

WALKING AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY IN AUSTRALIA (& ELSEWHERE)

A Presentation to the
ADELAIDE WALKING SUMMIT

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“SOLVITUR AMBULANDO”

IT IS SOLVED THROUGH WALKING

St Augustine c 400AD

Walking is the first thing an infant wants to do and the last thing an old person wants to give up.

Walking is the exercise that does not need a gym. It is the prescription without medicine, the weight control without diet, and the cosmetic that can't be found in a chemist. It is the tranquilliser without a pill, the therapy without a psychoanalyst, and the holiday that is free.

What's more, it does not pollute, consumes few natural resources and is highly efficient. Walking is convenient, it needs no special equipment, is self-regulating and inherently safe.

Walking is as natural as breathing.

(John Butcher, Founder of Walk21, 1999)

Realisation that we had to “do something” about walking did not emerge to many until the end of the 20thC
Congestion-health-climate change-peak oil etc. etc.

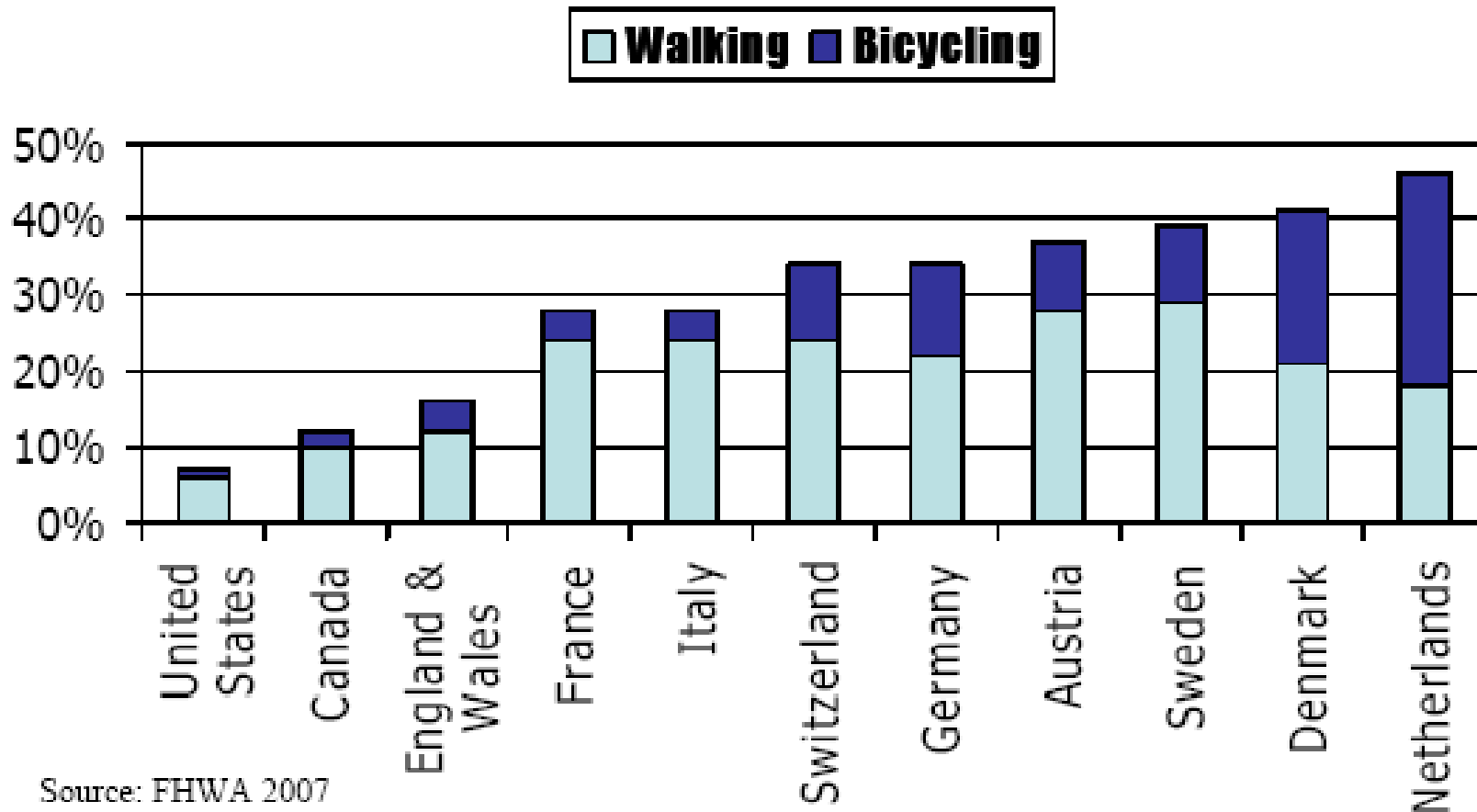
HOPE ITS NO TOO LATE



KEY Question.....
What KIND OF
CITY do you want
to live in?



