

Impact Report



JUNE 2021



Supported by



VicHealth

Our Vision

Healthier, connected communities through more people walking more every day.

Our Purpose

To influence investment and inspire more people to walk more every day.

Our Role

To facilitate and inspire more walking throughout the community.

To capture, translate and promote evidence on the impact and value of walking.

To be a trusted expert, positively influencing decision-makers.

About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion charity, leading the move for walkable communities in Australia since 2009.

We work primarily in Victoria, but increasingly nationally and internationally, to enable all types of walking – recreational, incidental and transport related.

Our work builds on our history and strengths, and we prioritise activities that will have the greatest influence on walking and walkability. We aim for scalable, systemic impact: anything we do on a small-scale or local neighbourhood level has potential for wider application.

We offer leadership and independent expertise and make timely and evidence-based contributions to influence policy and practice. In everything we do, we demonstrate the critical role walking plays in our health, wellbeing and economic productivity.

Who We Are

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Emma Hamilton (Treasurer), Daniel King, Josephine Monger, Justin Madden AM and John Hicks.

The small but enterprising team of staff is led by Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer) and includes Duane Burt (Principal Policy Advisor), Jane Holroyd (Digital Communications Advisor), Jo Eady (Senior Advisor) and associated consultants and skilled volunteers.

The 2020/21 year in review

We proudly released our new Strategic Plan for 2021–2025 centring on seeking action by government, industry and our community. It outlines how we will capture and communicate the outcomes we seek: increased walking participation through inspiring people to walk more and feel part of a walking community; and demonstrable investment – meaningful action and investment in walking from governments and decision-makers throughout the community.

During periods of strict stay-at-home orders, as well as throughout the year, walking was overwhelmingly the most popular active recreation and physical activity that helped keep many Victorians healthy and connected to loved ones and their community. Despite the lockdowns, visits to our Walking Maps website nearly topped 1,000,000 as people looked for local walks and, when they could, further out in the state's national parks and forests, and along beaches and waterways.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to pose great challenges for the organisation and the Victorian community, it was pleasing to see the growing interest the Victorian community has in our work.



Thriving walking community

Facilitating and inspiring walking communities to promote walking participation is central to our work. We continued investing in our increasingly popular Walking Maps website, making it easier to create digital maps and find walks by specific locations and radius, which many found helpful during lockdowns. Many councils are recognising the value of the site – Strathbogie Shire mapped an impressive 40 walks and the City of Wangaratta also jumped on board with 10.

With support from VicHealth, we began working with bushfire affected communities to promote walking. This included mapping walks in Alpine Shire and commencing a project with the Lakes Entrance Action and Development Association to map and promote many of the wonderful walks in East Gippsland Shire. This exciting work lays the foundations to support tourism and economic recovery by showcasing these areas as destinations for accessible nature-based tourism.

Our Facebook following grew by an impressive 15,215 people seeking inspiration and connection with the world of walking. Our Dog Walks group now has more than 11,000 members looking for or sharing great dog-friendly walks, while our Women Who Walk group grew to 1,400 members connecting and inspiring each other to walk more.

On Twitter and LinkedIn, we continued to put walking on the agenda with thousands of conversations among our followers, many in professional roles relating to walking around Australia and the world.

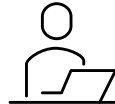
On our Victoria Walks Facebook page, the community is engaged, inspired and values walking:



14% increase in followers to **106,058**



6,258,824 daily total reach



330,012 daily engaged users

Walking Maps visits and return visits show a higher engagement and change in behaviours through walking:



969,884 visits **71%** via mobile, staying an average of 2½ minutes



62 showcase walks, bringing the total to **709** staff-recommended walks

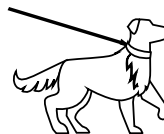


440 organisations and businesses referred visitors

The Victoria Walks website builds awareness and recognition of walking:



219,451 visits, staying an average of nearly 2 minutes



52,777 visits to find dog-friendly walks

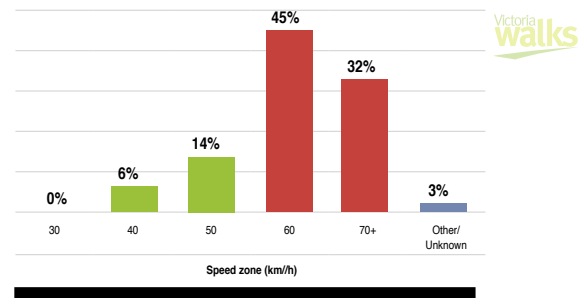


www.walkingmaps.com.au

Influential data and evidence

As an evidence-based health promotion charity we work to capture, translate and promote data and evidence that influences the conversation and actions of decision-makers.

PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WALKING KILLED IN MELBOURNE, BY SPEED ZONE (2014 – 2018)



Safer Urban Speed Limits position statement

In July 2020, with the support of a TAC Community Road Safety Grant, we released **Understanding Pedestrian Crashes in Victoria**. Undertaken by Monash University Accident Research Centre, the research provided a detailed analysis of road crashes affecting pedestrians. Data shows that 7,000 pedestrians were hit by ‘offending’ drivers during a 10-year period.

Our report **Road safety and walking: How Australia compares to the USA, UK, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands (June 2021)** found that Australia is doing better than the USA on road safety for people walking, but not as well as Europe.

We were proud to release our **Safer Urban Speed Limits** position statement, which received positive media coverage. The statement outlines how traffic speeds relate to walking, the evidence for lower speeds, the limitations of the current approach to setting speed limits, and recommendations for safer speed limits. We hope it encourages decision-makers to create calmer, safer urban streets and we thank the road safety experts who peer-reviewed the document.



We provided input into a number of external research projects including Deakin University’s Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition ‘Our Life @ Home Study’ and Monash University’s ‘Informal sport as a health and social resource for diverse young people’.

“...they [Victoria Walks] have done an enormous amount of work on this and it is one of the more credible attempts to get these speed limits down”

Neil Mitchell, 3AW radio presenter, on our Safer Urban Speed Limits position statement, 21 January 2021



Ben Carroll @BenCarrollMP · 11h
 Thank you for your advocacy @victoriawalks. Study after study shows #activetransport can -

- ✓ Improve health,
- ✓ Reduce congestion,
- ✓ Reduce healthcare costs, and
- ✓ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Public Transport, Roads and Road Safety
 5 May 2021



Meaningful influence

In focusing our efforts to bring about change, we prioritised our activities to maximise our impact and participated in the most relevant forums to help attract direct action and/or investment in walking.

Media coverage

Walking was covered widely in the media as it became more central in people's lives in response to COVID-19. We had numerous interviews on ABC Radio across the daytime and evening timeslots, talking on themes such as walking during the pandemic, urban walks, quiet walks, green walks and pedestrian road safety. The topics of our interviews on 3AW ranged from recommended physical activity guidelines and urban speeds to pedestrian distraction and road safety.

Overall, we generated 418 media mentions, including 69 television, 139 radio and 22 print stories with a combined estimated audience reach or circulation of 5,362,749 people. The equivalent advertising spend that would be needed to reach the same audience is estimated to be \$302,998.

Conferences

Hosting or participating in select conferences, forums and events is a key component of our work. We were thrilled to hold the 7th Smart Urban Futures conference as a virtual event over 3 days with our partner, the Municipal Association of Victoria, particularly after having to cancel the conference in 2020. Our international keynote speakers – Lucy Saunders (Healthy Streets, UK) and Dale Bracewell (City of Vancouver) – attracted high praise from delegates.

Webinar

Arup and VicHealth partnered with us to host a Techtalk webinar in August 2020. *Bouncing forward – attracting people back to our high streets & town centres post-lockdown 2.0* attracted nearly 200 attendees.

Industry forums

We presented at many industry forums, including for Engineers Australia, Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Planning Institute of Australia, and the Metropolitan Transport Forum. Our Executive Officer also moderated the session 'Walking and Public Transport – benefits and impacts' at Walk21 in Seoul in May 2021.

Submissions

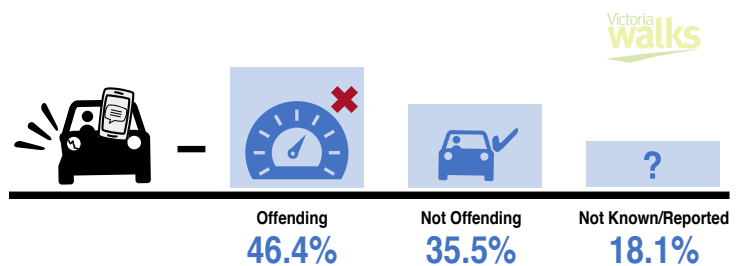
Our many submissions included: the Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism and events sectors; Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy; Victoria Planning Authority's Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines; and the National Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 (with Queensland Walks).

