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2 June 2023

Infrastructure Victoria

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## Submission to Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy

### Executive Summary

Victoria Walks recognises and appreciates that previous work by Infrastructure Victoria has acknowledged the important role of walking. However, previous recommendations and government investment in walking have been very modest, suggesting incremental rather than transformative change.

We no longer have the luxury of business as usual. Global society faces a climate crisis that needs to be addressed urgently across all economic sectors.

There is a recognition within the environmental movement that a rapid uptake of electric vehicles also needs to be accompanied by a reduction in private vehicle use and dramatic uptake of walking, cycling and public transport. The time for minor changes has passed. Now urgent, large-scale change is needed.

Victoria Walks has undertaken significant work to determine the level of investment required in walking. Last year, all councils in Victoria were invited to provide proposed walking projects. Based on this, Victoria Walks calculated an investment of \$942 million over four years was needed.

In addition to climate change, this submission outlines how investment in and prioritisation of walking would help address the other key areas identified by Infrastructure Victoria:

#### 1. Doing more with less

Compared to major transport projects, investment in walking provides exceptional return on investment. Victoria Walks has previously identified a range of different policy changes that would make walking safer and/or more attractive, without requiring investment in infrastructure. A notable example is safer speed limits. The development of signature walks also offers the potential to build significant recreational and tourism assets with minimal investment by utilising and marketing existing public assets.

#### 2. Navigating change and disruption

COVID-19 has shown us that local living is more resilient to future shocks. More walkable neighbourhoods are needed to cater for the 'new normal' where working from home is a regular part of everyday life for most office workers. The ageing population reinforces the need for safe walking environments, because half of the people killed while walking in Victoria are 60 years or older.

### 3. Improving social equity through access

Walking (often combined with public transport) allows people to get around when they don't have the option to drive, whether due to age, health, finances or vehicle availability. Walking is also the most popular and universally accessible form of exercise. It is therefore highly important to a range of disadvantaged groups in society including young people, those with disabilities, lower socio-economic communities and women.

Climate change and falling health outcomes are urgent imperatives for faster action in creating places which are pleasant and safe for walking. It is time for Victoria to step up and harness the potential of walking to improve neighbourhoods and towns and give all people the communities they need to thrive.

## Recommendations

The Victorian Government should:

- Create a Walking for Transport Strategy with clear targets, actions and investment to achieve more walking trips, and to coordinate planning to ensure all communities are walkable.
- Establish an expert walking and bike riding panel to advise on meeting climate change transport targets, including increasing public transport patronage by improving walkability to and from stops.
- Develop a pedestrian-specific road safety action plan.
- Expand 'school zones' into neighbourhood-wide active travel precincts to enable increased walking to school.
- Provide TAC or equivalent compensation for walkers injured in crashes with people using bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters or other similar devices.
- Develop a Regional Victoria Walking Tourism Strategy so more rural and regional communities can capitalise on the growing popularity of nature-based tourism.
- Fund Victoria Walks \$450,000 per annum to: facilitate community engagement; provide walking input into government and council policy processes, including greater walkability in metropolitan growth areas; and promote a more diverse range of quality walking experiences in all parts of the state.
- Invest **\$150 million per annum** over four years to deliver safer streets projects and improved access to recreational walking in our communities to deliver:
  - New and improved pedestrian crossings on local streets and arterial roads.
  - Safer speeds and traffic calming to support more walking.
  - New and upgraded footpaths and completing missing links in principal walking networks.
  - Walking access to public transport including Disability Discrimination Act compliance.
  - Better lighting in streets and parks.
  - Tree planting to provide shade and improve walking environments.
  - Open streets initiatives to support walking to school and create valued public spaces.
  - New and upgraded recreational walking paths and green corridors so everyone can be active where they live.
- Invest **\$85 million per annum** over four years to deliver 200 walking tourism projects across Victoria.

Further detail on investment and policy change required to support walking is set out in our report [Investing in Walking – a step forward for Victoria's environment, economy and health](#).

## Introduction

Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion charity, leading the move for walkable communities in Australia since 2009. Our vision is for healthier, connected communities through more people walking more every day. Victoria Walks conducts research and provides input to policy to encourage the provision of more walkable urban environments.

