

Encouraging Walking And Cycling: Focus Group

Final Report

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2009
WG 3345

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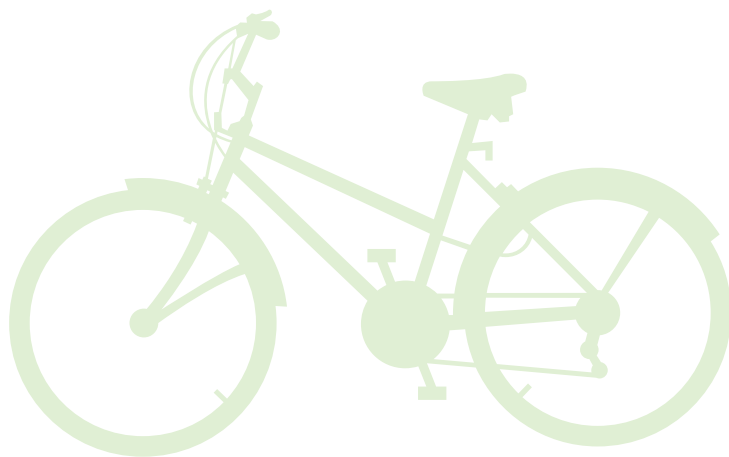


contents

This report was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Transport and is made available for the purposes of promoting public discussion. However, the views expressed in the report are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Transport.

It should be noted that the quotations in the report are exact transcriptions of what was said by participants during a focus group session. Because quotations reflect actual speech patterns, the language is often informal and punctuation is included only at obvious pauses.

1.0	Executive summary	1
2.0	Background and objectives	4
3.0	Methodology	6
4.0	Main findings	8
4.1	Attitudes and behaviour towards modes of transport	9
4.2	General benefits of walking and cycling	14
4.3	Specific barriers to walking and cycling	16
4.4	Respondents' suggestions for ways to encourage them to walk or cycle more	24
5.0	Summary and recommendations	29
5.1	Recommendations for specific target groups	32
	Appendix 1: Discussion guideline	33
	Appendix 2: Stimulus material	35





1.0 Executive Summary

Fourteen group discussions were held with Victorians who walk and cycle from a range of different walks of life. To better understand the barriers to walking and cycling for transport, the groups were structured to include: Victorians living in rural areas, Melburnians, people from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds (DCALB), people in different age groups (including young people aged 11–15).

Main findings

- Respondents, by their nature, were all positive towards walking and cycling – even if only for recreational purposes. Those who currently use these modes instead of cars and public transport do so for:
 - fitness and wellbeing
 - predictable travelling times
 - low cost
 - pleasant surroundings
 - convenience
 - low environmental impact.
- The car is the *accepted* mode of transport for almost every type of trip. It is part of the fabric of Australian society and bigger and/or better cars are currently something that most people aspire to.
- There are many barriers to replacing other modes of transport with walking and cycling. These fall into three categories – **physical**, **emotional** and **practical**.

Physical barriers

- **Time** – regular walkers/cyclists weigh up the length of time a trip would take by some other mode of transport when choosing to walk or cycle. A trip length of 45 minutes seems to be the key barrier, which translates to a distance of about 3-5 kilometres for walkers or 7-20 kilometres for cyclists. Beyond that, other modes of transport will almost certainly be faster.
- **Weather** – even diehard commuter walkers and cyclists can be put off by inclement weather (cold and wet conditions are the greatest deterrents, but extreme heat can also pose problems in arriving at the destination in good physical condition).
- **Pathways and road surfaces** – the lack of dedicated walking and cycling tracks or lanes, poor road and path surfaces where they do exist and poor lighting all act as deterrents with some commuters saying they have taken up walking or cycling when new or improved pathways and lanes have been built.

Emotional barriers

- **Safety** – this is an issue not only in terms of personal security and safety from others (parents are particularly protective of their children) but also the fear of injury. It extends amongst cyclists and pedestrians to knowledge of road rules and the fear that doing the wrong thing (unwittingly) might endanger themselves and other road users.
- **Boredom** – travelling the same route can lead to tedium and this is more likely where fewer dedicated bike lanes and walking paths exist. In turn, people are more likely to make excuses to avoid the activity.
- **Inferiority** – walking and cycling are considered to be excellent recreational pursuits but *poor relations* to the car as a mode of transport.

Practical barriers

- **Flexible travel plans** – the need to run multiple errands in the course of one trip, may make walking and cycling inconvenient, depending on the distances to be travelled, purpose of the errand (especially if carrying heavy or bulky items or other passengers) or the likelihood of being stranded with a bicycle. Related to this are the difficulties faced by cyclists wanting to combine cycling with other modes of transport – trams, trains and buses – that do not cater well to carrying bikes.
- **Changing and storage facilities** – depending on the purpose of the trip, the lack of changing and storage facilities at the destination point can make it unfeasible to use cycling and walking as modes of transport.

Respondents were encouraged to suggest ways that might encourage them to walk or cycle more. Their main suggestions fell into three areas:

- **Infrastructure** – ideally respondents would like to separate bikes from cars and pedestrians, but understand that the costs of doing this are high. They believe that there is scope to improve existing paths and bike lanes by providing better signage, lighting and consistent markings and to link them together (or extend them in country areas).

Respondents also suggested making it simpler to use mixed modes of travel and to make it easier to travel with a bicycle on public transport. Respondents also suggested communicating bike regulations and better enforcement of these, as well as developing good practice guidelines for pedestrians and cyclists on shared paths.
- **Promotion** – while awareness of specific promotional activities is low, respondents noticed communications campaigns in television, radio and in printed matter and believe there is a need for them. They also feel that workplaces, community hubs and governments should consider providing incentives to those who choose to walk and cycle.

The Department of Transport, formerly the Department of Infrastructure, commissioned a series of 14 focus groups in July 2007. The Wallis Consulting Group was contracted to conduct the interviews and prepare this report, which was written in 2007.

The purpose of the research is to better understand the motivations and barriers to walking and cycling for transport in Victoria.



- **Community support** – respondents believe that workplaces, government, community organisations, educational institutes and other destination points have a large part to play in helping to promote the benefits of walking and cycling over cars. This could be done in a variety of ways, from providing changing and storing facilities to giving different messages to the public about the merits of cycling and walking.

Recommendations

While some of the barriers to cycling and walking are difficult to overcome, none are insurmountable. Our recommendations for ways of overcoming them, based on the attitudes and beliefs of group respondents, are:

- **Physical** – improving infrastructure, in particular focussing on upgrading existing walking and cycling paths as well as bike lanes. For the former, clear signage, development of a code of conduct and improved lighting would be well received. For bike lanes, consistency in road markings throughout the state would be welcomed as would separating motorised from non-motorised traffic wherever possible.
- **Emotional** – in order to build confidence, helping Victorians to hone their skills both as walkers and cyclists and fostering these pursuits (even if for recreational purposes) would send appropriate signals. Encouraging better knowledge of the road rules (especially those relating to cyclists) would also be a positive step.

Some Victorians face the physical barrier of personal fitness. For these people, gradually getting them used to walking or cycling short distances and/or for recreational purposes provides a means of communicating with them about the possibilities of using these modes in lieu of motorised transport.

- **Practical** – encourage workplaces, educational institutes and other destination points to provide changing and storage facilities as well as incentives to arrive by foot or on a bike.

The previous recommendations apply to all respondents. There are some specific barriers to overcome for certain interest groups and others that emerged as part of the research process:

- **People from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds** – generally, these Victorians have fond memories of walking and cycling as children and young people. However, the key barrier to them using these modes of transport in preference to a car (which is aspirational and a sign of success) is to demonstrate that these alternative modes are not inferior to the car. There are also issues relating to arriving at the destination appropriately dressed, meaning that changing facilities are particularly important to this group.
- **Newcomers to an area** – walking and cycling are excellent ways to become familiar with a new environment and new residents should be encouraged to use these. Also, the opportunity to become part of the local community would be well received.
- **Different age groups** – young people are less likely to walk and cycle regularly than their parents and grandparents. Walking, in particular, is viewed as slow and boring. Communicating the benefits of these pursuits and overcoming the negative associations may lead to more young people developing walking and cycling habits.
- **Parents** – this group exhibits fears about the safety of their children from predatory behaviour. Fostering activities that are supervised by adults would help them to encourage their children to walk and cycle more.
- **Students** – members of this group are a clear target for walking and cycling given their age, fitness and (generally) lack of money. The key barriers they face are practical ways to get changed or store their equipment and clothing, as well as a lack of the necessary infrastructure to ensure that they do not need to walk and cycle on unmarked public roads.





2.0 Background and Objectives

The Victorian Government has developed major policy documents and issued strategic statements¹ that support Victorians in changing their behaviour regarding their mode of travel, in particular, to encourage them to use motor vehicles less and other transport modes more. The Walking and Cycling Branch, among other things, encourages and supports Victorians to walk and cycle for more of their travel.

The construction and maintenance of most walking and cycling paths on local roads has been the province of local government. Infrastructure requirements of pedestrians and cyclists on state roads, falls under the auspices of the Victorian Government, specifically VicRoads. The Walking and Cycling Branch has a communications and facilitation mandate and therefore wants to use its resources as effectively as possible to assist in implementing the government's overall strategy.

The purpose of this study is to explore the emotional barriers and factors that either prevent or encourage walking and cycling for transport.

The objective is to understand the motivations and barriers to walking and cycling in the Victorian community. This knowledge will provide direction on who to target and how to support changes in people's travel behaviour.

The findings in this report are qualitative and exploratory in nature and conclusions have been drawn based on the prevailing themes that emerge from the information captured.

¹ e.g. *Melbourne 2030* (2002); *Linking Melbourne: Metropolitan Transport Plan* (2004); *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* (2006). These plans are supported by a number of initiatives from statutory authorities (VicHealth, VicRoads), Local Government (VLGA and individual councils), NGOs (Bicycle Victoria) and private companies (RACV) – all of which have published strategies and plans to promote these activities within the Victorian community.





3.0 Methodology

A qualitative approach was undertaken to explore the barriers to cycling and walking. A total of 14 focus groups were conducted between 17–27 July 2007.

Six focus groups were conducted with walkers, six with cyclists and two with children who cycled. These were stratified by age, gender, location and experience. Groups were moderated by the Wallis Consulting Group and ran for approximately one and a half hours each.

Respondents were split into three age groups. Members of the adult groups were aged 18–35 years and 36–55 years. Children were aged between 11 and 15 years. Given their age, parental approval was sought for all children to participate.

Locations were split broadly between Melbourne and rural locations. The rural locations were Ararat and Myrtleford.

