



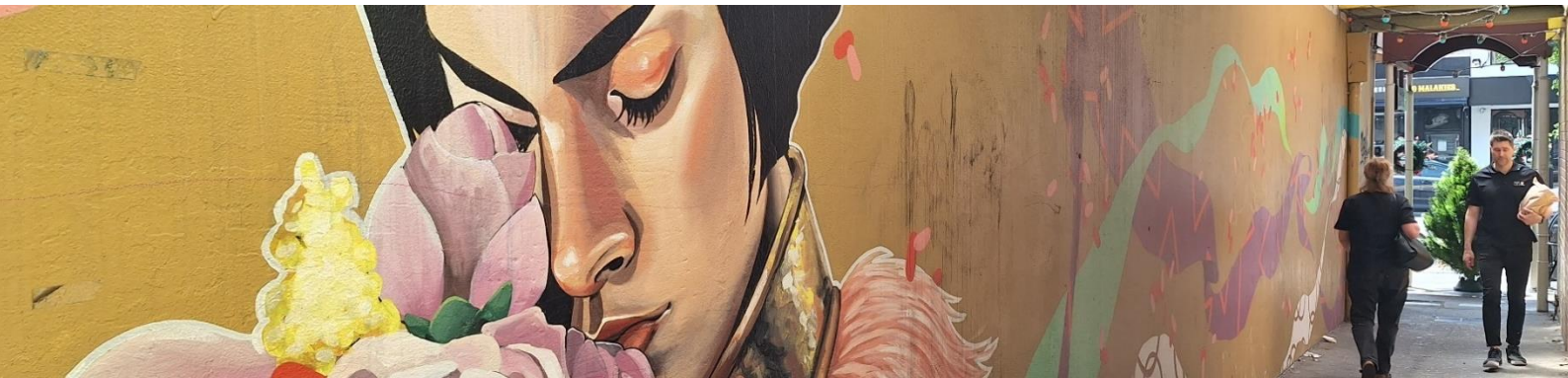
Walking and Transport in Melbourne

2025
UPDATE

Victoria
walks

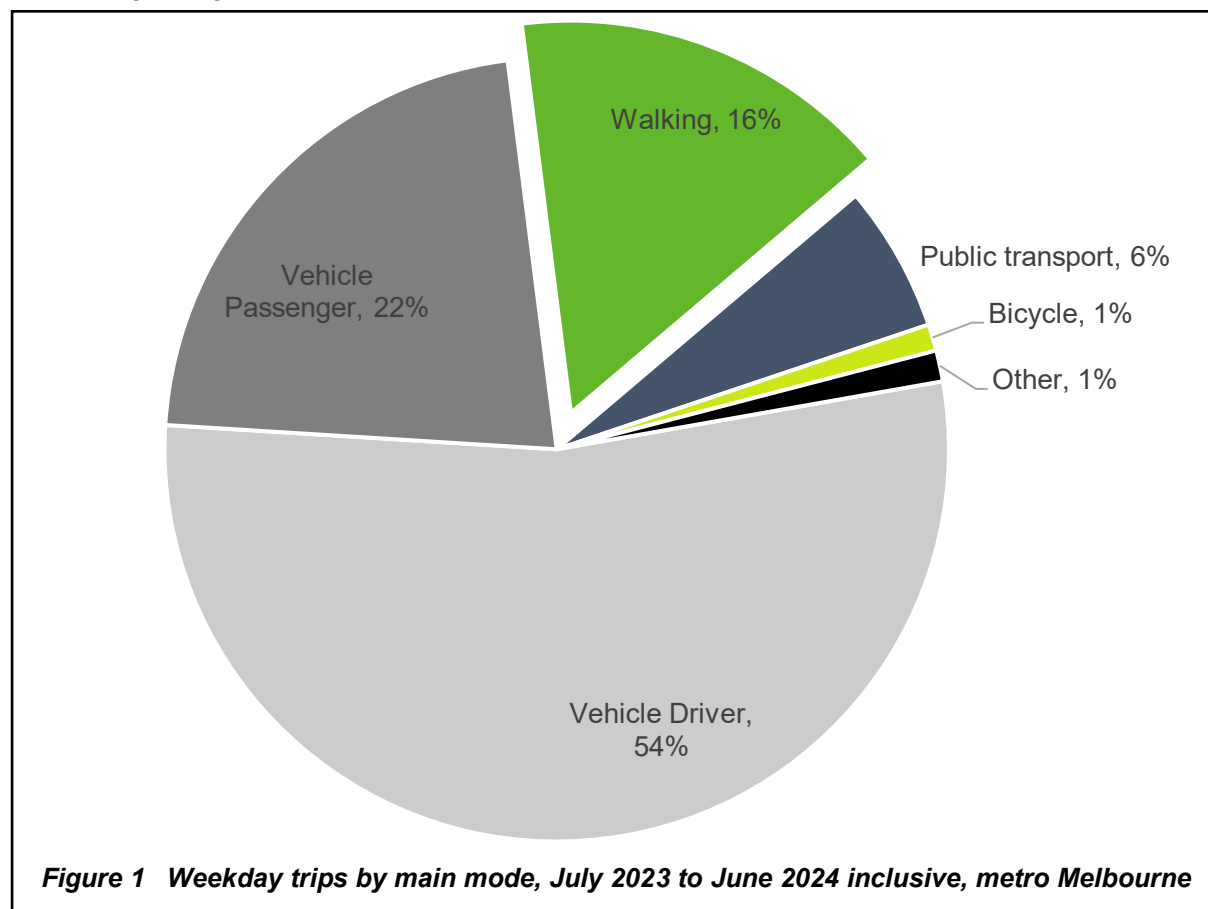
A green graphic element consisting of a series of parallel lines that form a stylized arrow or chevron shape pointing to the right.