Walking infrastructure is generally considered part of transport infrastructure – footpaths, crossings, etc. However, improving walking infrastructure and getting more people walking benefits not only the transport system but also health, recreation, community, and environment.

Throughout this submission, the term walking refers to people getting around on foot as well as people using any form of mobility device that allow them to travel at human speed. This includes people using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking sticks and walkers; people who are blind or have low vision; and people pushing prams or trolleys.

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## Previous work

Victoria Walks recognises and appreciates that previous work by Infrastructure Victoria has acknowledged the role of walking in meeting societal and government objectives related to infrastructure. The 2021 Infrastructure Strategy notes:

- The cost effectiveness of walking infrastructure
- That walking provides health and environmental benefits
- The importance of local places, open space and accessibility
- The need to partner with local governments to fund pedestrian infrastructure
- Focussing on networks within walking distance of train stations and public transport stops
- The lack of walking data, including in strategic transport models
- How walking can be encouraged through car parking fees at transport hubs
- In meeting emissions reduction targets
- How walking is closely related to tree canopy coverage.

Notwithstanding the above, previous recommendations and government action around investment in walking have been very modest, suggesting incremental rather than transformative change.

Climate change and falling health outcomes are urgent imperatives for faster action in creating places which are pleasant and safe for walking. It is time for Victoria to step up and harness the potential of walking to improve neighbourhoods and towns and give all people the communities they need to thrive.

The time for minor changes is past. Now urgent, large-scale change is needed.

## Consultation themes

This submission outlines how investment in and prioritisation of walking helps address each of the four key areas outlined by Infrastructure Victoria:

1. **Doing more with less** - Victoria needs to respond to increasing workforce, supply chain and financial constraints. We can influence productivity in specific infrastructure sectors, better use infrastructure, and help decision makers choose the right infrastructure to activate productivity growth. How should we do this?

2. **Navigating change and disruption** - Victoria's infrastructure planning must adapt to emerging changes and disruptions in technology, population, community preferences and ways of working. What ideas do you have about how Victoria can better plan and use infrastructure in conditions of uncertainty?
3. **Improving social equity through access** - Victoria should be a great place for everyone who lives here, no matter where that is. What improvements or changes should be made to make access to infrastructure fairer?
4. **Mitigating and adapting to our changing climate** – Victoria must prioritise adapting infrastructure to climate change and reducing infrastructure-related emissions. How should we do this?

## Doing more with less

### Economic return on walking investment

Walking provides significant benefits to the individual and society, including economic productivity. Our report '[The Economic Case for Investment in Walking](#)' looks in detail at the benefits of walking, along with the role it plays in transport, recreation and health. In short, walking has benefits across health, community, equity, environment, transport and economic development, all of which support economic prosperity.

Investing in walking infrastructure can provide a higher economic return than other transport projects such as rail and road. Evidence from 20 different studies suggested that the benefit cost ratio of walking interventions is 13:1 – \$13 of benefit for every \$1 of expenditure (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018).

With societal benefits of \$2.68 for every 1 kilometre walked (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018) Victoria has much to gain from proactively embracing the popularity of walking to strengthen communities across the state.

In 2008, the total annual economic cost of physical inactivity in Australia, including healthcare, productivity and mortality costs, was estimated at \$13.8 billion (Cadilhac, et al., 2011). Even a 10% reduction in physical inactivity through walking would result in 2,000 fewer deaths and 6,000 fewer incidents of disease each year (Medibank, 2008).

### Policy changes

Changes to policy are generally quick and relatively cheap to implement compared to new infrastructure. They can provide excellent value for money when they influence all future infrastructure or where they remove the need to build new or upgrade existing infrastructure.

Victoria Walks has previously identified a range of different policy changes that would make walking safer and/or more attractive, without requiring investment in infrastructure.

One such example is speed limits. Everyone deserves to get home safely, but in the 2021/22 year a quarter of people killed in crashes in Melbourne were people on foot (TAC, 2022).

By international standards, Australia has high urban speed limits. Lower speeds make for safer, more pleasant streets. A Canadian study found that reducing the speed limit from 40km/h to 30km/h resulted in a 67% decrease in serious and fatal injuries (Fridman, Ling, Rothman, & al., 2020). But current state policy makes it very difficult for councils to apply a 30 km/h limit.

