



VicHealth

LETTER

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PLANNING FOR HEALTH

Healthy Urban Environments

Walking School Bus

Research on Parks

4 BUILDING FOR AN ACTIVE, HEALTHIER VICTORIA

Overview of the connection between the built environment and health.

9 WHY DON'T WE JUST WALK?

Ways in which we can design suburbs to improve our mental, physical and social health.

12 ON THE BUSES

The Walking School Bus Program helps school children to be active and connected.

14 COUNCILS CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Local Councils are key players in developing environments supportive to health.

18 SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Heart Foundation research has identified the built environment as critical to improving health.

20 NEWS

VicHealth News, funding opportunities, publications, seminars and facts references.

Natural Activity

If centres of activity are located close to where we live we will walk to them.





FROM THE CEO

Our local environment drives many of our actions. It determines our capacity to be healthy and maintain good health in both subtle and overt ways. It can affect our willingness to go for a walk, or a run, or a ride; it can make being active a natural component of our day. It might also determine how connected we are to other people in our community—who we see, when we meet, how we interact. That's why VicHealth is involved and interested in ensuring our local environment promotes health and supports local communities to create environments that are conducive to good health.

An ideal healthy environment would display characteristics such as incentives for people to walk and exercise by making purposeful walking to shopping strips, schools, work and entertainment areas the best travel option; safe areas for children to go outside and play; street-friendly building design that promotes a sense of safety and interaction between neighbours; places for people to come together that are both enjoyable and accessible for everyone; and a good public transport system. That means accessible shops, walking paths, bicycle tracks, natural places to explore, sporting ovals, creative contributions that add to the overall look and feel of a place and housing developments that improve safety and a sense of community.

These characteristics underpin our efforts to achieve some of our core objectives: to improve levels of physical activity, to foster mental health and wellbeing, to tackle childhood obesity. VicHealth currently invests in areas such as mental health and wellbeing and sport and active recreation to encourage participation and connection. Without planning health into our environment we risk repeating the lessons learnt in the Greek myth of Sisyphus where he rolls a boulder up a hill only to see it rolling back down as soon as he reaches the top.

This is a complex issue. There is a need for more evidence of how the built environment can influence health. VicHealth also understands that collaboration with a variety of organisations is necessary to maximise potential opportunities to plan health into the environment.

Because of that, VicHealth is working with a range of organisations, government departments and individuals to achieve results. This is where our real value lies—bringing skills and ideas together from designers, developers, urban planners, local and state governments, community groups, health workers and researchers to achieve outcomes positive for health.

Our goal is clear enough—an active, healthy, safe and productive community. Now, we're planning for it.

Dr Rob Moodie
Chief Executive Officer



Building for an Active, Healthier Victoria

The logic is apparent and the evidence continues to grow. The built environment, along with the way we travel, impacts on our health and wellbeing. In 1999, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation identified the built environment and transport as key factors affecting the ability and willingness of both individuals and communities to engage in activity that is positive for health.

This vital connection between health—physical, mental and social—and the built environment is being recognised by governments, planners and health experts, particularly as Melbourne is expected to grow by up to one million people and 620,000 households by 2030.¹

A literature analysis conducted by VicHealth in 2000 to investigate the impact of the built environment showed that appropriate planning of urban environments with the provision of facilities to encourage active transport, such as walking and cycling, can improve physical, mental and social health.²

During this analysis, four key reasons why planning health into the environment is positive for population health were identified. Such planning would:

- reduce the inequalities that exist in access to transport for different socioeconomic groups and vulnerable groups in the population, such as the elderly or children;
- increase the amount of incidental physical activity necessary to reduce the burden of disease, disability and mortality due to sedentary lifestyles by improving access to affordable transport and providing walkable mixed-use communities;
- contribute indirectly to the improved health of the population by the reduction of air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change as active transport is environmentally friendly; and
- contribute to a changed social environment by improving the liveability of the streets, making them safer and improving communication between people and therefore improving community cohesion.

Victoria's recent childhood obesity summit identified planning and public transport issues as vital in turning around the level of obesity among young people in the community—good planning creates conditions that lead to higher levels of physical activity.^{3,4} We also know that the likelihood of people accessing healthy food such as fresh fruit and vegetables is affected by the design of their local area.⁵ The urban environment also impacts on mental health and wellbeing as it can affect the level of social interaction within communities. 'Active frontages' draw people together when they leave their house and reduce isolation, meeting places within communities provide forums for people to congregate, and healthy urban development which places housing within easy

and safe walking distance to shops and active parks encourages people to be active, reduces car use and increases social interaction.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Research shows that the level of active transport in suburbs is related to the location and accessibility of areas where activity will be focused, such as shops or transit centres. Active transport is moved by human power, and is about walking, cycling or any other active ways of travelling that can be done alone or combined with travel by public transport.⁶ Moving people out of the car and into alternatives such as walking and cycling can improve physical activity rates.

At a macro-level, the continuing reliance on the car for travel is obvious. On Census Day, 7 August 2001, 4.4% of Melburnians travelled to work by train alone, 1% (just under 15,000) took the bus and 0.6% took the bus and train. Almost 67% (1.03 million people) travelled to work by car as either drivers or passengers.⁷ More than 80% of trips made to accompany children to school in Melbourne are by car.⁸

The Melbourne metropolitan strategy, *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*, has identified the need to increase travel by public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce travel by car.⁹ The Draft Plan has identified improving alternatives (such as public transport coverage and quality, walking and cycling), managing travel demand and changing behaviour, road system management and parking policies as potential ways to change travel behaviour and increase public transport use.⁹ The Victorian Government, under its TravelSMART program, aims to increase public transport's share of motorised travel from 9% to 20% by the year 2020.

Designing new suburbs in ways that encourage activity will also assist at the local level to reverse the trend to less activity.

Research shows that most people will walk 400 metres or five minutes to a shop or ten minutes to a major transit centre.¹⁰ However, in many conventionally designed suburbs less than half the inhabitants' houses are within such a distance from those centres. That pushes people into their car if they have one. To get people to walk, says urban planner Wendy Morris, people need to have a walkable environment with everyday reasons to walk, such as having to go to local shops, schools, public transport stops or to post a letter. Supportive street environments are critical to achieving this. In Victoria, the 'Transit Cities' investment aims to encourage higher density housing around public transport interchanges.¹¹

The Western Australian Department for Planning and Infrastructure developed a 'litre of milk' index which showed on a map the locations where a litre of milk could be bought. This simple idea illustrated that in traditionally planned



suburbs of Perth such shops were accessible by foot, whereas in the conventional suburban layout the retail outlets were located within a grid of arterial roads divorcing them from passing foot trade.¹² This meant people living in those areas were forced into the car to obtain such goods.

FOOD INSECURITY AND INEQUALITY

Suburbs that are designed with an expectation that the car is available for all not only have an impact on people's levels of activity but can also affect their capacity to access fresh food. In a study of the City of Casey, Deakin University's Dr Cate Burns has found that large areas of that community are heavily reliant on the car to buy fresh food because places to buy such goods are difficult to access via public transport or on foot.¹³ This exacerbates inequalities in health as those without access to a car are often socioeconomically disadvantaged or part of the most vulnerable groups in the community, such as the elderly.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Designing suburbs that encourage people to be a part of their community, thereby increasing social connection, can also increase activity. Victoria's RESCode requires planning proposals to respect existing or preferred neighbourhood character.¹⁴ An 'active frontage' encourages activities to occur at street frontage level which contributes to pedestrian activity and social interaction. Active frontages involve the front of houses facing the street, laneway or recreation reserve and lighting in front of shops and in pedestrian areas. This can lead to an increased sense of safety, with activity spiralling upwards rather than down. Making natural meeting places within communities more accessible and attractive for people to congregate can also lead to higher levels of social interaction. VicHealth funded eight local governments to enhance public places by integrating the work of artists and the local community to develop creative local spaces (see page 16).