The criteria for *experience* were different for cyclists and walkers. *Experience* in cycling was related to the frequency and type of cycling undertaken, with people who cycled regularly and/or who used their bicycles as modes of transport being considered to be *experienced*. Experienced walkers consisted of participants who had lived in their area for two years or more, as this indicated the level of familiarity with the areas they were most likely to walk around.

In addition four groups were conducted with Victorians from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds (DCALB) – all of whom were born outside Australia.

The planned group structure is shown in the table below:

	Melbourne	Rural Centre
Walking		
Lived in current area/home for more than 2 years	1 male (18–35), 1 female (DCALB) (36–55)	1 female (18–35)
Lived in current area/home for less than 2 years	1 female (36–55), 1 male (DCALB) (18–35)	1 male (36–55)
Cycling		
Experienced cyclists	1 female (18–35)	1 male/female mixed (36–55)
Inexperienced cyclists	1 male (36–55)	1 male/female mixed (18–35)
DCALB	1 female (mix of experience) (18–35) 1 male (mix of experience) (36–55)	
Children	1 group aged 11–15 (cyclists mixed abilities)	1 group aged 11–15 (cyclists mixed abilities)
TOTAL	9 groups	5 groups

Recruitment was carried out by Cooper Symons and Associates using a network of recruiters to find suitable participants. The criteria used to determine suitable respondents were as follows:

- **walkers** – hardly ever cycle but walk at least once a week for exercise, running errands, etc. They may or may not be “serious” walkers but walking must be a mode of transport or exercise for them at least sometimes.
- **experienced cyclists** – *cycle regularly* – it is up to respondents to define regularly, but they are enthusiastic and would cycle probably at least once a week, or may cycle to work, etc.
- **inexperienced cyclists** – know how to cycle and may cycle with children, for example, from time to time but would not do so very regularly and may or may not have a bike at home. They may cycle for recreation from time to time.
- **DCALB** – those who were brought up overseas in a “different” culture and who may or may not have any experience on bikes. For example, in China and Vietnam many people use bikes but in many Muslim countries it is more unusual for women to cycle.

It became clear that some of the specifications needed to be relaxed as there was a considerable amount of overlap in persons who walk and/or cycle. In addition, the plan to talk with people new to their surroundings versus those who had lived in their area was relaxed so that, for the *walking* groups these did not become major recruitment criteria.

A discussion guideline was developed by Wallis Consulting in collaboration with the Department of Transport. The guideline was used as a tool to ensure that topics of interest were covered with the different audiences (e.g. cyclists, walkers, children, DCALB, etc.). The discussion guideline is in Appendix 1. Respondents were shown a set of photographs of people walking and cycling in a range of different settings. These were used to stimulate debate and are included in Appendix 2.

The findings in this report are qualitative and exploratory in nature and conclusions have been drawn based on the prevailing themes that emerge from the information captured.



4.0 Main Findings

The report is divided into the following sections:

- 4.1 Attitudes and behaviour towards modes of transport
- 4.2 General benefits of walking and cycling
- 4.3 Specific barriers to walking and cycling
- 4.4 Respondents' suggestions for ways to encourage them to walk or cycle more

4.1

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS MODES OF TRANSPORT

By the nature of the sampling for this research, focus groups incorporate a broad range of people who walk and cycle with different degrees of regularity and competence. Nonetheless, cars are the preferred mode of transport. However, as the sample structure suggests, there were also proponents and exponents of walking and cycling.

4.1.1

The Australian love affair with the car

The importance of the car and its entrenched nature in Australian society cannot be underestimated if Victorians are to be encouraged to swap this mode of transport for cycling and walking. Many prefer to use their cars on their regular trips when going to work, shopping and travelling with children. The perceived benefits of using a car for these trips are compelling for these regular drivers and include:

- safety (from other people and other cars)
- comfort
- speed and efficiency
- ability to cover long distances in a reasonably short space of time
- ability to carry heavy items – e.g. groceries, work files, school books, etc.
- arrival at destination looking and feeling fresh
- desirable – cars are aspirational objects and are used as rewards
- in some cases (especially rural locations) they are the only feasible option.

The word *lazy* is often used in this context, because in all of these listed benefits except the last case, it would be feasible to walk or cycle instead of using a car.

“In the summer I used to ride my bike every morning, but now because it’s winter it’s really cold and it’s frosty and I just drive my car. From the gym it’s a bit over a kilometre. I go at 6.00 [am] in the morning and go until about 7–7.15 [am] then get ready to go to school. Then from home I’m probably a bit lazy. I drive my car from home to school which is probably about 800 metres!”

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MYRTLEFORD

“I’m a bit lazy there, I could walk to the train station but it’s just all too hard in the morning. I’d rather have an extra half an hour in my bed...”

— DCALB, FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

For some, especially Australians born overseas, owning and using a car also offers an element of status over those who use bikes as a means of transport.

“Sometimes people don’t ride a bicycle because they’re just scared of other people they’re making fun of them or something like that... maybe seeing people riding bicycles as low. Maybe they think it’s a prestige thing...”

— DCALB, MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

All of these benefits are seen to outweigh the disadvantages of car transportation (e.g. cost, environmental damage, traffic congestion, etc.) so that the decision to use one’s car is rarely questioned. It is a rite of passage for young people for whom attaining a driving licence and owning (or having access to) a car signals the beginning of a new freedom.

This quote sums up feelings towards cars:

“I think it’s a time management problem. I think a bit more in a rush to get to work quick and biking would take a lot of time because we want to go for the easiest convenient option which is just getting in your car and driving to work for me. I don’t want to go through the hassle. I can ride, I can bike or cycle to work but I don’t because I can’t be bothered changing at work. I don’t want to bring the clothes with me. I don’t have time. It takes longer for me to ride so I think for me it’s just it takes too long.”

— DCALB, FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



4.1.2

Public transport

Public transport users choose this mode because of convenience, efficiency and low cost. However, users have many complaints about logistics and most respondents say they would use it more if it were more reliable (that is, ran more frequently to more places and connected around the city better).

People who live and/or work close to reliable public transport sometimes use this regularly and either walk or drive to their local stop or station. Like driving, public transport can allow a user to get from A to B fairly quickly, it enables them to travel long distances and offers a degree of comfort compared with being exposed to the elements on foot or bicycle.

In addition, in comparison to driving, public transport can be much cheaper and avoid many of the traffic issues (such as traffic jams and lack of car parking) experienced by motorists.

"I work near here (City) go to uni in Hawthorn where I also live so I tend to walk to the train station to get to work and walk to the shops, walk to the gym a lot, it's within about three or four streets of my house. Wouldn't drive...it's slower, more expensive and there's never any parking."

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"I mainly bike to school these days, just because I've realised how much you pay for public transport adds up, and you know, you can spend the money on chocolate or beer or something and then work it off on the bike."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Those who regularly drive and/or use public transport tend to view walking and cycling as a recreational activity with a variety of emotional, physical and social benefits rather than as a potential mode of transport.

4.1.3

Walking and cycling

Those who choose to walk or cycle to their regular destinations such as work, school or local shopping centres do so because these modes of transport offer:

- predictable travelling times
- environmental benefits
- health and wellbeing benefits.

Those who shun these modes of transport do so on the grounds of practical problems.

Some potential commuters see the barriers to using these modes as being insurmountable, whereas those who have actually taken up walking and cycling are able to list many practical ways in which these have been overcome. Examples are carrying groceries in backpacks when visiting the shops, taking a change of clothes when cycling to work, and developing safer routes away from traffic when cycling to school. Respondents marvelled at the tenacity and perseverance shown by regular commuters and clearly took mental notes as walkers and cyclists described their actions.

"I recently got a basket put on my bike and that was one reason why I wasn't using it as much as I should because I just got sick of carrying heavy backpacks and things like that so I got a basket put on so that was one thing that was stopping me in the past."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"I have to have proper walking shoes if I'm going to do a decent walk. So if I'm, lets say it's a nice evening and I think oh I might walk home. I can't really. I'll get halfway and think this is so uncomfortable to walk in, just with the hard surfaces. I work in inner city and live there. And I just, I mean that's just a very small thing. But unless I have proper shoes I can't walk a decent amount. I can't spontaneously go for a walk unless I'm prepared. So I find with walking for me, I have to be a bit organised."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



"I bought really good runners. And I keep one at home and some at work so that just in case. That I can do something like walk home and only have one pair. Like one of them got soaked the other week, so I've got an extra pair at work just so, just in case."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE.

These themes naturally led respondents to discuss the importance of competence and habit in cycling or walking for transport, rather than leisure/recreation.

4.1.4

The importance of habit

People who ride or walk as a mode of transport talk about *getting into the habit*. This conversation between respondents demonstrates this point.

"Didn't they say you have to develop a habit. I think the hardest thing is developing a habit.

Yep, habit in life.

And they say it takes six weeks to get a habit going no matter what it is but then quite often you get two or three weeks into something and go oh isn't this great, and then suddenly you think oh god it's four weeks and I haven't done anything you know? So it's, yeah it's just putting it into action and bringing your shoes or whatever."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"Yeah. It is a real discipline though you know to fit it in. Activity. It's so easy just to be so busy at the computer and in the car or whatever. It's something that you really have to plan for you know."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"It's a bit like swimming if you don't know how to do it, you're not going to."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

It seems clear that Victorians are not going to consider using a bike or walking as a mode of transport if they are not experienced walkers/cyclists. Even one-off activities such as Ride to Work Day attract recreational cyclists. It seems that most people participating in this event are regular cyclists and that it does not encourage non-cyclists to participate. Therefore, it is important to ensure that Victorians are active cyclists and walkers, even if only for recreational purposes, in order to encourage them to substitute motorised travel with these modes of transport.

4.1.5

Walking specifically

People walk for a variety of purposes that include getting from point A to point B and recreation. Regular walkers come from a variety of backgrounds. Those who walk frequently to their regular destination out of choice tend to focus strongly on the benefits of walking – physical as well as emotional, social, and practical benefits to some extent. While the environmental benefits of walking are acknowledged they are seen as secondary benefits rather than a key driver for choosing to walk.

"Well it's benefits for yourself and the environment if you leave your car at home and walk."

— DCALB, MALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE (EMERGED IN THE CLOSING MINUTES OF THE GROUP)

"The environment. Like if you don't go by your car or whatever like it helps pollution in the city."

— DCALB, MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"Well I guess you are saving the environment besides like not driving."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE



Many of the regular walkers choose to walk to their usual destinations such as work, school or the local shops. Far from focussing on the disadvantages of walking as a means of travelling (e.g. arriving looking dishevelled, not being able to carry a lot, etc.), these people have ways of overcoming these disadvantages (e.g. taking a backpack or shopping trolley to the shops to carry groceries home, taking a change of clothes in a bag to have fresh clothes for work).