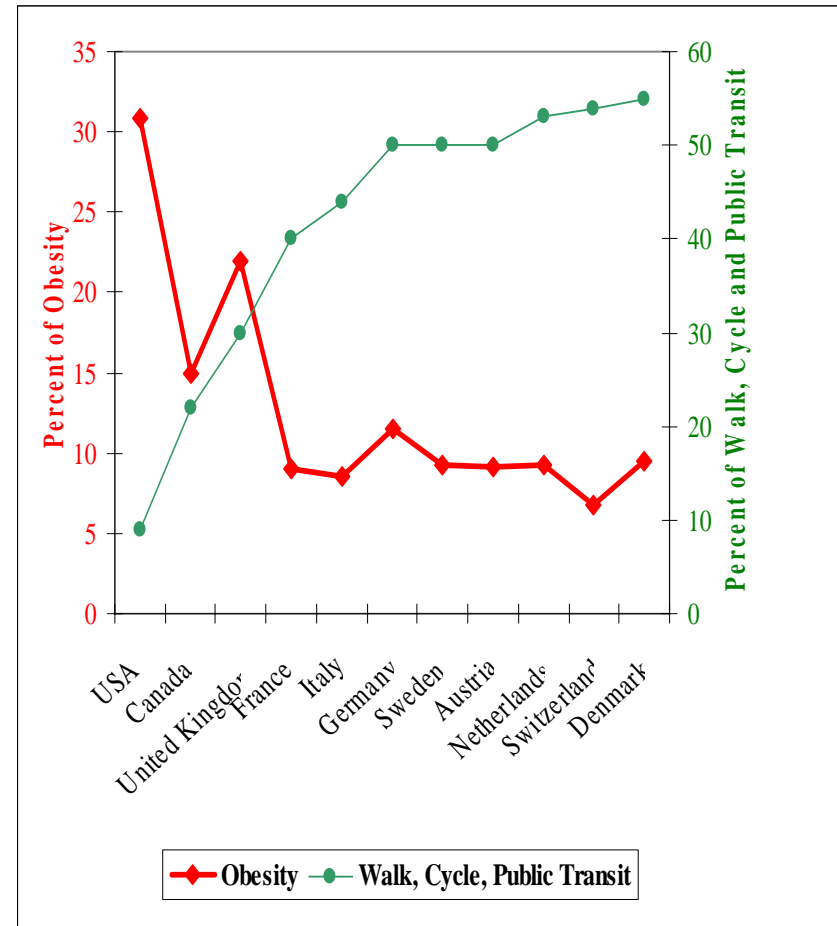
WALKING (and cycling) ARE IMPORTANT MODES OF TRAVEL – IN SOME COUNTRIES – Australia has 18-20%



Source: FHWA 2007

WALKING IMPACTS ON HEALTH

- **Health outcomes –** Walking is the best-value form of exercise for the prevention (and cure) of many major health problems including obesity, diabetes, heart-conditions and others.
- Where walking, cycling and the use of public transport is possible obesity rates are lower than where the car is the dominant mode (SEE GRAPH).



BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHER BENEFITS OF WALKABLE PLACES

- **Recreation** – walking is the most popular recreation activity in Victoria (Based on a 2004 ASC Survey) and in South Australia (2007 Health Summary)
- **Tourism** – walking in both cities and elsewhere is a major element in the tourism sector.
- **Social Inclusion** – walking is free and a mode available to almost all ages and groups in society
- **Social cohesiveness** – pedestrian-filled streets encourage social interaction and sense of community
- **Improved road/community safety** – good walking environments are safer for all users
- **Reduced air pollution** – walking reduces short car trips, which are 4 times more polluting than longer car trips, per km.
- **Reduced Climate Change**
- **Local economic benefits**

ACTIVE TRANSPORT IS VITAL TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

- The value of “non-drive-in spend” in local centres and CBDs is higher than we think
- Lots of people walk, cycle, PT-in, or work and study locally and then spend.
- In most inner-area centres/CBDs its 50% or more, and even in suburbs its up to 30%. (60% in Melbourne CBD and 75% in Acland Street)
- Supporting and encouraging walking (and other active modes) **to and within** centres and providing a high level of public amenity attracts \$ to a centre at a much lower cost than building new roads & more parking.
- All drivers get out to spend – so improved walkability helps them too.

