

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WALKING STRATEGY 2022-2032

More people walking more often; all ages, all abilities

Heart Foundation

Government of South Australia

Wellbeing SA

Foreword



As a keen walker myself, it brings me great pleasure to release the first South Australian Walking Strategy 2022–2032 (the Strategy). The Strategy outlines a 10-year blueprint, prioritising the planning of walkable neighbourhoods, towns and cities to build connected, safe and pleasant walking environments that create and encourage a culture of walking in South Australia.

Walking is the most equitable and accessible mode of transportation, is a low-cost and inclusive recreation and leisure activity, and is the most popular form of physical activity for South Australians.

The vision of the Strategy "more South Australians walking more often; all ages; all abilities" will be realised through cross-government strategic leadership, working in partnership with local government and non-government agencies, and ongoing community engagement.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in walking infrastructure and the importance of coordinated evidence-based action that will lead to physical, social, environmental and economic benefits.

I am proud that the development of this Strategy has been underpinned by strong stakeholder engagement and a robust evidence-base. Wellbeing SA will continue to work in partnership with the Heart Foundation, as well as government and non-government partners, to implement the Strategy and ensure strong cross-sectoral commitment to supporting more South Australians to walk more often.

Hon Stephen Wade MLC

Minister for Health and Wellbeing

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Executive summary

Our vision is: More South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities



Transport

More South Australians making short trips by walking



Recreation & Sport

More South Australians accessing green open space for walking



Health & Wellbeing

More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking

Our priorities are

Plan walkable neighbourhoods, towns and cities

- Plan for walkable places
- Plan for integrated public transport and walking
- Plan for universally accessible walking facilities for all ages and abilities

Build connected, safe and pleasant walking environments for all

- Create connected and pleasant walking networks
- Balance the needs for all travellers on our roads and footpaths
- Reinvigorate our main streets and local neighbourhoods
- Enhance our walking tracks and trails

Create a South Australian walking culture

- Educate, market and promote walking
- Realise the economic and tourism value of walking in South Australia

We will achieve our priorities through

Leadership • Partnerships and multi-sector collaboration • Community engagement and participation
Investment • Evidence based action and evaluation

We will measure our success by monitoring

The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report trips of 1km or less per week by walking **has increased**

The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report they walk weekly for recreation or leisure in the past 12 months **has increased**

The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report more than 30 minutes of walking per week **has increased**

Note: For reference, we consider walking to include jogging, running and moving with a pram or pusher, or moving with the aid of a mobility device such as a wheelchair or walking frame.

Our vision is: More South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities

Introducing our Walking Strategy

The Strategy is a 10-year blueprint and is accompanied by a separate action plan that will be reviewed every three years. Its delivery will fulfil our vision of more South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities.

The Strategy incorporates new and innovative cross-sector actions to plan, build, promote and maintain suitable walking environments that foster a culture of walking. It was co-designed with the community and experts to ensure our state's needs are met and it provides a practical guide for what needs to be done to get more people walking.

It champions pedestrian priority and prominence, and the regeneration of public space and public transport, with associated benefits to public health and wellbeing of South Australians.

South Australia is a wonderful environment for walking, with its areas of natural beauty, great climate, variety of landscapes, multitude of national parks and walking trails, and relatively small cities.

It's not surprising that walking is South Australia's most popular activity, one that we all innately engage with from the time we take our very first steps. The Strategy recognises the value of walking as a priority and as a valued indicator of the health and wellbeing of our society.

The Strategy seeks to:

- realise co-benefits for all State Government stakeholders who are delivering on the walking agenda
- create efficiencies when working across government by establishing a clear set of actions and by sharing resources and data
- assist stakeholders in sharing knowledge and the understanding behind delivering on the walking agenda, making it easier to build the case for walking projects and initiatives
- enable the evaluation and coordination of existing initiatives through the collection and use of data
- continue to put a walking lens on major transport projects, infill and new developments in South Australia
- contribute to building sustainable living environments that prioritise the health, wellbeing and safety of all South Australians.