Victoria Walks published earlier reports looking at walking and transport in Melbourne in [2019](#) and [2023](#). Amongst other things, these analysed VISTA data¹ to provide an understanding of walking in the Melbourne transport system. This publication presents an update on data collected through to June 2024, post COVID restrictions.



1. Mode share

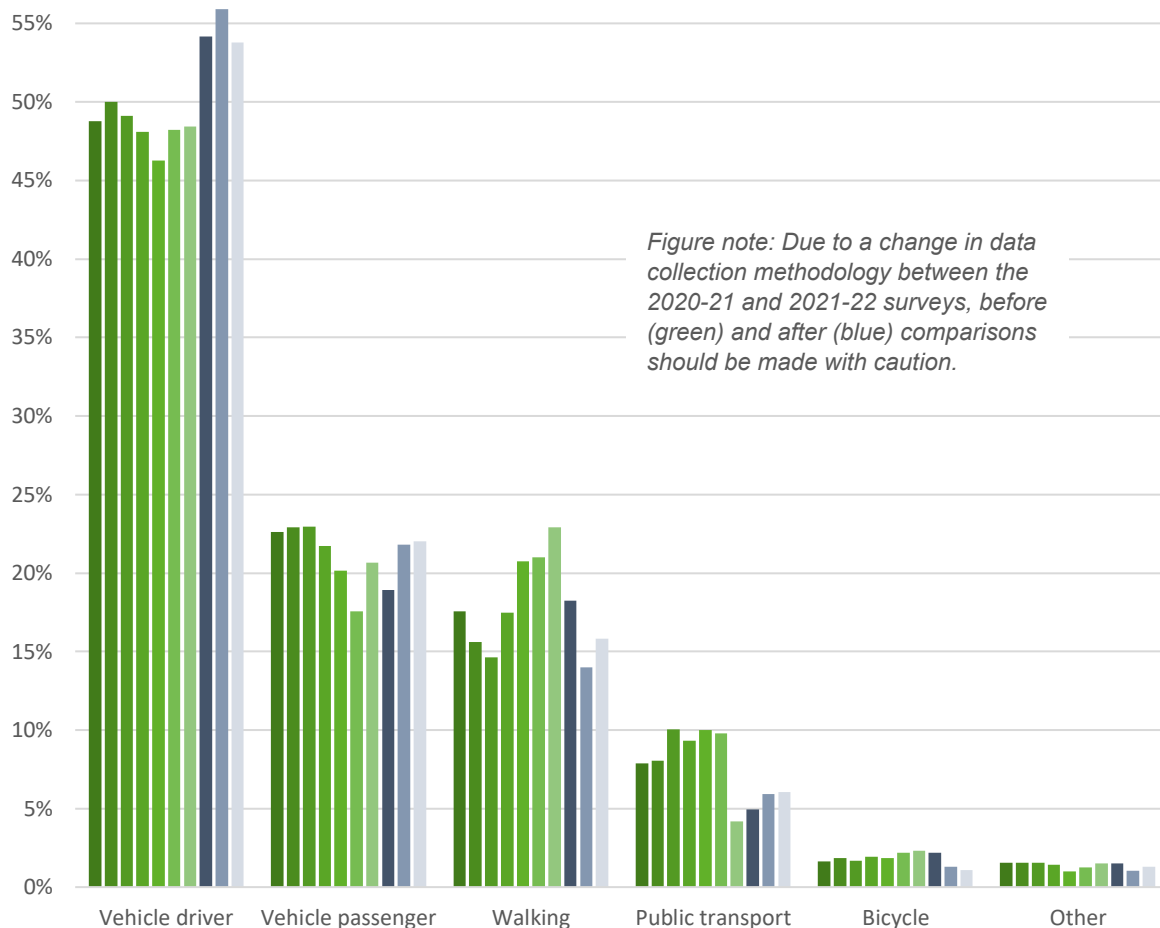
Walking is important for getting around Melbourne, with the most recent financial year of data recording about one in six trips walked (Figure 1). Walking mode share includes walking for both transport, such as to get to a shop, and recreation, such as going for a walk or walking a dog.



¹ Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity, collected by the Victorian Government
<https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-integrated-survey-travel-and-activity>

2. Travel patterns over time

Walking was the second most common mode of travel between July 2018 and June 2021, with the highest rates in 2020-21 during COVID restrictions. However, since the end of COVID restrictions, walking mode share fell back to levels seen about a decade ago (Figure 2). Whether this is due to actual changes in travel behaviour post-COVID restrictions, or changes in data collection methodology from the 2021-22 survey onwards is unclear.








						
2014-15	49%	23%	18%	8%	2%	2%
2015-16	50%	23%	16%	8%	2%	2%
2016-17	49%	23%	15%	10%	2%	2%
2017-18	48%	22%	17%	9%	2%	1%
