Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap

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Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water

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Victoria Walks Inc.

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Yes

5 First name
Ben

6 Last name
Rossiter

7 Email
[redacted]

8 Phone

[redacted]

9 Who are you answering on behalf of?

Organisation

10 Organisation name

Victoria Walks Inc.

11 What best describes you or your organisation?

Not for profit

12 What sector do you represent?

Active transport

13 What state or territory do you live in?

Victoria

14 Postcode

3000

15 What area best describes where you live?

City

16 1. Do you support the proposed guiding principles?

Yes

17 1.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

18 2. Do you support the use of the avoid-shift-improve framework as a tool to identify opportunities for abatement?

Yes

19 2.1 Please add details to your response.

Yes, the severity of the climate crisis that Australia is facing necessitates approaching the problem from every angle. Victoria Walks strongly supports 'shift' as an integral part of the framework and welcomes government intervention in this area to encourage more walking, as well as riding and public transport use.

20 3. Do you agree the development of a national policy framework for active and public transport will support emissions reduction?

Yes

21 3.1 Please add details to your response.

Yes, climate change is a global issue, so it should be dealt with at the highest levels of government. This consultation roadmap is the second national policy that has come out this year to recognise the pivotal role of the transportation sector in addressing the climate crisis and adhering to the emissions reduction targets of the Paris agreement. Both active and public transport are important climate change responses, and the Federal Government has a significant responsibility in investing in and supporting states as they transition towards a cleaner transport system.

22 4. What should be included in a national policy framework for active and public transport and how should it be developed?

While it is important to recognise the importance of walking, riding and public transport, it is critical to recognise that there are distinctions within this category, with each having very different characteristics and challenges.

Recommendation: The framework should recognise the different transport modes – walking, riding and public transport – as distinct modes with different infrastructure needs and need to be considered separately.

Victoria Walks supports the development of a framework to provide more Australians with healthy and sustainable transport options. To support walking, the framework should include the following high-level components:

- A detailed Walking for Transport Action Plan with clear targets, actions and investment mechanisms to achieve more walking trips, and to coordinate planning to ensure communities are walkable.
- Establish a stakeholder reference group to help to develop the framework, including walking and bike riding representatives to advise on meeting climate change transport targets, and increasing public transport patronage by improving walkability to and from stops.

- Develop a pedestrian-specific road safety action plan. Everyone should feel safe to walk but between 2012 and 2022, 23% of all road fatalities in metropolitan Melbourne were walkers, and approximately one third of all walkers killed were aged over 70 (TAC, 2023).
- Expand 'school zones' into neighbourhood-wide active travel precincts to enable greater walking to school. One example of this, is in New Zealand where 'speed limit changes have resulted in 71 per cent reduction in deaths and a 15 per cent reduction in serious injuries' (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2023).
- Provide no-fault compensation for walkers injured in crashes with people using bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters or other similar devices.

23 5. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure the movement of people contributes to transport emissions reduction?

Victoria Walks notes the section 'Rethinking our transport networks and systems' generally provides good direction on what is needed. However, it misses the important point that road management and design has triggered many of the existing problems in transport, including the exacerbation of climate change through excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as the prioritisation of vehicles through dedication of road space, traffic signal management and road design guidelines that prioritise traffic movement.

24 6.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure that the movement of goods contributes to transport emissions reduction?

Not answered

25 6.2. How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities for emissions reduction in the movement of goods?

Not answered

26 7. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for light road vehicles?

Not answered

27 7.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

28 8. The Australian Government is currently developing an Australian New Vehicle Efficiency Standard and has already begun to implement actions in the National Electric Vehicle Strategy.8.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce light vehicle emissions?

Not answered

29 8.2 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce light vehicle emissions?

Not answered

30 9. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for heavy road vehicles?

Not answered

31 9.1 Please add details to your response

Not answered

32 10. The proposed pathway for heavy road vehicles relies on a mix of battery electric, hydrogen fuel-cell and low carbon liquid fuels.Rank from 1 to 3, the order in which these should be prioritised for emissions reduction.

Not answered

33 10.1 Please add details to your response. Why did you rank them in that order?

Not answered

34 11. What role should low carbon liquid fuels play in the heavy vehicle

decarbonisation?

Not answered

35 12. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce heavy vehicle emissions?

Not answered

36 13. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for rail?

Not answered

37 13.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

38 14. The proposed pathway for rail relies on a mix of battery electric, hydrogen fuel-cell and low carbon liquid fuels.Rank from 1 to 3, the order in which these should be prioritised for emissions reduction.

Not answered

39 14.1 Please add details to your response. Why did you rank them in that order?

Not answered

40 15. What role should low carbon liquid fuels play in rail decarbonisation?

Not answered

41 16. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce rail emissions?

Not answered

42 16.1 How would these actions address the identified challenges and

opportunities to reduce rail emissions?

Not answered

43 17. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for maritime?

Not answered

44 17.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

45 18. The Australian Government is engaging in consultation as part of the development of the Maritime Emissions Reduction National Action Plan and those consultations will also inform the final Roadmap and Action Plan. 18.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce maritime emissions?

Not answered

46 18.2 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce maritime emissions?

