

Impact Report

JULY 2023 -
JUNE 2024



Supported by
 VicHealth™

The Change We Seek

Walkable neighbourhoods that enable health and wellbeing for all members of the community.

A better future for all aligned to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals: good health and wellbeing; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; and climate action.



About Victoria Walks

We are an evidence-based health promotion charity leading the push for walkable communities in Victoria and Australia since 2009. We work with partners, clients and community to realise:

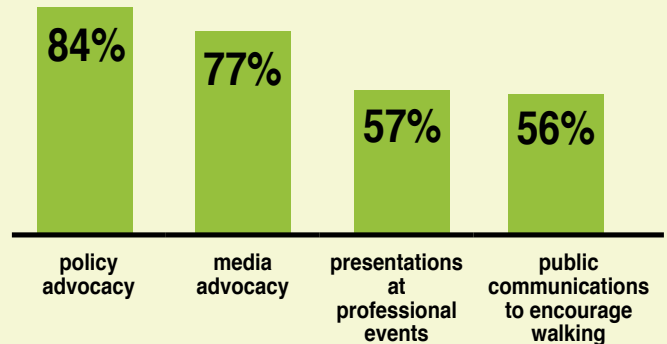
- Increased investment in walking-related infrastructure.
- Walking valued as a decarbonisation strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- More people walking more every day in communities across Victoria and Australia.

Annual Highlights

- Expanded our accessible walking path audits to regional and rural Victorians.
- Victorian Government appoints first-ever Minister for Public and Active Transport.
- Our stakeholder survey captured our worth to professionals and supporter organisations.
- We helped Victorians of all ages champion walkable communities.
- We published our [Theory of Change](#).
- We made protection of walkers a focus of Victoria's Road Safety Parliamentary Inquiry.
- Our advocacy helped flag serious safety and equity issues in Victoria's E-scooter trial.

Stakeholder Survey Results

Aspects of our work most rated as 'very important' by stakeholders:



#LoveWalking

We facilitated and inspired walking champions

We used our Walking Maps platform to work with governments, councils and organisations to promote walking opportunities for communities that face barriers to participation.

Supported by the Victorian Government, we partnered with Disability Sport & Recreation and with Regional Sport Victoria to extend our *Walking and Rolling Together* project to regional and rural communities. We worked with people with disability to audit and promote [17 accessible walks in Victoria's west](#).



Accessible Walk auditor Andrew Harrison, from Disability Sport & Recreation.

We identified and published [five accessible and pram-friendly walks](#) for City of Stonnington to share with residents (consultancy service).

We audited recreational trails for Parks Victoria, helping to increase access to parks for people with mobility disabilities.

We mapped 10 more inspiring walks exploring urban creeks, rivers and wetlands north of the CBD thanks to a grant from Melbourne Water's 'Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program'.

Walking Maps Had **907k** page views in 2023-2024



Our **Accessible Walking Maps** had **17k** views



Events and projects

We partnered with Parks Victoria to promote three Women Who Walk® twilight events in Greater Melbourne, and to audit and promote wheelchair 'Nature Scoot' events.

We worked with Active City to pilot the City of Yarra's New Deal for Schools. Our Walk, Scoot and Ride2School Day at Alphington Primary School resulted in 81% of students choosing active travel. The project included auditing and mapping of active travel routes (consultancy service).



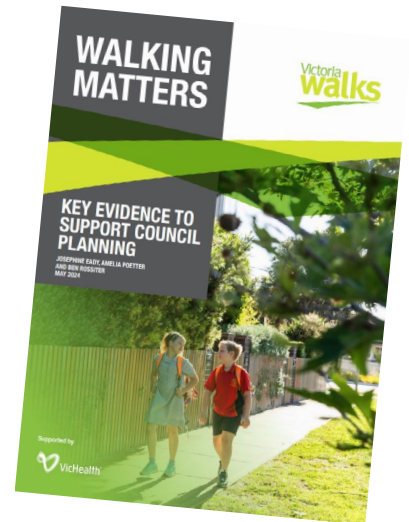
We worked with Loddon Shire Council to get more residents of rural Inglewood walking every day. We conducted a Safe Access Audit of a town centre walking route and advised on seating and wayfinding (consultancy service).

Each year we advise a range of organisations on planning for walkable communities including through the creation of resources.

We analysed state travel survey data to provide a comprehensive picture of local transport for the City of Maribyrnong (consultancy service) and for Peninsula Health.

We published *Walking Matters*, providing practitioners with a wide range of ready-reference facts to help illustrate the importance of walking and to support investment.