2018-19	46%	20%	21%	10%	2%	1%
2019-20	48%	18%	21%	10%	2%	1%
2020-21	48%	21%	23%	4%	2%	1%
2021-22	54%	19%	18%	5%	2%	2%
2022-23	56%	22%	14%	6%	1%	1%
2023-24	54%	22%	16%	6%	1%	1%

Figure 2 Proportion of weekday trips by main mode, 2014-15 to 2023-24, metro Melbourne

The proportion of public transport trips was also increasing prior to 2020, when COVID restrictions reduced public transport use. Rates have been slowly recovering but remain well below the peak of 10% between 2016 and 2020. This could be partly related to more people working from home, as public transport trips are most commonly made for work related purposes.

Conversely, mode share as vehicle driver has increased significantly since 2022, to the highest levels in 10 years. More trips are being made than ever before, but the new trips tend to be in private vehicles rather than by more sustainable and healthy modes like walking, which is a worrying trend.



3. Distance of walking trips






The pre COVID pattern of more trips being walked closer to the CBD continued post COVID restrictions, although fewer walking trips were made overall (Table 1). Longer walking trips continued to be made further from the CBD, as was the case prior to 2021. However, walking distances reduced across all parts of Melbourne post COVID restrictions, falling nearly 30% from an average of 820 m prior to June 2021 to 586 m post COVID restrictions. The data does not capture the reasons for this.