Above all, it will make South Australia a place where the community and visitors choose to walk, and where everyone is a pedestrian.

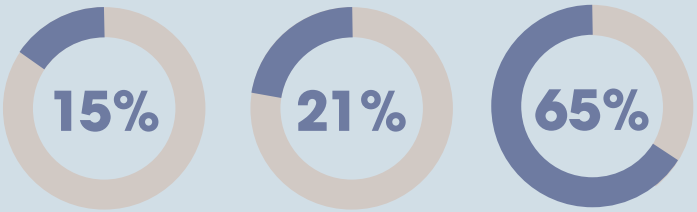


Why Walking?

Walking has been called the foundation of human physical activity and a universal transportation mode.[1]

It is the most equitable form of physical activity and human transport because it doesn't require specific skills, it is inexpensive, can be done almost anywhere and can be easily incorporated into most people's lives. Walking is accessible to all social groups, ages, abilities and cultures. It is about much more than physical health – it relates to mental health and wellbeing, social support and community cohesion, connection and safety.

In a week: South Australian adults (18-64 yrs) [2]



do no moderate to vigorous physical activities (MVPA)

do 1-149mins of MVPA

do at least 150 mins of MVPA

South Australian children under 18 yrs [2]



do 1-6 days of at least 60 mins of MVPA

do 7 days of at least 60 mins MVPA

The benefits of walking

[5]





Planning for environments that include more walking — Over the lifecourse (of approximately **21,000 people**), it was estimated that **1600 health-adjusted life years** were gained and economic benefits of **A$94 million** [7]

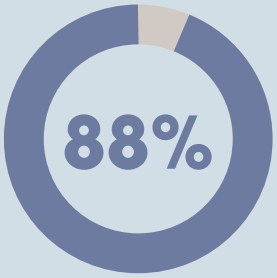


Walking as part of regular physical activity can help:

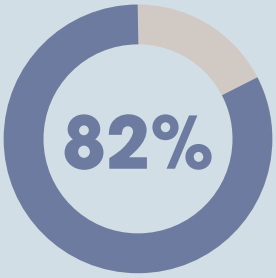
- reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke
- manage weight, blood pressure and blood cholesterol
- prevent and control diabetes
- reduce the risk of developing some cancers
- maintain bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures
- improve balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falls and other injuries
- improve daily mood which cumulatively leads to better mental health [8]

The gap in participation in vigorous physical activity for lowest socio-economic groups is growing compared to others BUT walking participation has remained stable despite social inequities [3]

Participation in walking by South Australian adults [4]

