



Report card: June 2012

About Victoria Walks

Victoria Walks is an independent walking health promotion charity. Our mission is to get more Victorians walking every day. Our vision is for vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible.

Victoria Walks:

- provides walking and walkability leadership through its membership on various advisory committees, presenting at conferences and forums, creating media content, writing submissions, and influencing policy development
- supports local action by enabling communities to increase walking and make their neighbourhoods more walk-friendly
- promotes walking through online activities, *Walking Maps* and social media.

Victoria Walks' brand, product and skills are used to build partnerships with aligned organisations and advocate for walking to increase children's physical activity, older people's participation, and family engagement.

The Victoria Walks Committee of Management comprises Kellie-Ann Jolly (Chair), Trevor Budge, Sue Fitzpatrick, Daniel King, Pete Thiessen and Ben Rossiter (Executive Officer).

This document provides a summary of the activities and highlights of Victoria Walks from July 2011 to June 2012.

Supporting local action

Supporting communities to work together to increase walking and the walkability of neighbourhoods continues to be important and inspirational work.

This year, Victoria Walks welcomed four new Walkability Action Groups (WAGs):

- *Active Travel to Sarah Court Pre-School* (Montrose) – a local group seeking to promote active modes of travel and address traffic and congestion issues surrounding a local pre-school.
- *Friends of Edward Street* (Brunswick) – a community-based initiative involving residents working together to enhance the streetscape and shared public spaces, improve amenities, and increase health benefits and social connections.
- *Mont Albert North Walks* (Mont Albert North) – a group of residents seeking to make the roundabout on Belmore Road and Union Road and the surrounding streets safer and more accessible for people walking to local shops and amenities.
- *Walk on Moreland* (Moreland) – a local interest group keen to promote a culture of walking in Moreland by identifying areas and taking action to improve walkability.

Ormond & McKinnon Walks successfully campaigned for a signalised pedestrian crossing at Jasper Road in Ormond. The group also made detailed submissions to their local council's *Community Plan* and *Sustainable Transport Strategy*.

Locomote used *Walking Maps* to promote flyers of walks in Portarlington at the National Celtic Festival, with plans to further engage local community groups and tourism authorities to promote walking in their region.

WAGs also made submissions to the VicRoads Review of Speed Limits 2011 and wrote letters of support for the establishment of the Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council.

Highlights

- Deployed *Walking Maps* (www.walkingmaps.com.au), which are at the forefront of using technology and social media in health promotion and community engagement. *Walking Maps* enable individuals, communities, organisations and governments to create, discover and share walks anywhere in Australia.
- Over 260 walks around Victoria created on *Walking Maps*, including 40 exceptional walks now rated as 'Staff Picks'.
- Organised *Victoria Walks to School Day*, which resulted in more than 61,000 primary school children from 300 schools walk to school (nearly double the number who walked the day before) and 80 media stories around Victoria.
- Partnered with the City of Bendigo and La Trobe University to deliver 'Child Friendly Cities Conference – Valuing Children as Citizens', Bendigo.
- Became a member of the Ministerial appointed Station User Panel that developed *Railway Station Useability Principles* to improve people's experience of the railway system.
- Worked with our partners to lead the call for the establishment of the Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council, on which we now sit.
- Received funding for a research project led by Victoria University (ISEAL) which will explore the social and physical experiences of parents and children as they walk in their neighbourhoods.
- Received additional two years of funding from VicHealth following an independent review of our performance for last three years.
- With the support of VicHealth, developed a new three year Strategic Business Plan.



Our work

Building a community for walking

Victoria Walks continued to build a community for walking through our continuously evolving digital eco-system that includes Walking Maps, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Footprints (monthly e-news bulletin).

Our Facebook and YouTube presence has increased steadily as we meet the public's need for positive, informative and inspiring content to get more Victorians to walk every day. Mobile technology, location-based tools and social networks encouraged us to develop Walking Maps, which enable users to create walk maps, highlight features with photography and comments, rate, share and discover walks wherever they live, work or play.

Media activity

Victoria Walks strengthened our media presence this year. It was mentioned 130 times in television stories, newspaper articles, opinion pieces, 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.

Highlights included: interviews on 7 News (twice), National Nine News, TEN news and WIN news; a feature article on *Walking Maps* in *Royal Auto*; and 80 stories on *Victoria Walks to School*.

Conferences, forums and events

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

- 'Walk friendly, child friendly: what's the difference?', Child Friendly Cities Conference – Valuing Children as Citizens, Bendigo
- 'Get Moving: it starts with our feet', Parks and Leisure Australia NSW/ACT State Conference 2012 (Keynote), Coffs Harbour
- 'Nature, cities and urban planning, how do our kids connect?' Victorian Child and Nature Connection network seminar, Melbourne
- Sustainable Transport workshop, City of Darebin
- Sustainable Transport workshop, City of Banyule
- 'Living Locally – How do we design our cities to make it better?', City of Moonee Valley.

Submissions

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

- VicRoads Review of Speed Limits 2011
- VicRoads Review of Speed Limits 2011 with the Safe Speed Interest Group.

Memberships

- Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council
- International Federation of Pedestrians (Australian representative)
- Safe Speed Interest Group (a collaboration of health and local government stakeholders promoting low speed limits in urban environments)
- Melbourne Transport Forum (Associate Member)



The year ahead

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

- **Achieving** our goals to:
 1. Get more Victorians to identify themselves as 'walkers'
 2. Position ourselves as the leader and 'go-to' authority for walkers, walking and walkability
 3. Collaborate with organisations so they champion walking and integrate it into their programs
 4. Increase our organisational strength.
- **Working** with partners to advocate for walking to increase children's physical activity, older people's participation and family engagement.
- **Developing** a resource pack for school communities and families to inspire and guide them to increase children's walking to/from, at and around schools and the community, as well resources to create safer, more walkable neighbourhoods.
- **Developing** a resource pack for local governments to support them to undertake walking promotion, increase walking and to foster more walkable communities, encourage best practice and support their uptake of Walking Maps.
- **Launching** *Walking Maps* mobile website allowing people to search for walks anywhere in Australia.
- **Developing** partnerships to expand the potential of *Walking Maps* as a groundbreaking health promotion, tourism, community building and advocacy tool.
- **Supporting** the Heart Foundation to deliver the Parks Victoria funded *Green Walks in the Park* program.
- **Moving** to new offices at the City of Melbourne's 'City Village', a not-for-profit community and cultural hub at 225 Bourke Street.

