Victoria Walks Inc.
Level 7, 225 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
P: 03 9662 3975
E: info@victoriawalks.org.au
www.victoriawalks.org.au
Registration No. A0052693U

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Submission to *Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport; Draft Report for Discussion – October 2012*

Background

Victoria Walks is a walking health promotion body working to get more Victorians walking every day. Our vision is for vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible.

Our cities, towns, neighbourhoods and urban areas have become largely automobile dependent and less walkable. This has contributed to the emergence of more sedentary lifestyles where people do not engage in the recommended levels of physical activity. Physical inactivity is a significant factor in the dramatic rise in the levels of obesity and preventable diseases such as Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Walking-friendly neighbourhoods and urban spaces are essential to encourage and enable people to walk. Walking is associated with positive health outcomes, improved fitness and better physical, social and mental health. Making towns, cities and suburbs more walkable has many health, environmental and economic benefits.

Introduction

Victoria Walks applauds the Department of Infrastructure and Transport for initiating this discussion. Much urban policy, including *Our Cities, Our Future*, is predicated on a model of intensified urban centres. Walking is absolutely fundamental to the success of this model, but has largely been taken for granted in policy discussion. As the report notes (page 1):

> *"Despite the importance of walking, it is often overlooked as a mode of transport."*

Victoria Walks congratulates the Department on the quality of the discussion document. *Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport* (hereafter referred to as 'the report') provides a good discussion of the benefits of walking and cycling and the need to promote them as transport modes.

The social, economic and environmental benefits of walking are numerous and the report provides a good overview of these benefits. It is important to note that there is extensive

guidance available elsewhere on detailed planning and design to make spaces more liveable and walkable, and design of public transport to facilitate access. Examples include:

- *Healthy by Design: a planners' guide to environments for healthy living*, National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2004.

- *Streets for People: Compendium for South Australian Practice*, South Australian Active Living Coalition, 2012.

- *Railway Station Useability Principles*, Station User Panel (Department of Transport, Victoria), 2011.

This submission does not seek to repeat the case for walking set out in the report or detail the design mechanisms available to facilitate walking. Rather, this submission focuses primarily on:

1. Any gaps we see in the analysis provided in the report; and

2. Recommendations for institutional mechanisms to support walking, with a particular focus on the potential role of the Commonwealth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much urban policy, including *Our Cities, Our Future*, is predicated on a model of intensified urban centres. Walking is absolutely fundamental to the success of this model, but has largely been taken for granted in policy discussion.

The discussion document provides a good outline of the benefits of walking and cycling and the need to promote them as transport modes. This submission does not seek to repeat the case for walking set out in the report or detail the design mechanisms available to facilitate walking. The submission adds to the analysis in the report and provides a range of recommendations in response.

Discussion

There has been a dramatic decline in walking for transport over recent decades. This is particularly the case in the decline in children walking to school. Evidence suggests that the trend towards driving of children to school is in large part due to their parents' perceptions of safety. Fostering children's walking and independent mobility is vital to their health and development and in establishing positive life time behaviours.

In addition to the economic benefits of walking identified in the report:

- Walking plays a significant role in fostering economic development, particularly the economic vitality of retail centres.

- There is strong evidence to suggest that better walkability adds substantial value not only to retail property, but also to office and residential property.

- The report notes that *"riding is often faster than driving for trips up to five kilometres, while walking is faster for trips of up to 400 metres."* Creating the conditions to shift short trips from cars to walking and cycling will improve the economic efficiency of transport.

- Where walking, cycling or access to public transport allows a household to forego owning a car, "*a household could spend an extra $110,000 on a new home and repay a $300,000 housing loan in 12 years instead of 25 years..."*[1]

Walking plays a key role in community wellbeing:

> *"Walking increases opportunities for face-to-face social contact and helps people to map their neighbourhood in social terms. Improved walkability also enhances the social life of people with limited mobility and increases property values..."*[2]

Transport policy that prioritises walkable environments rather than high speed car travel will help address significant community concerns around noisy and dangerous driving.

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[1] Ministerial Advisory Committee for the Metropolitan Planning Strategy for Melbourne, *Melbourne, let's talk about the future; Discussion Paper*, 2012, page 37.
[2] Kelly, J-F.; Breadon, P.; Davis, C.; Hunter, A.; Mares, P.; Mullerworth, D.; Weidmann, B., 2012, *Social Cities*, Grattan Institute, Melbourne, page 55.

Recommendations

Victoria Walks recommends that the Australian Government:

1. Establish a dedicated and independent walking promotion organisation for Australia and support states and territories to do the same. Walking should be specifically represented on all federal transport forums.