Table 1 Proportion and length of trips walked by origin location

Location	June 2016 to June 2021 (previous report)		Jan 2022 to June 2024 (post COVID restrictions)	
	Trips walked	Median length (m)	Trips walked	Median length (m)
Inner Melbourne	41%	590	34%	526
Middle Melbourne	23%	870	17%	601
Outer Melbourne	14%	890	10%	628
ALL metro Melbourne	21%	820	18%	586

Although walking mode share has fallen in the last few years, walking remains the most common mode of transport for weekday trips less than 1 km in length, at 57%.

Table 2 Mode share by trip length post COVID restrictions (Jan 2022 to June 2024), metropolitan Melbourne

Trip distance (km)	 Walk	 Vehicle driver	 Vehicle passenger	 Public transport	 Cycle	Other
0 - 0.99	57%	27%	13%	0%	2%	0%
1 - 1.99	20%	52%	24%	1%	2%	0%
2 - 2.99	6%	61%	26%	4%	2%	1%
3 - 3.99	2%	62%	28%	6%	1%	2%
4 - 4.99	1%	61%	29%	6%	1%	2%
5 - 9.99	0%	64%	24%	8%	2%	2%
10 or more	0%	68%	18%	12%	1%	2%
ALL Distances	16%	55%	21%	6%	2%	1%
2016-21 comparison	21%	48%	21%	6%	2%	1%

4. Purpose of walking trips

People walk for many reasons, with more than half of all walking trips made for three purposes post COVID restrictions (Jan 2022 to June 2024):

- Recreation (23% of walking trips)
- Personal business including taking the dog for a walk (19%)
- To buy something (18%).

Walking for recreation became very important in 2020-21 during COVID restrictions, peaking at 33% of all walking trips. The increase during the pandemic wasn't sustained, with the proportion of walking trips for recreation now close to what it was previously (Figure 3).

