria Police blame pedestrian distraction for the rising toll.<sup>1</sup> “Senior walkers are unlikely to be Snapchatting or listening to music while they walk”.

“Blaming pedestrians will not prevent further deaths when the apparent causes are not being addressed. Many pedestrians are being killed or injured crossing the road legally”.

In the lead up to the Victorian election, there have been no announcements to address the safety of senior pedestrians. Victoria Walks calls on the parties to prioritise senior and child pedestrian road safety.

“We want to see an ongoing grants program of \$25million per annum to make the walking journey from homes and retirement villages to schools, shops, services and public transport safer and more convenient for seniors, children and all Victorians” said Dr Rossiter.

Victoria Walks also wants:

- Better police enforcement of rules that protect walkers such as drivers giving way (when turning) and not blocking crossings.
- A change in driving culture and road safety campaigns that centre on observing laws that protect pedestrians.
- A parliamentary inquiry into pedestrian road trauma to establish the cause of crashes and whether government responses are appropriate.

#### ENDS

Further comment:

- Dr Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer, Victoria Walks, 0425 805 578 [brossiter@victoriawalks.org.au](mailto:brossiter@victoriawalks.org.au)
- Victoria Walks' election asks <http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/news/1636>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/police-warning-for-distracted-pedestrians>