VICHEALTH TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE

VicHealth understands that to make an impact in the area of planning and the built environment, the Foundation has to form alliances and partnerships with urban planning and active transport experts and relevant organisations from within and outside government.

VicHealth continues to focus on collaborating with areas such as local government to build organisational capacity, supporting relevant research and disseminating information (seminars, publications and advocacy) to ensure health is built into the planning of our future health environment.

The urban environment is directly linked to physical health by its influence on:

- physical activity
- ready access to and adequate provision of public transport
- reducing air pollution, noise, climate change and food and water chains pollution
- injury prevention/accident minimisation
- ready access to drinking water and food
- sun protection and sunlight access

The urban environment influences the following aspects of mental health:

- safe and secure environments
- sense of place
- community connectedness/social cohesion
- ability to find appropriate housing²⁰

Features of the local built environment that foster physical activity include:

- availability of open spaces, especially in combination with living close to the city
- convenient proximity to parks, shops, services, recreational facilities and schools—this is especially important for ageing people and those not using cars
- streets with shady tree coverage and footpaths
- convenient access to medical services, seen as important for older people
- the use of school ovals, not only for organised sporting activities but for general recreation such as walking the dog
- local aesthetics—the attractiveness of streetscapes and local parks
- low traffic density in residential areas²¹





VicHealth, the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) and the Department of Human Services are working together to better understand the relationship between urban infrastructure and the extent to which people choose to walk, cycle or drive to meet their various transport and recreational needs. These partnerships led to a number of planning and health forums in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria throughout 2002. More of these will take place in 2003. VicHealth recently awarded a grant to the Planning Institute of Australia to build the capacity of planners to influence local urban design so health is 'planned in' rather than 'planned out'.

The collaborations with both government and non-government organisations have led to projects such as the Walking School Bus program (see page 12), the ICLEI project (see page 19) and further research such as VicHealth Fellow Dr Jo Salmon's investigation into the link between local environment and physical activity (see page 13). VicHealth was also recently appointed to the advisory committee for the latest Docklands Development.

PLANNING HEALTH INTO THE VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENT

The Victorian Parliament's renewed focus on planning and the built environment means this is an opportune time to identify the community's current and future needs to ensure health is planned in, not out.

Environments for Health, Promoting Health and Wellbeing through Built, Social, Economic and Natural Environments by the Department of Human Services provides a framework for Municipal Public Health Plans (MPHP) developed by local governments. Under the Victorian Health Act 1958 Councils must review their MPHP annually. This document incorporates an awareness of the social, economic, natural and built environments on public health and wellbeing.¹⁵

As local governments work close to the community they serve, they have a unique capacity to make a difference. Local governments need to be, and increasingly are, aware of how their actions influence the health and wellbeing of their communities. VicHealth has worked closely with a number of councils to develop *Leading the Way: Councils Creating Healthier Communities* (see page 14), a resource package explaining factors which influence health and assisting councils to integrate their planning to create more positive health outcomes. It is designed to complement the Department of Human Services' *Environments for Health Planning Framework*.

The recent release of the State Government's Melbourne metropolitan strategy, provides a solid framework which collaborating organisations can work with to build both knowledge and sustainable projects to promote health. The

The Tale of Two Streets

There are two streets: one is called Light Street and the other Heavy Street. They are in San Francisco, but they could be in Melbourne.

The difference? Light Street has 2000 cars per day and Heavy Street has 16,000 per day. Those living on Light Street have three times as many friends among their neighbours as those on Heavy Street.

Light Street is perceived to be friendly and safe for kids, whereas on Heavy Street residents keep to themselves and there is little sense of community.²⁷

strategy outlines nine key directions to guide Melbourne's growth. Their achievement over time depends on putting into effect specific carefully framed policies.¹

The strategy also identifies three key policy objectives that will plan health into the environment:

- Recognise and protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place.
- Improve community safety and encourage neighbourhood design that makes people feel safe.
- Promote excellent neighbourhood design to create attractive, walkable and diverse communities.¹

RESCode, released in August 2001, also sets out provisions for residential development in Victoria with a large emphasis on planners maintaining a neighbourhood's character. This respect for neighbourhood character is not, however, meant to stop positive change.¹⁶

AUSTRALIA RECOGNISES HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS ARE NECESSARY FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

At a national level, the *National Environmental Health Strategy* released in 1999 by the Department of Health and Ageing established a vision of 'healthy communities in healthy environments'.¹⁷ Concerned with issues such as environmental degradation, climate change, contaminated water and food and chemical exposure, the Strategy also states that environmental health practice provides opportunities to 'enhance health by planning for improved health outcomes and



working towards health promoting environments'.¹⁷

Both the Strategic Inter-Government Forum on Physical Activity and Health (SIGPAH)¹⁸ and the Heart Foundation's SEPA (Supportive Environments for Physical Activity project), (see page 18) aim to increase environmental support and opportunities for people to be physically active in their daily life.¹⁹

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An International Perspective

Health Canada defines the built environment as 'part of the overall ecosystem of our Earth. It encompasses all of the buildings, spaces and products that are created, or at least significantly modified, by people'.²² The way our communities are planned and built can also affect our health, including such aspects as the availability of affordable housing, public transport and bicycle paths and the design of public spaces. For example, people are more likely to exercise when facilities are located near their homes.²²

The World Health Organization launched the Healthy Cities Project in 1988. The Healthy Cities Project, run by the WHO European Centre for Urban Health, is 'about enhancing the physical, mental, social and environmental wellbeing of the people who live and work in cities'.²³ The Healthy Cities approach seeks to put health on the agenda of decision-makers in cities and to build a strong lobby for public health at the local level.²⁴

In Europe, the Local Agenda 21 initiative is conducted by the UN's International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI, see page 19).²⁵ ICLEI is an international association of local governments implementing sustainable development.²⁶ The emphasis of both approaches is to involve local communities in the process of improving the urban environment in ways that promote health.

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Purposeful Walking

If the environment is right and a destination accessible, walking is the best 'active travel' plan.



Why Don't We Just Walk?

Walking expert Rodney Tolley says that daily purposeful walking is the quickest way to make positive changes to your life and improve your health. Cities need to be built to encourage this activity.

Rodney Tolley, the director of the Centre for Alternative and Sustainable Transport (CAST) at Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom, is not surprisingly, a passionate walker and cyclist. But he can 'talk the walk' as well.

Tolley is an expert in environmental traffic management and walking and bicycle use in traffic plans. He is also the editor of *The Greening of Urban Transport: Planning for Walking and Cycling in Western Cities*, globally acknowledged as the bible of green-mode planning.

This makes him one of the best informed advocates for improving health by making cities and suburbs conducive to walking and other forms of physical activity.

Tolley is straight to the point. He argues, quite simply, that daily 'purposeful' walking will change your life. And it won't cost you time—a factor often cited by people as their reason for cutting back on physical activity.