Lower speed limits reduce the costs associated with road crashes, but also roads with lower speeds can be narrower and require less infrastructure for safe operation. If they are pleasant and safe to walk

along, there is less need for expensive formal crossings like signals which are the only options for high-speed roads.

### Signature walks

Many communities do not have access to safe, accessible, interesting, high-quality recreational walks to allow them to be healthy, connected and active by regularly participating in walking, the most popular active recreation of Victorians. There is a need develop a coordinated approach to ensuring all communities have access to good walking options where they live. That is, every suburb should have a local 'signature walk'.

Further, there is an opportunity to develop regional/ sub-regional signature walks that will have health and well-being benefits for residents while also attracting tourism-based economic activity.

Walking related tourism has a positive impact on communities and regions across Victoria, providing jobs and contributing hundreds of millions of dollars into local economies.

Walking tourism benefits:

- **Destinations**, because it enables them to provide authentic local experiences to encourage visitors to explore less visited areas, spend more and stay longer.
- **Visitors**, because they choose activities relevant to their interests, providing contact with nature and culture and deeper interaction with locals leading to higher visit satisfaction.
- **Locals**, because it helps them to be more physically active and care for the environment.

According to the UN World Tourism Organisation: "Walking tourism is now one of the most popular ways to experience a destination".

One example Victoria Walks has identified is the creation of a 22km signature walk in the west of Melbourne that inspires residents of the west to use, love and appreciate opportunities at their doorstep. We have identified a route for the Western Waterway Walk that can be walked currently, but has some limitations, including being subject to flooding at one critical point. The existing walk simply needs some polish, investment and branding to inspire people to exercise and get healthier and share their activity on social media.

By identifying and addressing current limitations and missing infrastructure, then marketing these walks as tourism attractions, existing assets can be much better utilised.

### Job creation

Like any construction, the building of walking infrastructure creates jobs. However, walking infrastructure also delivers ongoing advantages. Walking trails stimulate the local economy by increasing visitor numbers, and then encouraging those visitors to stay longer. It is anticipated that the recently completed Grampians Peaks Trail will support 70 full time jobs directly, and contribute to a boost of 425 full time jobs in the wider Grampians region. Likewise, the construction of the Peninsula Trail in Mornington Peninsula would support 267 full-time jobs in construction and 109 full time jobs once completed through local and visitor economic benefits (Urban Enterprise, 2022).

## Navigating change and disruption

### COVID-19

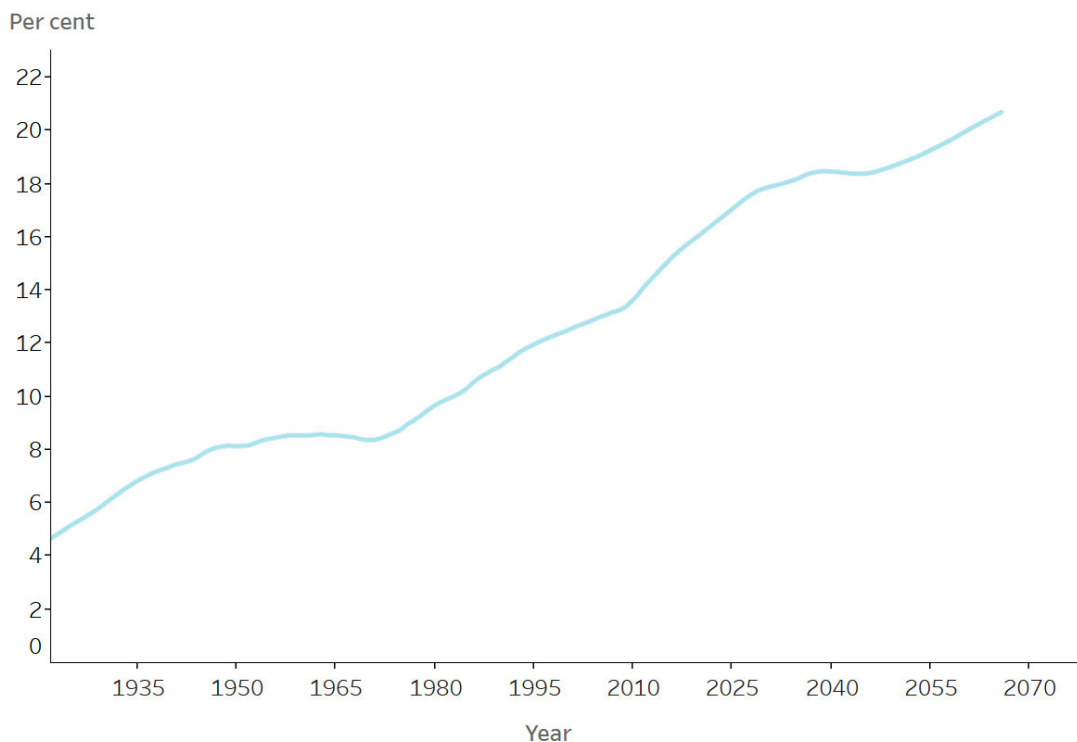
The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in restrictions in Victoria, which limited individuals to a 5km radius from their homes. This restriction led to significant behaviour changes among the population. Walking became a popular choice due to its accessibility, simplicity, and physical and mental health benefits. People enjoyed connecting with their community and neighbours and experiencing nature while walking.