We also presented to the Parliamentary 'Inquiry into the increase in Victoria's Road Toll' with some of our comments included in the report to Parliament.

Policy input

We provided strategic advice to numerous councils to support their work to make their municipalities more walkable. We also provided our expertise and input into a number of Victorian and national policy processes, including: the National Road Safety Strategy; VicRoads Arterial Road Project; Active Victoria Refresh; Pop-up Bike Lanes Strategic Cycling Corridor; Pedestrian Road Rules Review; Speed Zoning Technical Guidelines; the Pedestrian Strategic Plan; and the Victorian Road Safety Strategy.

POLICE REPORTED DRIVER OFFENDING IN PEDESTRIAN CRASHES (2009-2018) – VICTORIA



<https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/pedestrian-crashes>

Understanding Pedestrian Crashes in Victoria, July 2020.



Meaningful influence

Our Safer Urban Speed Limits positions statement generated:

56 television stories, including a 2-minute live in-studio interview on 7 News

32 radio stories, including interviews with Neil Mitchell (3AW) and Virginia Trioli (ABC Melbourne)

6 print stories, including p5 of the Herald Sun.

Smart Urban Futures conference with Municipal Association of Victoria



173
delegates

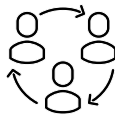


85%
rated the conference
8 out of 10 or higher

61%
strongly agreed that they
took away valuable insights
they could apply and 38%
agreed



Influencing decision makers and practitioners



The Department of Transport **agreed with all 11 of our recommendations** (two in part) for the Accessibility (Disability Discrimination Act) Guidelines for Road Infrastructure.



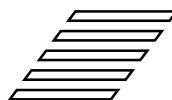
The **Coroner recommended our Submission** to the investigation into the death of Norman Mackenzie, who tragically died from injuries sustained in a crash with a bike rider, be provided to VicRoads for their consideration when planning road and bicycle lanes construction.



Advocated directly to **12 Ministers** about 20 walking-related policy issues, including engaging 10 Ministers on why a Walking Strategy relates to their Victorian portfolio.



Our long-term advocacy for walking, including calls for government to adopt a **target for walking short trips**, were realised with increasing active transport from 18% to 25% of all trips by 2030 adopted as a target in Victoria's Climate Change Strategy.



The Economy and Infrastructure Committee of Parliament's Inquiry into the increase in Victoria's Road Toll supported the need for **continued improvement in pedestrian infrastructure**.



Our **2018 Victorian election ask** to invest in street trees came to life with the Victorian Government announcing **\$5 million to plant trees** in growth areas across six councils in Melbourne's west.



3060 website visits to our research, submissions and position statements web pages and **860 downloads**.

Sustaining our impact

As we finalised our new Strategic Plan, we commenced developing an impact measurement framework to capture, translate and communicate our impact and help us prioritise activities that achieve our purpose. This included aligning our impact in coming years with global impact frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Continuing our meaningful partnerships, and establishing new ones, helped bring shared goals to life. A key focus was ensuring we continue to build a sustainable organisation with financial diversification to help us invest in technology, fund organisational growth and increase our capacity and capability to get more people walking more.

We worked closely with VicHealth on a number of initiatives, particularly those that could capitalise on the increased opportunities for walking that have been among the unexpected side-effects of the coronavirus pandemic. We were pleased to support the VicHealth Local Government Partnership and the development of its Building Active Communities module that outlines a range of activities, processes and changes that councils can make to increase children and young people's physical activity in the community.