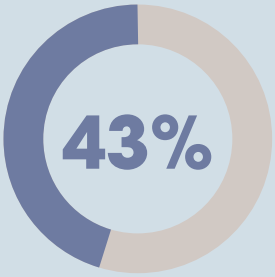


during past **12-months**



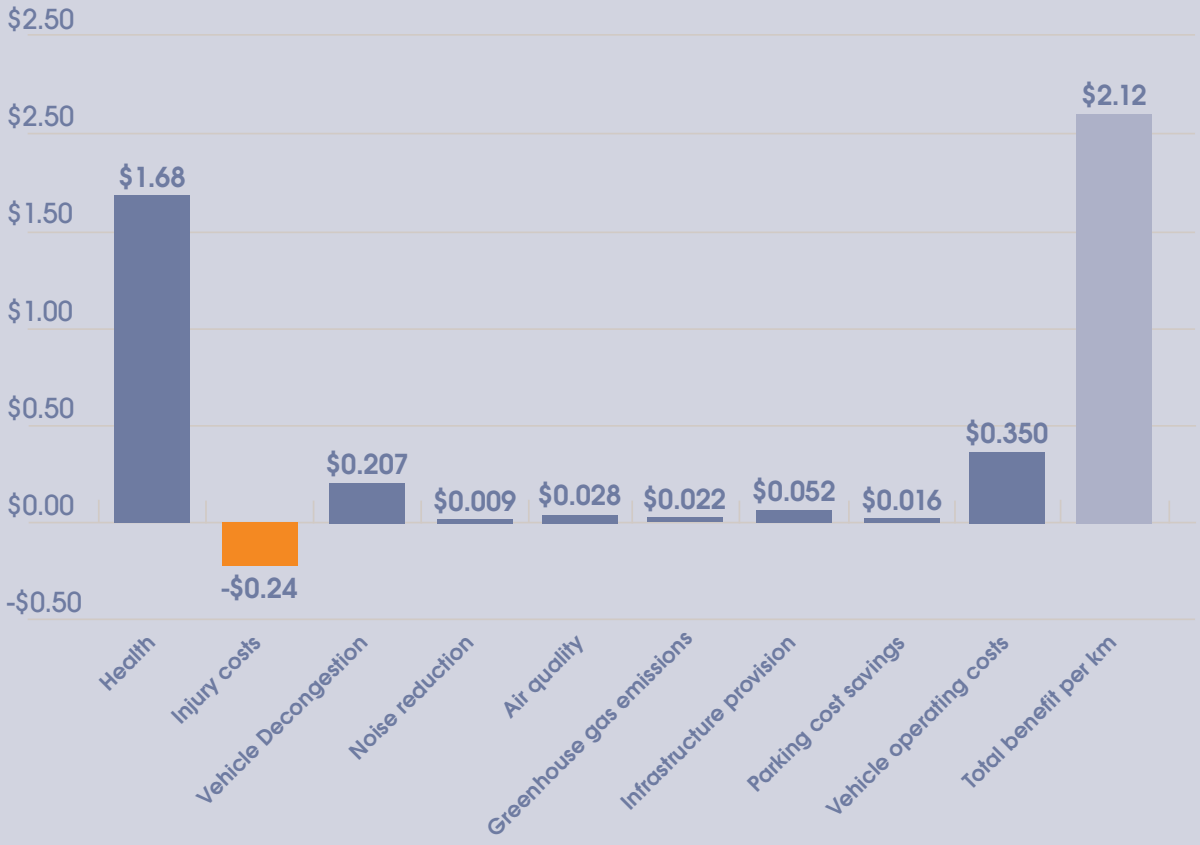
during past week

However, only



150 minutes or more during past week

Benefits per kilometre walked, for an average* project [6]



Note: An average project represents an average that was calculated over a number of Queensland road transport projects.

Significant environmental and health benefits are possible if alternative transport replaces even a relatively small portion of a car trip [9]