COVID-19 exposed the fragility of relying on global networks and supply chains for everyday life. Local living is more resilient to future shocks.

Some changes have continued past lockdowns such as increases in working from home and a greater appreciation for the value of living locally in walkable communities. More walkable neighbourhoods are needed to cater for the 'new normal' where working from home is a regular part of everyday life for most office workers.

### Aging population

The Australian population is aging. Not only are people living longer, but people are having fewer children. The proportion of people aged 65 and over has been increasing for the past 100 years with estimates suggesting this trend will only continue.



**Percentage of the Australian population aged 65 and over, at 30 June, over time** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023)

The ageing population is very relevant to walking because between 2013-22, half of the people killed while walking in Victoria were 60 years or older. The proportion of older pedestrians killed has been



steadily increasing over the last 20 years even though the number of fatalities overall has been dropping.

Older people are most at risk of serious injury and death due simply to frailty. People aged 70 or older are approximately 1.6 times more likely to be injured than people aged 16 to 39 years (Oxley, Stephan, & O'Hern, 2020). They are more likely to sustain an injury if involved in a crash and it is harder for them to recover once injured. For older people who fracture a hip, between 25 and 40 per cent die within 12 months and for the remainder an increased risk of death persists for years afterwards (Oxley, Stephan, & O'Hern, 2020).

People 70 years or older represented 52% of all pedestrian fatalities in 2021. In comparison, they represented only 12% of the Victorian population at the 2021 Census.

Victoria's current transport infrastructure tends to be built around the assumption that people can and will drive, rather than providing people with options for getting around. As such, it is not suited to forecast changes in climate and population, let alone unforeseen changes.

## Improving social equity through access

More than one in five weekday trips was walked in 2020-21, making it the most common way of getting around after vehicle driver. The number of trips walked in their entirety is now more than the number of trips by train, tram, bus and bicycle combined (Eady, 2023). The increasing proportion of trips made by walking is a longer-term trend that pre-dates the pandemic.

### Walking is accessible for nearly everyone

Walking is the most popular form of exercise and one of the most important forms of transport and recreation in Victoria. It is something everyone can do if the right infrastructure is provided, as it doesn't require special equipment, can be done at any time, almost anywhere and without any cost. It does not need to be scheduled or co-ordinated with other people.

Walking (often combined with public transport) allows people to get around when they don't have the option to drive, whether due to age, health, finances or vehicle availability.

Walking has considerable potential to meet the exercise needs of people who do not participate in organised sport because of the cost, time commitments, exertion involved, or skills required.

Exercise is typically strongly correlated with economic characteristics, with lower socio-economic groups getting substantially less physical activity. However walking, especially walking for transport, is comparatively equitable across all sectors of society (Garrard, 2013).

Walking is very unusual as sport or recreation in that participation is even higher for adults with disabilities (49.2%) compared to the overall population (43.6%). No other high participation sport or recreation has a significantly higher participation rate amongst people with a disability (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

### Walking is important especially for younger and older people

People between 10 and 19 years-old are the age group most reliant on walking. Nearly half of people in this age group who leave home (44%) on any given day walk as part of their travel, including in combination with public transport (Eady & Burt, 2019).