Not answered

47 19. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for aviation?

Not answered

48 19.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

49 20. The Australian Government has already engaged in consultation on aviation decarbonisation through the development of the Aviation White Paper and those consultations will also inform final Roadmap and Action Plan.

Not answered

50 20.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce aviation emissions?

Not answered

51 21. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for transport infrastructure?

No

52 21.1 Please add details to your response.

The Consultation Roadmap is correct in acknowledging the significance of GHG emissions resulting from infrastructure for roads and transport. However, the focus on green technology doesn't solve the problem, as it encourages and allows for more driving. A history of over investment in road infrastructure has come at the expense of investment in the sustainable transport options that Australia needs. Prioritising focus on new and green vehicle technologies should not be a priority as it encourages vehicle trips. Recommendation: The Roadmap needs to explicitly recommend a more conservative approach to new road construction, and direct funding toward investing in active and public transport.

53 22. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce transport infrastructure emissions and ensure that transport infrastructure is ready for and enables low-emission transport modes?

Behaviour change and education programs at the federal level should nudge drivers away from driving, to walking for short trips. This paradigm shift requires effectively communicating to the public an awareness of the benefits of replacing vehicle trips with walking and cycling for short trips and walking combined with PT for longer trips. While investment in infrastructure will have a greater long-term impact, public awareness and behaviour change has the potential for immediate benefits.

54 22.1 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce transport infrastructure emissions?

Australia is highly car dependant and across the country many short trips (under 1km) are completed in a car (e.g. around 4.8 million trips in Melbourne and Geelong each week) (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018). Driving produces more GHG emissions per km than

all other land transport options and encouraging people to opt for alternatives has significant potential to reduce emissions. For short car trips, walking is a feasible option for most people, and is far more widely used than other forms of active travel. A behaviour change campaign that encourages more people to walk instead of driving their short trips may effectively reduce vehicle emissions.

55 23. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure the energy mix is ready to support transport emissions reduction?

Not answered

56 24. How should the use of low carbon liquid fuels (LCLFs) be prioritised across different transport modes over time to achieve maximum abatement?

Not answered

57 25. What are the best ways for the Australian Government to work collaboratively with industry, business, governments and communities to implement the proposed pathways?

Not answered

58 25.1 What are good domestic or international examples of partnership and collaboration on transport and transport infrastructure emissions reduction that could inform the final Roadmap and Action Plan?

Ireland faces similar transport challenges to Australia and in 2020, the government committed to 'an allocation of 10% of the total transport capital budget for cycling projects and an allocation of 10% of the total capital budget for pedestrian infrastructure. The Government's commitment to cycling and pedestrian projects will be set at 20% of the 2020 capital budget (€360 million) per year for the lifetime of the Government' (Government of Ireland, 2020). This annual spend would have equated to just under $600 million AUD in 2020, almost 24 times the Australian Active Travel Fund yearly spend. This is despite Australia having a population more than 5 times the size of Ireland, as calculated by Victoria Walks.

59

25.2 What opportunities can Government leverage to show leadership in Australia and internationally?

Serious investment in local walking is needed to meet government transport and environment objectives and shift short car trips to walking. People will not decide to stop driving to their closest shops or station and walk instead without being supported and encouraged to do so. The minimal funding currently available will not be enough.
Australia has the opportunity to show international leadership by committing to generously funding active transport. This is imperative to align policy goals with global sustainability standards and is the kind of leadership that the Australian community supports. A national Heart Foundation survey found almost 70% support for increased transport spending on walking, cycling and access to public transport (National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2020). In Victoria, a survey by Victoria Walks found that there was strong support for government investment to make it easier to walk to schools (72% agree or strongly agree), tram/bus stops (67%) and railway stations (64%). In total, 89% of respondents wanted a combination of actions to help them walk more in their local area (Victoria Walks, 2021).
Victoria Walks recommends that:

- In line with United Nations best practice recommendations, the Consultation Roadmap should dedicate 20% of Australia's transport budget to walking and riding, with at least half of this for walking.
- Explicit acknowledgement of the high return on investment of walking.
- Recognise that local governments, particularly in rural and regional areas, are less well positioned to invest in transport compared to state and federal governments.

Victoria Walks supports the guiding principle of value for money in decarbonising the transport system. However, the Consultation Roadmap misses the opportunity to stress the significant potential of walking as transport in generating a significant return on investment (particularly, small investments across a network.) Walking provides great economic benefits across the multiple government priority areas, particularly health. Given the inactivity of the population overall, if Australians reduced physical inactivity by 10% through walking this would result in 6,000 fewer incidents of disease, 2,000 fewer deaths and 25,000 more disability-adjusted life years (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018).
Victoria Walks welcomes the government's recent decision to begin investing in walking and cycling specifically, with an announcement of $100 million in funding for active transport in the 2024–25 Federal Budget (DITRDCA, 2024). However, $100 million is a tiny fraction of the broader investment in transport. Actual and estimated annual federal spending on transport between the 2021-2022 and 2025-2026 financial years ranges from $9,562 million to $15,530 million, averaging $13,836 million (Parliament of Australia, 2022). The timeframe for the new National Active Transport Fund is over 4 years, which would appear to make up less than 1% of projected total transport spending. The United Nations (UN) underscores the critical link between funding and outcomes,

particularly in promoting walking and cycling as essential components of sustainable urban development. The Global Outlook on Walking and Cycling, with analysis of sample cities in Africa and Asia, recommended that 20% of total transport budgets should be directed to non-motorised transport "at national and city level" (UNEP, 2016, p. 36). The Consultation Roadmap should emphasise this necessity by outlining funding mechanisms for ensuring adequate and continual financial investment.