2. Prepare a National Walking Strategy.

3. Develop a mode share target for walking. An example of a possible target would be to increase walking from 4% of journey to work in 2009 to 7% by 2020.

4. Adopt a target for walking to school, as a measure of success in adoption of walking by the next generation.

5. Consistently apply the carbon tax to the transport system.

6. Evaluate the performance of metropolitan planning in promoting walking, by assessing:
   - performance against mode share targets and proportion of children walking and cycling to schools;
   - walkability in new subdivisions and brownfield development; and
   - performance in increasing development density around activity centres and public transport stops.

7. Recognise the desirability of walking in and around all activity centres, strip shopping and high pedestrian areas to influence any investment within those catchments, either public or private.

8. Federal funding for major projects should be contingent on a state/local government audit of walking access around activity centres and public transport stops, to identify priority works.

9. A fixed proportion of transport spending should be allocated to walking and/or place making. This must be clearly separated from, and additional to, any walking infrastructure improvements associated with upgrades of other modes.

10. 'Positive provision' of walking infrastructure in association with major road and public transport projects should extend beyond the corridor itself. All major transport infrastructure projects should provide improvements to walking environments in each activity centre impacted by the new road or public transport investment.

11. Link funding for place making to areas where development density is being increased.

12. Work with states and territories to reduce speed limits in residential areas and within identified catchments of activity centres. If applied generally, introduce a step-wise reduction (from 50 km/h to 40 km/h in the short-term, and subsequently to world's best practice of 30 km/h).

13. Federal funding should be provided for the adoption of safety measures, including education and awareness programs for motorists and pedestrians; auditing the pedestrian level of service at all signalised crossings; ensuring new signalised crossings have the highest level of pedestrian service as the default; implementing vehicle safety technologies with proven efficacy in reducing pedestrian injuries.

DISCUSSION

Travel to school

The report asserts at page 28 that *"primary and secondary student travel to school reflects the broader long-term trend towards increased car use."* This statement does not however capture the extent of the decline in walking to school which far outstrips the increase in car use. Figure 2.4 of the report illustrates that in the period 1981-2004 car travel to school in NSW increased from 19% to 50% for secondary school students and 37% to 68% for primary school students. Victorian trends are similar. In 1970, 49% of children in Victoria walked to school and 16% travelled by car; but by 1994 these levels were effectively reversed, with 20% of young people walking and 52% travelling to school by car (ABS 1984 and 1995). By contrast, Figure 2.1 of the report suggests that car use as a proportion of travel generally is essentially unchanged in the last 30-40 years.

The evidence suggests that the trend towards driving of children to school is due primarily to their parents' perceptions of safety.

> *"Fear of children being abducted by strangers is a significant limitation on children walking to school and around their community, as is the perception of too much traffic. There is also a widely held view that children at primary school are too young to travel independently in their neighbourhood."*[3]

While 'stranger danger' and changing social norms are major factors, so are perceptions of road safety.

> *"The majority of primary school parents (73 per cent) saw road safety as a barrier to their children's physical activity in the community.*
> *…*
> *Forty per cent of neighbourhood residents …did not feel safe due to the traffic on the streets and described the amount of traffic as making it difficult or unpleasant to walk or cycle. This percentage increased to almost 50 per cent for primary school parents …regarding the same issue."*[4]

Other factors relevant to the decline in children walking to school include the assumption that many vehicle trips to take children to school are multi-purpose – the driver goes on to another destination after dropping off or picking up children. However up to 40% of trips are simple home-school-home vehicle trips.[5] There is a great opportunity to increase the level of walking to school, particularly given that more than *"60 per cent of primary school students are driven to school even though 44 per cent of these trips are less than 2km"*[6]

Fostering children's independent mobility is vital to their health and development and in establishing positive life time behaviours. Recently, small steps have been made toward making the road environment around schools safer, with the introduction of 40kmph speed limits outside school entrances at key times in Victoria. However a much broader approach

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[3] VicHealth 2011. *Towards active and independently mobile children. Survey review, p13*
[4] VicHealth, p10.
[5] Morris et al cited in J. Garrard (p.9), *Active transport: Children and young people, an overview of recent evidence*, VicHealth 2009
[6] Government of Victoria, *Pedestrian Access Strategy,* 2010.

is required. Countries that have high levels of active transport have a multi-faceted approach.[7] The necessary measures can be summarised as follows:

> *"Small changes can be achieved, at least in the short-term, through programs such as Safe Routes to School, Walking School Buses, School Travel Planning, and Walk/Ride to School events. However, these initiatives need to be complemented by area-wide improvements that support children's independent mobility within their overall neighbourhood. These include reduced urban speed limits, good cycling and walking infrastructure, and secure bike storage at schools, shopping centres and community facilities."*[8]

In other words, walking to school should not be seen in isolation from the general neighbourhood context, but requires particular attention and provides an important barometer for walkability.

