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.

More and more parents are driving their kids to school. 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.

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

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

Walking helps build connected communities where people know their neighbours and shopkeepers. I can easily walk to the charming village of Eaglemont, 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.

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. 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

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

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

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