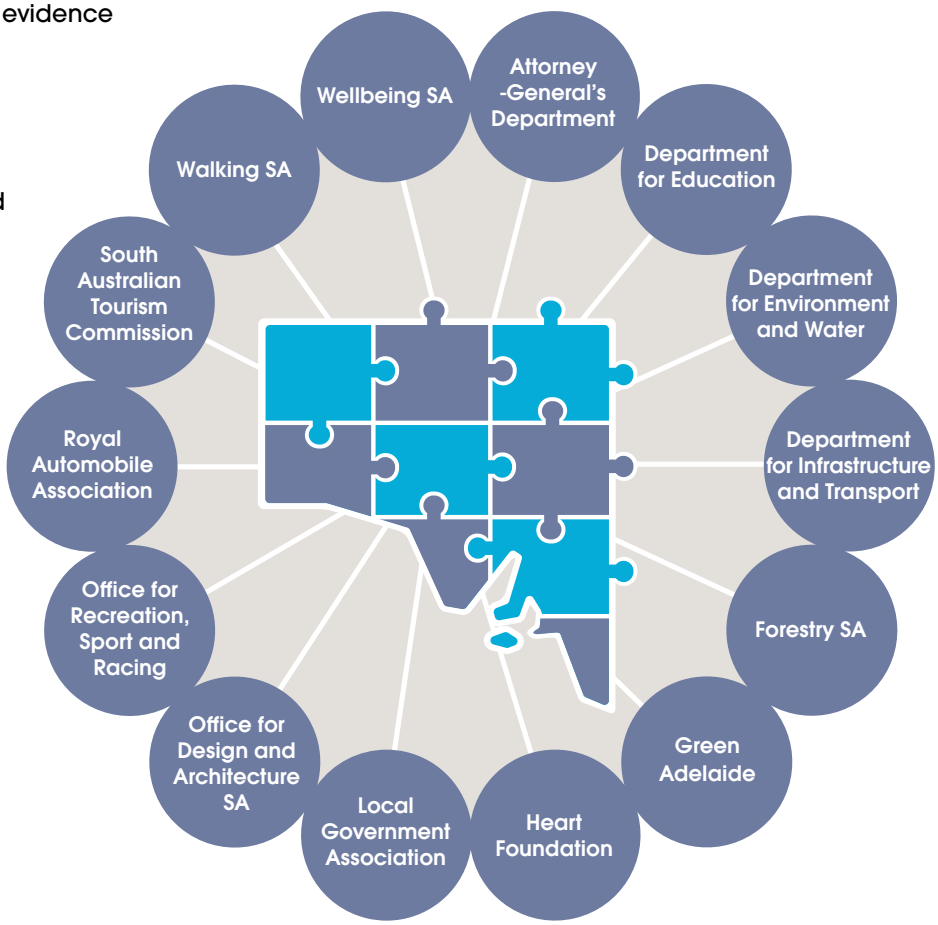




The Strategy is underpinned by a sound evidence base and community input, including:

- a local government survey
- SA Population Health Survey
- Active Lives survey
- input from a Strategic Leadership and Project Reference Group.

Leadership and commitment from the following groups facilitated the development of the Strategy.



Strategic context

There are a number of other state government strategies and initiatives that will support walking. The Strategy builds on strong foundations of action in South Australia and aligns with the directions of many government strategies:

- Wellbeing SA Strategic Plan 2020–2025
- South Australian Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025
- South Australia's Plan for Ageing Well 2020-2025
- SA Public Health Plan 2019-2024
- 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide
- State Planning Policy 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
- Mount Lofty Ranges Forest Management Plan 2021-2026
- 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy
- Game On: Getting South Australia Moving
- Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019-2023
- South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030
- Healthy Parks Healthy People South Australia 2021-2026
- Nature like nowhere else (2015 Nature based tourism strategy)
- Prospering in a Changing Climate 2012
- Wild South Coast Way 2020
- Parks 2025
- People and Parks & Linking Adelaide With Nature 2012
- Growing our Heritage Future 2021
- South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031
- South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025

Vision: More South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities

We aim to realise our vision over a period of 10 years. Making this vision a reality will be supported by the implementation of a three-year action plan for walking that will be overseen by Wellbeing SA, with progress reported on a regular basis.

To achieve our vision, the Strategy refers to three types of walking that have overlapping functions and outcomes. We acknowledge that many members of our community are involved in all three types of walking, while there are others who partake in one or two. The Strategy recognises all three equally.

The interconnection between walking types means that in order for the Strategy to be successful, a cross-government approach is required. The segregation of walking types will enable us to measure and monitor success.

Walking for Transport

More South Australians making short trips by walking

Walking for Recreation and Sport

More South Australians accessing green open space for walking

Walking for Health and Wellbeing

More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking

Measuring success

To measure the effectiveness of planning, investment and education, the Strategy incorporates measurable targets:

Walking for Transport
The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report trips of 1km or less per week by walking has increased.

Walking for Recreation and Sport
The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report they walk weekly for recreation or leisure in the past 12 months has increased.

Walking for Health and Wellbeing
The proportion of South Australian adults (18+ years) who report more than 30 minutes of walking per week has increased.



Priorities

> The Merriam Webster English dictionary defines planning as 'the act or process of making or carrying out plans; specifically, the establishment of goals, policies, and procedures for a social or economic unit'.