Economic benefits

The analysis set out in chapter 3 of the report summarises the benefits of walking and cycling in terms of improvements to public health, reduction in traffic congestion, environmental effects and community outcomes. However, there are further economic dimensions that have not been identified.

Walking plays a significant role in fostering economic development, particularly the economic vitality of retail centres. A useful summary of the positive relationship between walkable environments and retail health is provided by the National Heart Foundation discussion document *Good for Busine$$, the benefits of making streets more walking and cycling friendly*, 2011. A variety of studies are cited demonstrating that providing a more pedestrian friendly environment will increase retail turnover and retail property values. This document illustrates that *"making streets more walking and cycling friendly will:*

- *Increase retail rental values.*
- *Increase sale prices of nearby homes.*
- *Significantly increase pedestrian and cyclist activity.*
- *Generate more business and stimulate the local economy.*
- *Revitalise 'drive-through' districts into lively places that people want to visit.*
- *Encourage people to spend time outside of their homes.*
- *Reduce noise levels."*

Various studies have identified that walking is a more important mode of travel to shopping, and car travel is less important, than is perceived by many retailers. For example a study in Graz, Austria, found that retailers thought 58% of their customers drove to the shop and 25% walked, but in fact only 32% drove and 44% walked.[9]

Significantly, there is evidence to suggest that better walkability adds substantial value not only to retail property but also to office and residential property. A study of more than 4,200 properties in the United States concluded:

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[7] *Active transport: Children and young people, an overview of recent evidence*, VicHealth 2009, p6.
[8] Garrard p16.
[9] Sustrans, 2006, cited in *Good for Busine$$,* Heart Foundation, 2011.

> *"We found that, all else being equal, the benefits of greater walkability were capitalized into higher office, retail and apartment values. We found no effect on industrial properties. On a 100 point scale, a 10 point increase in walkability increased values by 1 to 9 percent, depending on property type.*
> *…*
> *Walkability was associated with higher value for office, retail and apartment properties. These types of properties with a Walk Score of 80 were worth anywhere from 6 to 54 percent more than properties with a 20 Walk Score, depending on property type. Consistent with their higher values, we also found higher net operating incomes for the office and retail properties."*[10]

The apparently broad economic value of walkability may be related to the efficiencies identified in the report itself. At page 58 it notes that *"riding is often faster than driving for trips up to five kilometres, while walking is faster for trips of up to 400 metres."* It follows that creating the conditions to shift short trips from cars to walking and cycling will improve the overall efficiency of the Australian economy.

Section 3.6 touches on the benefits of walking and cycling to individuals and households. If this allows the household to forego owning a car, or own fewer cars, the benefit is very significant:

> *"It was estimated in 2008 that owning one less car meant a household could spend an extra $110,000 on a new home and repay a $300,000 housing loan in 12 years instead of 25 years, thereby saving $245,000 in interest payments or accumulating in excess of $1 million in superannuation over a working life."*[11]

Community issues

Section 3.5 of the report briefly notes the role of walking and cycling in promoting community well-being and engagement. This deserves greater emphasis. A recent report by the Grattan Institute – *Social Cities*, 2012 – explains both the importance of community engagement and the role of walking and street life in promoting it.

> *"Research shows that social connection is crucial to wellbeing. This is not surprising. Humans have evolved in an environment where group membership is essential to survival. Neuroscience research suggests that over tens of thousands of years our need to deal with other people fundamentally influenced the structure of the human brain. In a literal sense, the need to socialise and connect made us who we are today. Loneliness can have serious health consequences, with a similar impact to high blood pressure, lack of exercise, obesity, or smoking."*[12]

