

Victoria
walks

Strategic Plan

2026-2030

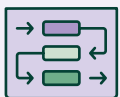


Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria Walks acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and walk. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters and community.

Who we are

Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion charity leading the move for walkable communities since 2009. We work to enable all types of walking – recreational, incidental and transport-related. We offer leadership and independent expertise, and make timely, evidence-based contributions to influence policy and practice. In everything we do, we demonstrate the critical role walking plays in health, wellbeing and economic productivity.



Our vision and purpose

Our vision is for healthier, connected communities where walking is safe, easy and part of everyday life.

We work to influence the policies, infrastructure and investment decisions that shape whether all people can walk safely and conveniently in their everyday lives.

We advocate for walkable environments, translate evidence into practical policy solutions and support decision-makers to embed walking in transport, planning and public health systems.

We give a voice to all those who walk.

Language and inclusion

When we refer to 'walking' or being 'on foot', we use these terms broadly to include everyone who moves through our streets and public spaces – including people who use wheelchairs, mobility aids or other forms of assisted movement. Creating safe, accessible environments for all is central to our work. Because we know that people walk only when they feel secure, our definition of safety includes being safe and feeling safe.



Our values

- ▶ Evidence-based
- ▶ Independent
- ▶ Timely
- ▶ People-first



A message from our Chair

Welcome to the Victoria Walks Strategic Plan 2026-2030. Since 2009, Victoria Walks has been a trusted voice for healthier, more connected communities. As we look towards 2030, this plan marks a deliberate shift in our focus: from an equal focus on encouraging individual behaviour change and policy advocacy to leading systemic reform.

Across Victoria, millions of trips are made on foot each week. Walking remains our most accessible and widely used form of active transport. It's great for our health, for our environment and for our economy. Yet too often it is overlooked in the decisions that shape our streets and neighbourhoods, and that comes at a cost.

Each year, more than 40* pedestrians are killed on Victorian streets, and that number is rising.

We know that for walking to be a natural part of everyday life, it must first be safe and easy. Our research and stakeholder consultations have highlighted a critical reality: walking is a systems issue, not just a personal choice. People walk when the environment enables them to do so – when streets are designed for safety, when footpaths are continuous, and when local destinations are accessible.

Recently, we worked with the Victorian Government to successfully advocate for a landmark target – ensuring one in four of the 16 million** trips Victorians take every day will be active travel. This target is now embedded from the outset in government transport, planning and investment decisions through the state's [Active Transport Plan](#), [Climate Change Strategy 2026–2030](#) and [Transport Emissions Reduction Pledge](#). Given walking accounts for more than 90% of active transport trips, this is a massive victory for our community.

Our focus now is on turning that policy into reality. By 2030, our goal is for walking to be a safer, more popular choice in Victoria, with active travel trips growing from 18% to 25% and annual pedestrian

deaths halved from 43 to 22*** in line with the [Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030](#).

Over the life of this plan, we will work to ensure that walking is no longer invisible in policy and investment. This means championing safer street design, advocating for 30km/h zones in activity centres and residential zones and ensuring that new growth areas are not structurally designed for car dependency.

Walking is so important to us as individuals, but also to our state as a whole – connecting people to public transport, supporting local economies and improving health and wellbeing. But it has not yet been treated with the priority it deserves, with little dedicated funding and accountability. Through this plan, Victoria Walks will continue to provide the evidence, amplify the voices of our community and influence the decisions that will shape our streets for generations to come.

We invite you to join us as we work toward a Victoria where every journey can begin and end with a safe, pleasant walk.

This is a moment of opportunity. Together we can create a Victoria where walking is not only possible, but safe, easy and expected – where every person, in every neighbourhood, can step outside with confidence.

Josephine Monger
Chair, Victoria Walks

*2025 5-year average

<https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/statistics/road-safety-statistical-summary>

** <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/infrastructure-strategy>

*** <https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/research/#walking-in-melbourne-2025-update>



How our plan was developed

The Victoria Walks Strategic Plan 2026-2030 is the result of a comprehensive, evidence-based design process. It marks a deliberate transition for the organisation, moving from the promotion of individual behaviour change to a focus on leading systemic reform.