Walking is seen as a very enjoyable activity with a variety of benefits, as long as it is undertaken when the person has time to enjoy it during conditions that are favourable to walking (e.g. fine weather). While the primary purpose of walking is seen as physical (fitness and weight benefits) there is a heavy emphasis on the emotional and social benefits as well, and many walkers do their walking with someone else. These emotional and social benefits are diminished for walkers if the walk is purpose-driven rather than for recreation, as walking to run errands or as a mode of transport is a more solitary pursuit and involves routine and discipline.

"I don't think it's so much time as just being with other people you're generally happier when you're with other people."

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MYRTLEFORD

Regular walkers (both "recreational" and "commuter") often mention that their upbringing had emphasised walking as a positive activity and that this attitude continues into later life. Those born overseas, especially in Europe and Greater Asia, point out that everyone walks regularly in their country of origin (mainly out of necessity) and that walking is regarded very positively.

Thus most regular walkers focus strongly on the benefits of walking regularly. The exception to this rule are some children and younger DCALB walkers who

often walk regularly out of necessity rather than choice (i.e. can't afford a car, cannot drive a car). For these people, walking is often the only option if they are to get from one point to another. Rather than focussing on the benefits of walking, some of these walkers aspire to a car to get them to their destination.

While acknowledging the physical benefits of walking, some choose to walk only irregularly, focussing instead on all of the disadvantages inherent in this activity, e.g. cold and raining outside, feeling lazy, need to get to destination quickly, cannot be bothered. For these people the challenge is in embracing the emotional benefits of walking (the rational benefits are already acknowledged), so that they are more motivated to walk. Many regular recreational walkers choose not to walk as a mode of transport for a variety of reasons. Time is a key factor, thus if there is a need to get from A to B within a certain time and the distance precludes this, then other modes of transport will be chosen. The need to arrive looking fresh is also a deterrent, so that poor weather and long distances can also become barriers.

4.1.6

Cycling specifically

While nearly every respondent walks at least sometimes, regular cyclists are a more specific group (some respondents never ride a bike – not only because they don't own one, but also because they can't ride). Most regular cyclists have been riding since they were children. Those who did not grow up riding a bike are reluctant to take it up as adults and do not know how to go about it.

Most cyclists in this study use their bikes primarily for recreational purposes and to do small errands rather than cycling to work every day.



"... Yes, I do have a bike but I'm just a bit lazy during the week to ride my bike to work because I usually do long hours at work and it's kind of really late when I ride my bike but I do ride my bike on the weekends, especially I usually go down to Williamstown on the train and then ride my bike around there and along the bay and that's about it... it pretty much sits at home during the week. I just don't get time to ride my bike during the week..."

— DCALB, MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Many respondents use their bicycles regularly because they enjoy it and because they perceive a variety of physical and emotional benefits in doing so. Some see the benefits of cycling as less social than walking, because they feel that cycling lends itself less easily to conversations with others on the road or pathway.

"Yeah well that's half the reason why I started cycling because you have to pay for the gym, you have to pay for like, I just bought like a second hand bike."

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

There are also environmental benefits however, like walking, these are considered to be secondary to other benefits.

"What I'm really keen on is the electric bike which happens to be a bit of a passion of mine in terms of my company markets one and it's an option for people who wish to cycle, who want to go longer distances than perhaps pedal power will allow them to. And you know recharging the batteries with green power for instance is very environmentally friendly."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"And they say if you're not using your car then you're not using any fuel. It's good for the environment to ride."

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT.

(NOTE THIS WAS TOWARDS THE END OF THE GROUP)

"There's a lot of people who are environmentally, basically, doing it for one reason because they're concerned about their fossil footprint, you know, and what they do every day. So if they're able to ride to work safely I think a lot more people would do it."

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Cycling is seen to have the disadvantages of walking and some specific additional problems, including needing fitness and technical competence, the need to use public roads rather than shared paths if commuting and problems associated with storing equipment at the destination point.



4.2

GENERAL BENEFITS OF WALKING AND CYCLING

There are a number of factors that encourage people to walk and cycle regularly – whether as a mode of transport or for leisure and recreational purposes. There are also some benefits specific to walking and cycling independently. Focussing on these benefits in communications is likely to tempt 'lapsed' walkers or cyclists to consider taking up these activities.

4.2.1

The benefits of walking and cycling

Generally both walking and cycling offer:

- The ability to explore new or different surroundings and see them from a different perspective. Cycling offers the added ability to cover more territory over the same amount of time as walking.
- The ability to maintain fitness and wellbeing and, where dedicated bike lanes and walking tracks exist:
 - the potential for social interaction
 - the ability to walk and cycle in pleasant surroundings.

4.2.1.1 The ability to explore new or different surroundings

In designing the focus group plan for this study it was thought that lack of familiarity with one's environment might impact negatively on walking and possibly cycling activity.

Respondents say that the reverse is true and some people new to their areas espouse the benefits of these pursuits in helping them to become familiar with their new surroundings. Once familiar with an area on foot or bike, the habits of walking and cycling are likely to continue, especially if facilities are within a short distance of the person's new home.

"I moved to where I am now about 18 months ago. So I started walking just to sort of get to know the area and stuff and since then it's just, yeah it's so handy to everything. I've pretty much made it routine that come the weekend I don't use my car at all. I walk everywhere for chores, for recreation, to meet people, it's yeah, all pretty much on foot."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"I'm doing walking especially to see new places, but also it's about exercising... And I don't have a pushbike yet but I'm planning to buy one and then I want to do all different trips around so that I can actually see more of Melbourne in one day on the pushbike."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

4.2.1.2 The ability to maintain health and fitness

A key factor that encourages regular walking and cycling appears to be a recognition of the physical benefits. Nearly all regular walkers and cyclists point out that the primary benefits for them are health-related via improved physical fitness and/or weight control/loss. Some people born overseas also talk about walking assisting digestion and "keeping the blood running".

"...I probably walk at least probably an hour a day and it's to keep my blood running..."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Some younger people are also encouraged to walk and cycle regularly to enhance their own body image.

"...Well I think in the teenagers they sort of are a bit more into it because they want to keep fit because of image has a lot to do with it..."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

A close secondary benefit of walking and cycling is the emotional benefit that is seen to derive from these activities. Regular walkers talk about a sense of wellbeing, feeling alive, feeling energised and working through stress when they walk regularly.

"...If I've got nothing planned then just pretty much go and just feel fresh and feel that, if you want to spend time for yourself you've just go and do things..."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE



"...every day I walk 40 minutes so it's four kilometres for me and I like, when I see the different flowers, houses, I get energy, so that's it, make me fresh and stress less that sort of thing. I meet sometimes many people, say hello to people and I saw few houses, different houses when I walking otherwise we can't see anything when we go for by car you know..."

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Some children use walking and cycling as an opportunity to escape a tense situation at home, providing them with an opportunity to think on their own or even experience some welcome independence from their parents.

"...Oh [I walk] just around the creek like because I've got a really big family and a lot's been happening over like the year like my brother has cancer. So I just like try and get out and stay away from the family and that..."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

4.2.1.3 The potential for social interaction

For some, there are also important social benefits that derive from regular walking and, to a lesser degree, cycling. For some people who live alone, or who are home alone during the day, a walk or cycle to the shops or to the park facilitates a sense of connection with the outside world, with nature and with the neighbourhood. For others who walk or cycle for recreation, this activity facilitates an opportunity to connect with another person – a family member or a good friend.

"...Once a week actually but I do it because my son takes the dog for walks so I join him for like quality time, that's the only time I get once a week..."

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Further compelling benefits of walking and cycling revolve around practical considerations. Some find it easier to walk or cycle to the local shops or train station than to battle traffic and try to find a car park. Some have dogs that need to be walked every day.

4.2.1.4 The ability to walk and cycle in pleasant surroundings

Generally speaking, Melbourne's bike and walking paths are complimented for offering excellent recreational and commuter facilities. People born overseas, especially in Asia, were much impressed by the opportunities in Melbourne.

"In Hong Kong there are not much trees and stuff and here they have a lot of grass and trees. It makes you feel more comfortable to walk."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

However, the story is different outside the city. While Myrtleford boasts a rail trail, several other tracks and excellent bushwalking nearby, Ararat is a small town with limited facilities for cycling and walking. Even tracks around Myrtleford pose problems for walkers.

"There's plenty of walking where we are. We've got the pine forest right across the road so there's plenty of tracks, but I won't walk up there on my own... It's a bit scary. I don't know, I'm just too frightened I guess. In summer there are snakes."

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, MYRTLEFORD

"We just got bored because we were walking the same streets all the time. We tried to vary it, but there's only a certain amount."

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT



4.3

SPECIFIC BARRIERS TO WALKING AND CYCLING

When choosing a mode of transport, Victorians consider the time the journey will take in both directions and the errands that need to be conducted en route, the time of day that they are travelling, the need to carry and store equipment and how they will feel on the outward and return journeys. Factors that can impact on these fall into three categories:

- physical barriers
- emotional barriers
- practical barriers.

They have an impact on the choice of mode and the likelihood that cycling or walking will be overlooked. These barriers are detailed in this section.

4.3.1

Physical barriers to cycling and walking

Physical barriers fall under the following headings:

- length of the trip
- weather
- physical attributes of roads, paths, bike lanes and other items of infrastructure encountered on the trip
- topography (especially for cycling).

4.3.1.1 Trip length and distance

The length of the trip is a key determinant of whether cycling or walking will be chosen over other modes of transport. While there are some die-hards who walk or cycle considerable distances, most are not prepared to walk or cycle for substantially longer than the trip would take by alternative modes. In practice this means about 45 minutes on foot or about an hour by bicycle. For most people of average fitness and ability, this translates to a walking distance of three to five kilometres or a cycling distance of seven to 20 kilometres. These distances confirm previous data on patterns of transport usage by Melburnians.²

Sometimes even the most enthusiastic walkers and cyclists choose to undertake these activities only in their spare time for recreation because they lack the time to walk or cycle to their destination (or in the case of families, several destinations).

"I suppose society sort of dictates how it is being drummed into us it's got to be quicker more efficient it seems to be the general message..."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

"Yeah, I feel sometimes people want to ride a bicycle and the only thing is they don't get the time because they're always in a hurry in the morning and when they come home from work and they are tired so they, so don't have any time, that's the one reason I feel..."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"It's those middle distances that are a bit like, if you

like, say you're six kilometres from work, like I'm not going to walk six kilometres in the morning, or like seven kilometres and then I've gotta get up like 45 minutes earlier, but I could ride, but I'm still gonna get sweaty like it's not, it's not really a riding distance you know, and if there's no community public transport then you're tossing up between your riding and your car so you just take your car."