Recognising the need to give attention to, coordinate and invest in walking, successful delivery of the Strategy depends on three priorities:

Priority 1: Plan walkable neighbourhoods, towns and cities

Making plans for walkable places is the key to a great living environment. These plans need to be based on a set of principles that facilitate the creation of neighbourhoods, towns and cities with streets packed with attractive, vibrant and healthy places. They need to be supported equally by legislative and policy frameworks that establish governance and accountability structures for walking.

Making walking a key priority in planning neighbourhoods, towns and cities will help to counter the conditions that create a car-dependent lifestyle. It will ensure that pedestrians receive equitable access to everyday services. Planning for our streets recognises streets provide both 'movement' and 'place', in that they move people and vehicles, and that they are also places for the community to live and work, businesses to flourish and for people to meet. In urban environments, density underpins the creation of walkable neighbourhoods by bringing destinations closer together.[12]

Cities around the world with successful public transport networks have an average population density of at least 3000 people per km^2. Facilitating high-quality design and new innovative housing types is important to ensure that increased density can be accommodated close to public transport while also conserving the character of areas that the community values. The density required to support a viable transport network can be achieved in metropolitan Adelaide by promoting a more compact urban form, allowing mixed land use, encouraging better design, and prioritising walking and cycling infrastructure.[13]

Neighbourhoods, towns and cities that have been planned to facilitate walking have:

- networks of integrated walking, cycling and public transport routes
- networks that are connected with other neighbourhoods through direct, safe and easy routes
- good quality public spaces and environments.

Priority 2: Build connected, safe and pleasant walking environments for all

South Australia has an extensive walking network. But that doesn't mean that these environments are always safe, perceived to be safe, connected or appealing to people who walk.

Walking networks that are built to be safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities will result in more inclusive, active and healthy communities. Our built environments need to be more connected, with smooth and even paths that incorporate features such as seats and trees for shade, with greater separation from traffic.

Priority 3: Create a South Australian walking culture

Walking is a great introduction to physical activity. It is fun, free and suitable for all ages and abilities.

Notwithstanding the clear evidence that walking for short trips is an easy way to incorporate physical activity into a daily routine, making walking part of our everyday life can be difficult. This is often reinforced by cultural norms, where it is thought to be easier to drive the car than to walk, and in many cases where the environment does not support walking.

Working together will enable us to raise the profile and value of walking so that walking becomes the first choice for South Australians.

Priority 1: Plan walkable neighbourhoods, towns and cities

1.1 Plan for walkable places

Walking networks feature well-connected links of safe shared footpaths, and streets suited for recreation and leisure as well as for transport. Consideration should be given to density of development, with adequate economic support for expanding and improving local services and infrastructure. This needs accompanying legislation, policies and practices that support walking.

Planning and designing streets to foster 'movement' by all kinds of traffic including pedestrians, as well as 'place', will improve conditions for walking, support local businesses, and help to ease traffic congestion and parking problems.

Shade along walking routes, clever building design, seating, lighting, water fountains and shaded meeting areas are factors too.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- apply movement and place principles to the management of the road network to appropriately balance the needs for the various modes of movement for which that corridor is used including pedestrians
- coordinate planning between state and local government and involve all local stakeholders to plan walking networks
- encourage local government to assess existing walking environments for gaps, particularly in and around priority precincts such as public transport hubs, schools and community centres
- encourage local government to identify the gaps that exist in walking networks and plan to create complete walking networks
- implement measures that strike the appropriate balance between traffic flows and pedestrian movements to optimise overall transport outcomes, and also improve pedestrian safety
- ensure cross agency support and shared resource use to support local government activities that improve neighborhood walkability.

Planning for healthy walkable neighbourhoods with a mix of commercial, education and entertainment areas with a variety of housing types and densities, along with streets with trees and quality open spaces will lead to more diverse, welcoming and social communities. Our planning and land use agencies and local government can achieve this through strategic application of policies and targets.

We will review and encourage improved walkability policy across government agencies.