This strategy has been shaped through five core areas of analysis:

- ▶ 1. Current landscape and changes from the previous strategy
- ▶ 2. Organisational assets and strengths
- ▶ 3. Strategic positions of aligned organisations
- ▶ 4. Stakeholder interviews and feedback
- ▶ 5. Funding and financial sustainability

Together, these inputs provide a comprehensive view of the environment in which Victoria Walks operates, the role it can play, and where it can have the greatest impact.

What we found

A critical evaluation of the 2020-2025 strategy showed Victoria Walks has maintained a high-trust voice and significant community reach. It also revealed an opportunity to move 'upstream' to address root causes.

Historically, we balanced our efforts between individual behaviour and policy advocacy. This analysis demonstrated that we can achieve greater impact by changing the system, rather than individual behaviour. The key barrier is not a motivation to walk but that environments are unsafe, disconnected or inconvenient.

To ground the strategy in policy reality, we analysed the priorities of ten major Victorian agencies, including VicHealth, the Department of Transport and Planning, and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). This uncovered a critical policy gap: while walking is frequently cited as a solution for health, climate, and transport challenges, it rarely receives explicit targets or dedicated investment.





This finding was reinforced through deep stakeholder interviews with 13 key organisations across government, health, transport, and media – including The Age, RACV, and Victoria Police. The feedback was consistent:

- **Systems over behaviour:** Walking outcomes are driven by how streets are designed and infrastructure is built, not just individual motivation.
- **Safety as a precondition:** Fear for safety remains the primary barrier to walking, and it must be addressed as a systemic responsibility rather than an individual risk.
- **The growth area challenge:** New suburbs are often designed in ways that structurally embed walking disadvantage through poor connectivity and missing infrastructure.

Our future role: systems leadership

These insights, combined with strong board engagement, pointed to a clear direction: Victoria Walks will take on a systems leadership role.

We will focus on influencing the high-leverage systems – such as planning, transport and infrastructure – that determine if walking is a practical and safe choice in local communities. Safety underpins all aspects of our work: all our key stakeholders agree that people must be safe and feel safe in order to walk.

The following section outlines how this focus translates into our four key areas of impact – transport, liveability, health, and climate – and the specific strategies we will use to achieve our 2030 goals of halving pedestrian deaths while increasing the percentage of all trips in Victoria that are made by active transport to a quarter. While ambitious, our goal aligns directly with Victorian Government targets for [road safety](#) and [climate action](#), reinforcing the role of walking in creating safer, healthier and more sustainable communities.

Our plan at a glance

Goal

By 2030, walking will be a safer and more popular choice in Victoria, with half as many pedestrian deaths and one in four trips made by active transport.

Focus Areas



Transport



Liveability



Health



Climate

Strategies

Advocate for the systems that enable walking



Inform decision-making through research and evidence



Amplify the voices and needs of people who walk



Key activities

- ▶ Shape new and existing walkable communities
- ▶ Champion safer street design and speed management
- ▶ Position walking as a critical link to the public transport network

- ▶ Identify and prioritise opportunities for improvement
- ▶ Commission and develop research and practical tools
- ▶ Communicate evidence to inform and influence decisions

- ▶ Prioritise the needs of vulnerable communities in all walkability decisions
- ▶ Ensure diverse lived experiences are central to street design and management



Our foundations

We will maintain a high-performing, sustainable organisation with the people, systems and governance and resources required to deliver this strategy effectively.

Our focus areas

To achieve our 2030 goals, Victoria Walks will focus on four interconnected focus areas where systemic change can deliver the greatest benefits for all Victorians. Together, they describe the outcomes we are working toward and are supported by our three strategies. In each area, we move beyond encouraging individual choice to ensure that the systems – policy, infrastructure and investment – make walking the natural and safe choice.

Transport



- ▶ Walking is the foundation of a functional transport network and the critical link for every public transport journey.

Liveability



- ▶ Walkable places are the bedrock of healthy, connected and vibrant communities.

Health



- ▶ Walking is the most accessible form of physical activity and a primary driver of mental and physical wellbeing.

Climate



- ▶ Increasing the share of trips made by bike or on foot is one of the most effective and immediate ways to reduce transport emissions.