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST/WALKER, MELBOURNE

4.3.1.2 Weather

Cyclists acknowledge that cycling is an outdoor pursuit, but are less likely to venture out when the weather is poor. This is not only for the obvious reasons relating to the discomfort of getting cold and/or wet, but also due to other practical matters such as shelter for bikes and equipment. Weather can be a particular deterrent in country areas where walkers and cyclists are even more exposed to extremes than they are in the city.

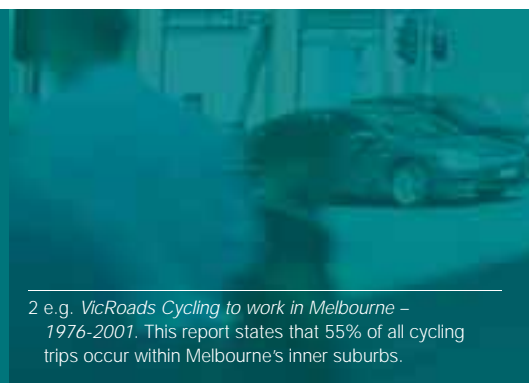
"Up here, winters and our summers are very extreme and big temperatures where they're a lot of time at minus and a lot of times we're very, very high 40's and extremely hot and extremely cold, it can stop you if you want it to, but I live in Bright and I commute probably on nigh 60 kilometres a day coming to and from there."

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST/WALKER, MYRTLEFORD

Cyclists particularly dislike bike racks that are not protected from the weather. The rationale is that most cyclists store their bikes under cover at home to protect them and keep them clean. Having their bikes exposed to the weather all day may damage bicycle components, saddles and even lead to the frame rusting.

"And also sometimes there's lots of bike racks but not shelter which I find is a bit annoying sometimes, like you don't want to, you start to put up with it but the bike getting wet, you know, it's not going to encourage you to keep bringing it there if it's gonna get rusty."

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



² e.g. VicRoads *Cycling to work in Melbourne – 1976–2001*. This report states that 55% of all cycling trips occur within Melbourne's inner suburbs.

4.3.1.3 Infrastructure

Respondents believe there are many inherent problems with cycling and walking on or along public roads. Car fumes are often a deterrent to walking or cycling on busy roads. In addition to the unpleasantness, breathing in these fumes is considered to be hazardous to one's health.

"I like to cycle down the Yarra because of the scenery and you know I could round Albert Park and enjoy that but actually to just ride on a road with cars and down a freeway or whatever else, it's like, not quite enjoyable in a cycling sense like if you don't have to do it then I'd much prefer to be in a park or somewhere where you can, I don't know, with trees or with an actual bike track where you feel as though you are actually getting something about being out and being in the environment feeling like fresh and not, you know, don't have car fumes everywhere, feeling like you're not enjoying being outside. I think part of it is being outdoors."

— FEMALE, 18–35, EXPERIENCED CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"Also for pollution even if you're cycling with the car is right in your face... Sometimes it's not a healthy thing to (do), no it's not it's actually. Worse for your health you know."

— DCALB, MALE, 36–55, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"And I just feel like I need to walk somewhere where I feel it's the fresh air because it's coming from the bay. I would walk around the park but I don't like walking in the streets when there are cars driving because I don't like ...breathing the fumes and all that."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Many agree that cars and bicycles do not mix well on the roads. Many potential cyclists are very concerned about cars not seeing them or even worse, cars ignoring their presence on the roads. Many cyclists feel very vulnerable being on the road with cars.

"A lot of motorists, even if there is a bike path on the road, they won't respect the fact that you're there and the road's for them, not for bikes."

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

In addition, with their motorists' hats on, some respondents do not believe that bikes should be on main roads (and definitely should not have their own lanes and dedicated space) in rush hour.

"There's no room, I mean certainly in peak hours bikes should be banned."

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST/WALKER, MELBOURNE

While many parts of Melbourne cater well for cyclists with dedicated bike paths and bike lanes, other parts of Victoria are lagging behind. In Ararat for instance, while there are some bike lanes (although many disappear at intersections, forcing cyclists onto the roads), there is a shortage of bike paths in the town itself.

"... You can be going along, if there's a bike track and then you suddenly you get to a point where there's no footpaths and then you are forced out on to the road and you know, and they've got open drains and things like that too so then you're forced to ride out on to the road..."

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT

In addition, rural cyclists often have to cycle on main highways with cars and trucks travelling at 100 kilometres per hour, or on gravel roads. The distances between home, work or school may also be quite large.

"There's no verge on the road...riding my bike on a lot of the roads outside of the town, I don't feel safe, because you can't trust the motorists is going to be doing the right thing, even though you, as the bicyclist, is trying to keep as far left as you can without getting into the gravel."

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST/WALKER, MYRTLEFORD

There is also evidence to suggest that some rural workplaces may be slower to encourage walking and cycling to work than workplaces in the city, because they often don't provide support – for example, no showers or changing areas.

"Depending on their profession, some people might want a shower at the end, and you're not going to get it here, I would only know two places where you could actually do that."

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST/WALKER, MYRTLEFORD



While bike lanes are seen to assist in alleviating the problems associated with drivers and cyclists sharing public roads, anecdotal evidence suggests that they do not provide the level of security they were designed to. Cars often don't notice bike lanes (signage for bike lanes may be hidden behind trees for instance) and drive in them. Cyclists are also still vulnerable to parked cars opening doors.

Many parents will not let their children cycle on the roads at all – whether or not there are bike lanes. While children are allowed to cycle on footpaths, they still need to cross roads, some of which are busy but all of which present possible danger. Many parents do not trust that their children have sufficient road skills or savvy to be able to handle busy traffic situations.

Bike lanes are also problematic in that they are inconsistent – with different council areas marking them differently and many lanes stopping or changing suddenly.

“When I first came here I actually looked for some of the bike paths and I noticed none of them really link up, there seem to be quite a few but they're all you know, there's a whole suburb separating them or something.”

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST/WALKER, MELBOURNE

There are particular problems attached to turning on public roads – both left and right.

“My major issue of riding on the road is right hand turns, when you've gotta prop in the middle of the road, where you don't see the car, you've gotta sit there with your arm out and then your perception's off because you're used to thinking ‘well he's about 30 metres, I'll make that’ and you've gotta make sure that no one's coming.”

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST/WALKER, MELBOURNE

Roundabouts pose another problem for cyclists.

“I think it's the idea of if there's a car coming behind you because obviously there's no bike path when you're going around a roundabout so you have to

hope that the car is gonna maybe slow down and stay behind you and that they don't sort of try and come around you, but my main thing is because my Mum was riding her bike in South Melbourne near Port Melbourne and an old man just for some reason although it was broad daylight didn't see her and she yeah went off over his bonnet.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Complex traffic interchanges, bridges with no hard shoulders on them and awkward lane changes all pose additional difficulties for cyclists, both in terms of them knowing where to position their bikes on the road and the threat to their personal safety.

4.3.2

Emotional barriers

The key emotional barriers are:

- safety
- boredom
- lack of understanding of road laws and regulations (especially for cyclists)
- lack of a cycling/walking culture.

4.3.2.1 Safety

Concern about personal safety is one of the biggest deterrents to cycling and walking after dark and to parents letting their children walk or cycle unaccompanied to school or other destinations. This concern revolves not only around traffic and motorists' perceived lack of respect or empathy for cyclists and pedestrians, but also about being vulnerable to other people with malicious intentions.

Parents agree that this fear is unwarranted as Australia is a safe place, however one father said “I'd never forgive myself” if his child was the one exception to the general safety rule. All parents liked the idea in principle of their children walking to school, which is why *VicHealth's Walking School Bus* initiative is endorsed enthusiastically.



"I was just going to mention the Walking School Bus is a really great thing. Just because I have a son and I've been loath to let him walk alone which seems crazy but these days it seems to be the way things are. So VicHealth has started the Walking School Bus which is a great idea. So a few parents supervise a group of children walking to school. And I just want to say what a great idea that was, because we'd all like to send our kids walking to school. And in the inner city also there's terrible crossings there. Like it's very busy crossings and stuff so you do get scared sending them off and we over supervise our children these days. So that's a really good idea and I think most people are pretty enthusiastic about that."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Most parents acknowledge that children are cycling and walking to school much less often than they used to and that they walked or cycled to school when they were children.

"There's no bikes in the bike racks anymore. When I used to go to high school it was chockers and now there's like a dozen. Hardly anyone rides."

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT

One of the primary justifications for this trend is that there is more pressure on road systems today and that motorists are more "intense" than they used to be, having little regard for cyclists or pedestrians. While parents acknowledge the benefits of walking and cycling to school, many are simply unwilling to risk their children's lives in busy traffic situations.

"Traffic doesn't automatically stop for children on the pedestrian crossings you think you would be safe and children are under the illusion... They're not, and they're not magic lines."

— FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Some children echo their parent's fears.

"...but if you've got to cross pretty busy roads like freeways and stuff you just don't feel confident doing it ..."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

"I don't feel comfortable like with people in cars these days ... too many maniacs."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

A second security concern for both adults and children, revolves around a sense of vulnerability to others when walking or cycling. This concern is not simply for women and children – many adult males are also concerned about being in dark and deserted places after dark.

"I think in the night sometimes it can be a little dangerous just depending where you walk, like I ride and will go along the train line, there's like a footpath there but it's not well lit up so at night I wouldn't walk down that way."

— DCALB, MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"It is a little bit dangerous at this time because, trust me, when I go home at 10:00[pm] and I'll be waiting at the train station for a bus, no it's not very safe, there will be people coming up to you and going 'have you got 50 cents change' and, you know, you just don't want to be there."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Many of those who would like to walk more often but complain about lack of time, claim that the only time they have to walk is after work, when many places are dark and deserted. Good lighting is likely to alleviate many of these fears for adults and encourage some to walk and cycle after dark.

"Because you're only scared of what you can't see..."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"A lot more street lighting and park lighting. It's limited, like around Albert Park at night, it's dark, it's too dark, when I go around Optus Oval, can't walk around it, there's just no lighting. I mean I walk in poor lighting and I think 'oh God if they could just light up these areas then there'd be so many more people out there'."

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE



“I think solar powered lights along a lot of the rivers and stuff would be good, on the tracks.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Children say that their parents are very concerned about these issues and actively discourage them from walking or cycling on their own at any time. Parents themselves endorse this. While they acknowledge that, as children, they had more freedom to roam as they pleased, there is a sense that people are more aware now of the dangers to children on their own and some would rather not take the risk.