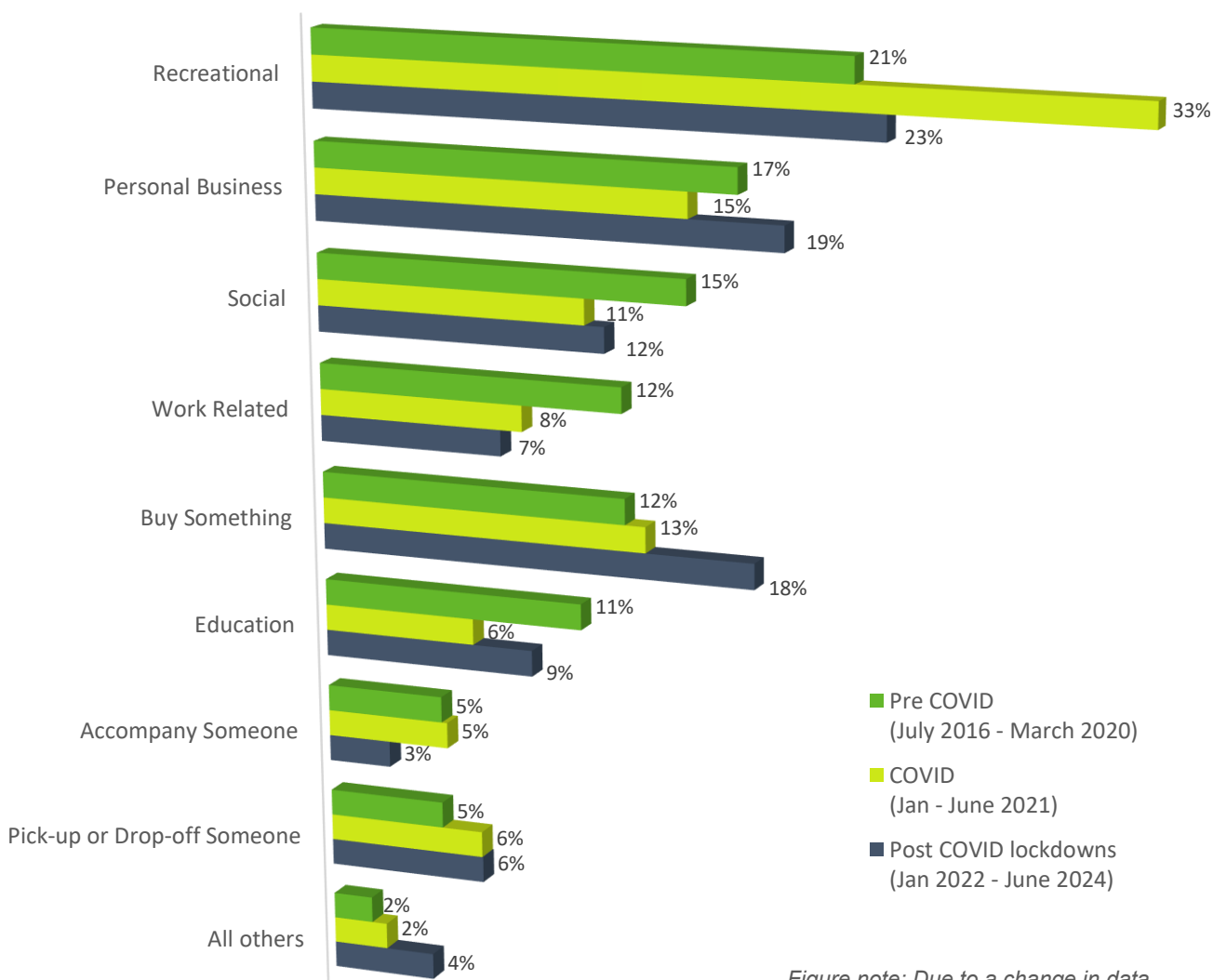


Figure note: Due to a change in data collection methodology between the 2020-21 and 2021-22 surveys, before (green) and after (blue) comparisons should be made with caution.

Figure 3 Weekday walking trips by purpose, metro Melbourne

The proportion of social and work-related walking trips fell during COVID and have since remained at these lower levels. Conversely, the proportion of shopping trips has significantly increased in the past few years, with 20% of walking trips in 2023-24 made for the purpose of buying something.

In comparison, during the same period, all trips (by any mode) were most commonly made:

- For work related purposes (21% for all modes, much more than the 7% for walking trips)
- To buy something (19%, similar to 18% for walking)
- To pick up or drop off someone (14%, much more than 6% for walking)



5. More information

This analysis is based on VISTA data collected during financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24. Data is collected by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and is available [online](#).

VISTA was not conducted during the last six months (July to December) of either 2020 or 2021 due to COVID restrictions. Therefore, results for financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 each contain only 6 months of data.

Weekday trips originating in the 31 council areas that make up [metropolitan Melbourne](#) are included.

Walking trips refers to those that are walked entirely for any purpose, including transport (to get somewhere) and recreation (to go for a walk). The mode hierarchy used in VISTA means walking is not considered the main mode unless no other modes are used. Our earlier research found basically all public transport trips also involve some walking.

'Mobility scooter' and 'jogging' were mode choice options in some years. These people are pedestrians under the road rules and so are included in 'walking' in this report. These modes represent only a small proportion of trips (e.g. 0.6% in 2020-21).

Trips made by children under 5 years old are estimated as part of the VISTA data editing process by DTP and do not reflect trips made with people outside of the household e.g. a grandparent picking up a three year old and taking them to kinder is not captured. This means trips for those under 5 years old are underestimated.

NOTE: Totals may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion organisation, leading the move for walkable communities in Australia since 2009. Our vision is for healthier, connected communities through more people walking more every day. Victoria Walks is supported by VicHealth.

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