1.2 Plan for integrated public transport and walking

Most South Australians access public transport by walking, and therefore bus, train and tram stops need to connect to high-quality walking routes and environments. This will enable better access to employment, education, health services and cultural and sport facilities regardless of car ownership. More people choose to walk when everyday destinations are connected, and this needs to be reflected in planning.

Walking networks that incorporate shade, that are safe and have convenient road crossings and direct paths to stops and stations will encourage more people to catch public transport.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- facilitate cross-agency support to ensure the state can work with local government and the development industry on planning for peoples' whole journey experience by public transport, especially those with a disability. This includes public transport service design for new or changed services and improving walking catchments when planning new stops and stations
- South Australia has a range of quality recreational walking trails and tracks. We will link these to the public transport network to facilitate more South Australians accessing these open spaces.

1.3 Plan for universally accessible walking facilities for all ages and abilities

Our walking networks need to be planned to be accessible to everyone, including families with strollers, older people, people who move with a wheelchair or walking frame, as well as those who walk and run for recreation and sport.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- review walking infrastructure design standards to ensure our neighbourhood, town and city walking networks and environments are safe, inclusive and accessible to everyone
- plan transport infrastructure projects in accordance with the Principles of Universal Design to cater for pedestrians of all ages and abilities.



Characteristics of a walkable environment

Priority 2: Build connected, comfortable and safe walking environments for all

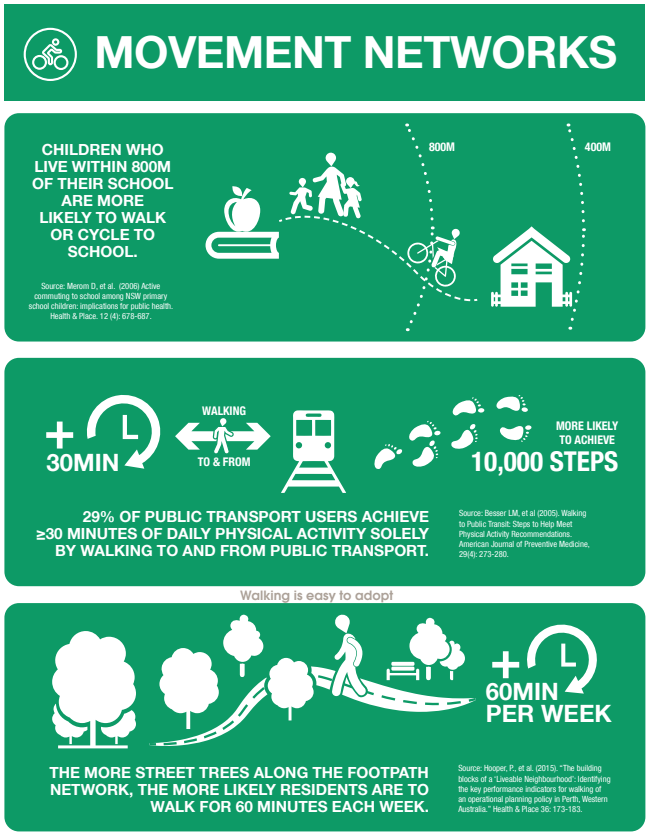
2.1 Create connected and pleasant walking networks

Walking infrastructure and networks that are connected and meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities will:

- link the walking route to local destinations and activity centres
- be accessible with walking routes that include kerb ramps, road crossings, smooth and wide paths, and aids to assist those with hearing and vision impairments
- have direct walking routes that include convenient short-cuts and road crossings in the places where people naturally want to walk, and bridges or underpasses where necessary
- be well signposted, and offer comfort through shade and shelter, drinking water and places to stop and rest.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- work with local governments to prioritise and implement these types of improvements in all South Australian communities
- encourage demonstration projects in selected priority areas to improve shade and amenity along walking routes



- Consider the needs for investment in improved infrastructure for pedestrians in the State Infrastructure Strategy, and in its investment programs; and ensure that pedestrians are appropriately provided for in any infrastructure investment initiative.