We created communication templates for schools in the City of Yarra to encourage active transport to school and safe driver behaviours.



Our Facebook posts had reach of **4,365,245**



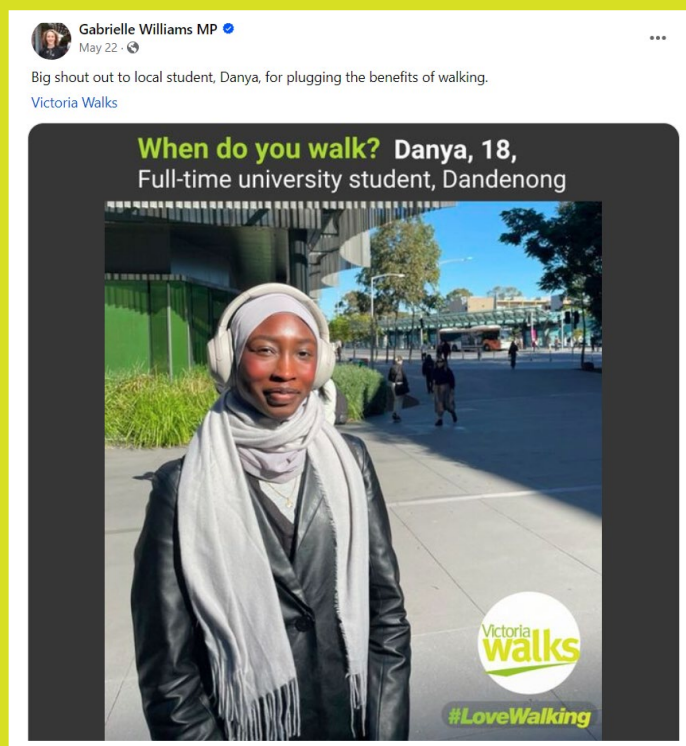
Our social media following grew to **136,000**

Our social media helped Victorians champion walking

We told 16 stories that showed how neighbourhood design helps walking participation for people of all ages, genders and abilities. Together, these individuals' stories created a positive vision of active, healthy, walkable communities for all.

The stories were shared by individuals, by organisations including the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and by decision-makers such as the Minister for Public and Active and Transport!

Our #LoveWalking reflections had a reach of 350,000 in the first six months of 2024.



“I have my Ps but still don’t have a car... I take a lot of public transport to get to Monash. As a result, I walk around a lot, especially on Uni days.”

#walkability #enabling

We ran a series of fun, simple social media posts highlighting planning and infrastructure that promotes walking over less-healthy, less-sustainable modes of transport.

Posts about wombat crossings, raised thresholds and pedestrian-priority roundabouts equipped Victorians with a better understanding of solutions available to governments to make walking easier, safer and better for everyone.



Wombat Crossings

A bit like a Zebra... but chunkier

#LoveWalking

We influenced through purposeful engagement

We used mainstream media to raise the profile of walking within health, planning and road safety policy and investment discussions.

We generated 159 prominent media mentions of walking. These stories had a cumulative potential audience reach of 10,648,919 and an Advertising Sales Revenue of AUD \$4,124,638.



Total **345** media mentions

(including syndicated tv and radio stories)



Executive Officer Ben Rossiter with MP Kathleen Matthews-Ward and the Hon. Natalie Suleyman at Parliament.

Highlights

We used our voice as a trusted expert to normalise safer urban speeds and 30km/h streets.



We used our profile as the nation's lead walking advocate to place a safety and equity lens over the Victorian Government's e-scooter trial. We focused attention on how the trial was failing to safeguard footpaths and walking, particularly for vulnerable groups in the Victorian community.

We were invited to participate in government forums to shape health, planning and transport policy including:

Planning Minister Roundtable (December 2023)

This event informed early development of the first statewide 30-year planning strategy Plan Victoria. We contributed our expertise on walking enablers and pressed the case for a government action plan and target to reduce car dependency in metropolitan Melbourne.

Active Transport and Liveability Roundtable (June 2024)

We used this inaugural forum convened by Public and Active Transport Minister Gabrielle Williams to highlight:

- Walking as Victoria's most popular form of active, sustainable transport.
- Walking's unique safety and accessibility needs, which require separate, focused attention in policy and funding to ensure all people can be active as part of everyday life.
- The need for a pedestrian-specific road safety action plan for urban areas.
- The evidence base for safer urban speed limits and the role of governments to lead change.

Active Transport and Liveability Roundtable.





