



Media Release

WALK THE BLOCK TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

3 March 2014

Victoria Walks is calling on Victorian workers to step away from their desks and onto their feet to **Walk the Block** on Thursday 20 March. The event is aimed at combating physical inactivity at work and fostering healthier workplace cultures across the state.

“Many of us spend around a third 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,” said Dr Ben Rossiter, Victoria Walks Executive Officer. “The level of sedentary behaviour common in many workplaces is concerning”.

Worryingly, 70% of Victorian workers do not get the minimum recommended 30 minutes of daily physical activity¹.

“A recent report from VicHealth found those who are most at risk from prolonged sitting are people working in offices, transportation and highly mechanised trades” said Dr Rossiter.

The benefits of physical activity include increased energy levels, weight management, stress relief and social connectedness. Studies show that employers who encourage physical activity report less absenteeism, decreased work related accidents, reduced staff turnover and higher staff morale.

“Workplace physical activity has many benefits for business as it can reduce sick leave by up to 32% and increase productivity by up to 52%”² said Dr Rossiter, “while poor employee health and absenteeism is costing Australian business \$7 billion annually”.³

“All we ask is that workplaces take 15 minutes out of their day to *Walk the Block*,” explained Dr Rossiter. “The aim is to show Victoria’s workforce how easy it is to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine,” he added.

“We urge everyone to *Walk the Block* and start talking about how they can make their employees healthier”.

Walk the Block is not a fundraising event and there are no fees involved. Workplaces that register receive resources to assist in promoting the event to colleagues and are provided with further resources to help keep staff moving beyond March 20.

ENDS

Further comment: Dr Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer, Victoria Walks 9662 3975/ 0425 805 578 brossiter@victoriawalks.org.au

More information: www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock

¹ ‘Work Health Checks Findings’, Worksafe Victoria, March 2012.

² ‘Workplace physical activity’ Department of Health, Victoria August 2013.

³ The Health of Australia’s Workforce, Medibank 2005.