The latent demand for investment in walking is significant. In Victoria, many walking projects are 'shovel ready' and only require funding to go ahead, demonstrating a base level of need for walking investment. In March 2022, Victoria Walks asked Victorian councils to indicate the walking projects they had planned and costed but lacked the funding. A total of 39 councils (half the councils in Victoria) and two water authorities put forward 522 projects worth $469 million (Victoria Walks, 2022). Additionally, an earlier survey by the Municipal Association of Victoria found that for 83% of councils, funding was a barrier to delivering walking and cycling projects (MAV, 2021).

The primary role of the Federal Government in transport and in many other areas of urban policy is as a funding partner. Funding should be consistently/fairly distributed under a national policy to ensure equity. Rural areas often have a high need for infrastructure for walking in urban areas (including footpaths, crossings and public transport.) Federal government should directly invest in the necessary walking infrastructure in these areas, given their own acknowledgement that "rural and regional Australians who are more likely to experience transport inequality compared to their urban counterparts due to limited public transport, longer driving distances, higher fuel costs and lower average incomes" (p38). Under section 2.1 Movement of people: promoting active and public transport (p22), the Consultation Roadmap should explicitly discuss how transport funding will be directed to active travel, including priorities and targets.

60 ## 26. What measures and metrics should be used to evaluate the final Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan?

Not answered

61 ## 26.1 What other data and evidence could governments use and how could this offer further insights on the pace, scale and location of transport emissions reduction pathways?

State travel surveys should be co-ordinated.

Publicly available datasets provide a poor level of information on land transport. The census only provides information on journey to work – a small fraction of total transport trips.

The focus on the journey to work effectively gives a distorted picture of transport and significantly disadvantages the assessment of walking. The journey to work is typically a comparatively long trip, unsuited to walking alone, whereas walking is a much more common main mode of travel to more local destinations like shops and schools. For example, based on Victorian data, 20.4% and 18.4% students walk to primary school or secondary school respectively (Eady, Walking and Transport in Melbourne: 2023 Update, 2023). With census reporting focusing on journey to work, we are not capturing the high volumes of Australians who rely on walking for transport to access education, shops or services, let alone walking for recreational reasons. Therefore, the significance of walking in the transport system tends to be under-estimated.

Most states and territories undertake surveys that provide a much more comprehensive picture of transport than the census. The relevant data set in Victoria is the Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA). A consistent and comprehensive approach to travel surveys across the states would be highly valuable for the accurate collection of data to understand travel patterns and enhance transport planning. This would:

- Allow comparison of mode share across different states and territories and provide data for Australia as whole.
- Provide an evidence base for setting mode share targets for different cities/states.
- Indicate whether these targets are being met.
- Provide a valuable data source for a range of research if publicly available. For example, it would provide exposure data about road safety across Australia, enabling assessment of crash risk based on distance travelled or trips taken.

Targets

A commitment by the government to increase the proportion of trips made by walking is essential, not only to meet climate change targets but also to ensure all Australians – regardless of age, physical ability, gender, postcode and socio-economic status – have healthy, appealing options to travel to daily activities in their community and to connect with others. Mode share targets that reduce vehicle kms travelled and replace with active travel will be an important metric to measure the success of this Roadmap.

Recommendation: Set a national mode-share target for walking.

62 27. Do you have any feedback on the proposed review process?

Not answered

63 28. Do you have any further feedback on the Consultation Roadmap and proposed pathways?

Not answered

64 28.1 Is there anything missing? Are the sections appropriately integrated? Is the Roadmap appropriately ambitious?

The Roadmap should be ambitious in the targets that they set; an adequate result will not be achieved without moving from a business as usual approach. Victoria Walks encourages the final Roadmap to be ambitious in what it sets out to do.

Short-term benefits of walking

Under section 2.1, despite accurately recognising the role active transport will have in improving the energy efficiency of transport, the focus on improvements 'over the long term' (p22) overlooks short-term opportunities. The benefits of investment in infrastructure for walking, including to access public transport services, along with behaviour change campaigns are apparent sooner than projects with more extensive infrastructure such as converting the current fleet to EV. This reality should be recognised by the Roadmap.

Recommendation: Reflect the potential for walking to be increased in a relatively short timeframe with appropriate investment. Include 'mode shift' as a pathway for transport decarbonisation in the timeline on p. 7 of the Roadmap - This can be started immediately so is relevant in the first stage – now to 2030.

Barriers to public and active transport

The Consultation Roadmap identifies "geography, weather," as significant barriers to the adoption of public and active transport, which are factors that often surface in survey responses relating to travel behaviour. However, good design can easily overcome these barriers, as evidenced by high rates of walking and cycling in many international cities with poor weather.