CEO of Infrastructure Victoria Dr Jonathan Spear, pictured third from left

Behind the scenes

We helped inform policy development at all levels of government through submissions and participation in at least 19 workshops and consultations with government agencies.

An earlier submission to the Federal Government supported our partner Vision Australia's campaign for Acoustic Vehicle Alerting Systems on electric vehicles. In April 2024 the government announced a new Australian Design Standard would require electric cars, trucks, van and buses to be fitted with acoustic alerts.

We continued to advocate to state Ministers and Members of Parliament about the need for greater policy focus and investment for walking across Victoria.

For supporters

We ran two exclusive events for professionals working at our 26 supporter organisations.

In September the CEO of Infrastructure Victoria Dr Jonathan Spear spoke about the relationship between infrastructure and travel behaviour (including walking!) and how this informed IV's recommendations to the Government's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy.

In May our supporters heard from Michelle Prior, Director of Active Transport and Safety at Western Australia's Department of Transport. Michelle gave a detailed overview of the Safe Active Streets pilot, which tested various infrastructure treatments to support active transport in neighbourhoods across WA.



We showcased examples of investment in walkable neighbourhoods such as Hobson Bay City Council's walk-friendly changes to Pier Street, which have benefited local residents including Mia (pictured below, centre) who lives with disability.



We translated and promoted data and evidence to shape decision-making



"About three-quarters of all serious pedestrian road trauma happens effectively on the major arterials... These issues are urgent so the government really needs to act."

Ben Rossiter
Victoria Walks



Image Credit: ABC News/Simon Tucci

This year's stakeholder survey showed how much our research is valued by practitioners.

Overall, 73% of respondents were aware of Victoria Walks' research reports and evidence on walking, and of those, 90% rated them as very important.

Road Safety Inquiry

Our evidence featured strongly in the final report and recommendations tabled by the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into the Impact of Road Safety Behaviours on Vulnerable Road Users, with our submission cited 40 times.

Key positives that cited Victoria Walks included:

- Recognition that the process for councils to deliver safer speed limits is too difficult, especially for 30 km/h.
- Better pedestrian crossings on arterial roads as a priority recommendation.
- Acknowledgement that give-way rules at intersections without traffic lights are too complex.
- Recognition that shared paths are a barrier for vulnerable groups, especially older walkers.

In 2023-2024 we explored new channels to disseminate research, data and evidence to generate discussion, action and investment.

We worked with supporter Leadsun to present the findings of our Public Lighting research to 13 metropolitan, regional and rural councils (consultancy service).

We shared our *Walking Matters* report to over 300 practitioners via our new professionals' newsletter.

We received a TAC Road Safety Collaboration Grant to assist in understanding community sentiment around safety in local streets.

We calculated the annual cost of falls in the street to Victoria's hospital system and sent this information to the Minister for Health.



Estimated annual cost to Victoria's hospital system of falls in the street
\$43-\$48 million

Our research was cited or used in many publications over the year including academic papers, communications for government projects and in reports from government agencies such as Infrastructure Victoria.



Infrastructure Victoria's *Fast, Frequent, Fair* – How buses can better connect Melbourne report cited our work on bus stop accessibility.

Setting a path for future impact

We began implementing our Financial Sustainability Plan by diversifying our funding mix.

We achieved our objective to grow our fee-for-services to at least 45% of overall income by expanding our consultancy services and delivering projects for a variety of clients including Austroads.

We received grants from Sport and Recreation Victoria, the Transport Accident Commission, VicHealth, Melbourne Water and the Bennelong Foundation.

The year ahead

We will expand our consultancy services and undertake further business development.





We will seek partners to help realise our organisational Theory of Change.

We will write to all government Members of Parliament to encourage discrete funding streams for pedestrian crossings and recreational walks for all communities.

We will continue to advocate for the Walkable Communities Strategy and Action Plan to be released.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

-  VicHealth for its significant partnership funding since 2009.
-  City of Melbourne for providing reduced-rent office space in City Village.
-  Russell Kennedy Lawyers for pro bono advice.
-  Morgan Stanley (Melbourne) for event space and catering.

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, Simone Rosel and Richard Onanjiri.

The 2023-2024 staff was led by Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer) and includes Duane Burt (Principal Policy Advisor), Jo Eady (Senior Advisor), Jane Holroyd (Digital Communications Advisor), Sean Mathews (Project Officer) and Sarah Allen (Project Officer) and associated consultants and skilled volunteers, including Kerry Haynes and Amelia Poetter.



Victoria Walks official supporters



Victoria Walks corporate supporters



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