

Impact Report



**JULY 2022 -
JUNE 2023**



Supported by



The year in review

Our Victorian Election Asks put walking on the policy and investment agenda.

Our inspiring walking content reached more people than ever before via our social media channels.

It was our highest-ever year of media engagement and advocacy.

We were asked to help shape the state government's forthcoming Walkable Communities strategy.

Through strategic partnerships we created more walking and rolling opportunities for people with disability and communities in Melbourne's west.

Our events brought council staff from across Victoria together to share learnings and opportunities to increase walking.



Our role

- To facilitate and inspire more walking throughout the community.
- To capture, translate and promote evidence on the impact and value of walking.
- To be a trusted expert, positively influencing decision-makers.



Executive Officer Ben Rossiter meets with Government MPs Sarah Connolly and Mathew Hilakari to discuss walking investment in Victoria.



Influential data and evidence

Victoria Walks continues to help shape understanding about barriers to physical activity, and to prompt useful discussions about evidence-based solutions.

We released three new reports this year:

Investing in walking: A step forward for Victoria's environment, economy and health

Our \$942 million pitch to political parties contesting the November 2022 state election was grounded in meaningful consultation with Victorian councils and statutory authorities.

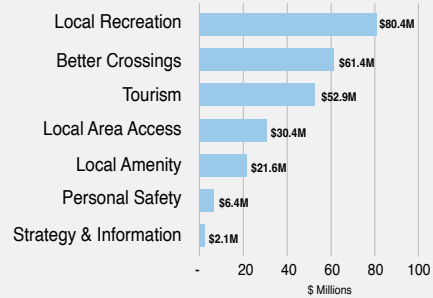
It showcased the policy interventions and state-wide, shovel-ready projects that would reduce emissions and state infrastructure spending while improving public health and local business activity.



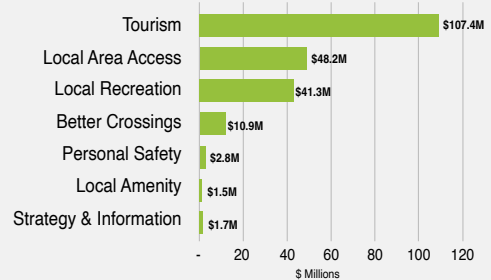
We shared our 'Investing in Walking' summary with over 150 election candidates as well as stakeholder organisations and influential professionals.

Breakdown of projects put forward by councils

Metro projects (\$255.1 million)



Regional projects (\$213.8 million)



We used the findings of our **2021 Victorian Walking Survey** to inform policy discussion in the lead-up to the election. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation and other media covered our survey finding that people living in outer suburban Melbourne are much more reliant on cars for short local trips than people living closer to the city.

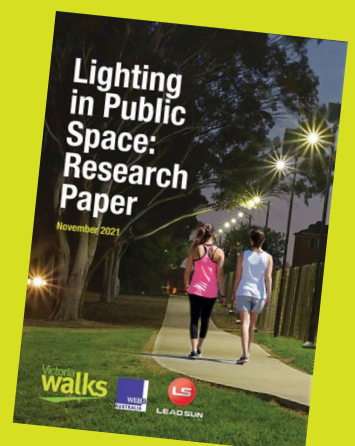
Walking and Transport in Melbourne (2023 update)



This timely publication encompassed the impacts of the Covid lockdowns on travel behaviours in Victoria. The report identified one-quarter of vehicle trips beginning between 8-9am in metropolitan Melbourne are school-related. We explained to Herald Sun readers that more walking was a solution to traffic congestion and sedentary lifestyles among young people.

Lighting in Public Space

Presented at Smart Urban Futures in May, this commissioned research paper examined the evidence-base for public lighting and walking participation. The paper supported gender equity by addressing a key known barrier for women, providing up-to-date information about how and when to light parks and other public spaces not serviced by streetlights. Solar lighting company Leadsun, the publication partner, helped to disseminate the paper direct to land managers.



Thriving walking community



We profiled Merri-bek City Council's 'Open Streets' among other council projects for our #LoveWalking stories

This year we showcased the transformative power of walking through storytelling.

Our #LoveWalking campaign continued, with Victorians sharing how walking kept them socially connected after bushfires and the Covid-19 pandemic. Other stories celebrated council projects helping communities swap short car trips for walking to improve health, resilience and to reduce emissions.

Our **videos about older Victorians** delivered powerful messages about road safety and the value of streets that work for everyone.

