

# walk the BLOCK 17 MAY 2011

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **WALK THE BLOCK TO COMBAT WORKPLACE PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**

Victoria Walks is calling on all Victorian workplaces to Walk the Block on Tuesday 17 May.

Workplaces across Victoria are encouraged to step away from their desks and onto their feet in order to combat workplace physical inactivity.

“All we are asking is that workplaces take 15 minutes out of their day to walk the block,” explained Victoria Walks Executive Officer Dr Ben Rossiter. “The aim is to show Victoria’s workforce how easy it is to incorporate walking into their daily routine,” he added.

Recent studies show a direct link between prolonged periods of sitting and increased incidence of cardiovascular diseases, even for people who are generally healthy.

Dr Rossiter said the sedentary behavior that is common in many workplaces is concerning. “Many of us spend around a third or more of our day at work. This often involves sitting at a desk or in a relatively confined space for hours on end. This is not good for us, our families or employers,” he said.

“Recent WorkHealth Checks showed that 70% of Victorian workers do not get the minimum required daily physical activity,” Dr Rossiter added. “That means 7 in every 10 workers do less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day,” he continued.

Walk the Block aims to show Victoria’s workforce how easily walking can be incorporated into their working culture. After the event, registered workplaces will be sent information on how to implement four simple workplace-walking initiatives:

- In your stride - quick and easy tips to keep staff moving at work
- Walking meetings - step out for active and productive conversations
- Walkabout inductions - for new staff to learn their surroundings on foot
- Walking groups - regular walks for fit and friendly workplaces.

### **So why should workplaces care about getting employees active?**

It is estimated that:

- Return on investment for workplace wellness programs could be as high as 3 to 1<sup>1</sup>.
- Workplace physical activity can reduce sick leave by up to 32% and increase productivity by up to 52%<sup>2</sup>.
- Poor employee health and absenteeism is costing Australian business \$7 billion annually.<sup>3</sup>

**To register your workplace or find out more visit [www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock)**

Victoria Walks is a health promotion charity that is funded and supported by VicHealth.

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<sup>1</sup>The World Economic Forum Working Towards Wellness, PWC 2007

<sup>2</sup>Health & Development through physical activity and sport, WHO 2003

<sup>3</sup>The Health of Australia's Workforce, Medibank 2005