



# Report card: June 2015

## About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks is an independent walking health promotion charity, established by VicHealth in 2009, working to get more people walking more every day.

## Victoria Walks:

- provides walking and walkability leadership
- supports local community action to increase walking and walkability
- promotes walking through educational resources, events and online activities.

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Blayne Morgan (Treasurer), Sue Fitzpatrick, Daniel King and Trevor Budge. It is supported by Ben Rossiter (Secretary and Executive Officer).

This report summarises Victoria Walks' activities and highlights from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

## Supporting local action

This year we welcomed two new Walkability Action Groups (WAGs) working to increase neighbourhood walking and walkability:

- **Walk, Bike Blairgowrie** – protects the relaxed, less urbanised seaside feel of Blairgowrie in the Mornington Peninsula by encouraging walking and cycling rather than short-trip car use.
- **Friends of Hustler's Reef** – works to preserve, care for and improve the natural and walking environment of Hustler's Reef Reserve in Bendigo.

## Highlights

Victoria Walks continued to develop and enhance its leadership role across the Victorian community. Over the past year, it has highlighted barriers and enablers to walking and walkability to decision makers and the wider community, and strengthened policy and practice to encourage more walking for transport and recreation. Victoria Walks has established and maintained a range of collaborative partnerships and joint initiatives promoting safer, more walkable and liveable streets. It has inspired a greater number of Victorians to walk more every day and join in conversations about the importance, benefits and joys of walking.

### Highlights include:

- Received new funding from VicHealth until June 2017.
- Undertook a literature review and extensive consultation into shared paths, resulting in the research paper *Shared paths – the issues, and position statement Shared Paths – finding solutions*.
- Developed *Footpaths are for feet* position statement in response to the push from cycling organisations to increase the age for footpath cycling. The statement was endorsed by the Council on the Ageing, Vision Australia and National Disability Services.
- Held the second annual 2-day *Smart Urban Futures* national conference in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria, attracting 200 delegates.
- Held *Walking Tall: Getting children on their feet*, a forum on children's independent mobility, active travel and walking in community settings.
- Refreshed our website ([www.victoriawalks.org.au](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au)) to improve navigation, visual appeal and responsiveness across all devices.
- Engaged by VicHealth to administer a *Park&Walk* grants program for councils to undertake infrastructure improvements to increase walking to school for primary school students living more than 2km from their school.
- Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services to continue supporting *Healthy Together Victoria* to increase walking in school, workplace and community settings.
- Held *Walk the Block* workplace walking event and *Smart Steps for Business* campaign in *Healthy Together Communities* to combat workplace physical inactivity.
- Developed *Walks Melbourne* app, in partnership with Roadhouse Digital, to highlight walks in Melbourne CBD with funding from *Healthy Together Victoria*.
- Received a City of Melbourne Community Grant to develop neighbourhood walking maps for disadvantaged communities in partnership with North Melbourne Language and Learning and Kensington Neighbourhood House.
- Commenced working directly with students in using *Smart Steps* resources in classroom activities.
- Continued to be active in the international walking community, including our Executive Officer sitting on the Board of the International Federation of Pedestrians.

Supported by:



# Our work

## Building a community for walking

Our digital media continues to play an important role in connecting people to walking and building a community of walkers. Most pleasing was a 72% increase in the number of likes on our Facebook page and a 59% increase in Twitter followers. Visits to the Victoria Walks website increased by 12% and to Walking Maps by 90%.

## Media activity

Victoria Walks generated over 140 media stories, including seven television interviews, 27 radio interviews and 110 newspaper articles and opinion pieces. Highlights include an opinion piece on walking to school in *Leader Newspapers*; a feature story on senior pedestrian road safety and a feature in 'The Zone' on a car-free Melbourne in *The Age*; and numerous interviews on 3AW and 774.

## Conferences, forums and events

Victoria Walks presented at many conferences and forums this year, including:

- 'Improving walkability: one step at a time' (Keynote) Regional Walkability Conference, Ballarat 2014
- 'Streets for seniors: rethinking urban design!' Age Friendly Communities and Local Government, Melbourne 2014
- 'Helping councils to help walking' Walk 21, Sydney 2014
- 'Active transport: a tripping hazard for walkable design?' Walk 21, Sydney 2014.
- 'Emerging issues in the world of walkability', Smart Urban Futures, Melbourne 2015
- 'Pedestrians with impaired vision – into the mainstream' Smart Urban Futures, Melbourne 2015
- 'Walking and cycling paths – making the right choices' Institute of Transport Engineers, Melbourne 2015.

## Workshops and committees

Victoria Walks participated in a number of government workshops and committees, including:

- Cycling Reference Group (Victorian Government)
- Leading Thinker Expert Reference Group, VicHealth
- Active Travel to School, City of Wodonga
- Smart Roads Reference Group, VicRoads
- Speed Limit Policy Reference and Steering Groups, VicRoads
- Cycling Road Rules Review, VicRoads
- Boulevard Policy, Melbourne Planning Authority
- Banyule Integrated Transport Plan Reference Group.

## Submissions

Victoria Walks prepared a number of submissions to influence policy and practice, including:

- Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia, Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, Canberra
- Walking Plan, City of Melbourne
- Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015 – Regulatory Impact Statement and Exposure Draft, Victorian Government
- Liebig Street Upgrade, Warrnambool City Council
- Draft Pakenham Structure Plan, Cardinia Shire Council
- Draft Bayside Walking Strategy.

## Memberships

- International Federation of Pedestrians
- Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council
- Melbourne Transport Forum (Associate Member)
- Australian Health Promotion Association.

# The year ahead

The year ahead offers many exciting challenges to build on the work of our first six years:

- Hold the third *Smart Urban Futures* national conference in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria.
- Complete the Transport Accident Commission Community Road Safety grants project: *Safer Road Design for Older Pedestrians*.
- Continue to support Healthy Together Victoria to increase walking in school, workplace and community settings.
- Commission Monash University Accident Research Centre/Injury Research Institute to undertake: 'An examination of fall-related injuries while walking'.
- Work with the Victorian Government to ensure good walking outcomes in the lead up to the establishment of Active Transport Victoria.
- Develop and implement a pedometer resource and primary school incursion program based on *Smart Steps* resources.
- Successfully deliver the *Park&Walk* grants program to increase walking to school for primary school students living more than 2km from their school.
- Explore a range of government, philanthropic and corporate funding options to ensure the organisation continues to grow and expand its influence.

# Thank you

Victoria Walks would like to acknowledge VicHealth for its significant funding and support, the Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) for *Healthy Together Victoria* funding, and the City of Melbourne for reduced-rent office space in 'City Village'.

We would also like to thank our key partners, including the Council on the Ageing, Vision Australia, Municipal Association of Victoria, Geography Teachers Association of Victoria and the many individuals who generously donate to our community appeals and assist in fundraising, particularly Malcolm Jennings.

