



# 20 MARCH 2014 WALK THE BLOCK

[www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock)

## the facts:

**73% of Victorian workers report inadequate physical activity (ie. less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day)<sup>1</sup>**

**Poor employee health and absenteeism is costing Australian businesses \$7 billion annually<sup>2</sup>**

**The direct and indirect costs of obesity and obesity-related illnesses to the Australian economy in 2008/09 were estimated to be a staggering \$37.7 billion<sup>3</sup>**

**40% of Victorian workers have a high or very high risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes or cardiovascular disease<sup>4</sup>**

**It is estimated that return on investment for workplace wellness programs could be as much as 3 to 1<sup>4</sup>**

Walk the Block is a statewide initiative by Victoria Walks aimed at getting Victorian workers away from their desks and onto their feet. There's no fees involved, no fundraising. It's all about taking a little time out of your day to Walk the Block and, as a result, help create happier, healthier workplaces. Just 15 minutes a day can make a huge difference. And it's happening right across Victoria on **Thursday 20 March**.

Many of us spend around a third of our day at work which often involves sitting at a desk or in a relatively confined space for hours on end. This is having lasting, adverse effects on our physical and mental health.

The **physical benefits** of regular exercise for an individual include:

- Improved cardiovascular fitness
- Reduced risk of premature death
- Reduced cholesterol level
- Reduced blood pressure
- Maintenance of healthy weight
- Improved muscle tone

### What are the workplace benefits?

Internationally studies have shown that employers who actively encourage physical activity report the following:

- Reduced absenteeism - it's estimated that increased physical activity can reduce sick leave by up to 32%
- Increased productivity - in some cases by up to 52%<sup>5</sup>
- Decreased accidents
- Reduced staff turnover
- Higher staff morale
- Improved ability to cope with workplace changes
- Fewer insurance and compensation claims
- Lower costs related to training, retirement and orientation

**Walk the Block** promotes four simple workplace walking ideas.

**Take the First Step:** quick and easy tips to get staff moving at work

**Talk the Block:** tips for conducting walking meetings

**In Your Stride:** tips for ongoing activity beyond the date of the event such as walking groups and incentives

1 WorkSafe Victoria WorkHealth checks, May 2010

2 The Health of Australia's Workforce, Medibank 2005

3 Obesity in Australia; financial impacts and cost benefits of intervention, Medibank 2010

4 The World Economic Forum Working Towards Wellness, PWC 2007

5 Health & Development through physical activity and sport WHO 2003

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