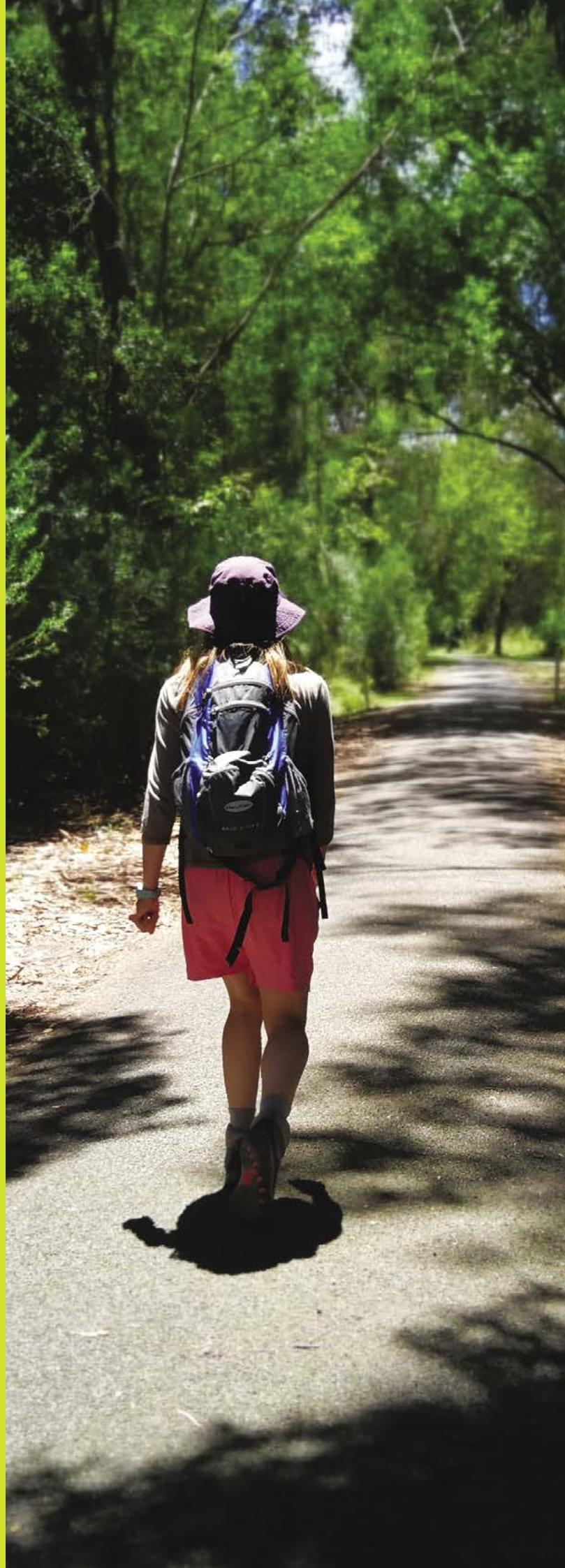
We were commissioned by Leadsun to deliver a Lighting in Public Space research paper outlining the why and where of lighting in public spaces. Similarly, we commenced our research project for the Bus Association Victoria to better understand pedestrian safety at and near bus stops. We completed our research for the Department of Transport on pedestrian crash reporting, data and processes.

Along with our partner – Safe System Solutions – the City of Banyule engaged us to undertake audits of safe access for pedestrians, mobility scooter users and cyclists to Diamond Village Shopping Centre, East Ivanhoe, Macleod and Olympic Village neighbourhood centres.

Our Walking Maps website continued to attract interest as a community engagement tool. We were engaged by Radisson on Flagstaff Gardens to create a walk from the hotel to Docklands that highlighted the best of West Melbourne. We also partnered with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to develop a Fishermans Bend 'Making Montague' online digital walking map.

Our contracted speaking engagements included delivering a workshop to incoming Warrnambool City councillor's on walking safety and amenity and best practice pedestrian orientated design.

We were thrilled to welcome three new Official Supporters: Bass Coast Shire Council, Stonnington City Council and the City of Greater Geelong. They join 12 other councils and the Bus Association Victoria, as well as our four Corporate Supporters.



The year ahead

- Champion walking and develop our agenda for the 2022 Victorian State Election.
- Use a grant from Melbourne Water to map and promote walks along the Maribyrnong and Werribee catchments to create health and wellbeing opportunities for people in the western suburbs of Melbourne.
- Undertake, partner and translate research that builds the evidence base to inform policy and advocacy.
- Undertake a walking tourism or walk local promotion with a regional council and promote walking in bushfire affected communities and council areas.
- Increase visibility of walking's role and showcase more examples of positive planning for walking to engage the public and decision-makers.
- Work with Common Cause Australia to develop value-based messaging marketing collateral to build public support for actions that support more walking.
- Continue to advocate for a Walking Strategy for Victoria and increased government investment in walking, leveraging the new 25% target for walking and cycling in the Climate Change Strategy.
- In partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria, deliver the 8th Smart Urban Futures conference.

Encouraging Victorians to discover East Gippsland by foot. Credit: Visit Victoria

Acknowledgements

Victoria Walks acknowledges and thanks the following:

- VicHealth for its significant core and project funding since 2009.
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- City of Melbourne for provision of reduced-rent office space in City Village.
- Helen Bartley Consulting for pro bono program evaluation advice.
- Polaris Lawyers for writing website content on walking legal issues.



Victoria Walks Official Supporters



Victoria Walks Corporate Supporters



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