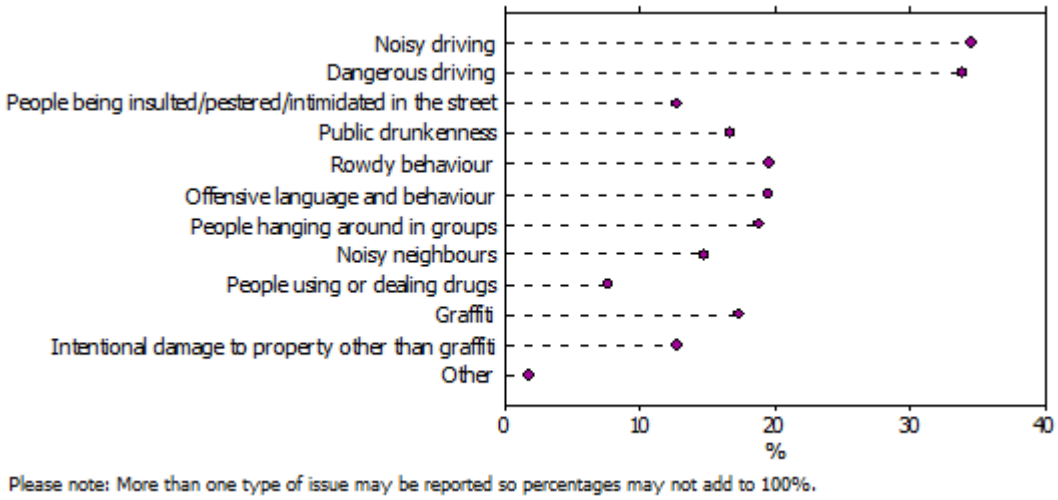
[10] G.Pivo and D. Fisher, 'The Walkability Premium in Commercial Real Estate Investments' *Real Estate Economics*, 2010, pages 1 and 19.
[11] Ministerial Advisory Committee for the Metropolitan Planning Strategy for Melbourne, *Melbourne, let's talk about the future; Discussion Paper*, 2012, page 37.
[12] Kelly, J-F.; Breadon, P.; Davis, C.; Hunter, A.; Mares, P.; Mullerworth, D.; Weidmann, B., 2012, *Social Cities*, Grattan Institute, Melbourne, page 4.

"The shape of our cities can make it easier, or harder, for people to interact with each other. Where we live, work and meet, and how we travel between these places, has a big impact on how much time we have to connect, and who we can meet face-to-face.[13]

"Walking increases opportunities for face-to-face social contact and helps people to map their neighbourhood in social terms. Improved walkability also enhances the social life of people with limited mobility and increases property values (as reflected in the increasing use of 'walk scores' by real estate agents)."[14]

Transport policy that prioritises walkable environments rather than high speed car travel is likely to help address community concerns around anti-social behaviour. Community members express high levels of concern about dangerous driving, and place a high priority on road safety. In the most recent ABS survey of Australian's perceptions and experiences of 'crime victimisation', survey respondents were asked questions relating to their perceptions and opinions about social disorder issues in their local area.

As illustrated below, noisy and dangerous driving were clearly the most significant concerns people had about social disorder in their community.



Perceptions of social disorder issues, adult Australians (%), 2011
(Source: ABS 2012)

Funding

Infrastructure funding is discussed to some extent in section 4.2.1 of the report, but there is no overall account of funding for walking and cycling and no comparative analysis of the level of government spending on different transport modes. The report provides better information on the level of spending on walking and cycling in the United States (page 46) than it does for Australia. This is a significant gap in the report, which indicates a lack of available information. This apparent lack of knowledge reflects a broader neglect of walking in detailed public policy consideration.

[13] Ibid, page 13.
[14] Ibid, page 55.

The difference between walking and cycling

While the report is generally good at distinguishing between walking and cycling, it occasionally lapses into an exclusive discussion of cycling, even where walking is relevant. An example is section 4.4 – the role of local government, which is exclusively focused on cycling.

The roles of walking and cycling in the transport system are quite different. Cycling is a mode choice for transport but is utilised by a comparatively small sector of the population. Walking, by contrast, is a fundamental aspect of everyday life, even in a car dominated society. Every transport trip begins and ends with walking. Walking is particularly critical to utilisation of public transport. In fact, people who catch public transport to work in metropolitan Melbourne on average get 40 minutes of physical activity as part of their trip while car drivers get 8 minutes.

To promote walking, the overall quality of the urban environment is as important as the provision of walking specific infrastructure.

Victoria Walks is aware that some cyclists and cycling bodies advocate for laws to be changed to allow bicycles to be ridden on footpaths, particularly secondary students. Victoria Walks supports legislation that allows children under 12 years and accompanying adults to ride on footpaths. Footpaths are for feet, they are for walking, but also stopping, playing, talking and interacting. That is, they are the basis of public and community space and should not be turned into vehicular transport routes (bicycle or otherwise). Walking for transport has great capacity for uptake for short trips and walking for leisure and health has the greatest capacity for uptake as a regular form of physical activity and incidental exercise (walking is the most prevalent form of medium intensity physical activity of Australian adults). Accessible, safe and well maintained footpaths are essential for increasing walking for transport, health and/or leisure, particularly for children, older people and people with a disability. Road Rules should not be modified allow bicycle riders over 12 years of age to be permitted to ride on footpaths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The remainder of this submission provides recommendations for measures to promote walking and access to public transport. General recommendations are provided, followed by recommendations in response to the questions in the report.