Awareness of potential danger appears to be even stronger in country areas where locals in smaller, tight-knit communities are aware of alleged paedophiles and sex attackers. They actively avoid locations where they may come into contact with these people including the streets where they are known to live.

“She’s been harassing me for probably 12 months to do it and I said to her ‘you get a blue belt in karate, if you can defend yourself against someone my size then I’m more than happy for you to do it’.”

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST/WALKER, MYRTLEFORD

“It’s strange though that, I mean something happens in a certain street in a country town people will avoid that street or avoid going near it, in Melbourne like the shooting that happened, hundreds and thousands of people go down that road every day.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT

4.3.2.2 Boredom

While some acknowledge all of the benefits of walking or cycling, they confess that they just find it boring. This can be especially true when someone uses the same route repeatedly. Some country respondents felt that walking in their home towns was far more boring than walking in Melbourne since the number of routes available to them is limited.

“There’s nothing nice, there’s nothing, there’s just bush, nothing, maybe a bird...”

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT

“Yeah, when we started walking last time, we just got bored because we were walking the same streets all that time, we tried to vary it but you can only go a certain amount of homes and you do you walk past the same houses, it’s the same dog that runs out to bite you...”

— FEMALE, 18–36, WALKER, ARARAT

Boredom can be overcome to a large extent for many people by walking with a companion, although organising company can be a challenge at times.

4.3.2.3 Road laws and regulations

Focus group responses suggest that many regular bike users (as well as drivers) are unaware of road rules that pertain specifically to cyclists. This can result in a lack of consideration on the roads from bike users as well as confusion, which in turn can lead to dangerous situations and the occasional altercation.

Both pedestrians and cyclists report a myriad of problems that occur when pedestrians and cyclists share tracks. Pedestrians accuse some cyclists of cycling too fast and endangering children or slower path users. Cyclists complain that dogs, groups of strollers and small children can make cycling on these paths very difficult. These difficulties deter some cyclists and walkers from using paths. A clear division between cyclists and pedestrians is preferred on these paths with bold signage at regular intervals to serve as a reminder to users.

Respondents are able to provide many anecdotes of near misses and selfish behaviour on shared pathways, fortunately, none serious. As, and if, more people choose walking and cycling as modes of transport and their preference for using dedicated walking/cycling paths is borne out, there will be more occasions where clashes occur on shared paths – a code of conduct might help with some basic rules.

“Everyone thinks it’s their own, that’s the biggest issue, cyclists think they own it and they’ve got a right to be there and then no one’s prepared to give way, I mean you get the odd individual who will see a bike and kindly step off, and you know vice versa, go around the lady with the pram, but like everyone thinks they’ve got the more right to be there so, how would you regulate that?”

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



"It just doesn't make sense, you know they don't drive on the wrong side of the road, so why do they have to do this, they know that they're supposed to be on the left side but they just don't care, same as when you're on a bike, you don't run a red light when you're driving a car, you don't creep forward and then go through when it's all clear, so I mean why does it have to change, they know the rules, but just no one enforces it. I think police should book bike riders for running red lights."

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"If you have a bike path and a walking path going side by side, because they've got that down in Brighton along the foreshore and that seems to work pretty well, they just need more money to build two paths."

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"I've been in bike lanes where a pedestrian just jumps out and you almost hit them and then sometimes, I'm, you know, like in a bike lane, like that one that goes across the river down St Kilda Road and I've got this horn that I had to finally get, and I honk at people and they just sort of look back at me and keep walking and don't even move."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"A bike can kill, it could kill you, it can kill someone else, they should be registered and there should be a licence to ride a push bike, okay, and then the tracks, and this could subsidise the lighting, new tracks, etc., etc., etc. Why not have an exactly the same system as a motor vehicle?"

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

4.3.2.4 *The lack of a cycling/walking culture*

People who were born or have lived overseas, in particular, point out that in contrast with the countries they come from, Australia does not have a cycling culture. At best, Australians are often not actively encouraged to ride their bikes. At worst, people are actively discouraged from riding by a hostile attitude from pedestrians and motorists who regard them as a menace on the roads and footpaths.

"I lived in Denmark for a year...and basically over there I'm not sure what the reasons are...I think it's something to do with taxes and expensive cars and petrol, everyone owned a bike. I did as well and I did everything like from going out to a restaurant to going out at night to a bar to going to school – everything was on my bike, but I could never picture myself doing it here because I've got a car, but over there when I had no choice that's what I did."

— DCALB FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"I think that's where you need to be looking for in the future, it's like, it's not gonna happen in my generation probably in my kids' generation or the one after that but for that sort of thing to happen you need to effectively train people or educate them right from get go and instill it as part of society. I don't think that cycling is still seen as, you know, the way to get to work, that sort of thing, it's naturally car or train or tram in Melbourne."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

4.3.3

Practical barriers

There are practical barriers to walking and cycling which fall into the following main areas:

- the need to do more than one thing on a trip and/or carry heavy/bulky items
- the lack of flexibility for travel plans
- difficulties associated with mixing modes of travel
- lack of changing facilities at destinations
- lack of storage facilities.

4.3.3.1 *Multi-purpose trips*

A major deterrent in walking or cycling revolves around the practical need to carry things. Many would find it impossible to carry home a week's worth of groceries in a backpack while others find it difficult to carry a number of work files, school books, sports gear and/or changes of clothes when walking or cycling. Some regular cyclists have overcome the need to carry groceries home by arranging for the supermarket to deliver for them.



For some, practical considerations in travel-mode choice outweigh any potential benefits:

“Wouldn’t catch public transport to uni. From where I live it would be the train, two trams and a bus. I live on the freeway so it’s 15 minutes in the car.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Others feel they have no other choice than to use their cars or public transport because they have large distances to travel and/or a number of destinations to cover in a limited period of time.

“Drop my son off to school because we can’t walk there anymore, it’s too far to walk, so we have to go in the car, then I usually go shopping quickly before I go to work, then I have to drive from Brighton to Kew to go to work, and it’s pretty much the same thing, I take the dog for a walk there, and then I pick up three children from three different schools in the car again, and then we usually have you know different activities we have to go to by car because it’s too far, I go from Kew to the city or Box Hill and then I go home, so I’m a lot in the car.”

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

4.3.3.2 Lack of flexibility

Younger people, in particular, dislike the burden of being caught at a destination without the ability to change plans – for example, cycling to a friend’s house, meeting as a group and deciding to go to another destination. This leaves the cyclist with the problem of what to do with both bicycle and equipment.

“I’m either going to have to ride the bike through big hills, because it’s a hilly area or drive. So I just drive...so I don’t bother with the bike or anything, it’s just too much hassle. Well it’s either two trains and a waste of an hour and a half, I take my bike out there and then I’m either stuck out there with a bike or I’ve gotta come back and get my bike at another stage, or I drive.”

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

4.3.3.3 Mixing transport modes

Respondents are able to provide many examples that demonstrate the difficulties faced when mixing cycling with other modes of transport, especially public transport.

Those who try to take their bikes on trains, trams and buses in Melbourne report poor experiences, although respondents who had lived in Canberra and North America give example of buses and trains being fitted with bike racks making it much easier to mix modes.

While trains have areas for disabled people that cyclists can use to store bikes, some feel embarrassed about using these spaces. Others do not know where to put their bikes and suggested open carriages with no or fewer seats in peak hours for this purpose.

“In peak hour, I hate it when someone like there’s a busy train, gets on with a bike...If you’ve got the bike you might feel a bit embarrassed.”

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST/WALKER, MELBOURNE

“I found most of the bikers would go right down to one end of the train because the large disabled areas and if they had a similar sized area where just one side was bikes and you could just go and put your bike up there and walk out and sit in a seat, it would be much easier for the rest of the commuters.”

— MALE, 18–35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

4.3.3.4 Changing facilities

In most instances, people want to arrive at their destination looking their best. This is especially true for office workers or people working in service industries who feel they need to present themselves appropriately. Cycling to work is likely to make many people hot and sweaty and result in a *bad hair day*.

“I wouldn’t want to go to the office, I would want to go to the office being fresh, I wouldn’t want to be sweaty and tired and things as you say, bad hair day, that’s not the idea.”

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

“Yeah and plus, you know, I feel uncomfortable if someone seen me, you know, around that office like that, that’s just an image thing, I mean that’s just me, I know some other people wouldn’t care, you know, it just looks, you know, you’re an awkward person or something like that, you know, so, yeah, this is a good example actually of the little things which are inconvenient.”

— MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



The provision of showers and changing facilities at work encourages some to walk or cycle to work. However, some people are more easily deterred by their need to keep up appearances than others. For example, some more fashion conscious women are unwilling even to walk to the train station because it may mess up their hair and necessitate a change of shoes. Indeed some women who were born in more fashion conscious countries (such as Italy or other European countries) find the concept of wearing sports shoes with work clothes particularly unattractive and avoid this *look* at all costs.

"I don't, I don't like for myself, everyone does, the corporate suit with the runners on. It looks shocking... Even if I wanted to walk, I would do it in my high heels, I wouldn't go and put my runners on to do it... Australia's the only place I have ever seen people, like you said, the corporate suit and runners."
— DCALB, FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Even teens and pre-teens sometimes avoid walking or cycling to a destination if they are concerned about appearances. Some girls are reluctant to ride to school in a skirt and many boys and girls prefer to take public transport or be driven to a shopping mall so that they look fresh when they meet their friends.

4.3.3.5 Storage facilities

One of the biggest issues facing cyclists is a lack of appropriate and safe storage facilities once they reach their destination. Many train stations, workplaces and shopping centres do not have safe places to store a bike or bike gear.

"I was actually walking to work just this morning thinking about how much I wish I could ride my bike to work and how much it just annoys the hell out of me. But that they (workplace) will not do anything to help us lock up our bikes, they won't do anything to keep them safe. A friend's bike, worth about \$1,500, got stolen out the front and they sort of just say well, there's nothing we can do, and I just think that's awful that they will not at least attempt to sit down and try and work out some kind of solution, there has to be something that can be done."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

A small number of cyclists is aware of station lockers but knowledge of how these work in practice is scant, as the following quotes demonstrate.

"I've noticed at a couple of stations, they've got the blue box sort of things. I don't know where you get the key from or wherever or if you have to pay for them or something, but I suppose you go to the counter at the station and hire a locker or something and you could put your bike in there. But I have no idea how to get them or who like has access to them, I just know that they exist."

— MALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"The station master, you have to get the key from, usually at like the premium stations where it is staffed, they keep them."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Ideally cyclists would like access to a lockable shed or storage facility that only bike owners could access.