WALKING AS TRANSPORT GIVES PEOPLE ALL THE BENEFITS

- In “middle” Europe walking is an important part of the culture – and when combined with cycling is 30-40% of all trips
- Add in public transport (which often begins/ends with a walk/cycle trip) it goes up to 40-50+%
- Cf Australia, with 16-18% walk trips, and 1-2% cycle trips and 75% of trips by car
- In Melb there are around 3m car trips of less than 2kms (20-30min walk) every day
- 1/3rd of all car trips are short trips

PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE BENEFITS AND ARE TRYING TO MAKE THE CHANGES

THREE DIMENSIONS

1. CHANGE THE CULTURE

Events, WSB, TravelSmart, provide information and encouragement, imaginative programs/incentives

2. CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

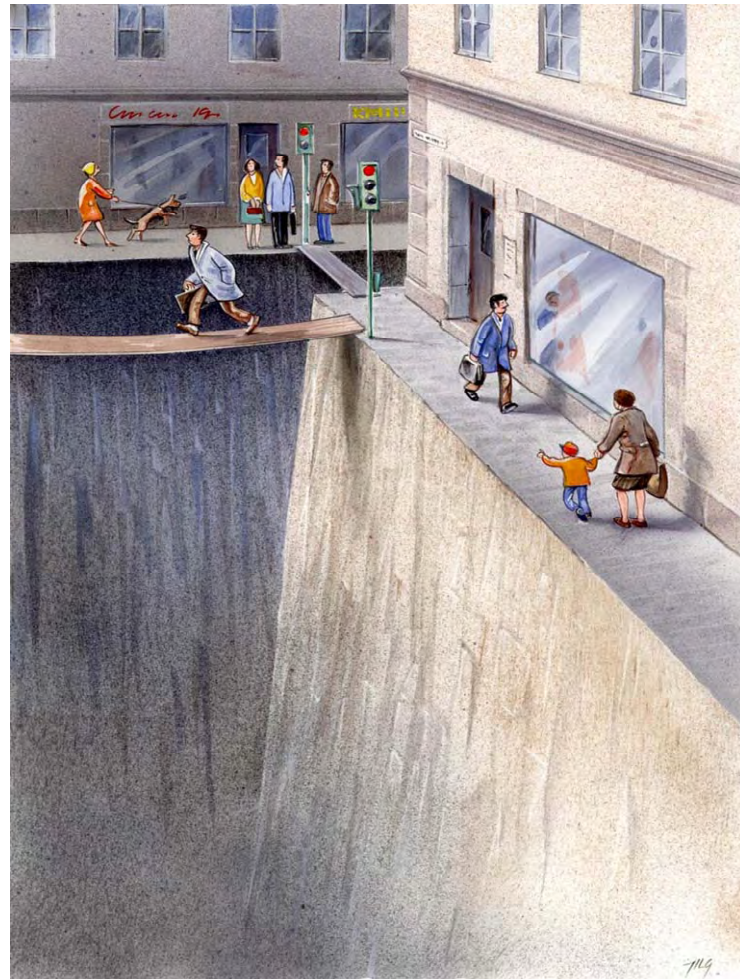
Physical improvements to the walking environment, including the ability of people to cross roads

3. CHANGE THE INVESTMENT

Need Politicians and senior bureaucrats to take walking seriously and treat it as a strategic solution to a range of problems.

