



Victoria Walks Inc.
Level 8, 225 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
P: 03 9662 3975
E: info@victoriawalks.org.au
www.victoriawalks.org.au
Registration No. A0052693U

Submission

Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy, March 2025

Victoria Walks makes the following comments and recommendations in relation to Victoria's drafty 30-year infrastructure strategy (hereafter referred to as 'the Strategy').

Draft recommendation 6 – Make government infrastructure more accessible

Victoria Walks supports this recommendation, which is further detailed as:

“Complete priority public transport stop upgrades to meet legal accessibility requirements and fund further upgrades. Provide better public information on accessibility in government buildings.”

Victoria Walks also notes the Draft Strategy says:

“When tram stops are upgraded to level access, they reduce pedestrian injuries from road accidents by 81%. The government is upgrading 8 stops a year. At this rate, it will take 155 years to complete.”

Public transport accessibility is fundamental for so many Victorians to live their daily lives with dignity. The slow rate of progress in improving accessibility of the public transport system is, frankly, shameful.

Draft recommendation 7 – Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more home choices

Victoria Walks supports this recommendation. Proximity to services is a key determinant of walking for transport.

Victoria Walks notes, however, that this recommendation (consistent with Government policy generally) is predicated on the assumption that more housing close to destinations will mean more walking for transport, with benefits in terms of reduced vehicle driving. Unless there is conscious effort and investment to improve the walkability of these areas, the potential benefits will not be fully realised. See the following section on investment for more on this issue.

Draft recommendation 14 – Make local streets safer for children and communities

Victoria Walks supports this recommendation, which is further detailed as “reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets, starting in places that children often visit including around schools, playgrounds, childcare centres and kindergartens.”

Parental concern for their children’s safety is the key determinant of independent travel by children. While this includes both ‘stranger danger’ and road safety concerns, the evidence suggests that if the road safety concerns are overcome then this is sufficient to deliver higher rates of active travel to school.

In 2024, Victoria Walks commissioned a survey on attitudes towards safer speed limits, which also tested different messaging approaches. This was a 15-minute quantitative survey of 2,258 people representative of the adult population of Victoria by age, gender and location (Glenn, Burt, Oulton, & Rossiter, 2025).

Before receiving any messaging around speeds, respondents were asked for their views on 30 and 40 km/h speed limits in a variety of contexts. In response to these questions, 44% agreed that school zones should have a speed limit of 30 km/h, slightly more than the 41% who disagreed. There was 29% support for extended zones around schools while 54% opposed (although 71% supported 40 km/h limits). The support for 30 km/h in these areas was higher than for other scenarios tested.

After receiving messaging in relation to safer speeds, support for 30 km/h increased to 75% in school zones and 56% in extended zones, while opposition dropped to 16% and 27% respectively (Glenn, Burt, Oulton, & Rossiter, 2025).

While Victoria Walks supports application of 30 km/h limits on local streets around schools etc, safer speeds are also needed on main roads. Only about 13% of Australian road fatalities occur in speed zones of 50 km/h or lower (Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics, 2022).

The Transport Australia Society, a sub-group of Engineers Australia, have released a position paper (Transport Australia Society and Engineers Australia, 2024) recommending a three-tier system of urban speed limits, based on international best practice:

- 30 km/h for ‘streets with moderate to high conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and cars.’
- 50 km/h as the general urban speed limit.
- 70 km/h ‘for a limited number of major traffic routes.’

Such a system would go a long way to improving urban amenity and safety for pedestrians and other road users.

Draft recommendation 16 – help government schools share their grounds

Victoria Walks supports this recommendation.

In addition to the reasons set out in the Draft Strategy, opening school grounds is likely to increase the number of local walking trips.

Schools occupy large suburban sites. Typically, not all school boundaries are on street frontages, so they group with neighbouring residential blocks to form a very large part of the neighbourhood. If the school is then closed to the public, this becomes a significant obstacle to walking in the neighbourhood. It may effectively eliminate the potential to walk between destinations on either side of the school.

Investing in and planning for walking

It is disappointing that the draft Strategy does not include any recommendations around investment in walking.

The Strategy includes recommendations for investment in a wide range of infrastructure including recommendations specific to public transport and cycling. It is not clear why walking has been neglected.

Walking has a wide range of societal benefits. The Strategy itself recognises:

“For every \$1 invested in walking and cycling infrastructure, the community receives \$13 in health, economic and environmental benefits. Investing in walking and cycling can reduce noise and pollution while lowering the risk of conditions like heart disease, stroke and diabetes. By encouraging healthy lifestyles, infrastructure can help reduce demand on public hospitals.” (page 52)

State government investment in walking is sporadic and spread across a range of contexts, often as part of broader initiatives. More focused investment is needed.

In the lead up to the 2022 Victorian election, Victoria Walks developed detailed proposals for [investment in walking](#). This included inviting Victorian councils to put forward projects requiring funding. Just over half responded, along with two water authorities, to provide 522 walking projects worth \$469 million. This analysis indicated that around \$235 million per annum is required to meet the demand for walking investment.

Recommendations

1. Victoria Walks supports the Strategy’s draft recommendations 6, 7, 14 and 16.
2. In addition, Victoria Walks recommends that the final strategy include:
 - a. A recommendation supporting investment in walking
 - b. A recommendation to review speed limits on urban roads with speed limits of 60 km/h or higher.

Victoria Walks would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions in relation to this submission. Please contact Duane Burt, Principal Policy Advisor, [REDACTED]

References

Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics. (2022). *Road trauma Australia 2021 statistical summary*. Canberra: BITRE.

Glenn, E., Burt, D., Oulton, G., & Rossiter, B. (2025). *Safer speeds on local streets: Messaging survey report*. Melbourne: Victoria Walks.

Transport Australia Society and Engineers Australia. (2024). *Towards safer and more liveable urban streets: Discussion Paper* . Melbourne: Engineers Australia.