



Walking in Melbourne 2026

Walking and transport
trends in Melbourne

Victoria
walks

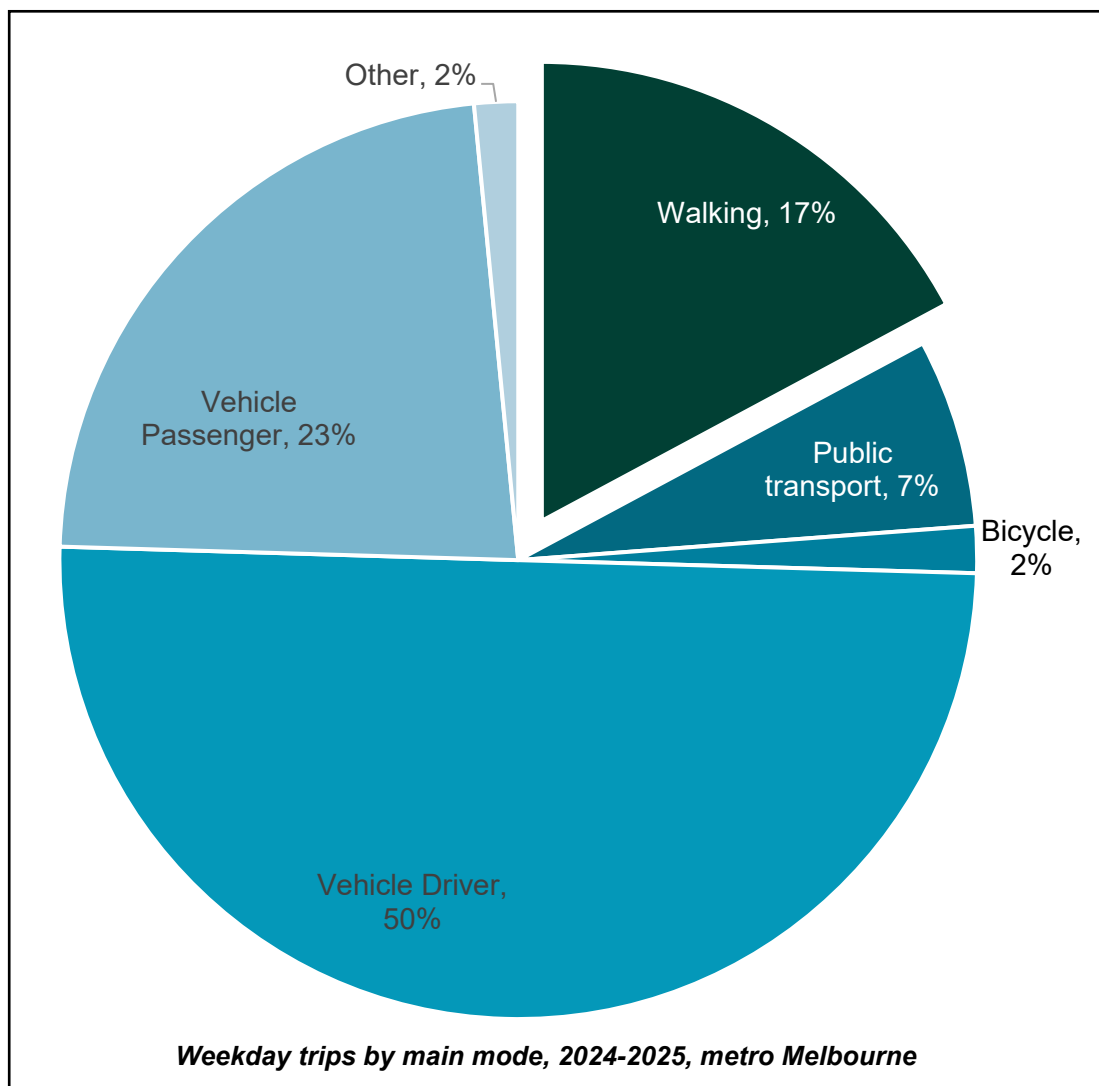
Walking in Melbourne: progress has stalled

Walking accounts for around one in six trips, making it an important part of the transport system. However, progress has stalled and Melbourne continues to be dominated by car travel.