ALL ARE INTER-RELATED

MOST CITIES ARE STILL UNWALKABLE



OVERSEAS TRENDS

- Middle Europe “doing it naturally” and think it normal to pedestrianise, restrain car use in cities, improve walking and public transport, and respond to climate change & peak oil. Big investment in cycle parking at stations and land use planning that restricts sprawl.
- UK has lots of “POLICY” but piecemeal action – congestion charge in London + signage for Olympics, 20mph limit in Portsmouth & Hull, & lots of WSBs, Travel Plans, “living streets” campaigns. However, bulk of transport investment still into roads and “congestion relief”.
- US/Canada just beginning to take walking seriously but transport planning still dominated by “traditional” road-focussed transport planners. 2007 & 2009 Walk21 Conferences in Toronto & NY
- Portland is an exception

TRENDS IN AUSTRALIA

- “Sustainability” is a key word in state/metro strategic plans – Melb 2030, Sydney 2031 and 30 year Plan for Greater Adelaide
- All States acknowledge the need to support “active transport” incl. walking and have TravelSmart programs. Most focus on the health element and do little to change the everyday walking environment
- Every State has independent organisations that promote walking – HF (all States), Pedestrian Council of Australia (NSW), VicHealth & Kinect (Vic) etc
- However, traffic engineering principles/practices dominate most state transport planning agencies.
- Real improvements to the quality of the walk environment are limited – and road expenditure is growing. Its “Business as usual” in most States
- Even the Fed. Govt. continues mainly to fund roads - and just a little “Active Transport” (**but** a shift to PT evident in the May 2009 Budget)

INTERSTATE VARIATIONS

- In WA/Perth had the 1st “Walking Strategy” (2000) & has the longest running TravelSmart program. Good network of TS Officers.
- Has invested heavily in new PT system – new rail lines, stations/bus interchanges and smart tickets.
- PT patronage and walking are growing
- Some Councils have recognised the need for signage and walkability improvements, but most do not.
- Main Roads Dept controls the “on-road” walk environment and is very reluctant to reduce traffic speed, increase crossings, change traffic light phasing, etc.
- Slowing traffic speed is not encouraged

INTERSTATE VARIATIONS

- In NSW Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans (PAMPS) have done little to improve the mobility of pedestrians, as they are designed by the RTA & focus on “off-road” issues. It is difficult to improve road crossings using their approach.
- The model is 10 years old & out-of-date
- The RTA is the dominant force and Councils battle (usually unsuccessfully) to change the on-road walk environment.
- The Pedestrian Council focuses on safety issues and it opposes WSB.
- Some Councils have embarked on improved wayfinding signage projects but are reluctant to try to improve walkability

INTERSTATE VARIATIONS

- Little news out of Queensland, Tasmania, ACT and Northern Territory – the rhetoric seems positive, but little action on the ground.
- Organisation such as HF and others are pushing the case and organising programs and events e.g. Tasmanian Walk Week.
- Some Councils have done good things on the ground – walking tracks/events etc – but on a shoestring.
- BUT we still find too many “Pedestrians must give way to vehicles” signs – (which shows the real attitude) especially in “Country Towns”
 - ? South Australia ?

VICTORIA IS LEADING THE WAY

Thanks to:

- Kinect, Heart Foundation, VicHealth + number of State Govt Depts. involved in walking issues and programs. (Walk21 Conference 2006, publications, Walktober events, Active Media, Victoria Walks – just launched)
- Only State with walking funding programs – Local Area Access Plans + TravelSmart (\$15M over 4 yrs), Creating Better Places, Transit Cities, etc
- Clause 56 of VPPs (making new subdivisions walkable)
- VicRoads “Safe Systems” approach to lower speed limits (See TEM Ch 7) and willing to help pedestrians.
- Councils have become actively involved in supporting walking (City of Melb, Boroondara, Darebin, Yarra, + many others).

CITY OF MELBOURNE – “Places for People” PROGRAM

- 71% increase in space for people and activities on streets
- Seats in kerbside cafes up by 177%
- Pedestrian traffic on a summer weekday daytime up 39%
- Pedestrian traffic on a summer weekday evening up 98%

There is no reason why this scale of results could not be replicated in most street-based activity centres in Australia.

RESEARCH BY J A GRANT & ASSOC & VISUALVOICE

Walking or Wayfinding Strategies conducted for over 40
Australian Activity Centres

On-street questionnaires in a variety of locations
produce similar/consistent results: **“If the pedestrian
environment was improved, would you walk more?”**

- Ballarat – 70% Yes, 30% No
- Kew – 66% Yes, 34% No
- Glenhuntly – 40% Yes, 60% No, but half of these said that they already walked extensively, but a better environment would make it easier to walk.
- Ringwood 49% Yes, 30% No, BUT 21% - We always walk because we have no option!
- Footscray 80%+ Yes because they need to walk

**LOTS OF DESIRE/LATENT DEMAND FOR WALKING IF
WE IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Consistent set of “aspirations” from interviewees.