A **growing social media following** saw us engage record numbers of people in these stories, in recreational walking and our advocacy for walkable communities.

We drew on our following to provide case studies for journalists covering liveability in the lead-up to November's state election.

Our Walking Maps resource allowed us to promote walking opportunities for specific communities.



We used an Access for All Abilities grant from the Victorian Government to develop an accessible walks audit tool to map and promote **20+ walks for people with disability** across the state.

We scaled up the impact by promoting the tool widely to land managers to assess their existing walks.

We helped popularise walking opportunities in Melbourne's western suburbs by partnering with Melbourne Water's Liveable Waterways Liveable Communities program to **promote 18 under-appreciated urban trails**.

We helped showcase regional Victoria's walking opportunities by **mapping 16 more walks** in Towong Shire Council. Staff at Hindmarsh Shire also used the site to encourage walking.



We continued to help women across the state connect with walking opportunities. Our updated '**Find Women Walking Groups**' page attracted thousands of visits.

The launch of a women's walk program in the Yarra Ranges was modelled on our Women Who Walk@ pilot.

"It would have been a step backward to start driving again to things I was now comfortably walking to."

Andrea Cook,
Abbotsford



#LoveWalking

Facebook



Followers up 9%
to 125,000 / Reach up 44% with
page posts seen 14 million times.



Daily engaged users **up 65%**
on previous year.



Simple changes that keep people who are walking safer

42 weeks ago · 2.4K views

65



Older walker videos

Dave, Christine and Sue's stories were viewed

10,000 times



Walking maps

Had **976,000**
page views and we created



79 new showcase walks across
the state (now over 900 maps)



Stephanos Karlos,
Restaurant owner, Cowes

New #LoveWalking

stories viewed **2000+**
times at our website



Victoria Walks newsletter:

Now **5000** subscribers



Meaningful influence

In 2022-2023 our profile as Australia's trusted expert on walking was cemented through a strategic approach to advocacy.

Media coverage

We put the issue of walker's rights on the public agenda by unearthing Julia's story to expose a compensation black hole for people struck by e-scooter riders on footpaths and shared paths.

Our Election Asks used evidence obtained from our community and council surveys to eloquently sell the case for a state walking strategy and for greater investment in walking access and safety.

Targeted approaches to mainstream metropolitan and regional news outlets paid off with stories highlighting a need for basic infrastructure such as footpaths and crossings in outer suburban and regional communities.

It was our biggest-ever year of media engagement including 29 TV interviews.

8 THE AGE SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2022

NEWS

How a run-in with an e-scooter cost a pedestrian months of pain and \$15,000

Patrick Hatch
Transport reporter

There was a time Julia Miller wouldn't think twice about walking on a footpath. But she now fears stepping outside, after a rented electric scooter ran her down while walking in Melbourne's east last year with debilitating injuries.

"It was a constant pain for two months - it was a terrible ordeal," she said. "Three months later, she is yet to fully recover. 'I can't use my right arm properly at all. I can't comb my hair, I can't blow my nose, I can't use it to eat because I can't get it any where near my mouth.'"

The Victorian government's compensation scheme now operates about the city's five scooter trial with operators like Uber and Monoposto, which have already faced



Julia Miller was hit by an e-scooter rider near the MCG; a rider in the CBD. Photos: Ben Searcy, Eddie Jim

Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece, said "better sense" signs to have highlighted an unacceptable number of the reported "incidents".

"We will be investigating the impact with the operators and Victorian government," he said. "Victorian government," he said.

Click this image to read full article at theage.com.au



Victoria Walks
@victoriawalks

Follow

Really like the look of this - \$210M over 4 years for "...raised crossings, intersection upgrades, speed cushions, kerbing upgrades, pedestrian islands, safer speeds and roundabouts."

Thanks Melissa Horne @TAC @VicGovDTP!



premier.vic.gov.au
Boosting Safety On Local Council Roads | Premier of Victoria



Decision-Makers

We also took a direct approach to influencing decision-makers, meeting with a wide range of parliamentary leaders from across the political spectrum to explain the economic and social value of walking.

We held 19 meetings and sent 25 detailed correspondences to Ministers, Shadow Ministers, advisors and politicians to highlight how walking investment is crucial in addressing Victoria's transport, health, liveability and climate change challenges.

Our pitch for a landmark day walk in the western suburbs caught the imagination of local MPs, and scoping has begun with several stakeholders.

