

Report Card

JUNE 2016

➤ **Victoria Walks** is an independent walking health promotion charity working to get more people walking more, every day.



Victoria Walks:

- provides leadership for walking and walkability
- increases community appetite and public support for walking and walkability
- promotes walking through educational resources, events and digital engagement.

Victoria Walks is governed by a Board of Management comprising Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Blayne Morgan (Treasurer), Trevor Budge, Sue Fitzpatrick, Emma Hamilton, John Hicks, Daniel King and Justin Madden. The Board is supported by a small but enterprising team of staff led by Ben Rossiter (Secretary and Executive Officer).

This report summarises Victoria Walks' activities and highlights from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

Supported by:





Walk the Block event.



Overview

Victoria Walks' expertise was widely sought over the last year, not only in Victoria but across Australia and internationally. Numerous Victorian Government agencies and councils have looked to Victoria Walks to provide input into policy relating to walking and walkability. While this affirms the recognition and importance of the organisation's work, present capacity has meant Victoria Walks has been unable to respond to all requests for assistance.

Highlights 2015/16:

- Worked with the Monash University Accident Research Centre to conduct an Australian-first study into falls in the street while walking. The report, **Fall-related Injuries While Walking in Victoria**, revealed the scale of the problem. In Victoria alone, falls in the street send more than 5,000 people to hospital each year.
- Analysed road crashes in Victoria (between 2008 and 2013) affecting older pedestrians. Provided detailed recommendations for road design to improve safety for older pedestrians via the **Safer Road Design for Older Pedestrians report**, funded through a TAC Community Road Safety Grant.
- Undertook significant digital enhancements of the **Walking Maps website** (www.walkingmaps.com.au) to improve the design, navigation and user interface. As a result, visits to Walking Maps in the last 12 months increased by 55%. With more than 350 high-quality walks, the website is attracting consistently high public engagement.
- Launched the **Official Supporters Program**, warmly welcoming our inaugural supporters: Ballarat, Bendigo, Casey, East Gippsland, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Warrnambool, and Whitehorse Councils and the Bus Association Victoria.
- Held the third **Smart Urban Futures national conference** in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria. This 2-day event featured leaders and visionaries from municipalities, business and research and attracted more than 160 delegates.
- Piloted the **'Sunday Walks in Tarneit' project** in partnership with Wyndham City Council to develop and promote seven walking maps to support residents to overcome personal barriers to walking. Over 450 printed maps were distributed at community events, and popular walking routes were viewed more than 2,500 times on the Walking Maps website.
- Produced 24 high-quality digital walking maps for Latrobe City Council's new **ParkTracks app** (see www.victoriawalks.org.au/latrobe).
- With funding from the Department of Health and Human Services supported **Healthy Together Victoria** and from January 2016 the **Healthy Together Achievement Program** in primary schools.

Achievements:

 - 1,500+ Smart Steps lesson plans and curriculum resources were downloaded.
 - A new Inursion Program was delivered to 20 primary schools / 2,250 students. The program consisted of the *Smart Steps Count* pedometer-based maths and science walking activities for school and home; and *My School Walking*, which encourages students to explore, connect with and map their local neighbourhood and develop skills to become independently mobile.
 - Supported Yarraman Oaks Primary School to establish and trial a Family Walking Club to walk and explore local neighbourhoods one day after school for 10 weeks. The club consistently attracted more than 30 participants and continued through winter after the trial finished.
- Held **Walk the Block** workplace walking event and **Smart Steps for Business** campaign to combat workplace physical inactivity.
- Delivered the VicHealth-funded **Park&Walk grants program** that supported Bass Coast, Cardinia and Macedon Ranges Councils to undertake infrastructure improvements such as pathways to support walking to school for primary students living more than 2km away.
- With a City of Melbourne Community Grant, **mapped neighbourhood walks** and used walking as a participatory learning platform to increase local knowledge and social connection for residents experiencing exclusion and disadvantage in partnership with North Melbourne Language and Learning and Kensington Neighbourhood House.
- Continued to be active in the international walking community, which included our Executive Officer being elected Vice-President of the International Federation of Pedestrians, to enable Victoria Walks to influence the international agenda and learn world's best practice.

Cover photo: Yarraman Oaks Primary School's Family Walking Club.

Our work

Social media

Building a community of walkers

Victoria Walks' social media presence continued to expand, providing valuable platforms for public engagement on walking, health and liveability. The success of Victoria Walk's social media is recognised by key stakeholders in health promotion, government and community agencies as a leading example of effective digital engagement.