Walking is exceptionally important as a form of recreation and exercise for older people. While involvement in organised sport diminishes as people age, walking becomes increasingly important as a form of recreation and exercise (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

### Walking is important for women

Women are more likely to participate in non-organised active recreation and walking is particularly important as a form of recreation and exercise for women. The AusPlay survey found that 53.7% of Australian women participate in recreational walking at least once a year compared to 33.2% of men (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

### Mitigating and adapting to our changing climate

Australia has been exceptionally slow to take action on climate change. The number of registered vehicles on our roads continues to rise and each week there are over five million car trips in Victoria under one kilometre (Department of Transport and Planning, 2022). However, we no longer have the luxury of business as usual. Global society faces a climate crisis that needs to be addressed urgently across all economic sectors.

In transport, there is a need to electrify the vehicle fleet in conjunction with a rapid transition to electricity generated from renewable sources. However, it is important that the transition to electric vehicles does not compromise other sustainable transport options including walking.

Even if considered only through a climate change lens, there is a recognition within the environmental movement that a rapid uptake of electric vehicles also needs to be accompanied by a reduction in private vehicle use and rapid uptake of walking, cycling and public transport. The combination of both is required to deliver the necessary level of emission reduction (Climate Council 2023).

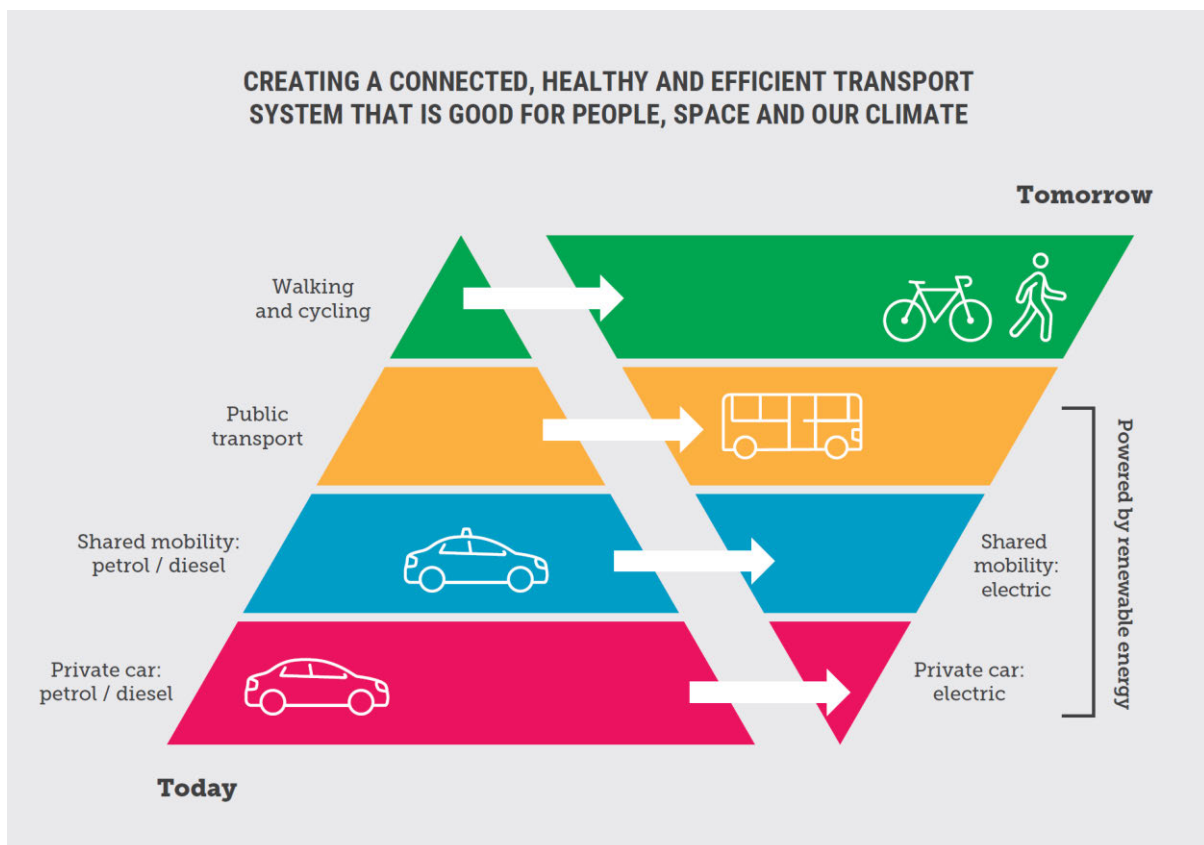


Image source: Climate Council *Policy Package – Charging Ahead: State and territory transport policy recommendations to reach near-absolute zero emissions*