'If you walk to work you are saving an enormous amount of time. If you drive, there's the driving time, which is almost always slow and stressful. Then you might have to find a gym in your lunch hour or after work. This all adds up to a lot of time. If you incorporate your exercise time with your commuting time, you literally save hours a day. Hours of time that you could be using for something else, something enjoyable,' said Tolley.

'It's pretty clear that, in regard to physical activity, walking is the best exercise we can adopt. You can fit it into daily life,

it's free, you don't need equipment, you don't need others and it's fun. While you walk you can also sing, think and talk. I can sort my whole day out by walking in the morning and using that time to think things through.

'With the British Medical Association announcing that every hour you walk will add an hour to your life, can you really afford to be spending all that time stuck in traffic?'

The fact that walking is good for you is well accepted. The value of Tolley's work, though, is that we, as a community, can create a city planned and built to encourage those who want to walk and engage in physical activity to do so.

The ideas might seem simple enough. Tolley says that if there are parks near large office blocks or city centres where many people work, governments can make sure they are accessible and attractive to workers so they will walk through them at lunchtimes and on their way to and from work.

'We need to make sure tram stops and stations are accessible by foot, that there are adequate connecting

streets and pedestrian crossings. There are Safe Routes to Schools programs, what about extending that to Safe Routes to Leisure, Safe Routes to Albert Park Lake,' said Tolley.

Albert Park Lake, just south of the City, is a local example that highlights Tolley's case. 'The walking track around Albert Park Lake is a stunning environment but it is absolutely horrendous to get to by foot. It is bordered by major roads making it particularly hazardous for pedestrians to access.'

'With the British Medical Association announcing that every hour you walk will add an hour to your life, can you really afford to be spending all that time stuck in traffic?'



Tolley also advocates the use of a 'community audit' of neighborhoods, which councils could use to glean valuable information about their residents' walking patterns. He suggests including questions that establish clues as to why people aren't walking, such as asking residents about streets that need to be fixed; areas they find particularly frightening, such as laneways; and what facilities are inaccessible by foot.

Councils should focus their investment on specific areas that will have the biggest wins. This may mean only working with people who want to change their behaviours rather than trying to force those who don't. For some people, the benefits of extra time, better health and less money spent on transport costs still aren't persuasive enough arguments to get them out of their cars or off the couch.

'Sometimes you need to be realistic and accept that you can't turn everybody into walkers or a whole suburb into a walkable environment. But every suburb has schools, shopping centres and facilities that people use and need to access. In these places there will be opportunities to make small changes that have a big impact,' he suggests.

The Centre for Alternative and Sustainable Transport (CAST) is currently working on a Walking to Work project which is investigating the impediments to walking in Britain and assessing whether these are the same reasons for the rapid decline in walking to work.

(CAST) can be found at:
www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/sciences/geography/cast/



Active Transport
 It is not just leisure but purposeful transport that planners need to be aware of.

The Sprawl: from cities to waistlines

Have you ever thought about the link between sprawling cities and sprawling waistlines? Maybe it's time you did because there is growing evidence to support the link between our built environment and our health.

Urban growth has seen new suburbs rapidly become car-dependent, with few facilities to encourage walking and playing. Traditional suburbs, by contrast, were planned for mixed use, with higher density, well-connected streets and diverse housing.

Urban planner, Wendy Morris, mourns the loss of the traditional suburbs that encouraged activity and community connectedness. The director of Melbourne-based urban design and planning consultancy, Ecologically Sustainable Design, Morris is a long-time practitioner of 'New Urbanism', a philosophy that embraces the return to traditional neighborhood developments that are characterised as transit-oriented and liveable active communities.

'The design of suburbs can have an enormous effect on our health. Urban sprawl has resulted in a lot of people living in suburbs that are absolutely not designed for people who don't drive and who are dependent on walking or catching public transport. Many of these areas have no linking streets to enable people to walk to the shopping centres. Many don't even have a local milk bar within walking distance. Often people have to negotiate very busy roads with no pedestrian crossings to even get to a public transport stop. This only encourages increased car use, congestion and isolation. There are fewer opportunities for people to meet their neighbours going about their everyday business at the shops or posting a letter, for example. It is critical for people's physical and mental health that they have a walkable environment with every-day reasons to walk,' said Morris.

The effects of this are starting to be noticed. Poorly designed suburbs with little opportunities for exercise and play may have contributed to the alarming rise in childhood obesity.

However, it's not just facilities but also perceptions which drive action. A perception of safety determines parents' confidence in allowing children to play outside the house or cycle on the streets. As fewer people walk or cycle, traffic increases, parents become concerned about road dangers and children are kept indoors. Excuse the pun, but this can become an ongoing cycle. Morris says that programs in place now can, in the long-term, reverse this trend: 'Walkable networks that enable kids to meet other kids are critical. A program such as the Walking School Bus [see page 12] is a wonderful example of how some of these built obstacles can be overcome. These children are walking safely in groups with adult supervision. There is more physical activity, less car use and more community interaction, which can only lead to positive outcomes for the participants and the community.'

FACTS

As most people are mobile each day, incorporating walking and cycling into our lifestyle is an important public health tool to ensure that daily physical activity is undertaken. Of the 57% of Victorians who are sufficiently active, 60% participate in three or more walking sessions a week.

Even suburbs can be health workers

While conceding that it's more difficult changing existing community layouts than planning health into new environments, Morris has outlined some practical steps to improve the built environment and make it more conducive to physical, mental and social health. All growth areas should be designed as mixed-use communities encouraging walking, promoting local business and encouraging the use of public transport. The following conditions need to exist:

- walkable street networks with good access to a main centre. A supportive street environment helps the viability of shopping centres and public transport;
- major centres of activity full of supportable mixed uses such as working, shopping and gathering which are therefore attractive places to be; and
- safe footpaths, kerb ramps, street signs, good speed control, lights-controlled crossings at busy roads and arterials. These will provide people with a walkable environment that encourages them to choose to walk as part of their daily activities.

Different design, different outcomes

Conventional suburban development is, typical of the 1970s and 1980s, (shown on the upper half of the diagram below). The development is characterised by:

- segregated land uses - high car dependence
- relatively disconnected street systems
- low residential density
- very limited public transport

Provision for employment is usually made elsewhere through zones for separate office or business parks or industrial precincts.

Traditional urbanism (shown in the lower half of the diagram below) comprises a built environment which:

- is diverse in use and population - is geared to support the pedestrian
- works well for both the car and public transport

It has a well-defined public area, mixed-use town and neighborhood centres, and normally has higher residential and employment densities than the conventional suburban development. It has a highly interconnected street system and uses traffic management to protect the safety and amenity of residential and town centre areas.



Health Outcomes: Two forms of suburb design impact differently.

Point Cook: A Real-Life Example

The proposed Point Cook town centre has planned health into the environment.

The following characteristics are present:

- a highly interconnected and walkable street network - streets fronted by attractive and interesting buildings;
- verandahs over footpaths and shade trees along street - places to shop, work and eat out;
- community facilities located in close proximity, together with parks and plazas for informal gatherings; and
- carparks and loading docks hidden at rear of buildings

The town centre is directly connected into its surrounding residential areas so people can safely and easily walk to it. Regular traffic lights on the major arterials will make them safe to cross.



Point Cook: A healthy built environment



Walking Distance: Planners can measure how far the town centre is from residents as shown here in Point Cook.

When cities are ranked according to their quality of life, those with increased levels of walking (and cycling) are high on the list because they are healthy and have good air quality. Moreover, in walkable communities there is good customer retention for local shops.

