

## Building resilience by walking to school

Loch Primary School's involvement in the Walk to School program is teaching children independence, which VicHealth studies show impact positively on physical activity.

VicHealth released a report into the impact of parental fear on children's independence and physical activity. The three-year study, commissioned to researchers at La Trobe University and the Parenting Research Centre, found children who were able to play and travel without an adult and those who walked or cycled to school were more likely to meet Australian Physical Activity Guidelines.

Loch Primary School is one of 10 local schools participating in this month's Walk to School program, designed to help children and their families develop healthy habits for life.

Students, parents and teachers met at Sunnyside Park, Loch at 8:30am and walked the 400 metres to Loch Primary School. The Walk to School Bus also joined in.

Council's Walk to School Program Support Officer, Irene Desiatov, said the reaction from parents had been overwhelming.

"A mother told me that her daughter was so excited about walking to school that she put herself to bed at 7:00pm the night before to ensure she got up early enough to join the walk to school," she explained. "Another mum, who typically drives her children to school, is now considering parking at Sunnyside Park to walk the rest of the way to school at least one day a week."

All the walkers were welcomed to school with a bountiful breakfast of eggs, bacon, pancakes, cereal, fresh fruit and fruit salad and yoghurt.

"The conversations between children and parents, the physical activity, the healthy breakfast...it all adds to the feeling of community connectedness, health and wellbeing and encompasses what this program is all about," Ms Desiatov said.

**PR1731 22/10/2015**