This is also acknowledged by Government. The state's Climate Change Strategy aims for 25% of transport trips to be undertaken via active transport by 2030. Currently around 90% of active transport



trips are made by walking. The role of walking in reducing emissions (and delivering a broad range of health, social and economic outcomes) should be fully embraced by the Government.

The Infrastructure Strategy has a 30-year timeframe. This means it needs to deliver net zero emissions (at a bare minimum). Ground transport can already move towards zero emissions given existing technology and transport options.

Victoria Walks has undertaken significant work to determine the level of latent demand for investment in walking by councils. Last year, all councils in Victoria were invited to provide proposed walking projects that had not already been funded as of March 2022. Across the state, 522 projects were submitted, which would immediately improve local walking environments and walking safety. Based on this, Victoria Walks calculated an investment of \$942 million over four years would increase the opportunities for all Victorians to walk more often and deliver substantial economic and environmental benefits. This work is set out in our report [Investing in Walking – a step forward for Victoria's environment, economy and health](#).

### Climate resilience

Climate change will result in generally warmer or hotter weather and probably a drier climate with more extreme events. Generally speaking this can be expected to make walking less comfortable in the summer and inland parts of the state and possibly more comfortable in the winter and cooler locations. However, Victoria Walks considers the former to be more likely to have a significant effect than the latter. Observations of our social media engagement suggest that summer heat is already a bigger deterrent to walking than winter cold.

Providing shade over walking paths and minimising urban heat more generally will be increasingly important to maintain summer walking. Street trees have a broad range of benefits and are important in creating an environment that people want to walk in. The benefits for walkers are both aesthetic and practical, with street trees providing shelter from the sun and, to some extent, rain.

Most significantly, tree canopies can reduce the temperatures of the surfaces they shade by 10-25°C (Heart Foundation 2013).

Climate change threatens important locations for recreational walking. Sea level rise threatens beaches, coastal walking paths and tracks. Flooding events are likely to damage important recreational paths along waterways. Bushfire will be an increasing risk for natural areas, especially in regional Victoria and the urban fringe.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation could compromise walking if not done well. In the UK, for example, charging of electric vehicles frequently obstructs footpath movement.

### Community support

Research shows Victorians value walking and want more safe, appealing places to walk where they live.

There is strong support for investment in walking amongst people. Our [Victorian Walking Survey](#) demonstrated strong public support for action to provide better walking conditions. 89% of Victorians want a combination of government actions to help them walk more in their local area and three-quarters said the government should make it safer and easier to walk to local shops (Victoria Walks, 2021).

A National Heart Foundation (2020) survey of Australians found almost 70% support for increased transport spending on walking, cycling and access to public transport, with support stronger in Melbourne than most other cities.

A large majority of Victorians say having facilities such as parks, shops, schools and public transport accessible by walking is important (National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2020).

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## Appendix 1 – Signature Walk Case Study

### The Western Waterway Walk

Victoria Walks has identified the potential to create a 22km signature walk in the west of Melbourne that inspires residents of the west to use, love and appreciate opportunities at their doorstep.

We have identified a route that can be walked currently, but has some limitations, including being subject to flooding at one critical point. The existing walk simply needs some polish, investment and rebranding to inspire people to exercise and get healthier and share their activity on social media.

The walk would celebrate four waterways that lead into Port Phillip Bay and the unique natural beauty, flora and fauna of the area. The walk will give residents of the west more opportunities for regular physical activity, social connections and a greater appreciation of local waterways and natural environments and First Nations culture and country.



The walk would be public transport accessible with multiple options for shorter walks, including all abilities access. It would use and build on existing assets alongside four creeks, extensive wetlands and two beach fronts.

Creation of a landmark walk in Melbourne's west would increase the potential to attract visitors and build community pride in the area. By mostly leveraging existing assets, a signature walking experience can be delivered with limited cost.

