



## Walk to School 2016

Walk to School 2016 will kick off in South Gippsland in October after Council received funding for the program from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) for the third year running.

Council is now working with local primary schools to coordinate walk to school activities encouraging students and their families to walk, ride or scoot to and from school to nurture healthy travel habits that can lead to good health for life.

Primary schools and students can register via the Walk to School website to track their achievements throughout October.

Almost 109,000 students participated in the Walk to School program last year from 620 Victorian primary schools, notching up a massive 1.2 million kilometres walked.

Council's Social Planning Officer, Vicki Bradley, said October was a great time to start walking, because the spring sunshine made it a pleasure to get out of the house, and the car.

"Less than one in five Victorian kids walk to school regularly, at a time when childhood obesity is rising to epidemic levels," she added.

"Since 2006, VicHealth's Walk to School has aimed to tackle this worrying trend by encouraging primary students to walk to and from school more often. Walking time is also talking time for parents and children: when the stress of driving and keeping your eye on the traffic is taken away, it's easier to talk to your children about what's happening at school and in their lives."

Walking also benefits the community and the environment by reducing traffic congestion, parking difficulties and associated environmental impacts.

"Recent research indicates that for older children, there are many benefits to gradually travelling more independently – including helping children develop motor skills, increase coping skills, self-esteem and social skills," Mrs Bradley explained. "We'd encourage parents to consider these benefits when making decisions about their child's journey to school."

For more information about Walk to School contact Vicki Bradley on 5662 9200 or go to [www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au](http://www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au).

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