



MEDIA RELEASE

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9 VICTORIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS NAMED STATE'S BEST WALKERS

Nine Victorian schools will receive \$1000 of sports gear and the title of the state's best walkers, for securing the top spot in VicHealth's *Walk to School* competition.

The annual *Walk to School* campaign encourages primary school students across Victoria to walk to and from school every day throughout November.

The winning schools (based on % of students who took part) are:

- Surfside Primary School - Barwon South West
- Park Ridge Primary School - Eastern Metropolitan
- Eagle Point Primary School - Gippsland
- Balliang East Primary School - Grampians
- Lake Charm Primary School - Loddon Mallee
- Chiltern Primary School - Hume
- Ivanhoe Primary School - Northern Metropolitan
- Chelsea Primary School - Southern Metropolitan
- Debney Meadows Primary School - Western Metropolitan

Victorian Minister for Health David Davis congratulated these schools for leading the way in getting students out of cars and on their feet.

"Walking is an essential part of developing healthy habits and staying active for life, and it's fantastic to see so many families taking on the challenge to *Walk to School*," Mr Davis said.

"The Victorian Coalition Government is supporting schools to make health and wellbeing part of everyday life through the *Healthy Together Achievement Program*. The Achievement Program supports early childhood services, schools and workplaces to create healthier environments for learning and working.

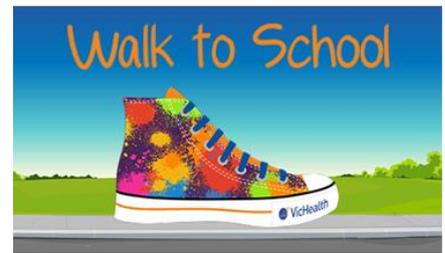
"It complements activities such as *Walk to School* by supporting schools to develop active transport strategies and work with families and the community to create a school culture that promotes healthy lifestyles and physical activity."

More than 30,000 students from more than 300 primary schools across the state took part in *Walk to School* three times as many as the year before, walking a total of 411,100 kilometres.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said between them, the students of Victoria walked further than the distance from Earth to the moon.

"This is an amazing achievement and we couldn't be happier with how many families got involved. The beautiful spring days and the decision to expand our event from one day to a whole month made such a difference, because longer term activity helps to build lasting healthy habits," Ms Rechter said.

"The 2013 *Walk to School* campaign represented a huge boost in physical activity among primary school kids and we hope that this healthy habit is kept up throughout 2014 and beyond."



Only one in five Victorian kids walk to school regularly – 50 per cent below 1970 levels – in an age when childhood obesity is rising to epidemic levels.

Now in its eighth year, VicHealth's *Walk to School* campaign aims to buck this trend and to raise awareness of the need for children to make walking part of their daily routine to improve fitness, friendships, the environment and their confidence. To learn more visit: www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au

The Healthy Together Achievement Program is open to registrations from primary and secondary schools, early childhood centres and workplaces and workforces. For more information visit www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au

All Victorian primary schools will have the chance to join the fun and get active with Walk to School 2014, later this year. Contact walktoschool@vichealth.vic.gov.au for more information.