



Walk to School

Media Release

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VICHEALTH'S WALK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES STATEWIDE!

This week, tens of thousands of primary school students around Victoria opt for the pavement as VicHealth's annual [Walk to School](#) campaign launches statewide.

Running for the month of October, *Walk to School* is a fun, free way to encourage kids to walk, ride or scoot to school and aims to kick-start active, healthy habits for life.

Walk to School is particularly relevant at a time when childhood obesity is high and four in five Victorian students are not getting the physical activity they need daily.

VicHealth CEO, Jerril Rechter, explains, "Unfortunately, Australian children are now among the world's least active. In the 1960s, one in 20 children were overweight or obese and today, it's one in four.

"Regular physical activity is essential for health. It's a well-known protective factor against chronic disease and obesity. Getting kids into a routine of walking can put them on the path to good health for the rest of their lives.

"Walk to School is part of VicHealth's long-term plan to get more Victorians living healthier and happier lives. Walking, riding or scooting to and from school is a great way for parents and children to get active, spend more quality time together and kick-start a habit that will put kids on the path to good health for life," she said.

Nearly 80,000 students from 499 primary schools participated in last year's *Walk to School* and it's hoped this year's campaign will attract even more students.

Walk to School community partners, Cricket Victoria and the Melbourne Stars, believe that walking is a great way to get kids active and they are proud to support this year's campaign and encourage more involvement from local schools and families.

Tony Dodemaide, CEO, Cricket Victoria said "We're thrilled to be able to support this important initiative and encourage more children to get moving. Daily exercise is imperative for children's health and the benefits extend beyond physical health. Exercise, such as walking, can aid personal development, foster connectivity and improve mental health."

Over 60 local councils will support this year's *Walk to School* campaign through competitions, healthy breakfasts, pilot walking programs and school programs.

Participating schools will receive certificates to celebrate their students' achievements and they will have the chance to win regional prizes including 250 tickets to the Melbourne Stars first home match. All Victorian primary school

WALK TO
SCHOOL

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students can get involved in VicHealth's fun walking-themed competition throughout October. Follow Walk to School on Facebook for all the details.

Parents are encouraged to download the free *Walk to School* app, which allows their children to record their walks to and from school each day. The app also includes a fun interactive game where children create their own imaginary *Walk to School* journey and collect bonus creatures and objects for their world with each walk they record.

It's not too late to register for *Walk to School* at www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au

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For further photo opportunities, interviews or information, please contact:

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About VicHealth

VicHealth is a world-first health promotion organisation focusing on promoting good health and preventing chronic disease. VicHealth's pioneering work includes creating and funding world-class interventions; conducting vital research to advance Victoria's population health; producing and supporting public campaigns to promote a healthier Victoria; and providing transformational expertise and insights to government.

Over the past decade, VicHealth has been working with schools, families and communities to reverse the decline in children walking to school.

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