

Put a spring in your step at Southern Cross Station's garden stairs

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The Bourke Street stairs at Southern Cross Station have been transformed into a scenic garden to motivate commuters to ditch the escalator and take the stairs. .

Initiated by the Heart Foundation, 'put a spring in your step' is part of the 100 Ways to Move it Melbourne campaign.

Victorian Health Minister David Davis said the initiative was delivered through the State Government's \$1.2million contribution to *Healthy Together - Active Cities Melbourne*.

"The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to working with the community to help promote healthier lifestyles and tackle preventable diseases such as heart disease," Mr Davis said.

"Through this partnership between the Victorian Government, the City of Melbourne and VicHealth and now joining with the Heart Foundation Victoria to deliver this initiative, we are continuing to strengthen this work to help get city workers active and healthy."

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said the public art would encourage people to put a spring in their step.

"We know that the most effective way to positively change behaviour is to make the transition easy and enjoyable," the Lord Mayor said.

"Some people struggle to find time to get to the gym or go for a run or walk, so one of the most effective ways we can look after ourselves is to change our routines to incorporate more incidental exercise.

"Using the stairs instead of the escalator is one way we can integrate exercise into our lives and that's what this project aims to do."

Heart Foundation Victoria CEO Diana Heggie said physical inactivity is major risk factor for heart disease, and alarmingly more than 50 per cent of Victorians are insufficiently active¹.

"One of the easiest ways for people to get their recommended 30 minutes of physical activity is to build it into daily routines such as commuting between home and work or home and school," Ms Heggie said.

When walking up the stairs, people will find many opportunities to put themselves in the picture. Try hugging the caterpillar, flying with the butterfly, or imagine yourself floating up the stairs on a red balloon.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said that by 2025, the vast majority of us will be overweight or obese, so every effort to get more activity into the working day counts.

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“Obesity is without a doubt one the most significant and complicated public health emergencies we now face as a society. We know that our increasingly sedentary lives are not doing us any good,” Ms Rechter said.

“We see the arts a really exciting area to inspire more physical activity. This initiative is about capturing people’s imaginations and finding an unconventional way to make physical activity a more appealing choice.”

Southern Cross Station was chosen because it is an important transport hub for regional and metropolitan travellers with around 114,000 passengers per day with many more just passing through.

ENDS.

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ⁱ ABS National Health Survey 2011/12



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