Further problems are caused when cyclists have to carry helmets and bike jackets with them once they reach their destination. The exception to this rule is in Myrtleford (as perhaps other country towns) where people regularly leave their bikes parked somewhere convenient with little fear of them being stolen. The weight of tourist traffic on the rail trail that runs through Myrtleford means that cyclists and their gear are commonplace.

Hence respondents suggest the idea of converting some space in commercial car parks to bike parking and some say they are willing to pay to use these facilities.

"I don't know about anyone else, but I would, like you know, parking in the city costs a fortune, that's why I catch the train. If I could park a bike in there and obviously it would have to be cheaper than parking a car there, because you could fit a lot more spaces in, a lot more bikes in I would, yeah I'd go for it."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE



4.4

RESPONDENTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR WAYS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO WALK OR CYCLE MORE

Throughout the group discussions, and in closing, respondents were asked to suggest ways that might encourage them to walk or cycle more.

The ideas fall into three key areas and are outlined here:

- infrastructure improvements
- promotional activity
- community support.

4.4.1

Suggested infrastructure initiatives

There is evidence from the groups to suggest that dedicated bike paths encourage some people to use their bikes as a mode of transport.

"The only reason why I started riding into the city is because they opened up the Federation Trail."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Cyclists prefer bike lanes that are totally separate from traffic of all other types and a separate cycle path network, such as that available in Amsterdam, is often mentioned by way of a good example. That said, cyclists are taxpayers and they are not advocating such a dramatic investment in infrastructure. Nonetheless, they believe that many of Melbourne's roads are wide enough to support a separate lane for cyclists and that others could be marked better. The clear preference is for a separate lane, followed by a clearly marked lane (solid line and colouring preferred) followed by the dotted line approach used commonly in metropolitan areas.

"I would definitely prefer to go on any kind of lane that actually has a solid line on it, I think, more so just that it's made clear to drivers that their lane starts there and mine starts here, where as if you've got the dotted lines it can be, not as clear."

— FEMALE 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"No, there's not (any bike lanes) that I have seen on the main roads that I have driven on, there is nothing at the intersection like you said to go ahead or anything like that, so that doesn't exactly inspire confidence in me to start using my bike as like, a mode of transport to like go and do shopping or something like that because I don't trust drivers out there at the best of times when I'm in my little car and you know, all safe and secure let alone when I can be flung off so easily. Like, I don't know, I think

maybe the solid strip idea, I like, maybe even a different colour so that way most people cannot get confused at all and in the odd event that something does happen and you are in an accident you can clearly see the difference between the two lanes."

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

"If it's on the road make the bike lanes it would make more sense to make them a bright colour so they you know exactly instead of just the white lines."

— CHILD, 11–15, MELBOURNE

"As long as there is a bike lane, but usually, like, when you're coming up to intersections and things like that you have to be like really aware of cars coming out, because they just sometimes don't consider the bike lane and they just come straight up, so, but you can usually sort of see them happening and you kind of try and be conscious of everything that's going on around you."

— FEMALE 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Both cyclists and pedestrians point out that shared cycle/walking paths can be fraught with confusion and danger. Mothers and dog owners often find it difficult to keep children and dogs to the left, pedestrians wander into the wrong lane and some cyclists travel too fast and are reluctant to warn pedestrians and other cyclists of their approach.

These potential clashes deter some from using shared pathways and it is likely that bike paths and walkways would be better utilised if the paths could be divided into separate sections that are clearly marked at regular intervals or, preferably, continuously.

"I don't think bikes and walking tracks go together, do they, because I got knocked over."

— FEMALE, 18–36, WALKER, ARARAT



On the subject of traffic lights, cyclists are divided as to the merits of bike lanes that position them ahead of the traffic. Those who prefer the “starting grid” approach do so because they believe they can be seen better by other traffic.

“Yeah they’re good because you can see that somebody’s a rider, so you know that they’re, you know if they’re in the left lane you need to go into the right line because they are opposite the intersection, you know that you’re gonna have to you know, not to speed up because otherwise you’re going to hit this person.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

Other cyclists like to be placed at the left hand side of the road in a line where they could not be run over by faster moving traffic from behind when the lights change to green.

In an era of close to full employment, many do not find an opportunity to exercise during the week until after dark. However, after 5.30pm in the winter months, streets and parks become dark, deserted and an undesirable place for many to exercise. Not surprisingly, the subject of lighting is often mentioned – in particular, in public areas where people like to exercise (e.g. Albert Park Lake, The Botanical Gardens, etc.) and also in side streets (e.g. country towns). Respondents believe that better lighting would encourage more people to walk and cycle after hours.

4.4.2

Suggested promotional initiatives

Promotional initiatives are seen as effective in helping to motivate and inspire people. In particular, respondents believe that promoting the existing road rules more widely is an excellent idea. Suggestions include making them available to all learner drivers, and encouraging bike shops to give copies of the bike road rules to all new purchasers.

“But surely VicRoads could implement you know, some type of, I mean when you’re studying for your learners and when you’ve got to do your P plate test and stuff I mean you’ve gotta know the rules and you’ve gotta be able to answer the questions. So if they put more about bikes and what to do as a bike rider – even though they wouldn’t target all bike riders it would target people who also had a car, then at least you’d have some awareness if you were a driver where the bike riders are meant to be and when to give way to them and when not to and those kinds of things.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

“I think I’ve read that there are some booklets or something... An idea that would be good, if anyone that goes and buys a bike gets a set.”

— DCALB MALE, 36–55, CYCLIST, MELBOURNE

One of the greatest barriers to walking (and to a lesser extent cycling) is boredom. This can be overcome by having company when taking a walk. Meeting people to go for a walk also helps to motivate those who are lacking inspiration and to make those who are nervous about walking after dark feel safer. Respondents report mixed success in recruiting friends and colleagues for regular walks. Therefore, walking groups are seen as an appealing initiative for those looking for company on their walks.

“I’m definitely a group person I’ve got no motivation of my own, that’s why I thought the walking group was a good idea... I’d be into the night walking group... Yeah, I’d get in to the sort of social side.”

— FEMALE, 18–35, WALKER, ARARAT

While walking groups exist at present, they are often held during hours that don’t suit those working regular office hours (9.00am to 5.00pm) and/or they may consist of runners who don’t want to be held up by slower walkers. Many potential walkers would welcome more walking groups in their area held at a range of times during the week.



Advertising is also seen to have an important role to play in motivating people who are having difficulty in finding inspiration. The “Go For Your Life” advertising campaign is recalled and is considered to be effective in motivating people. Some children recall “Scout” advertising and also find this motivating and inspiring. Ideally, promotions should emphasise the positive benefits of walking and cycling.

While health benefits are the greatest motivational force amongst many of those who currently walk and cycle regularly, in themselves these benefits fail to inspire others. Instead, promotions need to inspire people emotionally by tapping into the gratifications most likely to enthuse them. Those who are feeling very unfit, for instance, may be motivated by smaller goals – e.g., instead of aiming for 30 minutes a day, they might aim for 3 x 10 minutes a day. Pedometer challenges are mentioned positively in this context as every step counts whether these are taken in one long walk or in many short bursts.

“... And I think maybe give some statistic, you know, information say maybe for half an hour walk everyday and what it actually does like how many fat do you burn and stuff like that so a lot of people will actually realise how important it is for them.”

— DCALB MALE, 18-35 YEARS, WALKER, MELBOURNE

“... TV advertising but I think it has to be a positive reinforcement, like saying, you know, good things will happen, that sort of thing rather than say, ‘Get off the couch for your waist’...”

— FEMALE, 18-35, WALKER, ARARAT

Thus there is an opportunity for specific promotions to encourage people to walk and cycle more, especially as the weather gets warmer. Suggestions include maps of local walking and cycling areas and contact details of local walking groups dropped into letter boxes, more pedometer challenges, handy hints to assist people in making the time for regular exercise or to incorporate walking and cycling into their day (incidental exercise), and discount vouchers for bikes or walking shoes.

“I remember when I first moved in the area, the council rang up and asked me if I used the public transport in the area and I said ‘no I don’t’ and it was kind of a bit of a promotion and they said ‘well where do you really want to know how to get to’ and I said ‘well I’d like to know how to get from here to Southland’ and they sent me a map and a timetable and a free ticket.”

— DCALB FEMALE, 36-55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Some feel that they and others would be encouraged to walk or cycle more often through incentives. School children suggest being able to leave school half an hour earlier once a week or once a month, or receiving a \$5 canteen voucher as a reward for walking or cycling. Adults suggest that workplaces can assist in providing incentives to employees who regularly walk or cycle to work in a similar way by allowing them to arrive a little later or leave a little earlier sometimes.

Organisations that are community hubs, such as supermarkets, can also assist people who want to walk or cycle when doing their grocery shopping by providing a free or reasonably inexpensive same-day delivery service. In some communities, local supermarkets give donations to local community groups in proportion to dollars spent. A similar scheme could be developed, for example, offering additional points to community groups if the shopper arrives under their own steam.

“... if we go shopping at the local IGA and we keep the docket we take that to school the IGA donates I don’t know what percentage it is out of every docket that’s added up for the month the class that brings the most dockets in gets a free morning tea for the month so that’s the incentive for them so whether you could do something like that or you know they go for a picnic or something and get some time off school or whatever.”

— FEMALE, 18-35, WALKER/CYCLIST, MYRTLEFORD



4.4.3

The role of the community and workplaces

While all regular walkers and cyclists embrace the benefits of walking and cycling, their decisions are supported and facilitated to a large extent by their families, schools, local councils, governments and, sometimes, even their workplaces.

Local councils have a large role to play in encouraging people to walk and cycle in their local area by providing safe footpaths, bike lanes and crossings, good lighting for streets and public places, beautiful parks, walking and bike tracks in picturesque places, bike parks and walking groups so that people can encourage each other to walk more regularly.

Many of those who were born overseas comment that while more people may walk or cycle in their country of origin (often out of necessity), Australia has more places where it is more pleasurable to walk and cycle – less crowded footpaths and lots of lovely parks and public walking and bike tracks.

“I think actually the whole environment because like in Hong Kong there are not much trees and stuff and here they have a lot of grass, trees, it makes you feel more comfortable to walk.”

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

People are working longer hours and genuinely find it difficult to find the time to walk and cycle regularly. In an environment where many spend so many hours each day in their place of work, the workplace has a very important role to play in encouraging people to walk or cycle more regularly. The current culture promotes the use of cars and cars are seen as signs of success – for example, cars are often awarded along with promotions.