Victoria Walks generally supports the proposed initiatives set out in chapter 6 of the report. In particular, Victoria Walks supports identifying principal walking and riding routes in state, territory, regional and local plans. Most importantly, these routes need to be given priority in urban design, including design of intersections. The methodology used to develop walking routes should be based on a pedestrian oriented methodology, such as the *Principal Pedestrian Network Methodology* being trialled in Victoria, rather than adaption of a cycling model as suggested on page 114 of the report.

Notwithstanding this support, Victoria Walks is wary of the suggested separation of pedestrians from vehicles. This is already the dominant paradigm – reflected in a transport system designed for cars at the expense of other modes. There should be more emphasis on reducing speed and integration of roads into the community (including arterial roads but excluding freeways), rather than tacit acceptance of community severance.

A voice for walking

Walking needs a voice if it is to be effectively represented in public policy decision making. There is no organisation dedicated to representing walking at a national policy level connected with, supporting and supported by state based equivalents. Walking representation at a state and territory level is mixed at best.

Victoria Walks recommends that the Commonwealth establish a dedicated walking promotion organisation. Walking should be specifically represented on all federal transport forums, including those that are focused on roading and public transport.

A group advocating for walking should be independent of government, to enable it to advocate freely to government and to facilitate better connection with the community. Victoria Walks itself provides a good model for a walking promotion organisation.

Victoria Walks was established and is funded by Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) as a walking health promotion body, to represent the needs of walkers and increase the level of walking in the Victorian community. Victoria Walks provides leadership through: using its brand, product and skills to build partnerships with aligned organisations; advocating for walking to increase children's physical activity, older people's participation and family engagement in walking; participating on advisory committees, presenting at conferences and forums, and creating media content and submissions. The organisation also supports communities to make their neighbourhoods better for walking and promotes walking through social media, Walking Maps (www.walkingmaps.com.au) and a variety of school and community resources.

The Victoria Walks model has received great interest from stakeholders in other Australian jurisdictions including Queensland, South Australia, NSW and the ACT.

Government support for cycling currently provides a precedent for supporting a walking organisation. The report (page 71) notes that the Department of Infrastructure and Transport provides funding to Austroads to operate the secretariat for the Australian Bicycle Council.

The Commonwealth should fund the establishment, or support the continuing development of state and territory based walking promotion and advocacy bodies.

A National Walking Strategy

The absence of a national strategy or policy for walking is a clear gap in the current policy framework, set out in section 4.1 of the report. The contrast with cycling, where there is a dedicated strategy, with a clear target of doubling the number of people riding bicycles, is stark.

The policy process initiated by the report needs to lead to a policy outcome. Given that there is already a national strategy for cycling, a national strategy for walking should be an absolute priority.

Victoria is an example where a walking strategy plays an important role in the broader regulatory framework. The Department of Transport prepared the *Pedestrian Access Strategy: A strategy to increase walking for transport in Victoria,* in 2010. The Strategy identifies key directions and priority actions to promote walking.

In addition to the policy direction provided by a strategy, the process of developing a strategy is likely to further engage key agencies at both a federal and state level in consideration of walking.

Walking is a significant recreational pursuit. Both transport and recreation are important types of walking, but they require somewhat different policy responses. A National Walking Strategy should address both recreational walking and walking for transport

Victoria Walks is extremely wary of overarching Active Transport policies, strategies and investment as walking is frequently simply tacked on to cycling investments and strategies. There are clear social and infrastructure differences between walking and cycling and it is not appropriate to conflate the two modes into an Active Transport response. Once a National Walking Strategy has been developed it would be appropriate to then look at how walking and cycling intersect in terms of Active Transport policy.

Targets for walking

As walking is a fundamental part of life, not just a mode of transport, it does not necessarily lend itself to easy measurement. However, if the Government seeks to promote walking as a means of transport it should set targets by which to assess practical success in facilitating active transport.

The Government should develop a mode share target for walking (and potentially cycling and public transport). An example of a possible target would be to increase walking from 4% of journey to work in 2009 to 7% by 2020.

Victoria Walks would also recommend adoption of a target for walking to school. Clearly the journey to work is focused on adults. Walking to school provides a measure of success in adoption of walking by the next generation.

A National Walking Strategy should encompass targets for walking.

Pricing and incentives

The report (pages 23 and 118) suggests *"consideration could also be given to incentives and disincentives, such as pricing, taxation and rebates, that influence people's choices."* Unfortunately, this appears to be the limit of consideration in the report.

Transport should operate within an economic framework that reflects the environmental costs (if not the other costs) imposed by each mode. The carbon tax is the general mechanism by which the government seeks to have the cost of greenhouse gas emissions reflected in the economy. The carbon tax has been inconsistently applied to the transport sector, with rail facing the tax from commencement in 1 July 2012, the trucking industry exempt until 1 July 2014 and light vehicles exempted indefinitely.