We met regularly with Active Transport Victoria, Road Safety Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria and were involved in more than a dozen local, state and federal government public policy workshops.

Our specific knowledge on walking barriers and enablers for different demographics saw us providing tailored advice to 20 councils on boosting walking participation.

Impact

- **July 2022:** Executive Officer appointed to the Walkable Communities Consultation Group by the Minister for Roads to help develop a state walking strategy.
- **October 2022:** Released our Victorian Election Asks.
- **November 2022:** Department of Transport circulates a \$23 million Safe System Pedestrian Program to councils (the grant guidelines cite our Election Asks).
- **November 2022:** First time a political party promises significant funding stream for walking (Victorian Greens pledge \$2.5 billion over four years for walking and cycling).
- **March 2023:** Victorian Parliament launches an Inquiry into Road Safety Behaviours and Impacts on Vulnerable Road Users (following our call for pedestrian specific road safety strategies).
- **April 2023:** New government announces \$210m over 4 years for council projects to improve safety for vulnerable road users (Safe Local Roads and Streets program).

Resources for Councils



1230+

downloads of our research, submissions and position statements at the Victoria Walks website



700+

visits to our Accessible Walks audit resource page



“ Really enjoyed the experience to be with like-minded people interested in the evidence and successful implementations of good ideas. Very good for morale! ”

– Smart Urban Futures 2023 attendee

Events

We used our events to build professional networks for change.

Our annual **Smart Urban Futures** conference run in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria drew 150 planning professionals and decision-makers from across Australia to hear from international and local change-makers including WHO's head of injury prevention and road safety Etienne Krug, Toks Omishakin (Head of California State Transportation) and Professor Jenny Roe (author of Restorative Cities: Urban Design for Mental Health and Wellbeing).

Our second **Changing Streets** workshop provided an intimate platform for council staff across Victorian to learn from each other. Presentations from Kingston, Casey and Maroondah covered strategy engagement, messaging to influence transport behaviour and improving school walking routes through strategic tree planting.

We held two hybrid **supporter events** for our official and corporate supporters in Melbourne and the regions.

- **October 2022:** Greg Vann of Ethos Urban led an uplifting discussion on 'Putting the Active back into Transport' with a special focus on walking as the most accessible mode.
- **May 2023:** Active transport consultant and author Dr Rodney Tolley led a thought-provoking conversation about the systemic and commercial forces influencing transport provision in Australian cities.

Peers

We presented to nine professional forums including Engineers Australia, Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand and to Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning's 'Walkable Communities Roundtable'.

Community

We continued to support local advocates in our Walk Agents online community. Groups including Streets Alive Yarra and Walk On Merri-bek inspired us with their commitment to seeking local change. We also advised groups such as the Victorian Environment Friends Network, the Queensland Walking Alliance and local government active transport committees.

The year ahead

- As part of its new strategic plan VicHealth will continue to support us to provide more active living opportunities for Victorians over the next four years, with a focus on communities facing the greatest barriers to health.
- We will start to embed our Financial Sustainability Plan including a focus on expanding our consultancy services.
- As part of a broader group of consultants we'll continue our work for Austroads to recommend changes to the Guide to Traffic Management for Australia and New Zealand to improve pedestrian planning.
- We will audit and map more Accessible Walks in regional Victoria with support from Sport and Recreation Victoria (and support land managers to do the same).
- We will continue to participate in a Walkable Communities Consultative Group with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to develop a walking strategy for Victoria.
- We will continue our advocacy for walking-specific road safety strategies and a consistent funding stream for walking infrastructure and projects.
- We will partner with Parks Victoria to help promote more walking opportunities for women in parks.

Acknowledgements

Victoria Walks acknowledges and thanks the following:

- VicHealth for its significant core and project funding since 2009
- City of Melbourne for provision of reduced-rent office space in City Village

About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion charity, leading the move for walkable communities in Australia since 2009.

Who we are

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Emma Hamilton (Treasurer) Josephine Monger, Kathy Lazanas, Susan McNair and John Hicks (until December 2022).

The 2022-2023 staff was led by Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer) and includes Duane Burt (Principal Policy Advisor), Jo Eady (Senior Advisor), Jane Holroyd (Digital Communications Advisor), Sarah Allan (Project Officer), Steve Roddis (Senior Advisor), Sean Mathews (Project Officer) and associated consultants and skilled volunteers, including Kerry Haynes.



Victoria Walks official supporters



Victoria Walks corporate supporters



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