On The Buses

A 'Walking School Bus' is a simple concept. It consists of two volunteers—a 'driver' and a 'conductor'—walking at the front and the back, and a group of children walking in the middle. The purpose of the Walking School Bus program is to create change in the school travel patterns of Victorian primary school children, by encouraging them to walk to school in a group along a set route with adult supervision. Depending heavily on parent and adult volunteers for success, the program's objective is to increase the level of physical activity among children.

Four local governments—the Cities of Port Phillip, Whittlesea and Greater Dandenong and the Shire of Campaspe—received funding in 2002 to participate in VicHealth's pilot Walking School Bus program.

The results of the pilot program were very positive. Evaluators found that the emerging themes of increased fitness, decreased traffic congestion, increased social interaction and sense of community were predominant in the benefits voiced by participants.

The City of Port Phillip, with its participating schools in St Kilda, Albert Park, Middle Park and Elwood, is an area with many walking paths, corner milk bars and enticing areas such as the beach and Albert Park Lake. It is conducive to walking. The major problem, however, is traffic congestion and major connecting roads passing through the suburbs.

Helen Jennings, Port Phillip's Neighbourhood Access and Parking Liaison Officer, said one school was originally concerned about major traffic congestion during drop-off and pick-up times. After hearing of the benefits of the Walking School Bus project, this school agreed to trade a bigger car park for participation in the project, realising it is a safer option for their children. This school is now a very enthusiastic participant, with four different buses going three days a week. One of the routes is for cyclists and another for children who want to ride their scooters to school.

'It has been more challenging with the smaller schools. Parents are so busy these days they find it hard to make another commitment,' said Jennings.

'Our strategy is to get it going, make it visible and prove a point. We are trying to get other community members to walk with the kids. We agreed to the cycling and 'scootering' routes to develop trust within that school community. We will basically do anything the parents want if it means they are getting active and getting out of their cars.'

A report by the European Commission 'Kids on the Move' highlights the importance of planning for children in our



In Action: The Walking School Bus promotes activity and connection.

physical environments. 'We need to get down on our knees in order to have a better idea of the street as seen through the eyes of a child. When you're barely a metre high, fields of vision are quite different: visibility needs to be unobstructed (for example parking should be prohibited within a zone of at least five metres ahead of a pedestrian crossing).'¹

According to Tavis Perry, City of Whittlesea Walking School Bus coordinator, Mill Park is an area that, like many new suburbs, has struggled to develop a sense of community. The area has a large turnover of residents, with very few opportunities for people to develop trust within the community. In contrast to the City of Port Phillip the physical design of the area has encouraged a culture of car dependency which residents have keenly embraced.

Its nooks, crannies, drives and courts mean passengers on the Bus have to cover extra distances just to participate in the program. A one kilometre distance between home and school 'as the crow flies' becomes a three kilometre hike as children on the Bus go in and out of cul-de-sacs to pick up fellow passengers.

This underlines the important factors in developing a Walking School Bus: making it fun and flexible to respond to the needs of families at each school and the particular characteristics of the local neighborhood.

1. European Commission, GD Environment. Kids on the Move. 2002

VicHealth has funded Phase 2 of the Walking School Bus project, with 10 municipalities due to start walking in 2003. For more information, contact Rita Butera at VicHealth on (03) 9667 1353.

FACTS

Opportunities for school children to be physically active provide a good foundation for the development of healthy physical activity habits which may persist into later years. Studies show that less active children tend to remain less active as they grow older.

Do More Parks Equal More Play?

Deakin University lecturer Dr Jo Salmon is investigating the impact, if any, of parks and the local environment on the physical activity habits of families. Dr Salmon, who was awarded a five-year VicHealth Research Fellowship this year, is conducting the research in collaboration with Parks Victoria.

Dr Salmon said there is little research at present into the relationship between the built, social and policy environment and physical activity. Her research project involves two studies, including one focusing on young families living in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas and an intervention program for primary school children.

The first study involves more than 700 Melbourne families from two different areas. One area has a high density of parks and green space, the other has average density. The following issues will be examined:

- What are the current levels of activity of families in these areas?
- Is there a difference in activity levels between the families in the two areas?
- Do people living near a park or open space use the areas they have access to?
- Why are people who live near parks not using them? Are there barriers such as safety?
- Where do people who live more than 1km from a park or open space go for physical activity?
- What is the attraction of parks that are used frequently?

'We think the choice to use parks and open spaces for physical activity involves a lot of factors and we want to explore these. For example, a lot of people may go to a park when their children are small but stop going when their children are bored with the play equipment. So where do they go at that stage?,' Dr Salmon said. 'We are interested in where the children play, and also the role of more informal playing spaces such as streets, school grounds after hours and the backyard.'

Parks Victoria's team leader for Visitor Research and Development, Dino Zanon, agreed that his organisation was keen to determine if parks play a part in the level of activity people enjoy. Clearly Victoria's parks are well used, with 40.3 million visits recorded last year.

'It sounds logical that having a park nearby would encourage you to do more exercise. But is this the case and what influences that decision?,' Zanon said.

The second part of the research is a behaviour modification program called 'Switch Play', which is designed to reduce

Active Parks

The sprawl model of urban design, says Wendy Morris (see page 10), often has an emphasis on linear parks that have no particular use.

'Many parks are sterile. If there aren't things for kids to explore, they won't have chances to be active. Skateboard ramps are a great example of how to create a non-sterile environment. The one in Edinburgh Gardens in North Fitzroy is always well used by kids. The more kids that are around using the parks, the safer they become. Merri Creek nearby is another great example of somewhere kids can get out and explore. There are always kids on bikes down there as there is so much to look at.'

sedentary behaviours and increase physical activity among children. This randomised control trial involving 400 grade five children from three schools in Melbourne's western suburbs assessed the effectiveness of the program.

The children, who watched an average of 2.5 hours of television each day at the beginning of the study, were exposed to either:

- a weekly lesson (for the year) about physical activity and the health impacts of a sedentary lifestyle. They were also taught how to choose television programs rather than watch indefinitely. These children agreed to switch off one program per week for four weeks (up to four shows by week four);
- a fundamental motor skills program involving throwing and catching;
- both programs; or
- the normal school curriculum.

Doctoral student Clare Hume will evaluate the role of the environment, if any, in the effectiveness of the behavioural modification program. 'In this study we were keen to find out if the children who switched off television and who learnt ball skills increased their level of physical activity and what role the environment played in this. Perhaps the local environment was actually a barrier to increased activity,' she said.

'This research will provide evidence of the relationship between physical activity and the built environment that is important for the identification of factors in the environment that we may be able to modify or overcome, the development of policies and the development of potential health promotion strategies.'

Initial results from the Switch Play program will be released about July 2003. For information about the project, contact Dr Jo Salmon at jsalmon@deakin.edu.au.

Councils Create Healthier Communities



Residents of the City of Yarra may be looking at a much healthier future

Nick Matteo, from the City of Yarra's human services strategic planning and development area, said that council is keen to adopt many of the suggestions outlined in *Leading the Way: Councils Creating Healthier Communities*.

'In the past Municipal Public Health Plans focused on our regulatory role and this wasn't enough to change the health of our population, especially those in the community with poor health. *Leading the Way* has helped us look at other indicators of disadvantage and has helped us to develop a much more accurate and reflective profile of our community.' Matteo says it was common for health plans to be written and then left to sit on shelves, but today Yarra's health plan will be linked with its strategic and operational plans, helping to create a really good picture of the community that will add significant value to the work of council.