In 2024–25, walking made up 17% of weekday trips in metropolitan Melbourne, a marginal increase from the previous year. While this reflects the importance of walking for both transport and recreation, it also highlights a lack of growth at a time when higher walking rates are needed to meet state targets.

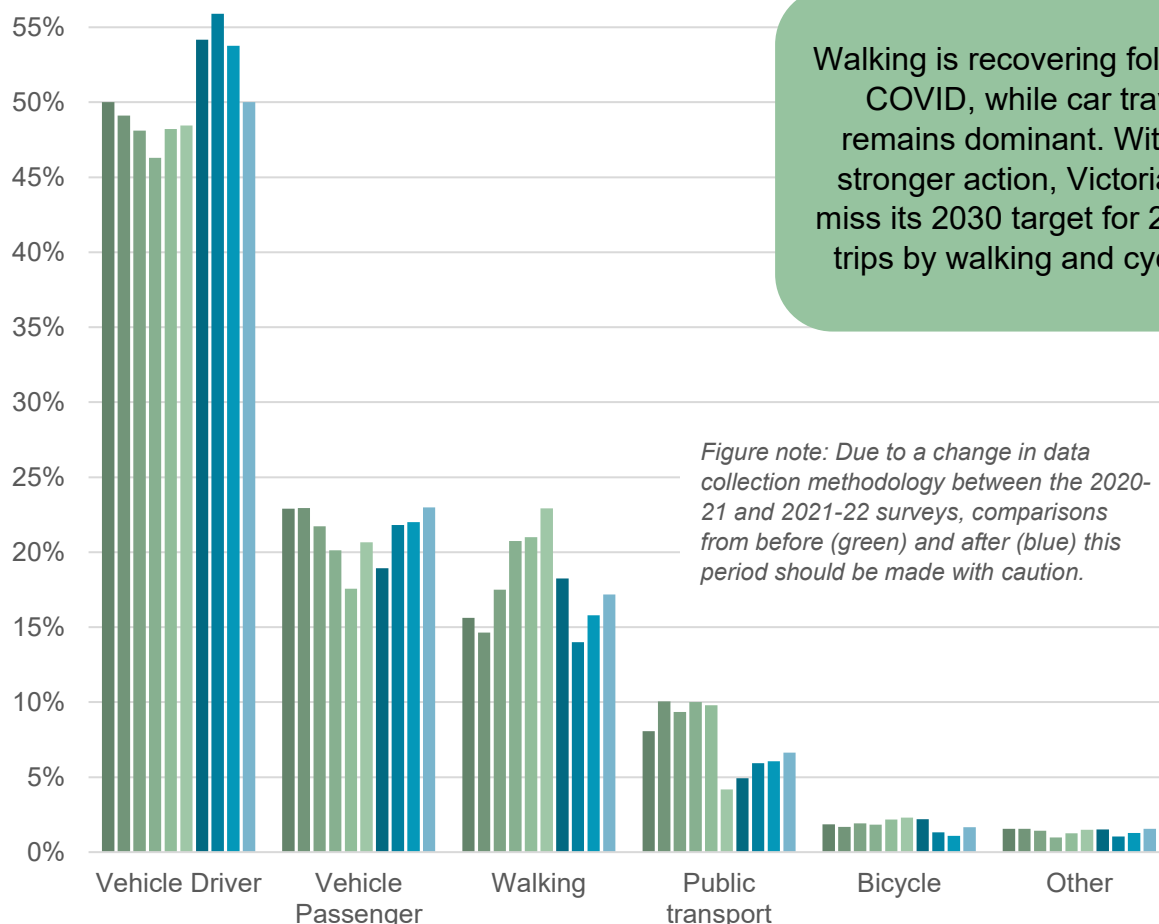
Private vehicles continue to dominate Melbourne's transport system, accounting for nearly three-quarters of all trips. This ongoing reliance on cars underscores the challenge of shifting towards more sustainable and healthy modes such as walking, riding and public transport.