Recommendation: Remove 'geography, weather' as significant barriers to the adoption of public and active transport on p 28.

New technologies

Under the section A net zero pathway for active and public transport of the Consultation Roadmap, the Roadmap highlights the ways that government can support the increased use of public and active transport. The Roadmap focuses on their role as a leader and an investor.

Victoria Walks recommends that:

- Instead of supporting technological advancements in active transport (p26), the government role in this space should be regulatory to ensure safety of all road users, particularly walkers, in the face of these new technologies.
- The government should explicitly commit to prioritising EV charging infrastructure on private land and ensuring that new infrastructure does not obstruct walking. (e.g. footpaths).

Air pollution

The effects of traffic on air pollution have been well studied internationally and to some extent in Australia. Approximately 2600 Australians die from air pollution each year and

traffic pollution has been linked with increased rates of asthma (Loo, 2020). In urban areas, the main contributor to air pollution is traffic. Forehead and colleagues (Forehead, 2020) measured pollution levels next to the road close to the height of an adult in Sydney. They found levels at busy intersections were ten times higher than background levels measured by nearby official monitoring stations. Children are most at risk from traffic pollution because their bodies are more sensitive to air pollution (Loo, 2020) (Marshall, 2022). In 2020, possibly for the first time anywhere in the world, air pollution was included as a contributing factor in the death of 9-year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah in London (Marshall, 2022).
Recommendation: Include air pollution from transport as relevant to climate change and collect and publish high quality data on it.

65 29. Is there any further information or documentation that you wish to be considered with your submission?

Investing in Walking – a step forward for Victoria's environment, economy and health 2022 details actions government can take to demonstrably improve walking outcomes. Walking and transport in Melbourne suburbs provides further analysis of walking and transport specific to Melbourne.
https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/research/

66 Would you like to upload a document?

Yes

67 Have you removed any identifying information from your submission?

Yes

68 Upload a submission

Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap_Victoria Walks_5August 2024.pdf

69 Upload a submission

Not answered

70 Upload supporting file

Not answered

71 Upload supporting file

Not answered

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

5 August 2024

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Submission to Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap

Executive Summary

Victoria Walks supports the Consultation Roadmap's emphasis on the government's critical role in increasing walking and riding. It underscores the necessity for enhancing the attractiveness and availability of infrastructure for walking and riding, as well as public transport. The Roadmap explicitly acknowledges the wide-ranging benefits of walking and riding beyond decarbonisation alone:

> *Active and public transport can support decarbonisation efforts while easing congestion and household transport costs, increasing physical activity levels and reducing harmful pollution, heat and noise.*

This strategic shift is essential and is supported by Victoria Walks.

Aspects of the Consultation Roadmap that Victoria Walks specifically supports include:

1. Recognition of the importance of and benefits of walking (Section 2.1 p. 22).
2. Commitment to urban planning and zoning reform (p. 24).
3. Commitment to "establishing mode share and investment targets for active and public transport" (p. 26). However, census journey to work data is not representative of all travel and national travel data should be collected and used to measure mode share instead. See p. 10 for further information.
4. Recognition that e-mobility technology is not an active form of transport (p. 23).
5. The statement that increasing active travel will require "improvements in the safety, connectivity, and convenience of walking … infrastructure" (p. 22). However, the Roadmap should specify the inclusion of pedestrian road crossings.

Recommendations

Victoria Walks recommends:

- Recognising the different transport modes – walking, riding and public transport – as distinct modes with different infrastructure needs that need to be considered separately.
- Explicitly recommending a more conservative approach to new road construction, and direct funding toward investing in active and public transport.
- Dedicating 20% of Australia's transport budget to walking and riding, with at least half of this for walking.

- Explicit acknowledgement of the high return on investment of walking.
- Recognising that local governments, particularly in rural and regional areas, are less well positioned to invest in transport compared to state and federal governments.
- Set a national mode-share target for walking.
- Reflect the potential for walking to be increased in a relatively short timeframe with appropriate investment.
- Include 'mode shift' as a pathway for transport decarbonisation in the timeline on p. 7 of the Roadmap – this can be started immediately so is relevant in the first stage – now to 2030.
- Remove 'geography, weather' as significant barriers to the adoption of public and active transport on p 28.
- Instead of supporting technological advancements in active transport (p26), the government role in this space should be regulatory to ensure safety of all road users, particularly walkers, in the face of these new technologies.
- Explicitly commit to prioritising EV charging infrastructure on private land and ensuring that new infrastructure does not obstruct walking. (e.g. footpaths).
- Include air pollution from transport as relevant to climate change and collect and publish high quality data on the issue.

Introduction

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

Walking is an important mode of transport, second only to private vehicles as the most common way of getting around. Road vehicles are responsible for the majority of Australia's transport emissions, but swapping some of these trips to walking instead, in conjunction with public transport, provides potential to reduce emissions.

Encouraging and supporting walking will help address transport emissions, however the broader benefits of walking mean the approaches and recommendations in this submission are and will be relevant to many other current and future government priorities over the long-term.

