

Students walk to the moon and back as part of Walk to School month

Victorian primary school kids hit the streets, walking, riding, and scooting more than 1.6 million kilometres this October as part of VicHealth's Walk to School program.

More than 130 new schools jumped on board the annual program this year, which saw over 140,000 kids get active to and from school travelling the equivalent distance of two return trips to the moon.

A record number of schools took part in the program this year, with:

- Over 140,000 students walking, riding or scooting to and from school
- Over 750 schools on board
- More than 130 new schools signed up in 2017
- Kids covered more than 1.6 million kilometers on their journey to and from school

The results were particularly strong in regional and rural Victoria with 427 participating schools from regional areas.

Minister for Health Jill Hennessy said she was thrilled to see even more schools supporting their students to get active this year.

"Walking, riding and scooting to school is a great way for kids to stay active and healthy so it's fantastic to see increasing numbers of schools joining VicHealth's Walk to School program," Minister Hennessy said.

"Congratulations to the thousands of Victorian kids who took part in Walk to School this year. We hope families will continue to embrace the healthy habits they've developed by continuing to walk to school in the New Year."

This year's Walk to School program encouraged kids to decorate their shoes, bikes or scooters to make walking to school even more fun.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said it was fantastic to see kids embracing their inner artist and getting excited about walking, riding and scooting to and from school.

"We encouraged kids to put their creativity on show by decorating their shoes, bike or scooters and it was incredible to see the colourful designs our clever Victorian students came up with," Ms Rechter said.

"Getting active is even more fun when we do it together and it was terrific to see schools and families right across the state embrace Walk to School in 2017."

Ms Rechter said with kids' physical activity on the decline and obesity rates on the rise it was critical kids were supported to make active travel part of their day.

"The proportion of Victorian children walking to school has declined dramatically in recent decades, from around 50 per cent in the 1970s to less than 20 per cent today," she said.

"The success of this year's Walk to School tells us kids and families want to walk to school and they want to do it more than one month a year.

"It's increasingly important to get schools and families involved in programs like Walk to School so kids are set up for a lifetime of good health."

This year VicHealth partnered with the AFL Players' Association to encourage even more kids to get walking, riding and scooting to and from school and establishing healthy habits for life. Also on board was Bendigo Bank, which assisted in providing healthy breakfasts, sporting grants and even donating more than 1,100 pairs of shoes to selected schools in disadvantaged areas of Victoria.

One winner, one runner-up and one new school has been selected in each of the four Victorian education regions based on the school's overall participation rate.

Each winning school will receive an Ultimate Footy Fun Experience, including an AFL or AFLW player lead footy clinic and AFL player memorabilia. Runners up and first-time school winners will receive a personalised recorded message from an AFL player and Sherrin footballs for classroom activities.

The Walk to School winners, runners-up and new school for each region in 2017 are:

North Western	South Eastern
Winner: Leitchville PS	Winner: Labertouche Primary School
Runner up: Glenvale School - Swan Hill Campus	Runner up: Rosedale PS
First time: Mernda Park PS	First time: Dandenong South PS
North Eastern	South Western
Winner: Carraragarmungee PS	Winner: Hampden Specialist School
Runner up: Edi Upper PS	Runner up: Balliang East PS
First time: Weeden Heights PS	First time: Holy Family School (Bell Park)

For more interviews, images and more information, including results and participating schools by local government area, contact:

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