### Walking background

- Walking is the most accessible and popular physical activity/active recreation of Victorians.<sup>i</sup>
- Walking has substantial physical and mental health benefits and can improve social connectedness, safety, and local business activity.
- The two key factors that motivate Victorians to walk are: exercise and health (65%); and personal well-being (49%).<sup>ii</sup>
- When asked what would encourage them to walk more in their local area, 35% of Victorians said more or better paths in parks or along waterways.<sup>iii</sup>
- Concerns over personal safety are a major barrier for women and gender-diverse people accessing leisure and recreation spaces, which can have a significant impact on health and well-being.<sup>iv</sup>
- People with disability experience much lower rates of participation in sport and recreation than the general population, and walking is their most accessible and popular physical activity/active recreation (AusPlay).
- There is currently a paucity of accessible and appealing walks that enable people with disability to walk or roll, be active and connect with others in their community.
- With the support of Access for All Abilities, an initiative of the Victorian Government, Victoria Walks has audited and mapped a number of [Accessible Walks](#) in partnership with people with disability however, only one is in the west of Melbourne, at [Werribee Park](#).
- Signature walks, including those that provide a physical challenge, can generate significant inspiration for walking and economic activity. The [1,000 Steps Walk](#), for example, is probably

Melbourne's most popular bushwalk. It is anticipated that the recently completed Grampians Peaks Trail will support 70 full time jobs directly, and contribute to a boost of 425 full time jobs in the wider Grampians region.

### Investing in the west

- Four of the six Western Metropolitan LGAs are in the top ten Greater Melbourne LGAs with the highest percentage of overweight or obese adults, and young people.<sup>v</sup>
- The regional prevalence of preventable diseases such as Type 2 diabetes is high compared with the Victorian average and most LGAs.<sup>vi</sup>
- Residents of Melbourne's west have a higher rate of sedentary behaviour and are less likely to meet recommended physical activity guidelines compared to the Victorian average.<sup>vii</sup>
- The Western Metro Region has large areas of concentrated disadvantage and has lower scores of subjective wellbeing compared to Victoria.<sup>viii</sup>
- In recognition that the western region has the lowest area of tree canopy cover in Melbourne, the Government is investing \$5 million to plant trees across the west to provide more shade and green spaces and help tackle climate change.



### Waterway walks of the west

- In partnership with Melbourne Water and local stakeholders, Victoria Walks has mapped and promoted a series of [18 high-quality walks along waterways of Melbourne's west](#) that are on well-formed paths, with good infrastructure and with interesting natural features and points of interest.
- The walks create some health and wellbeing opportunities for residents of the west, including those with limited access to quality green spaces or low levels of physical activity.
- In mapping a number of shorter walks around Point Cook, Altona Meadows and Altona, it became apparent that there is the foundation for an exceptional longer walk, from Altona Meadows to Williamstown, a type of walk that is lacking in the west.
- Victoria Walks mapped the [Day hike in the west, Altona Meadows to Williamstown](#) which illustrates the route of the proposed Western Waterway Walk but, it needs further planning and investment to become the signature walk that the west needs and deserves.

### About the Western Waterway Walk

- The Western Waterway Walk is a fantastic 22 km walk that takes in creeks and wetlands that feed into Port Philip Bay. It starts (or finishes) at Aircraft Station in Laverton to then follow Skeleton Creek to the Bay Trail West past Cheetham Wetlands to Truganina Park and continues to Cherry Creek, Altona Coastal Park, Kororoit Creek, Paisley-Challis Wetlands, Jawbone Marine Sanctuary to Williamstown Beach, finishing at Williamstown Station.
- The Western Waterway Walk, that includes sections of the Hobsons Bay Coastal Trail, will be enhanced into an iconic walk of regional significance and appeal.
- The creeks, waterways and coastal parks of the walk provide important habitats for birds and other species. The walk passes significant internationally recognised protected habitat for migratory birds.