Walking is equitable

Walking, which includes the use of mobility aids, is the most equitable form of transport. Walking, combined with public transport, allows people to travel when they don't have the option to drive or would prefer not to. It is something everyone can do if the right infrastructure is provided, as it doesn't require special equipment or registration, can be done at any time, almost anywhere and without any cost. It does not need to be scheduled or co-ordinated with other people.

Walking is also the most popular form of exercise and recreation in Australia. Exercise is typically strongly correlated with economic characteristics, with lower socio-economic groups getting substantially less physical activity. However, walking, especially walking for transport, is comparatively equitable across all sectors of society (Garrard, 2013).

Walking is important for people with disability

Walking is very unusual in that participation is higher for adults with disability (50%) compared to the overall population (44%). It has the highest participation rate of all sports and physical activities amongst people with disability (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

Walking is important for women

Women are more likely to participate in non-organised recreational activities rather than organised sport. Walking is particularly important as a form of recreation and exercise for them. More than half (54%) of Australian women participate in recreational walking at least once a year compared to 33% of men (Australian Sports Commission, 2019).

Walking is important in regional urban areas

People living in inner regional areas of Australia are more likely to walk for recreation than those in major cities, with participation rates of 47% and 45% respectively. In outer regional and remote areas where walking participation is slightly lower (43% and 40%), significantly more people walk than do any other sport or physical activity (Clearinghouse for Sport, 2024).

The regional prevalence of preventable diseases such as Type 2 diabetes is high compared with urban areas. In 2022, 6.8% in inner regional areas and 6.6% in outer regional and remote areas had heart, stroke and vascular disease compared to 5.4% of people living in a major city (ABS, 2024). Walking, whether for transport or exercise, is an achievable way to improve the health of regional communities.

Investment in walking provides excellent value for money

Walking provides significant benefits to the individual and society, with benefits across health, community, equity, environment, transport and economic development, all of which support economic prosperity.

Compared to other transport projects such as rail and road, investment in walking provides exceptional return on investment. Evidence from 20 different studies suggests that the benefit cost ratio of walking interventions is 13:1 – $13 of benefit for every $1 of expenditure (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018). These don't even have to be large scale projects. Providing a footpath as an alternative to walking along a road, a kerb ramp to get down to the road level or pedestrian refuge to make it easier to cross the road can all increase the attractiveness and safety of walking.

In 2008, the total annual economic cost of physical inactivity in Australia, including healthcare, productivity and mortality costs, was estimated at $13.8 billion (Cadilhac, et al., 2011). A 10% reduction in physical inactivity through walking would result in 2,000 fewer deaths and 6,000 fewer incidents of disease each year (Medibank, 2008). For every one kilometre walked instead of driven, there is a total saving of $2.68 through benefits like reduced congestion and improved health (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018).

In addition to infrastructure, there are a range of low-cost policy changes that make walking safer and more attractive, such as safer speed limits.

Mode shift

Travel mode shifts from private motor vehicle use to walking and cycling (including to access public transport) are associated with (i) a range of health benefits arising from increased physical activity and reduced car use; (ii) reduced traffic congestion; (iii) reduced air and noise pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions; and (iv) improved community liveability (Litman, 2013).

There is increasing recognition that transitioning from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles will not happen fast enough to meet the 2030 emissions targets. Climateworks Centre recently released modelling indicating that an increase in mode share of active travel by 15 percent is required for Australia to meet their transport emissions goals (Rau, Rowe, & Powell R, 2024).

Walking and public transport

Walking and public transport strongly complement each other. Walking is overwhelmingly the main way people access public transport, with data from Melbourne (Eady & Burtt, 2019) showing:

- 66% of trips to train stations are walked
- 96% of trips to bus stops are walked, and
- 98% of trips to tram stops are walked.

Nearly half of the time spent travelling on a 'public transport trip' is actually on foot, and 70% of memories of the trip are from the walking component (Hillnhütter, Walking to Access Public Transport, 2019).

Public transport is an extension of walking when distances are too far to walk alone. Improving walking access to public transport can increase patronage, often a much cheaper alternative to boost ridership than changes to the service itself e.g. more buses, new train lines. Research shows that improving the walking environment can increase walking distances to public transport by 70%, potentially tripling the catchment area (Hillnhütter, 2016).

Walking and riding, not active transport

Active transport is a term often used to group together walking and riding. However, this ignores that walking and riding are quite different:

- Walking is much more common than riding. For example, for every 10 trips in Melbourne that are walked, less than one is ridden on a bicycle (Eady, 2023).
- The two modes have different infrastructure requirements. For walking, footpaths and road crossing are key infrastructure requirements. Uptake of walking is also driven by a range of broader urban planning considerations such as density of development, street connectivity and car parking availability. For riding, the primary concern is around safety with desire for infrastructure that is separated from vehicles.
- Walking is more accessible to a much greater proportion of the population, particularly people with disability or those who are less physically fit.
- Victoria Walks analysis of VISTA data between 2012 and 2021 for this submission finds they are used for different purposes. Nearly two-thirds of riding trips in Melbourne (68%) are work related or recreational, whereas people walk for a wider range of reasons e.g. 27%of walking trips are recreational, 16% personal business, 13% to buy something and 12% social.

