

LIVING STREETS Canberra

www.tinyurl/WalkACT

2017-18 Federal Budget priorities

Recommendations

We recommend that the Government allocate \$1 million to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, to:

- review the contribution of walking to the Australian economy;
- review the state of Australia's walking infrastructure; and
- identify options and funding mechanisms for improving walking infrastructure.

Rationale

- Every voter is a pedestrian, many voters have children who are also pedestrians.
- Walking is worth about \$16 billion annuallyⁱ.
- Footpaths are an important component of the 'last mile' of the freight distribution network –the segment from shop to home;
- Two million Australian commuters walk all the way to school or to work, 3.7 million walk to and from public transport, and 0.4 million cycleⁱⁱ.
- About two streets in five have no footpathsⁱⁱⁱ.
- Many footpaths require upgrading to shared path standards, to accommodate use by bicycles and vehicles such as Segways.
- Improving the walking network will facilitate walking, public transport and cycling, with consequent benefits to mobility, health, traffic congestion, air quality and greenhouse emissions.

I attach summaries of four relevant references.

Yours Faithfully



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Background

Is Walk Score associated with hospital admissions from chronic diseases?,

[This paper](#) in the British Medical Journal found that suburbs with high walkability had significantly lower rates of hospitalisation due to heart attack.

The true cost of unwalkable streets

Atlantic Cities Place Matters: Why don't Americans walk more? Because, as Dr. Howard Frumkin, another of our leading experts on environmental health, puts it in [a fantastic presentation](#), "we have engineered walking and bicycling out of our communities" with community design oriented almost exclusively to driving ...

How the built environment influences walking and cycling

"Across culturally and geographically different countries and cities, our study underscores the importance of density, land-use mix, parks and street connectivity for supporting active travel in adults. The study adds some interesting new findings. First, a threshold effect of residential density on walking for transport was found, where no additional benefits were found above 12,000 dwellings/km²; residential density did not have a significant effect on cycling for transport; and built environment attributes may be more important in cities located in developed countries. Second, both land-use mix and street connectivity were important for both walking and cycling for transport. Third, there was variation across sites how parks were related to active transport, and especially for cycling local policies and cultures of park use seem to play an important role for the potential positive effect."

That is the conclusion of *International comparisons of the associations between objective measures of the built environment and transport-related walking and cycling: IPEN adult study*, L.B. Christiansen et al. / [Journal of Transport & Health 3 \(2016\) 467–478](#).

The cost-effectiveness of installing sidewalks to increase levels of transport-walking and health

Source: Preventative Medicine 2014 via AusPANet

Authors: L.D. Gunn, Y. Lee, E. Geelhoed, A. Shiell, B. Giles-Corti

Commentary: Bethany Walker, National Heart Foundation

The installation of sidewalks is known to facilitate and increase the levels of walking within a community both directly and indirectly through street connectivity, aesthetics and safety. This paper determines the cost effectiveness of installing sidewalks to increase walking for transport.

Western Australian data (n=1342) was used from 1995-2000 and calculated two variables, those who achieved the recommended 150min/week of walking and those who achieved 60 min/week of walking in recognition that they meet the full recommendation in combination

with other forms of physical activity. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between presence of sidewalks and transport-related walking. Minimum, moderate and maximum interventions were examined according to the presence of one sidewalk, at least one sidewalk (the addition of a new sidewalk in presence of a pre-existing sidewalk) and two sidewalks. Costs and average and incremental cost-effectiveness ratios were calculated for each intervention.

The results indicated all interventions were a worthwhile investment as the probability of walking increased with the presence and amount of sidewalks. However, the most cost-effective option was to install one sidewalk. For the transport-walking threshold of 150 min/week (60 min/week), the minimum sidewalk intervention had the best average cost-effectiveness ratio (ACER) at \$2330/person (\$674/person) for the 150 and 60 min/week transport-walking thresholds respectively. Density and proportion of the population walking have the most influence on the cost-effectiveness of sidewalks and increasing both of these variables would increase the cost-effectiveness of the interventions.

Although the findings show it is more cost-effective to install one sidewalk, particularly in areas of low density, it may be more beneficial to install two sidewalks in highly populated areas e.g. schools and shopping centres to encourage active transport to local destinations. The results of this study should ideally be disseminated to developers, planners and policy-makers to influence future policy and practice. This study provides a solid foundation to further explore the impact of the built environment on physical activity and how it can help prevent burden of disease.

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ⁱ The \$16 billion estimate of the value off walking to the economy is derived on the basis that 22 million Australians each walk 4 km daily (6,000 steps per day, at 0.67 metres per step) and value this travel at 50 cents/km (the cost of driving a small car). This estimate does not explicitly include the health cost savings due to the benefits of exercise from walking.

ⁱⁱ Estimates of the numbers of people who commute by walking, cycling and public transport are derived from the 2011 ABS Census and the 2011 ABS Census at School.

ⁱⁱⁱ For an estimate of the proportion of streets that have no footpaths, see <http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/LSFootpathFree.html>