

Media Release

12 JULY 2018

Victorian Councils set to go the extra mile to get local kids walking to school

A record 63 Victorian councils will join VicHealth in its mission to get kids walking, riding and scooting to school as part of the health promotion foundation's annual Walk to School program.

Walk to School, held each October, aims to turn the tide of flagging rates of kids walking to school. Since the 1970s the number of kids walking to school has halved with only a quarter of Victorian kids regularly walking to school.

Funded councils have received up to \$10,000 to work with their local primary schools to deliver a range of fun activities encouraging more families to walk, ride or scoot to and from school this October.

To support the program, the councils will run competitions for participating schools, support park and walk options, host healthy breakfasts at local primary schools and develop safe walking maps with schools.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said each year the Walk to School program continues to grow with more and more schools taking part.

"Walking, riding or scooting to and from school every day is an easy way to make physical activity part of kids' daily life which is why our Walk to School program is so important," Ms Rechter said.

"Last year more than 140,000 kids from over 750 schools across Victoria took part in Walk to School and walked the equivalent of two return trips to the moon. This year we hope to get even more schools involved in the program to improve the health of our kids.

"Local councils play an important role in promoting Walk to School as they understand their local area and schools.

"Helping our kids to get active is so important for their health and wellbeing – which is why it's great to have the support of councils to get more kids walking, riding or scooting to school."

For the second year in a row, Walk to School is encouraging kids and families to show off their creativity by decorating their shoes, bikes and scooters to make the journey to and from school even more fun.

"We're encouraging kids to put their creativity on show and make the journey to and from school even more exciting by decorating their shoes, bikes and scooters," Ms Rechter said.

Local schools which participate in Walk to School will also be in the running to win specialised AFL footy clinics with an AFL or AFLW player.

VicHealth's Walk to School is a fun and free program encouraging Victorian primary school kids to walk, ride or scoot to and from school throughout October and build healthy habits for life. It's also a great way for parents and carers to enjoy some quality time with their kids.

Schools and Councils can now register at the Walk to School website on www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au

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