

Framing walking and bike riding

Tip sheet

This tip sheet is a shortened version of VicHealth's *Framing walking and bike riding: Message guide*, produced by Common Cause Australia. To view the full guide visit: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

The **9 messaging tips** presented below will help advocates build public support for actions that support more walking and bike riding (e.g. paths, crossings, safer speed limits). We can best do this by:

- Motivating existing **supporters** of actions that support walking and bike riding to speak with others and encourage their support too
- Moving **persuadables**, who hold ambivalent or conflicting attitudes, to support actions
- Ignoring our entrenched **opponents** who strongly and consistently disagree with actions.



Tip #1: Use values (not facts) to persuade

Values and emotions trump facts. Engage your audience's values of freedom, equality and friendship. Avoid economic arguments that risk activating values of wealth and competition.

FROM

For every \$30 the government spends on roads for cars, it spends only \$1 on walking and bike riding. It's much cheaper to build more footpaths and bike lanes than to upgrade or build more roads.

TO

No matter where we live, it's important for everyone in our community to access and enjoy our streets. That means joining up the missing links in our walking and cycling networks with more footpaths and bike lanes.

Tip #2: Tell our story, not theirs

Tell our story, *streets are for everyone*, where everyone has a range of movement options to enjoy. Avoid telling our opponents' story, *roads are for cars*, by not focussing on 'easing congestion' or 'convenience' or mythbusting.

FROM

So that more people can enjoy getting around safely, we should close more roads to cars.

TO

So that more people can enjoy getting around safely, we should open more streets to people walking and bike riding without car traffic.

FROM

More footpaths, crossings and bike lanes will ease congestion on our roads.

TO

More footpaths, crossings and bike lanes help families to stay healthy and spend quality time together.

FROM

Bikes don't block car traffic, we have every right to be on the road.

TO

Our streets are for everyone to move around – bikes belong here.

Tip #3: Desire and social norming

Ground your story in people's desire to walk and bike ride. Showcase the attitudes and behaviours we *want*, not those we *don't want*.

FROM

More and more parents are driving their kids to school.

TO

Many schools are encouraging kids to get to school in ways they want to. Kids tell us they want to walk, scoot or bike ride, especially with their friends.

Tip #4: Be positive: more of, not less of

Focus on our solutions and outcomes, more than problems they address. Talk about positive outcomes *before* any challenging actions required to achieve them.

FROM

More paths, crossings and calmer streets help us to enjoy walking and bike riding, instead of being trapped inside cars on loud and busy roads.

TO

More paths, crossings and calmer streets help us to enjoy walking and bike riding.

FROM

We need safer speed limits on our streets, to make walking and bike riding good options for everyone.

TO

To make walking and bike riding good options for everyone, we need safer speed limits on our streets.

Tip #5: Humanise: make your audience feel included – and let them tell their stories

Humanise your communications by talking about “people walking”, rather than labels such as “pedestrian”. Invite people to tell their own stories from the heart.

FROM

Walking helps build connected communities where people know their neighbours and shopkeepers.

TO

I can easily walk to the charming village of Eglemont, where our beloved Ivan keeps the little supermarket, and keeps the heart of our village beating.

Tip #6: Steer clear of ‘space’ arguments

Avoid engaging in arguments about how road space should be (re)allocated, where one group's gain is another's loss. Reframe to *streets are for everyone*.

FROM

Too much road space has been given to cars, and we can rebalance this by putting pedestrians and cyclists first. This means giving pedestrians priority at traffic lights and turning car parks into bike lanes.

TO

Streets belong to every person who walks, rides, plays and drives. We're upgrading streets that currently only really work for one use so that everyone is welcome to enjoy them.

Tip #7: Talk safe outcomes, not dangerous problems

Highlight the benefits that safe options give us. Avoid suggesting that walking and bike riding are *dangerous* activities

FROM

Anything can happen when you're out riding a bike: branches, drains, even car doors opening. Cycling or walking to the station can be a dangerous ordeal.

TO

All kids and families should be able to enjoy getting where they need to go safely – with good footpaths and bike paths, plenty of crossings and calm streets.

Tip #8: Show what safer speeds make possible

Focus on the benefits of calmer streets where people can enjoy walking and bike riding. Safer speeds make this possible.

FROM

Lower speed limits of 30 and 40 km/hour have very little impact on travel times.

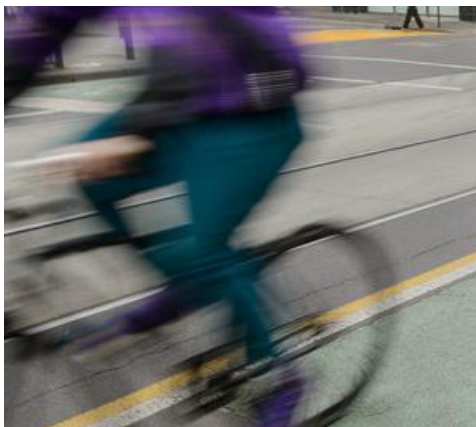
TO

We all enjoy walking to streetside cafes and bike riding in pleasant neighbourhoods. That's what becomes possible when we drive at safer speeds.

Tip #9: A picture paints a thousand words

Help your audience to see themselves in our images, and imagine using more paths, crossings and calmer streets in their own neighbourhoods.

FROM

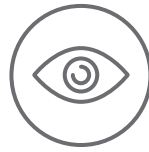


TO



Story Structure

We recommend the following story structure that focuses on the positive outcomes of enabling walking and bike riding.



1. Vision



2. Barrier



3. Action

In summary, our **vision** is for everyone to be able to walk and bike ride as much as they want, where they want. Since the **barrier** is that most streets are still designed for cars, the **solutions** revolve around changing our streets so they provide these options for everyone.

1. Vision

Describe an attractive values-based vision.

Example:

Streets are for everyone. We all want to move around in ways that are healthy and enjoyable.

2. Barrier

Identify an external barrier that undermines people's efforts to achieve the vision.

Example:

Many people who currently drive would rather walk or ride a bike, but those options are not yet available to them where they live and work.

3. Action

Frame the action required to overcome the barrier as a positive solution, creating a better future.

Example:

Governments can make sure everyone has the freedom to use and enjoy our streets, by creating wider footpaths, more crossings and bike lanes, that give people more options to walk and ride a bike.

Mind your language

WORDS TO USE	WORDS TO LOSE
... so that people have options to walk and bike ride	... so that people choose to walk and bike ride
Measures give us freedom, health, community connection, equity	Measures reduce congestion; make walking and bike riding more convenient
People everywhere want to access safer and more enjoyable walking and bike riding	The business case; invest in measures because they deliver an economic return
Car traffic	Traffic (meaning car traffic)
Open street	Road closed
Street open to walking and bike riding – without car traffic	Road closed to cars
Street open to non-car traffic	Cars banned
Safer speed limits	“Reduce” or “lower” speed limits
Calmer traffic	Slow speed
Provide walking and bike riding options for all	Reallocate road space



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