During the last 12 months, our Facebook followers more than doubled to 35,000+. This is the result of targeted promotion of the page and posting content that is informative, inspiring and interactive. For example, a post on great Melbourne's walks, which had a reach of 350,000+ and 9,000+ likes, shares and comments. Our Twitter followers increased by 40% this year with about 1,500 impressions a day, and our new LinkedIn company page is garnering a good pool of well-connected professionals.



Facebook photo competition.

Workshops and committees

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

- Obesity Expert Reference Group, VicHealth
- Smart Roads Reference Group, VicRoads
- Towards Zero Road Safety Leadership Symposium, TAC
- Fishermans Bend Ministerial Advisory Committee Forum
- Expert Consultation Forum on risk factors for fatal cyclist crashes in Victoria, Coroners Court
- Cloverton Futures Seminar, Stockland
- Walking for Transport Workshop, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources
- Plan Melbourne Refresh, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
- Speed Limit Policy Steering and Working Groups, VicRoads
- Boulevard Policy, Melbourne Planning Authority.

Media activity

Victoria Walks generated over 120 media stories, including television reports and numerous radio interviews. Our report, *Fall-related Injuries While Walking in Victoria* generated over 30 media stories, including a significant article in *The Age* ('Walking into danger: pedestrian falls put 5000 a year in hospital').

Submissions

Victoria Walks prepared a number of submissions to Victorian Government agencies and local councils to promote urban planning and infrastructure that supports walkability. Submissions included:

- *Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper*, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources
- *Laying the Foundations*, Infrastructure Victoria
- *City of Melbourne Draft Bicycle Plan 2016–2020*
- *All Things Considered*, Infrastructure Victoria.

Conferences, forums and events

Victoria Walks presented at numerous conferences and major forums during the year, including:

- *Australian Walking and Cycling Conference*, Adelaide, July 2015
- *Brain health, exercise and eating well: Dialogues on Healthy Ageing* (Keynote), Monash University, August 2015
- *Creating more walkable and liveable local communities: Planning an active Western Sydney* (Keynote), Premier's Council for Active Living, Parramatta, October 2015
- *Annual General Meeting, Walking SA* (Keynote), Adelaide, October 2015
- *Creating Healthy Cities Summit 2015 ADC Forum*, Melbourne, November/December 2015
- *Warrnambool City Centre Revitalisation*, Warrnambool City Council, February 2016
- *Smart Urban Futures* (2), Melbourne, March 2016.



The year ahead

The year ahead offers many exciting challenges and opportunities for Victoria Walks:

- Hold the fourth **Smart Urban Futures national conference** in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria.
- Initiate **Let's Walk** in Braybrook, in partnership with the City of Maribyrnong, to support people concerned about personal safety to walk more often by promoting good quality, safe and appealing neighbourhood walking routes.
- Undertake **research**, in partnership with YACVic, into young people's perceptions of walkable communities and independent mobility.
- Partner with the Bus Association Victoria, PTV, VECCL, VicHealth, VicRoads and Bicycle Network to develop the **'One Day in 5' campaign** to encourage the use of public and active transport to get to work at least one day out of every five.
- Support VicHealth to encourage regular physical activity through walking, one of the key goals in its **Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–23**.
- Develop and promote **best practice case studies** of walkable design for incorporation into our online toolkit.
- Deliver the **Change to Walking grants program** in partnership with VicHealth, City of Greater Geelong, City of Warrnambool, Yarra Range Shire Council and the City of Greater Bendigo to provide innovative approaches to travel behaviour-change programs.
- Prepare a report for the Level Crossing Removal Authority on designing **crossing removal projects** to enable walking.
- Work with Active Transport Victoria to ensure **valuable walking investments** and outcomes.
- Expand our **Official Supporters program**, hold two annual support events and ensure our work is valuable and relevant to supporters.
- Explore a range of government, philanthropic and corporate **funding options** to ensure the organisation continues to grow and increase its influence.

Acknowledgements

Victoria Walks would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations:

- VicHealth for its significant core and project funding since 2009
- The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for *Healthy Together Achievement Program* funding
- The City of Melbourne for reduced-rent office space in 'City Village'.

We also thank our key partners, including the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria, and the many individuals who generously donate to our community appeals and assist in fundraising.

Victoria Walks Official Supporters