The carbon tax should apply to the transport system and be applied consistently. This is generally the case with comparable regulatory systems such as New Zealand, where emissions trading has applied to transport since July 2010.

The apparent argument for not applying the carbon tax to the light vehicle fleet is that these vehicles face fuel excise tax.[15] However this tax does not even cover the direct cost of road building and maintenance. It does not compensate for any of the environmental or social costs of vehicle use.[16]

While the application of the carbon tax to light vehicles may generate some initial anxiety, the real 'costs' are likely to be less than expected:

> *"Past experience with market-based approaches to pollution control in Australia and overseas suggests that government forecasts tend to underestimate the rate of commercial innovation and thereby overestimate the costs of such schemes to society once adequate incentives for innovation are in place."*[17]

Application of the carbon tax would generate additional government revenue. The carbon tax does not present a cost to the economy so much as a transfer from one sector to another. The additional government revenue could be utilised in various ways, including facilitation of active transport.

[15] http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au/transport-fuels/
[16] Public Transport Users Association of Victoria, www.ptua.org.au/myths/petroltax.shtml
[17] Ross Garnaut, *The Garnaut Review 2011: Australia in the Global Response to Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, page 129.

Implementation

To effectively promote walking and cycling there needs to be a much stronger focus on translating policy into action. It is not clear that current or recent policy, which theoretically supports walking, is actually resulting in walkable environments. An example is the Watergardens Town Centre, the major retail centre on the north-western fringe of Melbourne. Despite being built fairly recently, between 1996 and 2004, this centre has extremely poor walkability. Approaching the central complex on foot, even from the closest and most directly accessible houses, requires walking hundreds of metres across major highways and through large car parks – an inhospitable environment for pedestrians. Even walking from one part of the centre to another requires trips across roads and parking areas of up to 350 metres.

Rather than policy alone, states should be audited based on results. The performance of metropolitan planning in promoting walking should be evaluated by assessing:

- performance against mode share targets (this would probably require different targets for different states or cities);
- proportion of children walking and cycling to schools;
- professional assessment of walkability in new subdivisions and brownfield development; and
- performance in increasing development density around activity centres and public transport stops.

We note that a foundation for this type of assessment is provided by the State of Australian Cities series, which already provides some comparative data on levels of walking in capital cities.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

Further recommendations are proposed below in the context of the questions put forward by the report.

1. How can we better plan for comprehensive 20-minute walking and riding networks around central business districts, major activity centres and major education and health campuses?

20 minute catchments

Victoria Walks supports the concept of planning for comprehensive walking networks within 20 minute catchments of major activity centres. Victoria Walks also supports the recognition of smaller catchments around public transport stops.

Victoria Walks understands the need to prioritise attention and investment. However, as relatively few urban activity centres are typically defined as ‘major,’ it is important to recognise the potential role of small and medium centres, as well as schools and hospitals. While these locations may not necessarily be major employment centres (although hospitals

typically are) and may not be highly important for the journey to work, they are likely to have a much greater significance for other types of trips, particularly shopping trips and journey to education. Non-work trips are typically much more localised. In Sydney, for example, commuter trips average 14.4km compared to 5.2km for shopping trips. Non-work trips are the majority of trips undertaken – only about 15% of trips in Sydney are to work.[18]

Small-medium centres will in any case often coincide with public transport stops. Walkable environments should be developed around all of these focal points. Recognising smaller centres would be important in engaging local government, as many councils would not encompass a 'major' activity centre.

Victoria Walks believes that walking in and around all centres should be recognised in planning frameworks, to ensure that any investment within those catchments, either public or private, responds accordingly. If there is a need to prioritise between centres, it may be appropriate to target proactive government expenditure on walking to 'major' or specifically selected activity centres.

In practice, there needs to be a sophisticated approach to identifying walkable catchments that recognises the scale and nature of the centre, and the frequency and level of service in public transport.

In terms of implementation, there should be a requirement for state/local governments to audit walking access around activity centres and public transport stops to identify priority works. This should include evaluation of intersection treatments such as traffic light phasing. Identified treatments should then be implemented through capital works programmes in order to deliver the 20 minute catchment concept. Federal funding for major projects should be contingent on this work being done.

As noted previously, the design techniques available to improve walking are extensive and well detailed elsewhere. One general tool that we would specifically promote is the *Principal Pedestrian Network* methodology prepared by the Victorian Department of Transport.

2. How can we improve access to public transport (train stations, bus, tram and ferry stops) through better walking and riding connections? What are the roles of local, state, territory and Commonwealth governments?