Furthermore, there is poor understanding of what constitutes 'active transport' in transport agencies and teams with some:

- Interpreting 'active transport' to exclusively mean 'riding', with resources and budgets focused on bike infrastructure.
- Erroneously including passive transport such as e-scooters – in addition to not providing any physical health benefits to users, these also can have a negative impact on walking.

As such, 'active transport' strategies and investment streams can oversimplify the role of walking or ignore it all together, resulting in poor policy outcomes and infrastructure investment that does not benefit walking. If 'active transport' is used, modes and funding stream should be clearly divided, for example, by having separate walking and bike riding sections, with clear targets and action plans for each mode.

There has been comparatively little effective, coordinated walking planning and investment where it is needed most – increasing walking trips to public transport, schools and activity centres. Understanding the needs of walkers in infrastructure planning would help to guide appropriate investment in infrastructure for walking.

Shared paths

Active transport investments often provide 'shared use' paths which can pose safety and user experience issues for walkers – 39% of older walkers find them a barrier to walking (Victoria Walks, 2015). Building shared paths in urban areas, particularly those with even moderate number of cyclists, create equity issues as they are often avoided by older walkers and people with disability.

Much of Victoria's active transport investment in the last 10 years has focussed on pop-up bike lanes or shared paths next to freeways or train lines which, while welcome, are unlikely to result in increases in walking. This also increases inequities as shared paths can be unwelcoming, even hostile, walking environments, particularly for older walkers and people with disability. Subsequently, investment in shared paths risk designing vulnerable community members out of urban spaces and walking routes.

Response to questions

The remainder of this submission is structured around the questions outlined in the Consultation Roadmap.

2. Do you support the use of the avoid-shift-improve framework as a tool to identify opportunities for abatement?

Yes, the severity of the climate crisis that Australia is facing necessitates approaching the problem from every angle. Victoria Walks strongly supports 'shift' as an integral part of the framework and welcomes government intervention in this area to encourage more walking, as well as riding and public transport use.

3. Do you agree the development of a national policy framework for active and public transport will support emissions reduction?

Yes, climate change is a global issue, so it should be dealt with at the highest levels of government. This consultation roadmap is the second national policy that has come out this year to recognise the pivotal role of the transportation sector in addressing the climate crisis and adhering to the emissions reduction targets of the Paris agreement. Both active and public transport are important climate change responses, and the Federal Government has a significant responsibility in investing in and supporting states as they transition towards a cleaner transport system.

4. What should be included in a national policy framework for active and public transport and how should it be developed?

While it is important to recognise the importance of walking, riding and public transport, it is critical to recognise that there are distinctions within this category, with each having very different characteristics and challenges.

Recommendation: The framework should recognise the different transport modes – walking, riding and public transport – as distinct modes with different infrastructure needs and need to be considered separately.

Victoria Walks supports the development of a framework to provide more Australians with healthy and sustainable transport options. To support walking, the framework should include the following high-level components:

- A detailed Walking for Transport Action Plan with clear targets, actions and investment mechanisms to achieve more walking trips, and to coordinate planning to ensure communities are walkable.
- Establish a stakeholder reference group to help to develop the framework, including walking and bike riding representatives to advise on meeting climate change transport targets, and increasing public transport patronage by improving walkability to and from stops.

- Develop a pedestrian-specific road safety action plan. Everyone should feel safe to walk but between 2012 and 2022, 23% of all road fatalities in metropolitan Melbourne were walkers, and approximately one third of all walkers killed were aged over 70 (TAC, 2023).
- Expand 'school zones' into neighbourhood-wide active travel precincts to enable greater walking to school. One example of this, is in New Zealand where 'speed limit changes have resulted in 71 per cent reduction in deaths and a 15 per cent reduction in serious injuries' (Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2023).
- Provide no-fault compensation for walkers injured in crashes with people using bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters or other similar devices.

5. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure the movement of people contributes to transport emissions reduction?

Victoria Walks notes the section 'Rethinking our transport networks and systems' generally provides good direction on what is needed. However, it misses the important point that road management and design has triggered many of the existing problems in transport, including the exacerbation of climate change through excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as the prioritisation of vehicles through dedication of road space, traffic signal management and road design guidelines that prioritise traffic movement.

21. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for transport infrastructure?

The Consultation Roadmap is correct in acknowledging the significance of GHG emissions resulting from infrastructure for roads and transport. However, the focus on green technology doesn't solve the problem, as it encourages and allows for more driving. A history of over investment in road infrastructure has come at the expense of investment in the sustainable transport options that Australia needs. Prioritising focus on new and green vehicle technologies should not be a priority as it encourages vehicle trips.

Recommendation: The Roadmap needs to explicitly recommend a more conservative approach to new road construction, and direct funding toward investing in active and public transport.

22. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce transport infrastructure emissions and ensure that transport infrastructure is ready for and enables low-emission transport modes?

Behaviour change and education programs at the federal level should nudge drivers away from driving, to walking for short trips. This paradigm shift requires effectively communicating to the public an awareness of the benefits of replacing vehicle trips with walking and cycling for short trips and walking

combined with PT for longer trips. While investment in infrastructure will have a greater long-term impact, public awareness and behaviour change has the potential for immediate benefits.

22.1 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce transport infrastructure emissions?