'We are now starting to think in terms of what can we do within council and what can we do with our partners in the community? Our citizens will now be at the centre of our community consultations and will help us determine other indicators of health for the City of Yarra specifically.'

Yarra will now be looking at strategies to improve future health for the whole of the community, not just for those who are sick.

'*Leading the Way* has legitimised the work we knew we had to do.'

In May 2002, the VicHealth resource *Leading the Way: Councils Creating Healthier Communities* was released.

Designed to increase the level of understanding across local government about how social, economic and environmental factors can impact upon health and wellbeing, the resource takes a practical look at how councils can consider policy and strategic priorities in a more integrated way.

The resource complements the Department of Human Services (DHS) planning document *Environments for Health* which is designed to assist councils develop their Municipal Public Health Plans.

Ged Dibley, of PDF Management Services, was instrumental in developing *Leading the Way* and, since its release, has travelled extensively throughout Victoria presenting it to councils and highlighting its practical application. He says that the initial challenge in developing *Leading the Way* was to demystify some of the concepts and to emphasise the relevance to councils. 'The process of developing the resource involved local councillors and senior managers both in consulting on the content of the resource and in piloting it. This input was really critical because it put the "mustard" on it to be relevant and practical. As a result, *Leading the Way* is short and easy to grasp and provides policy-makers with a sound starting point for integrating health and wellbeing into councils' core business.'

'Most council core business impacts on the health and wellbeing of the community. The challenge is in recognising how this happens and planning proactively so that the impacts are positive,' said Dibley.

'Similarly, councils may wish to respond directly to emerging health issues in the community. For example, if the latest burden of disease study rates cardiovascular disease as high, a council might respond by developing walking tracks and bicycle tracks, and creating opportunities for people to get together socially—all things that encourage habits that lower the risk of heart disease,' he said.

Leading the Way is in two parts. Part One explains the influences on health and wellbeing and the role of councils in creating a healthier community.

'Part One talks about "asking the right questions", so it seemed only fair to provide some ideas about the sorts of

FACTS

Built environments can vary across a range of characteristics—such as the quality of infrastructure, the sense of safety and amenity, the availability of public spaces, healthy foods and health affirming services, and community norms—which all influence individual and collective behaviour.



Moving Together: VicHealth and Local Governments are developing ways to improve health.

questions councils could ask about their communities.’ said Dibley. ‘Part Two therefore provides some prompting questions to assist the planning and policy-making process—mostly questions relating to specific population groups within each community, such as young people or people with a disability.’

Part Two also includes a number of case studies, all drawing on Victorian experiences, where councils have been proactive in influencing the health and wellbeing of their communities for the better.

Response from councils to the resource has been promising. In some instances it has simply reinforced the broad approach already favoured by council, in others it has provided a framework for thinking differently about the future.

‘It’s early days,’ said Dibley, ‘but each council taking up the resource has been able to draw something useful from it, particularly in thinking about its Municipal Public Health Plan but also in relation to overall planning and decision-making.’

*VicHealth, in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and local government councillors and senior managers, has developed **Leading the Way: Councils Creating Healthier Communities**. Already 25 councils have taken up the offer to have a closer look at **Leading the Way** through free presentations or workshops. Opportunities for your council to take advantage of this offer will continue into 2003. If you would like to know more, please contact PDF Management Services on 1300 727 002 or email: pdf@pdfmanagement.com.au.*

Leading the Way has spurred the City of Greater Shepparton into a new plan of action

The City’s project coordinator, Dennis Wapling, said Ged Dibley’s presentation to council and the resource itself highlighted the positive outcomes that can be achieved through integrated planning.

‘In the past planning decisions concentrated on the physical environment. The social dimensions of the environment are now becoming a focus for planners. We wanted to encourage a new way of thinking across council, *Leading the Way* has provided a springboard to that thinking’, Wapling said.

Integrated planning was a key element in council’s much-lauded Health Plan, with council now developing a specific strategy for integrated planning across all council activities. ‘We are currently facing some issues that we now know would not have come up if a more formal across-council approach had been employed at the time of the original decision.’

The Department of Human Services has funded the redevelopment of an area known as the North Shepparton Neighbourhood Renewal Program, which will make major changes to existing housing and recreation facilities to create a new, more liveable environment for residents.

The City of Greater Shepparton will work with this neighbourhood seizing the opportunity to embrace the philosophies and ideas generated by *Leading the Way*.

Walking can replace many short journeys made by car. Results of Perth’s pilot program to replace car travel with alternative modes saw in the first year public transport trips rise by 21%, cycling trips nearly double and walking trips increase by 16%. Car-as-driver trips declined 10%.

Getting Town Planning Down to a Fine Art

The focus on enhancing the built and natural environment to promote health and wellbeing has increased over the past decade. Research has highlighted the importance of local planning in the design and development of public spaces which facilitate positive health outcomes for residents. Of note is the San Francisco two streets study (see page 6) which found that through management of traffic flow it was possible to create increased connection and supportive relationships between residents.¹

Social connection and inclusion are now commonly accepted as key determinants of mental health and wellbeing.² It is also acknowledged that a sense of community wellbeing is supported when public spaces such as parklands, civic squares and transport hubs reflect the heritage, identity and aspirations of local people and encourage them to actively participate in community life.³

In acknowledgement of this VicHealth developed the Art and Environment Scheme designed to support and document innovative, creative and participatory approaches to the design and management of the physical environment as a key strategy for Councils and Shires seeking to improve community mental health and wellbeing. The scheme aims to:

- Enhance public spaces through innovative design that integrates the work of artists and encourages active community participation throughout development and implementation of the project;
- Promote social connection and the valuing of diversity through visual representation, project design, implementation and publicity;
- Increase the capacity of Councils to undertake creative projects which enhance the physical environment to promote health and wellbeing; and
- Document and disseminate models of good practice in this area.

Local governments of Casey, Greater Dandenong, Port Phillip, Yarra, Banyule, Swan Hill, Mount Alexander and Golden Plains received funding of \$80,000 to undertake project activity with a multi-site evaluator employed to evaluate and document scheme outcomes. The positive interim findings of the evaluation have led to the staging of the scheme again in March 2003.

For information regarding the project, contact Rita Butera at VicHealth on (03) 9667 1353.

1. Dora, C. Philips, M. (2000) Transport, Environment and Health. WHO Regional Publications, European Series, No 89. 2000.
2. Commonwealth Department of Health & Aged Care, (2000) Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Action Plan, Canberra. 2002.
3. Cultural Development Network (2002) The Fourth Pillar. Melbourne City Council 2002.



Corindhap: Old farm machinery reinvented as a seat.

Art and Environment Forums

The aim of the forum series is to explore the potential of community art to impact on the built and social environments, the ways in which people are engaged and involved in their community and how this affects their health, and the role of local government in public art practice.

Art and Environment Forum 3

Planning, people and councils - making sure collaborations work

This forum will examine how communities and local government work together effectively. It will consider consultation and engagement of communities and the role of local government in community development and the promotion of social justice.

Date: 23 April 2003 **Registration:** Register by April 16 2003

Art and Environment Forum 4

Looking for outcomes - measuring the success of VicHealth's Arts and Environment scheme

This forum will review what has been achieved in eight local governments funded to develop pieces of public art through the VicHealth Arts and Environment Scheme 2001-2003.

