



An initiative funded and supported by VicHealth

VICTORIA WALKS Report card: June 2011

About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks Inc. is a charitable non-profit organisation, funded by VicHealth, to promote the prevention or control of diseases relating to physical inactivity by increasing the number of people who walk. The organisation's vision is for vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible.

Victoria Walks:

- Provides leadership for walk-friendly environments through submissions, resource provision, influencing policy development, research, public comment, forums and social marketing.
- Provides resources and support to communities to promote walking and make their neighbourhoods more walk-friendly.
- Works to increase awareness of the health, environmental, social and economic benefits of walking, and undertakes walking promotions and events.

Victoria Walks' primary target audience is families of school-age children. Secondary audiences are workplaces, early/recent retirees, and the general community.

The Victoria Walks Committee of Management was chaired by Peter Gordon until March 2011 and then by Kellie-Ann Jolly. Committee members over the last year included Trevor Budge, Sally Cockburn, Sue Fitzpatrick, Daniel King, Tim Lane, Edwina Pearse, Pete Thiessen and Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer).

This document provides a summary of the activities and highlights of Victoria Walks in 2010–2011.

Highlights of Victoria Walks

Held the inaugural *Walk the Block* with over 150 workplaces participating in this fun event that got people up on their feet at work (including 31 councils and the Department of Health).

Launched our *Step up at Work* campaign that included tips for conducting walking meetings, walking inductions, walking groups, and how to keep staff moving at work.

Held *Talk your Walk Walktober* (walking story competition) which resulted in over 50 stories being submitted.

Appointed by the Minister for Public Transport & Roads to the new Station Users Panel to advise on how train station development and redevelopment projects can better reflect the expectations of users and communities, and enhance the places in which they are located.

Hosted a Children's Walking Roundtable to inform our investment in walking related activities, promotions and events for children and families.

Co-hosted the 'Walking as Transport – benefits, challenges and ideas in local government' forum with the Victorian Local Governance Association.

Invited to join and represent Australia on the International Federation of Pedestrians (The Hague, November 2010).

Attended the launch of the groundbreaking *Pedestrian Access Strategy*, Victoria Walks sat on both the Working Group and Steering Group.

Joined the Safe Speed Interest Group that promotes safe walking and cycling by reducing traffic speed.

Commenced development of the *Walking Maps* website to allow people to load, share and rate their favourite walks.



Supporting local action

Supporting communities to increase the level of walking and make their streets and neighbourhoods better for walking is one of the most satisfying aspects of our work. We are inspired by the ideas and dedication of the small but growing number of people and groups wanting to get their community physically active and on their feet.

There are now 17 Walkability Action Groups (WAGs) associated with Victoria Walks. Some of their achievements over the last year include: a detailed submission on Glen Eira Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and an extension of a 40 km/h zone (Ormond & McKinnon WAG); a submission on the City of Maribyrnong's Walking Strategy (West Footscray WAG); being a key community group consulted in the development of a Coastal Management Plan, featuring in a Sunday Age article on walkability, and presenting at the 'Promoting Liveability through Walkability' forum (Locomote in North Bellarine); and undertaking a petition for footpaths that resulted in five articles in local newspapers (Access Round Kilmore).

Two WAGs were successful in applying for a small grant from Victoria Walks to support their work. Plan B (Bendigo) used their grant to develop an innovative resource map for local communities to promote walking in their neighbourhoods. Locomote (North Bellarine) used their grant to design a logo and print t-shirts for promoting walking at festivals and to local communities – they had a successful stall at the National Celtic Festival in Portarlington in June.

Stakeholder relationships

VicHealth The critical importance of VicHealth to the ongoing development and sustainability of Victoria Walks cannot be understated and has extended well beyond the formal core funding agreement. As a new, independent and growing organisation their support and guidance is invaluable.

Victorian Government Victoria Walks continues to explore opportunities to collaborate with many government departments and agencies. Working with the Department of Transport on projects such as Pedestrian Priority Network is key to increasing the level of walking as is exploring opportunities to work with the Department of Health on the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health.

Local government Victoria Walks is seen as an authority on walking issues by many local governments. The organisation addressed official council meetings, made submissions, participated in forums and facilitated community consultations on walkability issues. Victoria Walks has been included in various council strategy documents, has links on numerous council websites and is an Associate Member of the Melbourne Transport Forum.

Other stakeholders Victoria Walks worked with many organisations across diverse sectors and communities. Key stakeholders over the last year have included the Heart Foundation (Vic), VicHealth, Kinect Australia, VLGA, VECCI and YMCA. The Heart Foundation's contribution of \$10,000 towards the development of *Walking Maps* is much appreciated.

Media activity Victoria Walks continued to develop a presence in the media with more than 90 mentions in newspaper articles, opinion articles, letters to the editor (online and print) and radio interviews. Media outlets are starting to approach Victoria Walks for expert comment on walking related issues.

Conferences, forums and exhibitions

Victoria Walks presented at many conferences, forums and exhibitions including:

- Walk 21 the 11th international conference on Walking and Liveable Communities (The Hague, 16–19 November)
- International Society for Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity conference (Melbourne, 15–18 June)
- Promoting Liveability through Walkability Forum (Preston, 28 June 2011)
- Sustainability Victoria's International Car Free Day race of various travel modes across the Melbourne CBD (22 September)

Submissions

Victoria Walks actively worked to influence policy and practice at state and local level.

Our submissions included:

- National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 (with the Safe Speed Interest Group)
- City of Maribyrnong Walking Strategy
- City of Melbourne Transport Strategy Update 2011
- City of Port Phillip Sustainable Transport Strategy, Walking Plan and Bike Plan
- Department of Transport changes to SmartBus routes on Hoddle St and Victoria Pde



THE YEAR AHEAD

THE YEARS AHEAD OFFER MANY EXCITING CHALLENGES TO BUILD ON THE WORK UNDERTAKEN OVER OUR FIRST TWO YEARS.

This will include:

- **Launching *Walking Maps* (www.walkingmaps.com.au) to excite and inspire Victorians to explore their world on foot. *Walking Maps* will encourage healthy living and community connections, and**

promote walking for recreation, leisure and transport. It will be an extremely valuable resource to individuals, communities, governments, walking groups and programs.

- **Holding the inaugural *Victoria Walks to School day* (previously Walktober Walk to School) and developing a range of family walking-related initiatives.**
- **Expanding our workplace walking initiatives: *Walk the Block* and *Step up at Work*.**

• **Continuing to build our social media presence to enable the organisation to promote walking and engage new audiences in walkability issues.**

• **Working with our partners to see the establishment of a Walking Advisory Council in the Transport portfolio to provide strategic policy and program advice to the State Government to increase the level of walking for transport in the Victorian community.**