Everyone wants an environment where it is safe to walk, cycle and catch public transport. Specifically:

ON-ROAD

1. Reduced traffic volume and speed – improved safety
2. Better pedestrian crossings – more of them, more crossing capacity, automatic and advanced “green men”

OFF-ROAD

3. Better footpaths and pram ramps – DDA compliant
4. Better seating, cleanliness, footpath and other maintenance
5. Improved wayfinding signage – pedestrian focused - where are things like toilets, PT stops, amenities, and how long to walk to them?

Examples of “poor infrastructure” can be found everywhere – bad pram ramps – no footpaths



Signs pointing the wrong way

Bad footpaths and crossing near Swinburne Univ

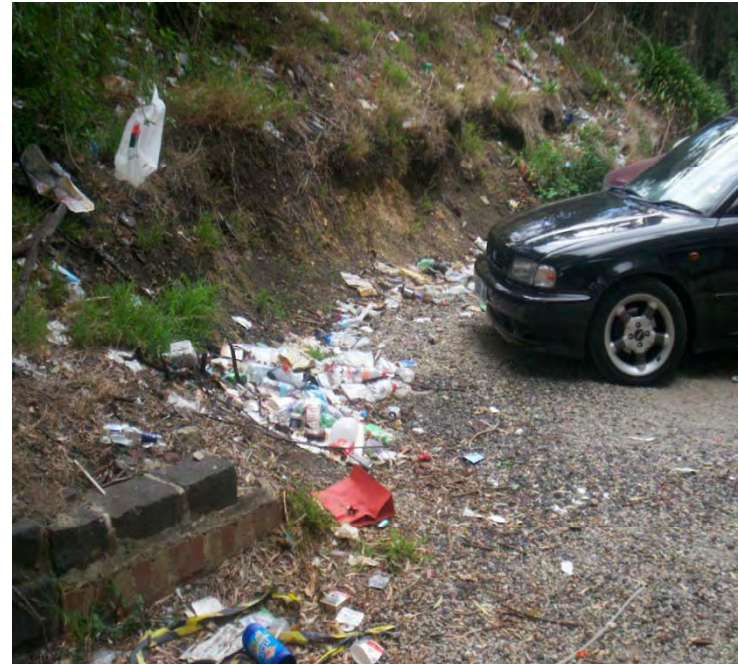


Tram stop with a (4WD) parking spot. Tree root problems



Potholes + rubbish on main walking routes (Near Swinburne University)

Maintenance is essential



Identifying these issues usually results in change



INFORMATION PROMOTES WALKING



Full Area Map Sign

Information Panel Sign
Dr John Grant www.jagrant.com.au

Independent Directional Sign

Heads-up maps, pedestrian focussed, at major decision points



QUALITY SIGNAGE IS BEING INSTALLED ALL OVER THE WORLD



Improved street name and direction signage, on rubbish bins, Clarendon St, Port Phillip



The International Charter for Walking

- Recognise the benefits of walking
- Acknowledge the universal rights of people to be able to walk safely
- Commit to reducing the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit walking activity
- Work with others to help create a culture where people choose to walk
- Launched 2006
- Hundreds of communities throughout the world have signed...

A spectrum of Activities and Actions

To increase walking and active transport

Information – Promotional media, Advice (Travelsmart)

Leadership – Policy (setting an example)

Events – Walktober, unique local initiatives

Programs – Walking School Bus, corporate challenge

Signage/information

Install pedestrian/cycling wayfinding signage

Develop Transport Access Guides

Urban space improvements

Improve footpaths & shared paths, add amenity (seating)

Improve road crossings, speed limits



CONCLUSIONS FOR SA/ADELAIDE

- Improving walkability & wayfinding is neither difficult nor costly
- They “tick all the boxes” for C21st problems
- Its what people want – safe, walkable suburbs
- Lots of examples to follow
- Vital to get politicians/bureaucrats on board
- Supportive press – it’s a good news story (Ballarat – a “Pedestrian Paradise”)
- Funding (1km of freeway/year equivalent could solve a lot of walking problems everywhere)