2.2 Balance the needs for all travellers on our roads and footpaths

Roads, crossings and footpaths designed with safety and wellbeing in mind encourage more people to walk more often. Safe and secure walkable neighbourhoods incorporate passive surveillance from adjacent properties, lighting for night-time use and areas devoid of potential hiding places.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- improve pedestrian safety and convenience in areas with high numbers of walkers, by optimising traffic signal phasing and crossing locations and ensuring new road crossings are designed with safety in mind
- explore opportunities with local government to better manage speed in residential neighbourhoods, central business districts and school zones
- prioritise place and integrate movement in precincts where liveability and vibrant streets attract greater numbers of pedestrians.

2.3 Reinvigorate our main streets and local neighbourhoods

Most South Australian towns, suburbs and cities have main streets or precincts for shopping, services and social activities. They are often the heart of our communities.

Evidence from places such as King William Road, Unley; Port Road, Aldinga; Prospect Road, Prospect; and Queen Street, Croydon has shown that revitalising these places results in more vibrant shopping precincts, local economies and neighbourhoods. The elements in these places that entice the community to stop, meet, stay and connect include:

- wide footpaths and generous public space
- interesting shops, windows and displays
- shade and awnings to make walking a pleasure in any weather
- buildings at a welcoming size and scale
- places to sit, chat
- cafes
- people.

To achieve these outcomes, we will support local government to:

- identify places where town and neighbourhood centre improvements can be undertaken
- explore funding for local pilots and trials to enable communities and local businesses to experience temporary changes to streets to make them more welcoming before more permanent changes are made, e.g. by introducing temporary installations like 'parklets' on a trial basis to test and trial location and product; introduction of shared pedestrian zones within a low-speed traffic environment; temporary road closures to enable businesses to spill into the street.
- strategically align projects submitted for competitive grant funding with the objectives of the SA Walking Strategy
- investigate opportunities for permanent revitalisation projects.

2.4 Enhance our walking tracks and trails

South Australia has a diverse network of recreational walking trails across its national parks, local reserves, along waterways and coastlines.

Walking trails provide opportunities for people to explore and interact with the natural environment, seek adventure and challenge and can provide important community connections.

It's important that our recreational trails are well designed and constructed, provide linkages between other destinations and have support for ongoing management, maintenance and promotion of the network.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- develop trails and open space opportunities for walkers
- create linear parks along waterways, coastlines and other strategic locations
- build new trail experiences across South Australia's National Parks
- develop, promote and market walking tourism experiences in South Australia.





Priority 3: Create a South Australian walking culture

'Cities have proven people can be lured out of their cars to walk and cycle more with the right support and encouragement.' [15]

Planning and building walking infrastructure in isolation will not be enough to transform people's habits and change their behaviour. This strategy aims to collect all the opportunities available to help change the way people make everyday journeys and walk more often.

3.1 Educate, market and promote walking

Together with planning and building to support walking, behavioural change programs facilitated through community education and promotional activities will be required to support and develop a walking culture.

To do this effectively, we must respond to specific challenges and misconceptions.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- increase awareness of walking across the state, and the numerous benefits associated with any increase of walking at the individual and population level
- promote and celebrate walking
- explore opportunities to create new programs and support existing programs
- develop public education campaigns.

3.2 Realise the economic and tourism value of walking in South Australia

Tourism is a high growth sector and an economic priority for South Australia. Walking tourism contributes significantly – between 2017 and 2019, 36% of overnight international visitors and 10% of domestic visitors to South Australia participated in bushwalking as a component of their visit.

The *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030* has a bold ambition of $12.8 billion in visitor expenditure by 2030; it is currently $8.1 billion. This growth is expected to emerge from promoting South Australia's immersive nature and recreation experiences and new trail construction.[16]

To maximise the growth potential we will:

- develop new and enhance existing walking tourism products and experiences
- promote South Australia's appealing walking destinations and experiences
- enhance and improve provision of information
- seek opportunities around walking and trails events.