Access to public transport should be improved through improvements to walkability in the surrounding context, as discussed above and in other parts of this submission. Attention should be given to the *Railway Station Useability Principles,* Station User Panel (Victorian Department of Transport), 2011.

3. How can the Australian Government, through its various programs, encourage better planning and building of networks for walking and riding?

As suggested above, Federal funding for major projects should be contingent on work by state/local governments to audit walking access around activity centres and public transport stops to identify priority works.

[18] Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Major Cities Unit, *State of Australian Cities 2012*, page 253.

Funding

It is important to recognise that the vast majority of government transport spending is used to promote motor vehicle travel and, to a lesser extent, public transport. Government policy at various levels typically purports to support greater levels of walking and cycling compared to car use, but this is not reflected in actual expenditure.

Walking should be supported through both dedicated funding for walking as a mode of transport, and broader programmes to improve urban amenity.

In addition to walking as a transport mode in itself, lack of attention to walking will mean that the benefits of spending on public transport will not be fully realised. Public transport will not attract the desired level of patronage if there is not also significant investment in creating walkable routes to that transport.

Victoria Walks acknowledges that the Department of Infrastructure and Transport provides some funding for active transport and place making, including walking, through the Liveable Cities Programme. There are various funding streams for transport, including walking, at all levels of government. However walking is very much 'the poor cousin'. An interesting example of this is Appendix B of the report, 'recent national infrastructure projects that incorporate walking and riding.' All of the 15 projects listed provided cycling infrastructure, but only two involved a significant walking component. If walking is to be effectively promoted, particularly in comparison to other modes, then it requires significant and dedicated funding.

A fixed proportion of transport spending should be allocated to walking and/or place making. This must be clearly separated from and additional to any walking infrastructure improvements associated with upgrades of other modes.

4. How can we ensure that appropriate infrastructure for walking and riding is included when other transport infrastructure is being constructed so that we can avoid costly retrofitting at a future date?

As suggested above, Federal funding for major projects should be contingent on work by state/local governments to audit walking access around activity centres, high pedestrian areas and public transport stops to identify priority works.

Critically, 'positive provision' of walking infrastructure in association with major road and public transport projects should extend beyond the corridor itself. A limited focus on a specific corridor is unlikely to be helpful in considering walking. The distinction between walking and cycling is important here. It may be useful to provide a dedicated cycle path alongside a new freeway or railway line, to facilitate commuter or relatively long distance cycling. However a separated walkway along a freeway or railway line is highly unlikely to be a good use of funding for walking. Providing improvements to walking environments around each activity centre impacted by the new road or public transport is much more likely to be productive. When considered in this context, useful improvements to walkability are likely to be possible, and should be required, in conjunction with all major transport infrastructure.

Funding criteria for major transport infrastructure should formally adopt a system that prohibits route severance, similar to the United States model outlined in the report.

5. How can governments, businesses and the community work together to leverage infrastructure investment with other programs and incentives to encourage greater uptake of walking, riding and public transport?

The Commonwealth should not only establish a dedicated walking promotion organisation at a Federal level, it should also encourage and support states and territories to do the same. At the state level, a dedicated walking organisation can:

- Provide leadership to ensure walking issues impact policy and programme development and are understood by the wider community.
- Facilitate connections between people interested in walking.
- Empower local community members to engage with councils and local agencies to overcome particular local barriers to walking.
- Disseminate news and information on walking.
- Provide a conduit for behaviour change programmes.
- Identify and promote recreational walking routes in a 'one stop shop,' avoiding the need for scanning through information from various councils, tourism or parks agencies – see www.victoriawalks.org.au/WalkingMaps/.

See the Victoria Walks website – www.victoriawalks.org.au – for a demonstration of the roles above. Victoria Walks is also about to commence walking promotion through provision of resources to schools (within the curriculum framework) and local councils.

Supporting increased density

An important component of facilitating walking within 20 minute catchments is higher density of development.

Increase density is often viewed unfavourably by people within the community. This is often associated with concerns regarding increased traffic, even though any additional traffic is likely to be considerably less than that generated by dispersed development – especially when associated with improvements to walkability.

Funding for infrastructure and place making (such as improved public transport, walking infrastructure, and greener, better quality streets and public spaces) should be tagged to areas where density is being increased. People are more likely to support change – especially after the fact – if it includes improvements to the amenity of the area. Councils are more likely to support intensification and its associated political risks if it is linked to funding that enables them to 'give something back' to the community.

6. How can we further achieve consistent standards for facilities, road rules and vehicle design to ensure the safety and convenience of all road users?