Australia is highly car dependant and across the country many short trips (under 1km) are completed in a car (e.g. around 4.8 million trips in Melbourne and Geelong each week) (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018). Driving produces more GHG emissions per km than all other land transport options and encouraging people to opt for alternatives has significant potential to reduce emissions. For short car trips, walking is a feasible option for most people, and is far more widely used than other forms of active travel. A behaviour change campaign that encourages more people to walk instead of driving their short trips may effectively reduce vehicle emissions.

25. What are the best ways for the Australian Government to work collaboratively with industry, business, governments and communities to implement the proposed pathways?

25.1 What are good domestic or international examples of partnership and collaboration on transport and transport infrastructure emissions reduction that could inform the final Roadmap and Action Plan?

Ireland faces similar transport challenges to Australia and in 2020, the government committed to 'an allocation of 10% of the total transport capital budget for cycling projects and an allocation of 10% of the total capital budget for pedestrian infrastructure. The Government's commitment to cycling and pedestrian projects will be set at 20% of the 2020 capital budget (€360 million) per year for the lifetime of the Government' (Government of Ireland, 2020). This annual spend would have equated to just under $600 million AUD in 2020, almost 24 times the Australian Active Travel Fund yearly spend. This is despite Australia having a population more than 5 times the size of Ireland, as calculated by Victoria Walks.

25.2 What opportunities can the government leverage to show leadership in Australia and internationally?

Serious investment in local walking is needed to meet government transport and environment objectives and shift short car trips to walking. People will not decide to stop driving to their closest shops or station and walk instead without being supported and encouraged to do so. The minimal funding currently available will not be enough.

Australia has the opportunity to show international leadership by committing to generously funding active transport. This is imperative to align policy goals with global sustainability standards and is the kind of leadership that the Australian community supports. A national Heart Foundation survey found almost 70% support for increased transport spending on walking, cycling and access to public transport (National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2020). In Victoria, a survey by Victoria Walks found that there was strong support for government investment to make it easier to walk to schools (72% agree or strongly agree), tram/bus stops (67%) and railway stations (64%). In total, 89% of respondents wanted a combination of actions to help them walk more in their local area (Victoria Walks, 2021).

Victoria Walks recommends that:

- **In line with United Nations best practice recommendations, the Consultation Roadmap should dedicate 20% of Australia's transport budget to walking and riding, with at least half of this for walking.**
- **Explicit acknowledgement of the high return on investment of walking.**
- **Recognise that local governments, particularly in rural and regional areas, are less well positioned to invest in transport compared to state and federal governments.**

Victoria Walks supports the guiding principle of value for money in decarbonising the transport system. However, the Consultation Roadmap misses the opportunity to stress the significant potential of walking as transport in generating a significant return on investment (particularly, small investments across a network.) Walking provides great economic benefits across the multiple government priority areas, particularly health. Given the inactivity of the population overall, if Australians reduced physical inactivity by 10% through walking this would result in 6,000 fewer incidents of disease, 2,000 fewer deaths and 25,000 more disability-adjusted life years (Badawi, Maclean, & Mason, 2018).

Victoria Walks welcomes the government's recent decision to begin investing in walking and cycling specifically, with an announcement of $100 million in funding for active transport in the 2024–25 Federal Budget (DITRDCA, 2024). However, $100 million is a tiny fraction of the broader investment in transport. Actual and estimated annual federal spending on transport between the 2021-2022 and 2025-2026 financial years ranges from $9,562 million to $15,530 million, averaging $13,836 million (Parliament of Australia, 2022). The timeframe for the new National Active Transport Fund is over 4 years, which would appear to make up less than 1% of projected total transport spending.

The United Nations (UN) underscores the critical link between funding and outcomes, particularly in promoting walking and cycling as essential components of sustainable urban development. The Global Outlook on Walking and Cycling, with analysis of sample cities in Africa and Asia, recommended that 20% of total transport budgets should be directed to non-motorised transport "at national and city level" (UNEP, 2016, p. 36). The Consultation Roadmap should emphasise this necessity by outlining funding mechanisms for ensuring adequate and continual financial investment.

The latent demand for investment in walking is significant. In Victoria, many walking projects are 'shovel ready' and only require funding to go ahead, demonstrating a base level of need for walking investment. In March 2022, Victoria Walks asked Victorian councils to indicate the walking projects they had planned and costed but lacked the funding. A total of 39 councils (half the councils in Victoria) and two water authorities put forward 522 projects worth $469 million (Victoria Walks, 2022). Additionally, an earlier survey by the Municipal Association of Victoria found that for 83% of councils, funding was a barrier to delivering walking and cycling projects (MAV, 2021).

The primary role of the Federal Government in transport and in many other areas of urban policy is as a funding partner. Funding should be consistently/fairly distributed under a national policy to ensure equity. Rural areas often have a high need for infrastructure for walking in urban areas (including footpaths, crossings and public transport.) Federal government should directly invest in the necessary walking infrastructure in these areas, given their own acknowledgement that "rural and regional Australians who are more likely to experience transport inequality compared to their urban counterparts due to limited public transport, longer driving distances, higher fuel costs and lower average incomes" (p38). Under section 2.1 *Movement of people: promoting active and public transport* (p22), the Consultation Roadmap should explicitly discuss how transport funding will be directed to active travel, including priorities and targets.