Date: 23 July 2003 **Registration:** Register by July 16 2003

Both Art and Environment Forums are held at:
Time: 11.00am-12.30pm **Venue:** VicHealth Seminar Room, Ground Floor, 15-31 Pelham Street, Carlton

For further details or to register contact Ngare Knight at VicHealth (03) 9667 1311 or email nknight@vichealth.vic.gov.au or check <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/seminars>

FACTS

In the United Kingdom the prevalence of obesity rose from 7% in 1980 to 17% in 1996. In The Netherlands it rose from 6% to 8% in a similar period. England, like Australia, has a high dependency on cars compared to the strong emphasis on bicycle and public transport (which includes walking) in Holland.

Getting into Shade

Victorians want to play and relax under shade. Certainly, this is the message coming from research by SunSmart and the response to a recent round of funding by VicHealth for portable shade structures. SunSmart acknowledges that Victorians will often be outside during times when UV levels are high. Developing shade, through the planting of trees or the construction of shade, can make this activity safe and enjoyable.

The manager of SunSmart, Craig Sinclair, said there is strong evidence that if shade is available people will use it. For example, SunSmart's population data indicates that many Victorians (65% in 1998) usually seek shade when outside for more than 15 minutes. However, in many areas where outdoor activities occur there is little or no access to effective shade.

'Good health promotion practice dictates that we cannot continue to seek behavioural changes without providing a supportive environment,' Sinclair said.

SunSmart is now working on a range of strategies to increase the provision of effective shade in the community. Its priorities are:

- to work with local government and schools to improve shade planning guidelines and the design of shade structures;
- to establish a pool of experts who can provide appropriate guidance and advice in relation to shade planning and design;
- to undertake research that is able to demonstrate benefits of different forms of shade, not just in relation to reduction of UV exposure but also, for example, cooling effects and increased patronage/usage; and
- to work in partnership with local government in the development and delivery of shade design features.

Sinclair said SunSmart receives many calls every day from concerned individuals, community groups, sporting clubs, schools and early childhood facilities seeking assistance in relation to shade; these groups are usually already fundraising to finance shade development and are looking for top-up grants or subsidies.

A pilot project by VicHealth's sport and active recreation program, called Outdoor Sports Shade Grants, indicates how keen sporting facilities are to provide shade. The program has received almost 800 applications from sporting organisations in Victoria all seeking a \$2500 grant to go towards a portable shade structure.



Shade: You can still be active but protected.

About 350 grants will be allocated to groups which can show that the provision of shade will increase or enhance physical activity.

Sinclair said some community facilities, such as swimming pools, are continuing to provide shade. However, despite the community demand for shade facilities, there is no mention of shade in building and planning guidelines at state or local level for public and educational facilities or for residential areas. He said preliminary results of SunSmart's 2001 survey of local government sun protection policies indicate that only a quarter of local governments use shade criteria in planning permit approvals for non-residential developments. It is more frequently considered in council infrastructure development plans for public open spaces (57%), play equipment in parks (55%), early childhood facilities (43%) and sport facilities (40%) but only occasionally in new neighborhoods (19%).

A SunSmart priority for the next three years is to up-skill local government planners to improve shade provision, both natural and constructed, in new housing estates, community facilities and commercial developments.

Supportive Environments for Physical Activity



In recent years the Heart Foundation has developed a strong focus on urban planning and the urban form to improve levels of physical activity. As physical inactivity is a key risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and in consideration of the synergies established between planning and health, the Heart Foundation has a vested interest in planning for walkable communities, active transport and urban planning that creates environments that support Victorians to be active every day.

The Supportive Environments for Physical Activity (SEPA) project is an outcome of qualitative research that examined physical activity in daily life and how the urban environment supports people in being physically active. The SEPA project emphasises active transport and incidental physical activity, such as, walking children to school or cycling to the local supermarket. The research demonstrated that people will walk if infrastructure supports them, if they feel safe and part of an active, vibrant community, and if there are facilities, services, activities and transport stops in close proximity.

Research outcomes can be grouped under three key themes:

- Sharing the road
- Destinations
- Community spirit

Local government has been a key partner since the commencement of the SEPA project. SEPA projects within local government include those that promote community safety and active street frontages to those that inform the planning and design of new residential areas.

Maribyrnong City Council's 'Shifting the Shutters' pilot project aims to reduce the number of external security devices on commercial premises in the Footscray CBD. The intended outcomes of this project are improved street lighting and the visual amenity of the area and a safe, walkable neighbourhood.

Another key SEPA project has been the City of Whittlesea's input into the new Mernda and Epping North major suburban developments. SEPA concepts have been incorporated into the key land use planning and design documents to ensure the development of walkable catchments and of environments that support all people to be active.

There is merit in promoting good working examples of new residential areas that support heart health and a range of additional benefits for residents, visitors and businesses in new communities. When people are active in their local

A costly exercise

In Australia, cardiovascular disease is the most costly disease for our health system—responsible for \$3.9 billion of total national health expenditure in 1993–94. Clearly this represents a significant financial, social and health burden which can be largely prevented through actions of individuals and communities.

environment, the local economy benefits from local resident expenditure, there are increased opportunities for social interaction, and a likely reduction in crime and vandalism through increased people presence and a sense of belonging and community. Increasing physical activity in new communities also improves population health and can lead to environmental benefits due to a reduction of car trips and traffic on local roads.

SEPA is complementary to a wide range of State government frameworks and policies, including Melbourne 2030 and ResCode (Department of Infrastructure), Environments for Health (Department of Human Services), Growing Victoria Together (Department of Premier and Cabinet) and the Safer Design Guidelines (Department of Justice). SEPA also complements several walking programs, including those that promote active transport, such as the Walking School Bus and TravelSmart communities.

For further information go to <http://www.heartfoundation.com.au> or email emma.sutherland@heartfoundation.com.au

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Heart, stroke and vascular diseases—Australian facts. AIHW Cat. No. CVD 13. (Cardiovascular Disease Series No.14). Canberra: AIHW, National Heart Foundation of Australia, National Stroke Foundation of Australia, 2001.
2. Wright C, MacDougall C, Atkinson R, Booth B. Exercise in daily life: supportive environments. Adelaide: Commonwealth of Australia, 1996.

FACTS

In Victoria today's sedentary lifestyles are responsible for around 8% of the burden of premature death.

Green with Activity

A joint initiative between VicHealth and the International Council for Local Environmental Issues (ICLEI) is likely to lead to Victorian local governments having a greater focus on implementing initiatives to promote more walking and cycling in our communities.

The two organisations have embarked on a two-year project to help local councils and shires build their capacity to reduce greenhouse emissions and increase the level of physical activity among residents. Thirty-nine municipalities in Victoria, representing 73% of the state's population, have committed to reducing greenhouse emissions through ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection™ (CCP™) Program.

VicHealth and ICLEI have joined forces to assist CCP™ councils address transport emissions as part of their greenhouse reduction strategies. The project involves promoting 'active transport' as an alternative to vehicle based transport. Through walking and cycling there are great gains to be made, including improved air quality, better health through physical activity and decreased greenhouse emissions.

The project will involve:

- developing a website, to be launched in 2003, featuring case studies of effective active transport initiatives in Australia and overseas;
- conducting workshops with municipalities to explore implementation challenges and processes and to identify suitable actions for their areas; and
- working with leading CCP™ councils to accelerate the implementation of initiatives.