This report provides an update on walking and transport trends using VISTA data collected up to June 2025, building on [previous Victoria Walks analysis](#).



COVID significantly disrupted travel patterns

Walking declined following COVID, falling back to levels last seen a decade ago, and is still recovering. Public transport use dropped sharply during the pandemic and has only partially recovered. At the same time, the share of trips made by private vehicle increased significantly.



	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Vehicle Driver	50%	49%	48%	46%	48%	48%	54%	56%	54%	50%
Vehicle Passenger	23%	23%	22%	20%	18%	21%	19%	22%	22%	23%
Walking	16%	15%	17%	21%	21%	23%	18%	14%	16%	17%
Public transport	8%	10%	9%	10%	10%	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Bicycle	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Other	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%

Proportion of weekday trips by main mode, metro Melbourne

Melbourne remains car dependent

Melburnians are making more trips than ever before, with around **11.3 million trips on an average weekday**. However, these trips are overwhelmingly made by private vehicles rather than by walking, cycling or public transport.

Mode share for vehicle drivers has returned to levels seen in 2015, reinforcing the persistence of car dependence.

Travel demand is growing, but most of that growth is being absorbed by cars—not by more sustainable modes.



Walking trips in Melbourne are highly local in scale

Most walking trips are under 800 metres. In the most recent year, walking distances were slightly shorter than in the longer term.

	Over the past decade	In 2024–25
Median distance	660 metres	620 metres
% under 400 metres	30%	33%
% under 800 metres	59%	65%

These figures reflect trips made entirely on foot and do not include walking to public transport

Weekday mode share by trip length, 10 years, metropolitan Melbourne

						
Trip distance (km)	Walk	Vehicle driver	Vehicle passenger	Public transport	Cycle	Other
Less than 1	63%	23%	11%	0%	2%	1%
1 to <2	26%	47%	23%	1%	2%	1%
2 to <3	8%	56%	28%	5%	2%	1%
3 to <5	2%	58%	30%	6%	2%	2%
5 or more	0%	65%	21%	11%	1%	2%
ALL Distances	18%	52%	21%	6%	2%	1%

Walking is the dominant mode for short trips under 1 km

Walking is the most common mode for weekday trips under 1 km, accounting for 63% of these trips. However, as distance increases, car use rises rapidly and dominates all longer trips.

Improving local walking environments is one of the most effective ways to increase walking