In order to change this behaviour, workplaces and other institutions can generate a positive cycling/walking culture not only by providing facilities needed to encourage these modes of commuter transport, but also by getting people used to walking for recreational purposes. At the moment, if anything is done, it is the latter, not the former.

The sorts of initiatives that are suggested for Victorian workplaces include:

- rewarding staff with initiatives that support bike riding and walking – e.g., instead of getting a car park, staff might receive free access to an onsite bike storage facility
- providing showers and changing areas
- implementing lunchtime walking groups (and supporting those who need to take a full hour lunch break to walk with work colleagues)
- creating teams to participate in charity walks, fitness events and bike rides
- creating workplace challenges and competitions for people who want to walk or cycle.

“Maybe companies just organising groups to make it like a social activity walking through parks or whatever, within the city and maybe extending that sort of lunch break for people to actually have the time to do that and have their lunch and whatever in that same period of time.”

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

These initiatives are particularly well covered in “The Cycle-Friendly Workplace”.³ Similarly, having senior role models endorse walking or cycling as a mode of transport assists in positioning these activities as desirable rather than, in many cases, a cheap alternative (and for some a quick or reliable alternative) to a preferred motorised mode.⁴



³ The Cycle-Friendly Workplace – Bicycle Victoria, May 2007

⁴ Note the 2007 Ride to Work Day initiative has included senior business ambassadors

Schools (and the school community) also have a strong role to play in encouraging regular walking and cycling among school children (and sometimes their parents). The *Walking School Bus* initiative is mentioned by a number of parents, although anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these initiatives lack parental volunteers, limiting the number of days and routes on which they run. Parents are less supportive of the lesser known *Cycling School Bus* initiative as many parents have misgivings about the different levels of ability among different aged school children and the difficulties attendant in supervision. Nonetheless, there is evidence that the provision of lockable bike sheds encourages some children to ride to school. Some schools support a *Walk to School* day which helps to encourage local families to walk together to school.

Families also have a strong role to play in the mindset and value Australians place on walking and cycling. Many of those born overseas point out that they had come from a culture in which walking or cycling is valued and encouraged. These respondents have many happy memories of their younger days. However, most openly admit that while they have positive memories, they have adopted their new country's habits and use their cars, especially where their children are involved. Tapping into the happy memories held by this group and encouraging them to share these cultural experiences with their children might convince them to walk and cycle more as families and/or encourage their children to do so. Some respondents had taken up these pursuits, because of being encouraged by older generations.

"After having my meal I love to walk for a while to get food digested properly and it's in my tradition, like firstly my grandparents' grandparents used to do that so yeah."

— DCALB MALE, 18–35, WALKER, MELBOURNE

"I think it's just the way I've been brought up, I think my mother was into fitness and my whole family were sort of all very sporty."

— DCALB FEMALE, 36–55, WALKER, MELBOURNE

Several children also point out that they walk (or cycle) more often when their parents actively encourage them to. Some children are able to cycle regularly during the weekends or during summer evenings because their parents choose to cycle with them.

Places that are potential destinations for walkers and cyclists can also play an important role. These include cafes, shops and recreation facilities. Providing incentives to those arriving on foot, turning a *blind eye* to dress and appearance and providing safe storage facilities would help to make walkers and cyclists feel welcome.

Governments at both the federal and state levels have roles to play in encouraging people to walk or cycle more regularly through the use of promotions and initiatives. Many people, especially children, mention the "Life Be In It" advertising campaign which is seen to encourage many to get outdoors. Others mention other initiatives such as Ride to Work Day.

Finally, as was noted earlier, it is important for Victorians to form the habits of walking and cycling from childhood. Many initiatives run by schools and Victoria Police (e.g. Bike Ed) receive support and endorsement. However, there are no places for adults to go to refresh or learn how to cycle. For some people, the need to cycle on public roads when they have not cycled since childhood (or at all) poses too great a barrier for them to consider using a bike as a serious mode of transport.





5.0 Summary and Recommendations

Respondents by their nature, are all positive towards walking and cycling; although some consider walking and cycling only for recreational purposes. Those who walk or cycle currently for some of their travel do so for:

- fitness and wellbeing
- predictable travelling times
- low cost
- pleasant surroundings
- convenience
- low environmental impact.

Nonetheless, the car is the *accepted* mode of transport for almost every type of trip. It is part of the fabric of Australian society and bigger and/or better cars are currently something that most aspire to.

There are many barriers to replacing other modes of transport with walking and cycling. These fall into three categories – physical, emotional and practical.

In broad terms the **physical barriers** are:

- **Time** – Regular walkers/cyclists weigh up the length of time a trip would take by some other mode before choosing to walk or cycle. A trip length of 45 minutes seems to be the key barrier, which translates to a distance of about three to five kilometres for walkers or seven to 20 kilometres for cyclists. Beyond that other modes of transport will almost certainly be faster.
- **Weather** – even diehard commuter walkers and cyclists are put off by inclement weather (cold and wet conditions are the greatest deterrents, but extreme heat can also pose problems in arriving at the destination in good condition).
- **Pathways and road surfaces** – the lack of dedicated walking and cycling tracks or lanes, poor road and path surfaces where they do exist and poor lighting all act as deterrents, with some commuters saying they have taken up walking or cycling when new or improved pathways and lanes have been built.

The **emotional barriers** are:

- **Safety** – this is an issue not only in terms of personal security and safety from others (parents are particularly protective of their children) but also the fear of injury. It extends among cyclists and pedestrians to knowledge of road rules and the fear that doing the wrong thing (unwittingly) might endanger themselves and others.
- **Boredom** – travelling the same route can lead to tedium and this is more likely where fewer dedicated bike lanes and walking paths exist. People are more likely to make excuses to avoid the activity.
- **Inferiority** – walking and cycling are considered to be excellent recreational pursuits but *poor relations* to the car as a mode of transport.

There are also **practical barriers**, chief among which are:

- **Flexible travel plans** – the need to run multiple errands in one trip, thus making the maximum use of available time or to change travel plans, may render walking and cycling inconvenient, depending on the distances to be travelled, purpose of the errand (especially if carrying heavy or bulky items or other passengers) or the likelihood of being stranded with a bicycle. Related to this are the difficulties faced by cyclists wanting to combine cycling with other modes of transport – trams, trains and buses do not cater well to carrying bikes.
- **Changing and storage facilities** – the lack of changing and storage facilities at the destination point can make it unfeasible to use cycling and walking as modes of transport depending on the purpose of the trip.



While some of these barriers are difficult to overcome, none is insurmountable and our recommendations for ways of defeating them are:

- **Physical** – improving infrastructure, in particular focussing on upgrading existing walking and cycling paths as well as bike lanes. For the former, clear signage, development of a code of conduct and improved lighting would be well received. For bike lanes, consistency in road markings throughout the state would be welcomed as would separating motorised from non-motorised traffic wherever possible.
- **Emotional** – in order to build confidence, helping Victorians to hone their skills both as walkers and cyclists and fostering these pursuits (even if for recreational purposes) would send appropriate signals. Encouraging better knowledge of the road rules (especially those relating to cyclists) would also be a positive step.

For some, there is also a physical barrier of personal fitness with some respondents being concerned that having walked or cycled to their destination, they would be unable to make the return journey. Being able to walk up to 10 kilometres a day or to cycle up to 40 kilometres demands a degree of fitness and ability. This is why recreational walking and cycling are so important to provide the underpinning skills necessary for these to be considered as modes of transport.

- **Practical** – encouraging workplaces, educational institutions and other destination points to provide changing and storage facilities as well as incentives to arrive by foot or on a bike.

These recommendations apply to all respondents. There are some specific barriers to overcome for certain groups of interest and others that emerged as part of the research process.



5.1

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS

The particular groups of interest are:

- DCALB
- newcomers to an area
- different age groups
- parents
- following a presentation of the key findings, students emerged as another group of interest.

5.1.1

DCALB

Most people who were born overseas report being encouraged to walk and cycle as children, some having had no other options. All have fond memories of their childhood experiences involving walking and cycling that could be reinforced positively in communications with them.

For women, in particular, *keeping up appearances* is very important and the idea of arriving at a destination hot and flustered, with *helmet* hair and/or wearing running shoes with business clothes is not something they can accommodate. Therefore overcoming practical barriers, while reinforcing the emotional benefits of these activities, is required.

Another consideration for this group is demonstrating that walking and cycling are as legitimate as using a car as a mode of transport. As long as Australians in general give the car pre-eminence, moving back to walking or cycling will continue to be seen as a retrograde step by some migrants who have come to Australia for an improved lifestyle.

5.1.2

Newcomers to an area

While it has been hypothesised that this group would be less likely to walk and possibly cycle in their new environment because of lack of familiarity, the reverse is true. For this group, the benefits of becoming familiar with their new surroundings through walking and cycling should be communicated. Not only will these modes allow new residents to learn their local geography, but also if they can be put in touch with walking or cycling groups it may help them to establish links with the local community.

5.1.3

Different age groups

Obviously, both walking and cycling require a degree of physical fitness and ability. The disturbing trend of discouraging young people from walking (and, to a lesser extent, cycling) both by parents and peers,

along with their feeling that time should be used efficiently, does not bode well for encouraging young people to walk and cycle. Walking, in particular, has the image of being *slow* and *untrendy*. Messages that can counter these views convincingly may result in more younger people taking up these pursuits or continuing them.

5.1.4

Parents

Parents exhibit fears about letting their children cycle and walk, especially in relation to a fear of their children encountering paedophiles and other undesirable persons who could harm them. They also raise concerns about their children's competence both as cyclists and pedestrians. Parents have fewer misgivings if their children are in a group, especially one supervised by adults. Therefore encouraging supervised activities, as well as providing the tools to make both them and their children aware of how to deal with approaches from strangers, may serve to counter these fears.

5.1.5

Students

Students are an ideal target market in that the majority are fit enough to cycle and walk and they are generally happy to save money. The problems they face are the inability to make fluid travel plans, store their gear and (especially in the case of Monash University) travel to the university largely via footpaths and bike lanes rather than using public roads.

Of these, the practical barrier seems to be the largest. Ways to make it easier for students to obtain secure storage for bikes and other gear would be appreciated. There is no doubt that the presence of bike paths and lanes in Parkville, around Melbourne University, has encouraged cycling there and providing these around other university campuses, for example Monash University (especially the Clayton and Caulfield campuses, both of which are surrounded by busy roads), would probably do the same.



Appendix 1

Discussion Guideline WG 3345 Encouraging Walking and Cycling

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Group etiquette and privacy requirements – ensuring no observers recognise group participants. Introducing group members to each other by means of walking and cycling activities/interest. Purpose is to understand what issues pedestrians/cyclists face in walking and cycling primarily as a mode of transport so that the Victorian government can develop policies to assist Victorians to do these more (more often). Check respondents are on spec by talking about walking, cycling, how long they've lived in current area, etc.