Enablers

To plan and build walking environments and to facilitate walking becoming the community's transport of choice, we need:

- leadership
- partnerships and multi-sector collaboration
- community engagement and participation
- investment
- data collection with evidence-based action and evaluation.

Leadership

Considering pedestrians and walking in government policies, legislation and government-funded projects will help to create cultural change, which will deliver positive outcomes for walking.

With the community at the heart of the Strategy, we will work across government agencies to:

- make walking a key priority in urban planning and infrastructure in built up areas
- make walking a tourism and recreational opportunity in South Australian parks and reserves
- consider pedestrians in policies and legislation to deliver positive outcomes for people walking
- lead by example and collaborate with local government, the private sector and our communities to make walking an obvious and healthy choice for all
- support local government to plan, deliver and maintain walking networks and promote walking for transport, recreation and tourism as a healthy activity
- share resources to ensure best outcomes from infrastructure and built environment projects

Partnership and multi-sector collaboration

State government, local government, the development sector and not-for profit agencies such as Heart Foundation, Walking SA and the Royal Automobile Association have roles to play in supporting and advocating for attractive, functional and safe walking outcomes in South Australia.

By recognising the respective roles, responsibilities and benefits that all these sectors bring, and by working together with purpose, we will deliver walking outcomes for our communities.

In our commitment to strong partnerships, we will work with:

- local government to:
  - deliver an integrated transport network that prioritises the pedestrian
  - plan walking networks that promote walking for transport, health, tourism, recreation and sport
- the development sector to:
  - plan, design and build new walkable neighbourhoods
  - educate new communities on the benefits of walking
- the not-for-profit sector to promote and support existing walking programs.

Community engagement and participation

Neighbourhood representatives, cultural and social groups, workplaces, schools, interest groups and non-government organisations across South Australia will be engaged to plan for walking outcomes. Place-based approaches led by communities recognise that locals are best placed to understand local needs.

Effective community engagement will find ways to better involve local communities to achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, with robust processes that build on relationships through respectful discourse and decision-making.

Together with local government, we will undertake community engagement that:

- employs a range of tools and strategies to ensure success, that also builds on fostering and enhancing trust
- ensures the needs of walkers are included in the planning and development of centres, infrastructure, open space, streets and streetscapes.

Investment

Funding directed to dedicated walking infrastructure, initiatives and programs will assist in delivering the Strategy. International[17] and national[1] research demonstrates investment in well-planned walking infrastructure pays for itself in economic, environmental, physical and mental health benefits and socially connected communities. Supported by well-considered and executed education and promotional programs, the return on investment in walking is even greater.

Our investment strategy will:

- use evidence to inform prioritisation of investment in walking across government
- identify and better coordinate existing funding opportunities across government
- investigate innovative ways to support community education and behavioural change programs.

Evidence-based action and evaluation

Emerging opportunities and new evidence will be continuously reviewed to ensure walking-based actions and initiatives are based on efforts that achieve the greatest outcomes for South Australians and cross-government objectives. To determine where efforts should be prioritised, knowledge translation is vital. To realise the multiple benefits of walking to the South Australian community, evidence that demonstrates its benefits will need to be gathered.

We will:

- continue to build the evidence base for investment in walking to ensure funding programs are well-targeted and achieve value-for-money by gathering data and undertaking targeted research
- gather data and source from respected data sets to inform future action and continuous improvement
- build partnerships with the non-government sector to collect data and evidence
- promote and support existing programs that have opportunities to fund walking initiatives
- evaluate programs to understand successes and failures and make continuous improvements to policies, programs and infrastructure.



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Wellbeing SA and the Heart Foundation acknowledge and respect Aboriginal peoples as the state's first nations people and recognise Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and occupiers of South Australian lands and waters.

***WARNING:** Aboriginal people are warned that this publication may contain culturally sensitive material, including images of persons who have died and we offer our apologies for any distress caused if this occurs.*

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