Local conditions matter most

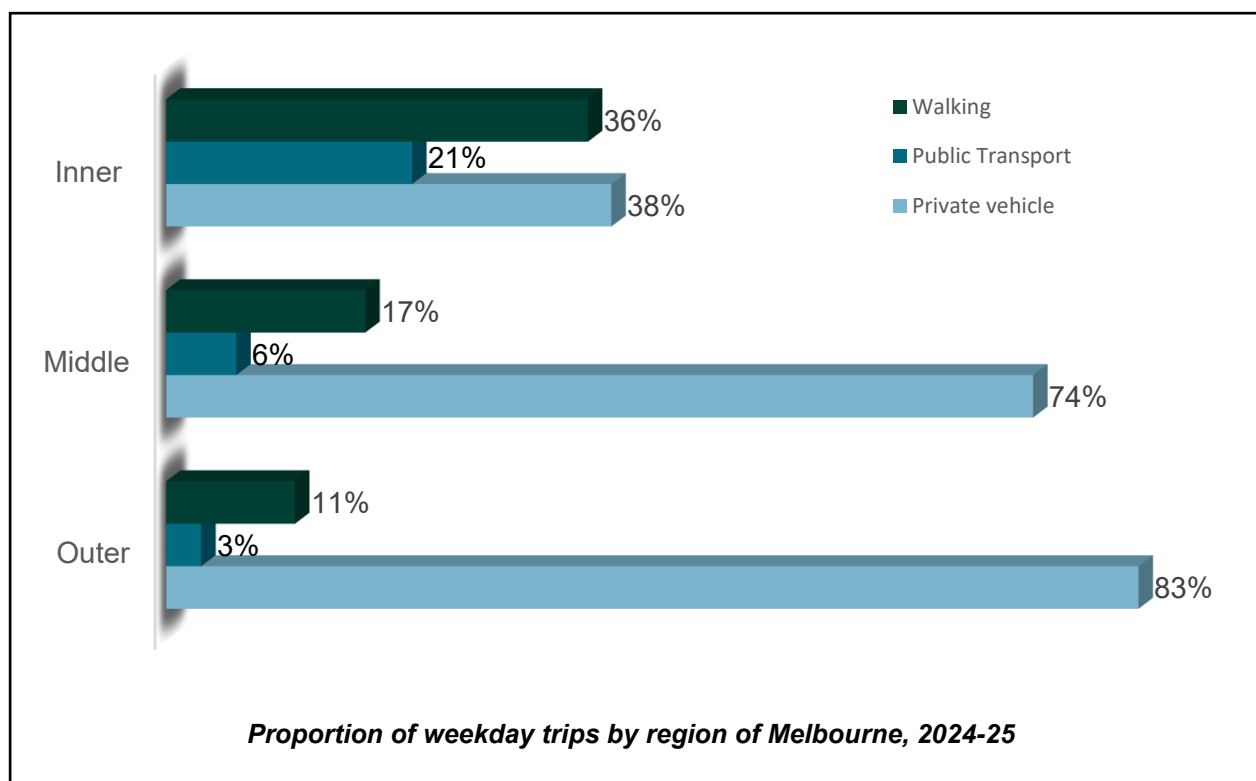
Because most walking trips are short, they are highly sensitive to local conditions. Small gaps in the network, indirect routes, and poor crossings can discourage walking.

Planning policy often assumes walkable catchments of around 800 metres. However, these findings suggest that improving conditions within smaller neighbourhood-scale catchments—particularly within 400 to 800 metres—is critical.

Outer Melbourne faces a walking disadvantage

Walking is closely linked to public transport, and both decline with distance from the city. Walking mode share in outer Melbourne is **less than one-third** that of inner Melbourne, while public transport's share is just one-seventh.

While spatial patterns have remained consistent since COVID—with higher walking and public transport use in inner areas and lower in outer areas—the overall share of these modes has declined.



A compounding disadvantage

Lower rates of walking and public transport in outer areas reflect a compounding disadvantage:

- Less walkable environments
- Poorer access to public transport
- Greater reliance on cars