The transport coordinator for ICLEI, Jessica Kerstjens, said case studies are being developed that will include initiatives in relation to planning and infrastructure, education and promotion, and incentives for behaviour change. The case studies will promote opportunities to work with the community through schools and local businesses and, more immediately, through municipal activities and staff travel patterns. They will explore the benefits of implementing the initiatives, and once the initiatives are in place, CCP™ and VicHealth will work with councils to track and quantify the environmental, health and cost-benefits of implementing and promoting active transport initiatives.

'It's a win-win situation—through the promotion of shifts to active transport there are positive health and greenhouse benefits for individuals and councils,' Kerstjens said.

'We are working with a diverse range of councils. Some may develop an initiative such as the Walking School Bus for health purposes and others for the cost or greenhouse benefits. We are helping them make the links.'

VicHealth's interest in the relationship between health, transport and the built environment has arisen from an

Some of the active transport projects already undertaken in Australia include:

- 'Walking School Bus' programs involving coordinated groups walking to school instead of using cars or buses;
- construction of bike paths to facilitate travel from a residential area to a major workplace area as well as bike paths for recreational use;
- provision of bike spaces in commercial planning applications;
- a council providing a fleet of bikes for staff to travel to meetings and site visits within the municipality;
- councils offering incentives to staff who use bikes instead of cars to travel to work;
- car-free days;
- provision of bicycle storage facilities;
- education work with target groups such as schools and business to explore alternative ways to travel; and
- planning of new residential developments and shopping areas in a way that facilitates better access for cyclists and pedestrians.

increased understanding that the physical environment, including urban design and transport systems, significantly influences the health and wellbeing of communities. Although there is a greater acceptance of the health impacts of surrounding environments, there is a lack of awareness of the full health consequences in planning and transport decision-making.

VicHealth group leader for Education, Local Government and Health, Kellie-Ann Jolly, said that preliminary work undertaken by ICLEI with municipalities last year demonstrated the benefits of more sustainable transport practices. This has led to a greater awareness of the impact walking and cycling can have on the greenhouse effect and health.

Jolly said this current project has the potential to create a sustainable approach to increasing physical activity.

'By working within an existing framework infrastructure such as CCP™, we can build on the strengths of ICLEI's four-year experience influencing councils at department, management and elected levels to make cultural, organisational and design changes that will enable people to be become more physically active,' Jolly said.



Award Winners: Recipients of VicHealth Awards at the 2002 VicHealth AGM.

VICHEALTH AWARD WINNERS 2002

Outstanding achievements in promoting health were announced at the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation's annual general meeting held at Government House on Tuesday 17 December 2002. The recipients of the 2002 VicHealth Awards were recognised for their contributions to promoting the health of Victorians.

'This year's winners exemplify what health promotion at its very best is all about,' said Dr Rob Moodie, CEO of VicHealth.

Excellence in Health Promoting Research Award

The Cancer Council of Victoria: Staff exposure to second-hand smoke in hospitality industries

The study assessed the relationship between exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) in the workplace and respiratory and sensory symptoms, and measured staff attitudes toward and experiences of exposure to SHS in the workplace.

Excellence in Health Promotion Award

Nagle College: Changing Lanes Project
This program targets at-risk young people between 13 and 24 years in East Gippsland. *Changing Lanes* provides new skills; builds self-esteem; improves outlook on life, the ability to relate to adults and school/work/training retention rates; addresses antisocial and illegal behaviour; enhances employment prospects; and increases community connectedness for marginalised youth.

Excellence in Health Promotion Award

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE: Changing Cultures

Working to enhance the mental health of young refugees, *Changing Cultures* is increasing access to appropriate education and training and developing community structures that will support youth refugees in a social and educational framework.

Health Promotion through Community

Participation Award: Section 1

CERES: Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival

By bringing the community together to participate in a healthy, expressive and natural environment, the festival plays a role in breaking down social isolation, improving people's feelings of belonging and celebrating our diversity, therefore improving health.

Health Promotion through Community

Participation Award: Section 2

Immigration Museum: VicHealth Cultural Connections

Access to the arts is positive for mental health and wellbeing. The program ensures that opportunities exist for all to access, engage with and participate in a range of exhibitions, learning programs, events and activities, creating a vibrant and dynamic living cultural centre.

Health Promotion through Community

Participation Award: Commendation

Northeast Support and Action for Youth: SmartArts Music Program

HERALD SUN TOUR— VICHEALTH TEAM WINS

iteamNova, Australia's only professional cycling team, was sponsored by VicHealth in the 2002 Herald Sun Tour. After a gruelling 10 days, the Active for Life/iteamNova combination won the prestigious team's event—a great result for both the riders and VicHealth.

iteamNova, racing under the Active For Life banner, provided an opportunity, particularly throughout regional Victoria, for VicHealth to continue to emphasise the importance to our health—both mental and physical—of regular participation in physical activity.

The 10-day race ended on Active Australia Day in Geelong on 27 October with a free family fun day. Over 4000 people came together and enjoyed the day.

CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH: A FOUNDATION FOR VICTORIA'S HEALTH Melbourne 26-27 March 2003

**Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre
Cnr Bell St and St Georges Rd
Preston, VIC, Australia**

The VicHealth Public Health Research Symposium will be a celebration of public health and health promotion research in Victoria.

This symposium will:

- showcase the role of significant public health research in improving population health through case studies;
- demonstrate the breadth of public health and health promotion research, how research links to practice and policy, and how to sustain research;
- provide a forum for established and emerging leaders in the field of public health and health promotion research to come together and learn from each other's work; and
- be a significant networking opportunity for researchers and students.

This symposium is of interest to public health and health promotion researchers, students, policy-makers and practitioners. We have offered a special rate for students to ensure the symposium remains accessible to all.

Full details can be found at <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/seminars>. Registration forms and further details are available from:
Michele Agustin-Guarino
Learning Strategy Support Officer
VicHealth
PO Box 154
Carlton South VIC Australia 3053
Telephone: +61 3 9667 1343
Fax: +61 3 9667 1375
Email: magustin@vichealth.vic.gov.au
Website: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/seminars

LAUNCH—MENTAL HEALTH PUBLICATION

Monday 31 March 2003, 10.00am
VicHealth Seminar Room
15-31 Pelham St
Carlton South, VIC, Australia
VicHealth will launch the publication *Learnings and Practice in the Promotion of Mental Health and Wellbeing for People who are Newly Arrived to Australia* as the second of its series of publications evaluating projects funded under the Mental Health Promotion Plan 1999–2002.

ART AND ENVIRONMENT FORUMS

23 April 2003
Planning, People and Councils—
Making Sure Collaborations Work
23 July 2003
Looking for Outcomes—Measuring the
Success of VicHealth's Arts and
Environment Scheme
VicHealth Seminar Room
Ground Floor, 15-31 Pelham St
Carlton South, VIC, Australia
Contact Ngare Knight on
(03) 9667 1311 or
email: nknight@vichealth.vic.gov.au

NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON INVESTMENT IN TOBACCO CONTROL

9–11 April 2003
Grand Hyatt, 123 Collins St,
Melbourne, VIC, Australia
This is the 2nd Australian Tobacco
Control Conference. Full details
about the conference themes and
program can be found at
<http://tobaccocontrol03.conference.net.au>.
Keynote addresses will be given by:

- leading international tobacco control experts Dr Michael Cummings and Dr Frank Chaloupka from the USA, Dr Ann McNeil from the UK and New

Zealand's Professor Alistair Woodward;

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chair, Professor Allan Fels, and Professor Simon Chapman; and
- lawyer Peter Gordon from Slater and Gordon about tobacco litigation and his firm's representation of Rolah McCabe in her lawsuit against tobacco company British American Tobacco Australasia.

