



# Media release

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## SA Election: Vote with your feet

Walking SA has today written to all candidates in the upcoming election with a call to invest in our children and ensure we have Safe Streets to Schools.

All children should feel safe to walk and cycle to school, without risking being injured by vehicles.

It is completely unacceptable to have poor walking conditions, that do not consider children's needs or incorporate design based on children's abilities, within a 2km catchment of our primary schools.

Parents have no faith in the urban environment to keep their children safe, so they drive them to school, adding more cars to the roads and increasing school traffic.

The Government must make a commitment to active school travel and prioritise children's health and wellbeing by enabling children to walk and cycle to school.

"Over the past 40 years, children walking and cycling to school has declined from 75 percent to 25 percent," Dr Helen Donovan, Executive Director Walking SA said. "As physical activity levels decrease, not only do children experience a myriad of problems associated with loss of physical health, but we have also seen levels of anxiety and depression in young people skyrocket. Are we going to accept this as a community?"

In South Australia on average 52 percent of school children live within two kilometres of their school, but only 20 percent actively travel to or from school.

"Walking and cycling to school isn't just a matter of individual motivation. We need to steadily improve the built environment to ensure it is safe and enjoyable to walk and ride. Children and families must have a viable, safe choice." said Dr Donovan.

"We commend the government on their genuine, collaborative efforts to develop a state-wide Walking Strategy. Now we need to see some commitment and investment into walking to see this Strategy come to life."

Walking SA calls on the government to take immediate action:

- Commit to working in partnership to enable Safe Streets to Schools;
- Lower the speed limit to 40km/h or less in all local streets and school catchments;
- Increase funding to local governments to install a network of planned separated bikeways, safe road crossings, greenways, and other supporting infrastructure to create Safe Streets to Schools
- Create policy to move school drop-off zones away from the front gate to decrease the high traffic volumes immediately in front of schools and thereby decrease the risk of collision with a child.



Walking SA will be calling on our members, supporters and followers to support our call at the next election and vote with their feet for the party who supports more walking more often.

Walking SA 2022 State Election submission is here - <https://www.walkingsa.org.au/news/election-2022-safe-streets-school/>

### **Media enquiries**

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### **About Walking SA**

Walking SA is the not-for-profit peak body that leads, promotes and supports all forms of walking in South Australia, including walking for recreation, transport, health, wellbeing, organised events, adventure, environmental appreciation and fun experiences.

*Our vision is to see more people walking more often.*

Our members include walking clubs, informal groups, individuals and organisations whose aims, and objectives align with those of Walking SA.

Our Strategy guides us to achieve more walking for recreation, transport, and health as we:

- Grow walking participation through programs, walking clubs and walking SA supporters.
- Support the planning of walkable communities and environments.
- Provide community information and lead annual walking events.

To find out about Walking SA, including our database describing over 750 trails in South Australia, visit [www.walkingsa.org.au](http://www.walkingsa.org.au)