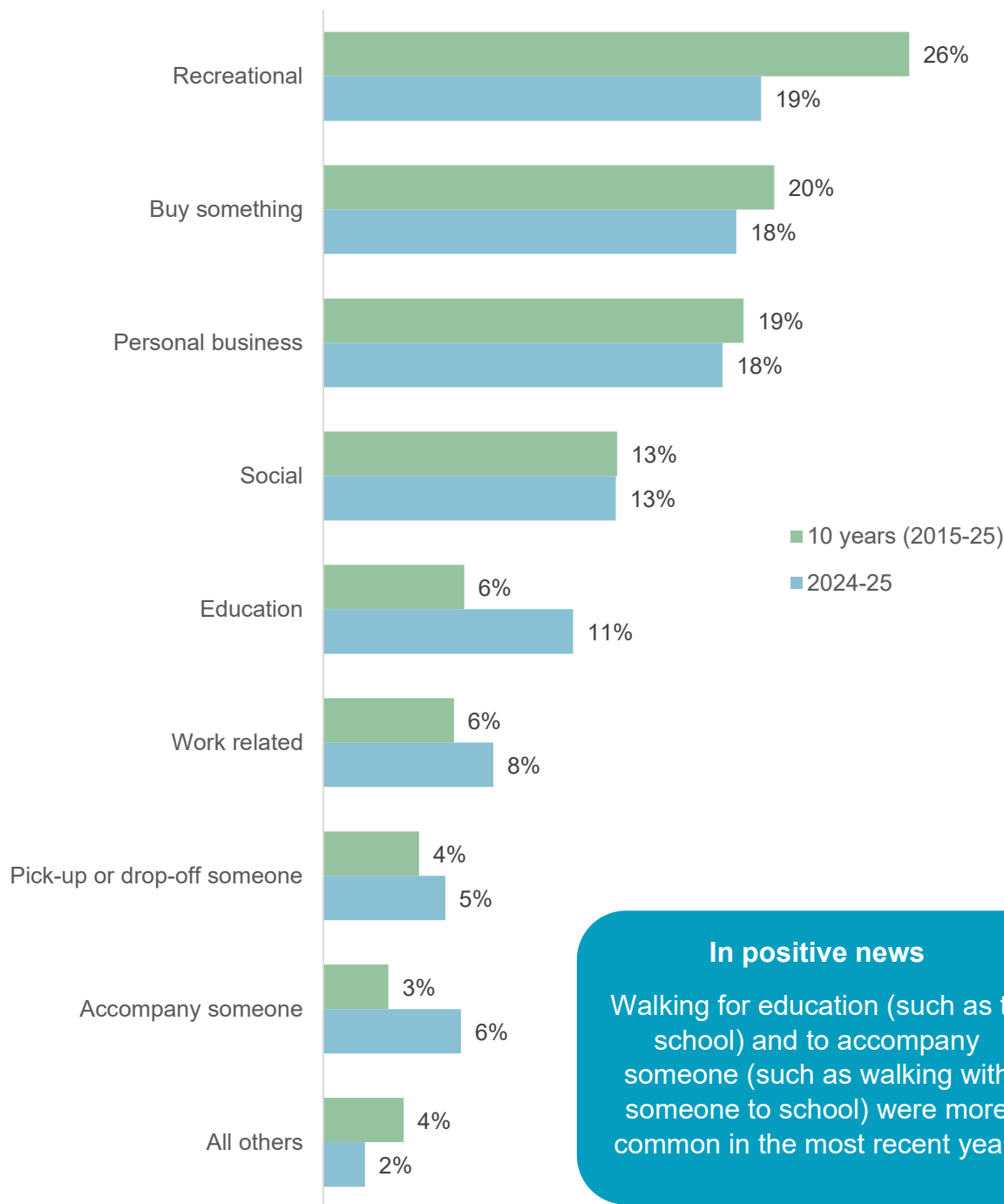
Improving walking conditions is critical to improving public transport access—especially in outer Melbourne.

Walking is integral to public transport

[Earlier Victoria Walks research](#) found:

- Nearly all trips to bus and tram stops are walked
- 66% of trips to train stations are made entirely on foot
- Median walk distances from home to:
 - Bus stop – 390 m
 - Tram stop – 390 m
 - Train station – 721 m

Recreation remains the leading purpose for people to walk



Weekday walking trips by purpose, metro Melbourne

Conclusion: Walking needs renewed focus

Walking is a fundamental part of Melbourne's transport system, particularly for short trips and local travel. However, COVID significantly disrupted travel patterns, reversing earlier growth in walking. The share of trips made by walking has since begun to recover but remains below pre-pandemic levels.

At the same time:

- Car travel remains dominant
- Public transport recovery is incomplete
- Outer areas face structural barriers to walking.

Without stronger investment and policy focus, Victoria will miss its 2030 targets.

Increasing walking is achievable—
but it requires sustained
investment in local walking
environments, better integration
with public transport, and a clear
shift away from car dependence.

More information

This analysis is based on [VISTA data](#) collected between 2015–16 and 2024–25 by the Department of Transport and Planning.

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

Walking trips include all trips made entirely as pedestrians, for both transport and recreation. Walking associated with public transport is not counted as the main mode.

Data limitations:

- Reduced data collection during COVID years (2020–21 and 2021–22).
- Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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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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