26. What measures and metrics should be used to evaluate the final Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan?

26.1 What other data and evidence could governments use and how could this offer further insights on the pace, scale and location of transport emissions reduction pathways?

State travel surveys should be co-ordinated.

Publicly available datasets provide a poor level of information on land transport. The census only provides information on journey to work – a small fraction of total transport trips.

The focus on the journey to work effectively gives a distorted picture of transport and significantly disadvantages the assessment of walking. The journey to work is typically a comparatively long trip, unsuited to walking alone, whereas walking is a much more common main mode of travel to more local destinations like shops and schools. For example, based on Victorian data, 20.4% and 18.4% students walk to primary school or secondary school respectively (Eady, Walking and Transport in Melbourne: 2023 Update, 2023). With census reporting focusing on journey to work, we are not capturing the high volumes of Australians who rely on walking for transport to access education, shops or services, let alone walking for recreational reasons. Therefore, the significance of walking in the transport system tends to be under-estimated.

Most states and territories undertake surveys that provide a much more comprehensive picture of transport than the census. The relevant data set in Victoria is the Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA). A consistent and comprehensive approach to travel surveys across the states would be highly valuable for the accurate collection of data to understand travel patterns and enhance transport planning. This would:

- Allow comparison of mode share across different states and territories and provide data for Australia as whole.
- Provide an evidence base for setting mode share targets for different cities/states.
- Indicate whether these targets are being met.
- Provide a valuable data source for a range of research if publicly available. For example, it would provide exposure data about road safety across Australia, enabling assessment of crash risk based on distance travelled or trips taken.

Targets

A commitment by the government to increase the proportion of trips made by walking is essential, not only to meet climate change targets but also to ensure all Australians – regardless of age, physical ability, gender, postcode and socio-economic status – have healthy, appealing options to travel to daily activities in their community and to connect with others. Mode share targets that reduce vehicle kms travelled and replace with active travel will be an important metric to measure the success of this Roadmap.

Recommendation: Set a national mode-share target for walking.

28. Do you have any further feedback on the Consultation Roadmap and proposed pathways?

28.1 Is there anything missing? Are the sections appropriately integrated? Is the Roadmap appropriately ambitious?

The Roadmap should be ambitious in the targets that they set; an adequate result will not be achieved without moving from a business as usual approach. Victoria Walks encourages the final Roadmap to be ambitious in what it sets out to do.

Short-term benefits of walking

Under section 2.1, despite accurately recognising the role active transport will have in improving the energy efficiency of transport, the focus on improvements 'over the long term' (p22) overlooks short-term opportunities. The benefits of investment in infrastructure for walking, including to access public transport services, along with behaviour change campaigns are apparent sooner than projects with more extensive infrastructure such as converting the current fleet to EV. This reality should be recognised by the Roadmap.

Recommendation: Reflect the potential for walking to be increased in a relatively short timeframe with appropriate investment. Include 'mode shift' as a pathway for transport decarbonisation in the timeline on p. 7 of the Roadmap - This can be started immediately so is relevant in the first stage – now to 2030.

Barriers to public and active transport

The Consultation Roadmap identifies "geography, weather," as significant barriers to the adoption of public and active transport, which are factors that often surface in survey responses relating to travel behaviour. However, good design can easily overcome these barriers, as evidenced by high rates of walking and cycling in many international cities with poor weather.

Recommendation: Remove 'geography, weather' as significant barriers to the adoption of public and active transport on p 28.

New technologies

Under the section *A net zero pathway for active and public transport* of the Consultation Roadmap, the Roadmap highlights the ways that government can support the increased use of public and active transport. The Roadmap focuses on their role as a leader and an investor.

Victoria Walks recommends that:

- **Instead of supporting technological advancements in active transport (p26), the government role in this space should be regulatory to ensure safety of all road users, particularly walkers, in the face of these new technologies.**
- **The government should explicitly commit to prioritising EV charging infrastructure on private land and ensuring that new infrastructure does not obstruct walking. (e.g. footpaths).**

Air pollution

The effects of traffic on air pollution have been well studied internationally and to some extent in Australia. Approximately 2600 Australians die from air pollution each year and traffic pollution has been linked with increased rates of asthma (Loo, 2020). In urban areas, the main contributor to air pollution is traffic. Forehead and colleagues (Forehead, 2020) measured pollution levels next to the road close to

the height of an adult in Sydney. They found levels at busy intersections were ten times higher than background levels measured by nearby official monitoring stations. Children are most at risk from traffic pollution because their bodies are more sensitive to air pollution (Loo, 2020) (Marshall, 2022). In 2020, possibly for the first time anywhere in the world, air pollution was included as a contributing factor in the death of 9-year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah in London (Marshall, 2022).

Recommendation: Include air pollution from transport as relevant to climate change and collect and publish high quality data on it.

29. Is there any further information or documentation that you wish to be considered with your submission?

Investing in Walking – a step forward for Victoria's environment, economy and health 2022 details actions government can take to demonstrably improve walking outcomes.

Walking and transport in Melbourne suburbs provides further analysis of walking and transport specific to Melbourne.

https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/research/

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