

1 March, 2018

New funding to get local kids walking to school

Health promotion foundation VicHealth is teaming up with local councils across Victoria to get more kids walking, riding and scooting to school with funding grants of up to \$10,000 per year announced today.

Victorian councils can now apply to become a [VicHealth Walk to School partner](#) for 2018 and 2019. Councils have an important role to play in the Walk to School program and can be at the forefront of helping get more Victorian children active.

Councils will deliver local activities to get more kids involved in the program, such as healthy breakfasts at schools, competitions to incentivise participation, and infrastructure upgrades to make the walk to school more safe and attractive for local families.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said she's looking forward to working with more local councils in 2018 to help encourage more kids to get active as part of Walk to School.

"Every year, Victorian councils support Walk to School using their knowledge of their own community to encourage schools and families to become more active and walk, ride and scoot to school," Ms Rechter said.

"VicHealth research shows that more than 60 percent of Victorian parents want their child to walk to school more regularly and councils can help by promoting walking routes, helping schools register and encouraging kids to get active.

"Last year we teamed up with more than 60 local councils to deliver Walk to School – we encourage more councils to get on board and help us make Walk to School bigger and better than ever in 2018."

The Walk to School program encourages primary school kids to walk, ride or scoot to and from school throughout the month of October and build healthy habits for life.

All Victorian councils are eligible to apply for this funding, which closes at 1pm, 12 April 2018.

For more information and how to apply, visit <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/walk-to-school-grants>

-END-

1 March, 2018

Note to Editors

Since 2006, every October, VicHealth's Walk to School program encourages primary school kids to walk, ride or scoot to and from school. This year, the program will run from 8 October to 2 November.

In 2017, almost 150,000 Victorian primary school kids from more than 750 schools took part in Walk to School, travelling more than 1.6 million kilometres throughout October. VicHealth is hoping to make 2018 bigger and better.

Participating schools will be provided with certificates to celebrate students' achievements, as well as being in the running for fantastic prizes.

Fast facts about Walk to School:

- The number of Victorian kids walking to school has declined dramatically in recent decades. In the 1970s, almost 50% of Victorian children walked to school, compared with only 20% in 2011.
- New VicHealth research shows that more than 60% of Victorian parents want their child to walk to school more regularly.
- Parents in rural and regional Victoria are less likely to have the option to walk their child to school than those in metro areas.
- Childhood obesity levels are on the rise. Only one in five children aged 5-17 years get the recommended amount of physical activity every day.
- By 2025, one in three children will be overweight or obese.
- Kids who are regularly physically active are more likely to continue to be active as they grow up.