For more information, contact Zoe Furman on (03) 9635 5517 or email zoe.furman@cancervic.org.au.

WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH BIENNIAL CONGRESS

21–26 February 2003
Melbourne Convention Centre
Cnr Flinders & Spencer St
Southbank
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
For more information, visit
<http://www.icms.com.au/wfmh2003/>.

VECCI/VICHEALTH 2003 PARTNERSHIP WITH HEALTHY INDUSTRY PROGRAM

Registration: 9.15am
Seminar: 9.30am—12noon
VECCI Offices
196 Flinders Street
Melbourne, VIC, Australia

11 February
Mental Health and Work: Issues and Perspectives

11 March
Keep it Safe and Communicate

8 April
Leadership

13 May
Bullying in Your Workplace

10 June
Stress Management in the Workplace

8 July
Transparent Management

12 August
Managing Discipline in the Workplace

9 September
Achieving Your Goals

14 October
Environmental Impacts on Your Business

11 November
Organisational Change

9 December
Take Control of Your Time and Life

For further information, contact Carolyn Journeaux, VECCI Events Manager, on (03) 8662 5333 or fax (03) 8662 5362.

SEMINARS ON VICHEALTH WEBSITE

Check out all the latest seminar information on the VicHealth website at <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/seminars>.

GRANT ROUNDS— OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

SPORTS PROGRAM

The Out of School Hours Sports Program encourages greater participation in sport and active recreation for school-age children who are in after-school care services.

Expressions of Interest close:

5pm Friday 14 February 2003

Expressions of Interest are available at:

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au>

For further information, contact Megan

Kerr on (03) 9667 1355 or at

mkerr@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

CHILDREN OF PARENTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, the Mental Health Branch of the Department of Human Services and 'beyondblue', the national depression initiative, are committed to developing programs to support children who have a parent with a mental illness. Following the successful establishment of a project targeting adolescents, the partnership will be inviting submissions from organisations or partnerships for the development, implementation and evaluation of a three-year project targeting children aged 5-12 years. This will be advertised early in February 2003.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION GRANTS

Active Participation Grants are offered for Local Grants and Partnership Grants. Guidelines and application forms are available at:

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding>

or from VicHealth on (03) 9667 1333.



COMMUNITY ARTS PARTICIPATION SCHEME

Scheme designed to increase access to participation in creative activity for people disadvantaged by socioeconomic or geographic circumstances.

Grants of up to \$30,000 are available.

Closing date for applications:

28 March 2003

Guidelines are available at:

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding> or from VicHealth on (03) 9667 1333.

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER SCHEME

This scheme is designed to build the capacity of community organisations to plan and stage festivals and cultural celebrations which are inclusive and participatory.

Grants of up to \$10,000 per festival/celebration are available. Consideration will be given to funding for a second year.

Closing date for applications:

28 March 2003

Guidelines are available at:

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding> or from VicHealth on (03) 9667 1333.

SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION GRANTS SCHEME

A scheme designed to build the capacity of local sporting organisations to address sports injury prevention.

Grants of up to \$2,500 are available.

Guidelines will be available at VicHealth by the end of January on (03) 9667 1333.

CONFERENCE SUPPORT SCHEME

This scheme is designed to facilitate the transfer of new and existing health promotion knowledge through supporting health promotion conferences that are accessible to a range of delegates and which take place in healthy environments.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available.

Closing dates for applications:

1 February 2003 and 1 May 2003.

Further details are available at:

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/> or from VicHealth on (03) 9667 1333.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Newspaper advertisements:

Saturday 5 April 2003

Deadline for applications:

Friday 11 July 2003

SCHOLARSHIPS

Newspaper advertisements:

Saturday 31 May 2003

Deadline for applications:

Friday 22 August 2003

It is now a requirement that all Fellowship and Scholarship applicants apply for concomitant, nationally competitive funding (e.g. NHMRC, ARC). Applicants who do not apply for other funding will be ineligible for VicHealth Fellowships and Scholarships.

For further information, contact Michelle Callander on (03) 9667 1339, fax (03) 9667 1375 or at mcallander@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

PUBLICATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

The *VicHealth Annual Report 2001-2002* will be available in February 2003. Its tabling in Parliament, and therefore its general release, was delayed by the Victorian State Election.

RURAL PARTNERSHIPS IN THE PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Launched in December 2002, this publication is an evaluation of projects arising through the Rural Partnerships for Promoting Mental Health Scheme funded under VicHealth's Mental Health Promotion Plan 1999-2002.



Copies of both publications are available by ringing VicHealth on (03) 9667 1333.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WORK: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Developed in conjunction with VicHealth and Auseinet -The Australian network for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention - this publication explores the impact of economic and social policies such as downsizing, use of temporary labour and rapid globalisation on the health of populations.

This publication is now available from VicHealth by emailing Irene Verins at IVerins@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

VICHEALTH LIBRARY

The VicHealth library provides an information service to health promotion professionals and others working in partnership with VicHealth. The collection is available as a reference resource for tertiary students. The library is open from 10 am to 4 pm Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Find out if we can help you by contacting Edith on (03) 9667 1331 or email efry@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

The VicHealth website will also show monthly listings of new additions to the VicHealth Library from February 2003.

The VicHealth library has built a collection of items around the themes of transport and sustainable development which includes the following: Momentum Mosaic European Commission. *Mobility management: the next challenge*. 1999.

Health Education Authority (HEA) UK. *Transport and health: a briefing for health professionals and local authorities*. London: HEA; 1998.

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National Public Health Partnership (NPHP). *Promoting active transport: an intervention portfolio to increase physical activity as a means of transport. Planning framework—case study*.

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Vuchic VR. *Transportation for liveable cities*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research; 1999.

World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. *Transport, environment and health*. Denmark: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2000.

Some useful websites on this subject are:

[The European Environment and Health Committee](http://www.euro.who.int/EEHC), a forum for the discussion of environment and health policy at: <http://www.euro.who.int/EEHC>.

[Campaign Interactive](http://www.sustainable-cities.org/home.html), the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and the European Sustainable Cities Project at: <http://www.sustainable-cities.org/home.html>.

[Sustrans](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/webcode/home.asp), which works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects, available at: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/webcode/home.asp>.

THE COCHRANE HEALTH PROMOTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD

VicHealth and The Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field welcome Nicki Jackson as Systematic Review Training and Support Officer. The Field successfully applied for Commonwealth funding to support this role.

Situated at VicHealth, Nicki's role will be to scope the training needs of the health promotion and public health workforce in Australia and to instigate strategies for meeting these needs. She will be providing ongoing training and support to people undertaking Australian Cochrane reviews of the effectiveness of health promotion and public health interventions.

Fact References

Page 10

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Disclaimer: Views and opinions expressed in the VicHealth Letter do not necessarily reflect those of VicHealth.

For information relating to this VicHealth Letter contact:
Jackie Van Vugt (Director Communications and Marketing)
Peter Ryan (Publications Coordinator)
Sharon Osman (Events and Production Coordinator)



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
PO Box 154
Carlton South 3053 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 9667 1333
Facsimile: +61 3 9667 1375
Email: vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au
Website: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au