Our strategies

Advocate for the systems that enable walking

Walking is shaped by the systems that surround it – planning, transport and infrastructure. We will contribute earlier and more systematically in key policy and planning processes. We will champion the policy, funding and design frameworks that make walking a safe and natural choice for every journey, whether that's a quick stop in at the shops or a work commute.

By influencing high-level decision-making and local infrastructure priorities, we will help ensure communities across Victoria are designed to support walking as a practical, convenient and desirable option.

We'll do this by:

Shaping new and existing walkable communities

We will influence planning and investment decisions so that growth areas, activity centres and established neighbourhoods prioritise walkability from the outset – including connected street networks, safe crossings and access to shade – while supporting improvements in existing areas.

Championing safer street design and speed management

We will advocate for safer speeds and street design that protect people on foot, particularly in residential streets and high-pedestrian areas. This includes expanding 30km/hour zones, improving crossings, upgrading lighting and supporting safe routes to schools and local destinations.

Positioning walking as a critical link to the public transport network

We will work with decision-makers to embed walking as a critical link in the transport networks, ensuring safe and convenient access to train stations, tram stops and bus services.



What this may look like

Expect more initiatives like our recent work with the Victorian Government, where we successfully advocated for a 25% mode-share target – meaning one in four daily trips will be active travel – in both its Climate Action Plan 2026–2030 and its Active Transport Plan. This crucial step means that walking is embedded in governmental transport, planning and investment decisions from the outset.

Inform decision-making through research and evidence

Systems change requires strong evidence and practical solutions. We will build, synthesise and apply an evidence base that positions walking as a measurable priority in public policy and investment.

By providing decision-makers, councils and partners with high-quality data, clear insights and practical tools, we will challenge assumptions that entrench car dependency and demonstrate the economic, social and environmental value of walkable communities.

We'll do this by:

Identifying and prioritising opportunities for improvement

Through spatial mapping, safety audits and policy scanning, we will identify the places and opportunities where walkability can be improved – including missing links, high-risk locations and upcoming policy or investment decisions, helping to direct advocacy, planning and investment where it's most needed.

Commissioning and development research and practical tools

We will lead and synthesise rigorous research on what makes communities walkable and translate this into data-driven tools, design guidance and policy resources that practitioners can apply directly in planning, design and delivery.

Communicating evidence to inform and influence evidence

We will distil complex evidence into clear, compelling insights that demonstrate the broader benefits of walking, including its contribution to health, local economic activity, emissions reduction and community safety.



What this may look like

You'll be seeing more work like our [Safer Speeds Communications toolkit](#) that took deep research and learning about communication around the change to safer speeds and produced practical tools, webinars and online resources to support all those who advocate for speed zoning changes in their communities.



Amplify the voices and needs of people who walk

People who walk every day have critical insights into how streets and public spaces function. We will ensure these lived experiences shape decision-making, helping to create safer, more inclusive and more enjoyable walking environments.

We'll do this by:

Prioritising the needs of vulnerable communities in all walkability decisions

We will advocate for the needs of children, older people and people with disabilities, ensuring these insights directly inform policy, planning and design processes.

Ensuring diverse lived experiences are central to street design and management

We will create and support ways for people to share their experiences of walking and ensure these insights directly inform policy, planning and design processes.



What this may look like

You'll see more work like our award-winning [Walking & Rolling Together project](#), which designed an accessible trail audit tool and a public list of more than 70 walking maps across Melbourne and regional Victoria to help people with mobility disabilities find suitable walks.



Our foundations

Our foundations shape our ability to work effectively with partners, respond to emerging challenges and deliver lasting impact across Victoria's walking systems. To deliver this strategy, we must maintain a high-performing, sustainable organisation equipped with the right people, systems and governance.

We will strengthen our financial sustainability by diversifying income streams and managing resources with complete transparency and accountability. Ultimately, we will continue to build our capability as a trusted, influential voice for walking – supported by strong governance and a collaborative culture.

Thank you

We are grateful to everyone in Victoria who shares our passion for walking, and to our generous funders and partners who believe in the power of walkable places.

Your support is what makes our work possible. Thank you for being part of the journey.





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