Speed

A key measure to ensure the safety and convenience of all road users would be to reduce speed in key locations. The report itself provides useful explanation of this need. We support in particular the statement:

> *"There are many urban locations with a high level of pedestrian activity – for example, around entertainment and shopping districts, schools, universities, hospitals and public transport interchanges. In these situations reducing traffic speeds may be the most appropriate course of action.*

This principle should also be applied to areas with a high potential for walking and cycling, even if existing levels are low.

A key principle of the Safe System approach is the establishment of a 'forgiving' road transport system. As set out in the National Road Safety Strategy 2010-2020:

> *"The road system must allow for human error [including pedestrian error] and provide forgiving environments that prevent serious injury or death when crashes occur. A Safe System ensures that the forces in collisions do not exceed the limits of human tolerance. Speeds must be managed so that humans are not exposed to impact forces beyond their physical tolerance. System designers and operators need to take into account the limits of the human body in designing and maintaining roads, vehicles and speeds*" (NTC 2011, p.34)

The most effective measure for reducing pedestrian road traffic crash deaths and serious injuries is speed reduction (World Health Organization (WHO) 2008). Lower vehicle speeds provide a more 'forgiving' environment in the event of pedestrian errors, consistent with a key principle of the Safe System approach.

A key recommendation in this submission therefore is to reduce speed limits in residential areas and within a 2 km radius of schools, shopping strips, parks, and major trip generators such as universities, TAFE colleges, hospitals, large shopping complexes, and other employment centres. The internationally recommended safe speed limit is 30 km/h for areas where vulnerable road users are exposed to vehicular traffic (as defined by the biomechanical tolerance to crash impact forces).[19] However, given that speed limits in built-up areas are substantially higher than this (and also higher than in many other developed countries)[20]] it may be more feasible to introduce a step-wise reduction (from 50 km/h to 40 km/h in the short-term, and subsequently to world's best practice of 30 km/h).

[19] World Health Organization (WHO) (2008). *Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership; and International Transport Forum (2011). *Pedestrian Safety, Urban Space and Health*. Paris, OEDC/ITF.
[20] Fildes, B, Langford, J, Dale, A, Scully, J (2005). *Balance between harm reduction and mobility in setting speed limits: a feasibility study*. Sydney, Austroads Inc

Other safety measures

Additional safety measures include education and awareness programs for motorists and pedestrians. Road safety education (including in schools, driver education, and licence-testing) should be revised to place more emphasis on the importance of motorists respecting the rights of pedestrians and cyclists, obeying the road rules in relation to pedestrians and cyclists, and taking care to avoid collisions with pedestrians and cyclists.

Programmes should raise public awareness of giving way to pedestrians when exiting private properties and car parks, and making left and right turns (compliance with this road rule is particularly poor at unsignalised intersections, and when turning into the minor road arms of T-intersections).

Pedestrian education for children should be maintained, but its limitations as a stand-alone measure for reducing child pedestrian injuries should be acknowledged.

Given the lack of demonstrated efficacy, the current focus on 'educating' older pedestrians (eg to cross roads safely) should be replaced with an increased emphasis on an overall Safe System approach to improving the safety of the rapidly increasing numbers of older pedestrians.

Improvements in road infrastructure, environment and traffic conditions should also be key components of a Safe System strategy for improving pedestrian safety. These include the operation, phases, timing and placement of traffic signals at intersections and pedestrian crossings; road width, sight distance, and refuge islands; and well-designed, well-lit and well-maintained road and footpath surfaces that are free of obstacles. The pedestrian level of service at all signalised crossings should be audited.

Many signalised crossings have extremely poor pedestrian levels of service that both impacts pedestrian safety (e.g. compliance) and reaffirms the dominances of a culture that gives primacy to car travel, thereby making walking for transport less appealing. Many crossings have extremely long wait times, short crossing times, do not have auto green or auto call-up. Most do not give pedestrians an auto head start (early green), and lamentably, some even give vehicles a head start over pedestrians. Frequently new crossings are installed with the lowest level of pedestrian service possible (no auto call up, head start, short crossing times etc.) even when the crossing is not on a major road and has no real bearing to broader network operation. The installation of such poor levels of service unfortunately suggests a cultural disregard for walking. Victoria Walks recommends that all new signalised crossings have highest level of pedestrian service as the default that this level should drop only if there is a justifiable reason for this to occur.

'Vehicle safety technologies' have been proposed for future implementation, but these are mainly focused on the safety of car occupants. Some existing vehicle safety technologies with proven efficacy in reducing pedestrian injuries have not been implemented. These include frontal vehicle design, bull-bar design and car window tinting. In these instances non-essential, largely aesthetic car design features should not be permitted to over-ride the safety of other road users particularly pedestrians, cyclists, and motor-cyclists.