- The walk takes in key sites and landmarks such as the Federation Steps that provide panoramic views to the city, the Dandenong Ranges and the You Yangs.
- There are a number of high-quality shorter walks leading off from the walk or nearby, such as: [Skeleton Creek from grasslands to wetlands](#), [Cheetham Wetlands Tower Walk](#), [Altona Skipper Butterfly Loop](#), [Truganina Park](#), and [Truganina Park Trail and Laverton Creek Spit](#).
- When Bay Trail west is extended from Sanctuary Lakes to Point Cook, an offshoot walk to Cheetham Wetland Towers and Point Cook Marine Sanctuary will be possible.
- The planned Hobsons Bay Wetland Centre will be a key asset supporting the walk experience.
- Altona is halfway along the walk and provides opportunities for walkers to stop, swim in warmer months, and/or seek refreshments from local businesses.
- If walkers did not want to complete the full 22 km walk, there are a number of nearby train stations along the route at Altona, Westona, Seaholme and Williamstown Beach.

### Current limitations of the walk

- The walk route from Aircraft Station to Skeleton Creek is unclear and not particularly safe and appealing, although VicRoads is currently installing pedestrian crossing facilities across Central Avenue near Point Cook Road, which will make some improvement.
- Potential walkers, locals and visitors are likely to be unaware of the opportunity that the walk presents.
- There is no wayfinding signage to guide walkers along the whole route so it can be unclear what path to follow at an intersection.
- There is no detailed, consistent interpretive information about the walk, the waterways, flora and fauna and points of interest to inform and inspire visitors.
- Although most of the paths are flat with relatively accessible, good quality surfaces, the walk lacks adequate accessible parking, toilets and other infrastructure to ensure the paths can be easily used by people with disability and their carers.
- There are no amenities on the path (public toilets, water and cafes) between Skeleton Creek and Altona foreshore (a stretch of over 10 km of walking path).
- There are some long stretches on the walk without shade. Hobsons Bay City Council, Melbourne Water, and Friends of Skeleton Creek have been active in planting saplings that will provide shade when they mature however, more investment is needed to enhance the walk, especially during warm weather.
- The Kororoit Creek is prone to flooding on the causeway over Altona Rd, and nearby a short section of the walk borders a small stretch of industrial area that can be unpleasant.



### Creating the Western Waterway Walk

- Create a recognisable brand with wayfinding and interpretive signage to inspire people to walk, engage with and care for the environment.
- Address the flooding over the Altona Road causeway. Conduct feasibility studies for options: either a pedestrian bridge over Kororoit Creek from Altona Coastal Park or a pedestrian bridge over the causeway at Altona Road.
- Complete the missing section of pathway in Altona Coastal Park with a boardwalk over the wetlands following the feasibility studies conducted by Hobsons Bay City Council.



- Install more seating, accessible toilets and drinking water along Skeleton Creek in Altona Meadows (Hobsons Bay) and Sanctuary Lakes (Wyndham CC).
- Undertake tree planting for shade.
- Audit the walk for all abilities access to identify barriers to and then instal appropriate infrastructure to ensure priority sections of the walk meet requirements for accessibility.
- Undertake a Gender Impact Assessment to identify issues that need to be addressed to ensure the walk is welcoming to women and gender diverse people and minimise concerns over personal safety.
- Engage Victoria's First Peoples to provide advice on Aboriginal culture and heritage to ensure the walk meets the needs and expectations of Aboriginal Victorians and State priorities.
- In addition to stakeholders such as Melbourne Water and applicable councils, collaborate with agencies such as Visit Victoria and Victoria Walks to promote the walk more broadly.



Note, the numbers are the points of interest of the current mapped walk from [Altona Meadows to Williamstown](#).

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results>

<sup>ii</sup> *Victorian Walking Survey 2021 (Panel Survey Report)*, Bartley Consulting Pty Ltd, (Nov 2021, prepared for Victoria Walks).

<sup>iii</sup> *Victorian Walking Survey 2021 (Panel Survey Report)*, Bartley Consulting Pty Ltd, (Nov 2021, prepared for Victoria Walks).

<sup>iv</sup> <https://womensagenda.com.au/life/yourground-maps-a-safer-melbourne-for-women-and-gender-diverse-people/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/australian-health-tracker-series/obesity-rate-depends-on-where-you-live>

<sup>vi</sup> *Economic, Social and Environmental Profile: Western Metro Region*, SGS Economics and Planning (April 2019, prepared for Infrastructure Victoria).

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/population-health-systems/victorian-population-health-survey-2017>

<sup>viii</sup> *Economic, Social and Environmental Profile: Western Metro Region*, SGS Economics and Planning (April 2019, prepared for Infrastructure Victoria).