2. Current activities necessitating travelling (domestic chores, recreation) and the way in which travel is undertaken (25 minutes)

- Please think about your average day. What trips do you make and for what purposes?
- How do you travel to:
 - work/study/school?
 - recreational activities/social events?
 - shops?
- Why do you choose these modes of transport?
- What are the alternatives?
- In what circumstances would these be viable or not be?

3. Consideration of alternative means of transport in particular, walking and cycling (30 minutes)

- Could you walk or cycle to do any of these?
- Why would these be considered or not be considered? (probe for physical, emotional and social barriers)
- Can you see yourselves in these photos? Now? Ever? When or why?
 - Photos of walking school bus, recreational walking, power walking, shopping, cyclists in peloton, commuter cyclists, all ages.
 - Why/not?
- Cycling – are you aware of anything designed to encourage you to cycle more? PROMPT – Promotional (e.g. Ride to Work Day, Travelsmart, Ride2School, etc.), physical (e.g. bike lanes, signage, lighting, showers, etc.), emotional (e.g. for the environment, etc.), social (e.g. others doing it, the done thing, etc.). What do you think of these? Have you been motivated to participate? Why/not?
- Walking – are you aware of anything designed to encourage you to walk more? PROMPT – Promotional (e.g. Walktober, Travelsmart, Walking School Bus, etc.), physical (e.g. bike lanes, signage, lighting, showers, etc.), emotional (e.g. for the environment, etc.), social (e.g. others doing it, the done thing, etc.). What do you think of these? Have you been motivated to participate? Why/not?

4. What would make you/your family walk/cycle more? (20 minutes)

- What things stop you from walking/cycling more? (e.g. weather, carrying baggage, equipment, arriving flustered, etc.).
- What could be done to overcome these problems?
 - Cycling – presence and configuration of cycle paths (in particular challenging those in Myrtleford and Melbourne who have access to them to explain why they don't/wouldn't use), security and safety issues (personal and equipment), social issues, design issues – where multi-modes of transport meet, logistical problems (places to shower, store bikes, store luggage and personal gear, lighting, etc.) and etc.
 - » There are numerous bike lanes around the city and country (e.g. Wangaratta – Bright Rail Trail Cycle path, other rail trails). Show maps of rail and other long distance bike paths. What should these be used for?
 - » Should these be reserved only for bikes? When? Why/not? Sharing with whom? What about pedestrians? Where do these work/not work? Why?
 - » What are your views on bike lanes? Where do they work well or badly?
 - » Are there any that shouldn't be there?
 - » (Inexperienced cyclists – especially bike path users) Do you cycle on the open road? Why/not? – Explore reasons for staying on bike paths and staying off roads (outside Melbourne talk about cycling on major roads and freeways (100kph speed limit)).
 - » (Experienced cyclists) Do you cycle on the open road? What are the problems associated with it? (PROBE as above for cycling on high speed roads).
 - » (All cyclists) Do you prefer on/off road? When i.e. in what circumstances?
 - » To all who cycle on the open road – how can cars and other vehicles co-exist more comfortably? PROBE for specific infrastructure problems related to different types of road (presence or absence of hard shoulder, surface materials, camber, state of roadside, signage, roundabouts and traffic islands, T-intersections and crossing lanes) as well as other ideas (e.g. education).
 - » To all who stay on bike paths only – how could they be improved? PROBE ESPECIALLY for infrastructure – surface, width, configuration, signage, linking together, need to go across/along roads, lighting, etc.
 - Walking – sharing footpaths with others – local pedestrian only paths with child cyclists, roller blades, etc., shared bike paths, state of paths (surface, lack of paths, lighting, etc.), security concerns, social issues, logistical problems (showers at work, places to change, cost of running/walking shoes, etc.) and etc.
 - » Most roads and major rivers (and in the city, freeways) have footpaths along them. What should these be used for?
 - » Should any be for pedestrians only? In what circumstances?
 - » Can you suggest things that can be done to footpaths and pathways to make them more conducive to 'commuter' usage? PROBE for specific infrastructure problems related to different types of path and routes (signage, roundabouts and traffic islands, T- and other intersections, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, places where roads get priority and walking is difficult, traffic volumes, traffic type [e.g. big trucks], and traffic speeds, etc.).

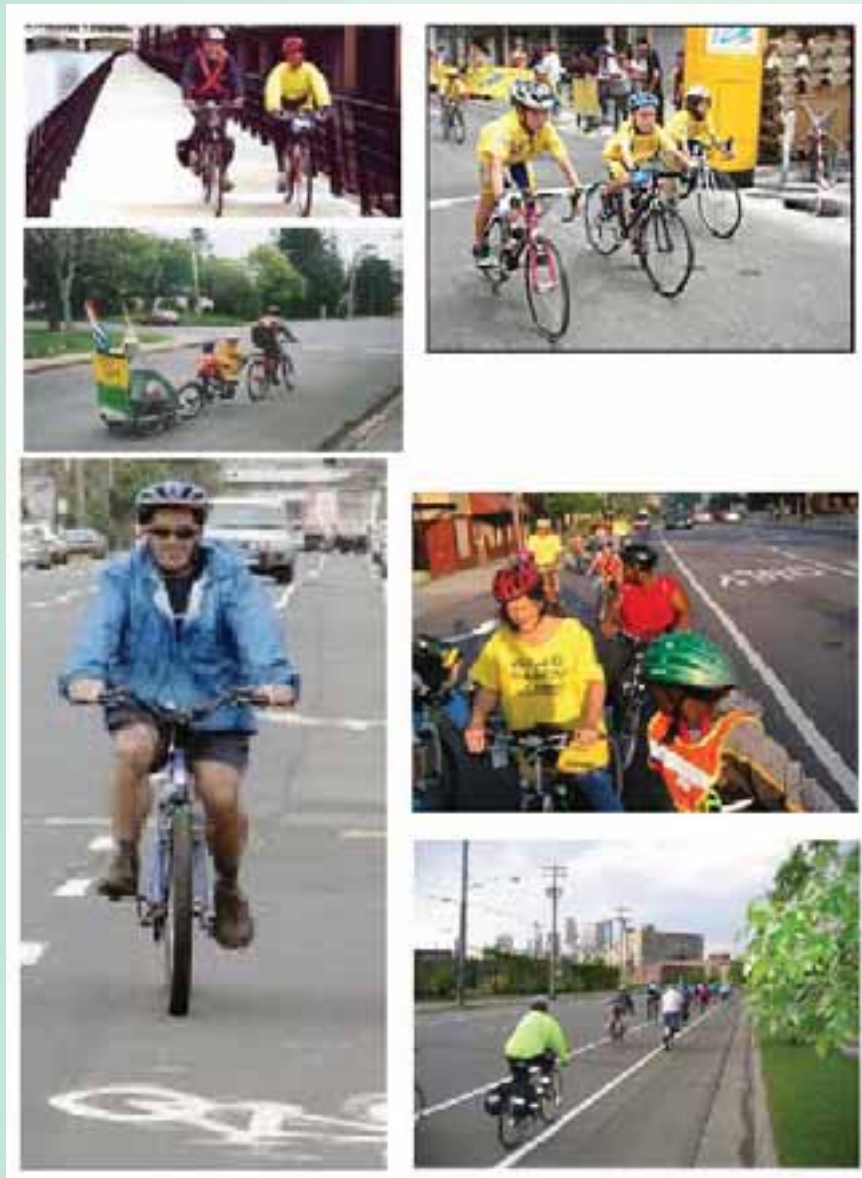
5. Summary and close (5 minutes)

Appendix 2

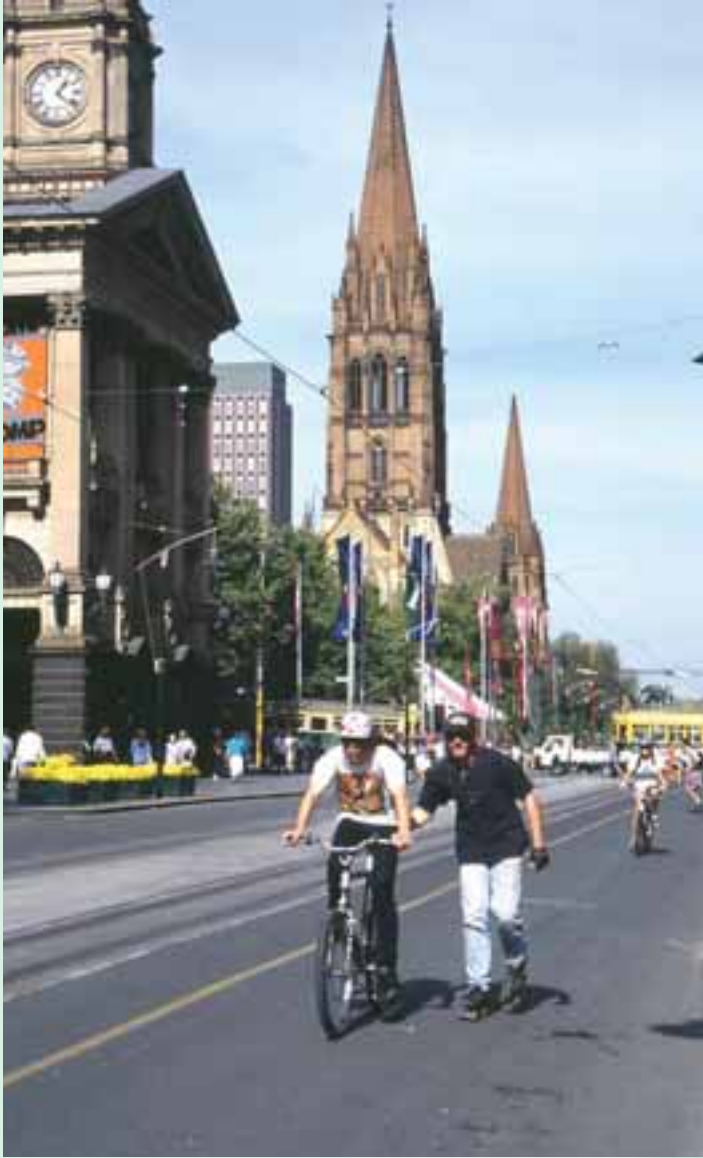
Stimulus Material

Cycling Photos

A



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G



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K




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M





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ISBN 978-0-7311-8764-5

Authorised by the Victorian Government,
121 Exhibition St, Melbourne Victoria 3000

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