

Stakeholder Engagement Report



Stakeholder Engagement Report

Prepared for
Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL)

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Themes from the workshop



1.0 Introduction

In response to direction from the Premier, the NSW Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) was requested to prepare a Draft NSW Walking Strategy. As part of the process, stakeholders were invited to share their knowledge and ideas at a workshop held on October 25, 2010. Comment was also sought from a number of additional stakeholders who were unavailable to attend the workshop. This report summarises the emerging priority issues from the workshop and includes feedback received from those stakeholders who were unable to attend the face-to-face meeting.

The workshop was attended by 23 representatives from a range of local government authorities, interest groups and the wider community. A list of the attendees and their background is included in **Table 1**. To encourage a frank and uninhibited discussion, comments made during the session were recorded anonymously. Several additional agencies were invited to participate in the stakeholder consultation process but were unavailable to comment. A full list of agencies who were invited to participate is available from the PCAL Secretariat upon request.

Table 1: Attendees at stakeholder workshop

Participant	Background
Vicki Blaskett	Warringah Council & NSW Parks & Leisure, Australia
Gail Broadbent	Australian Conservation Foundation
Jane Bryce	Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Rosemay Cangy	Parramatta City Council
Garry Glazebrook	City of Sydney
Phoebe Harpham	Heart Foundation
Karen Hawksworth	Bankstown Council
Lauren Henley	Blind Citizens Australia
Amy Houston	NRMA Motoring & Services
Anne Irvine	Connections Community Development
Ingo Koernicke	Sutherland Shire Council
Rona Macniven	Prevention Research Centres, University of Sydney
Chloe Mason	COTA (NSW)
Dafna Merom	Prevention Research Centres, University of Sydney
Anthony Mifsud	City of Sydney
Ian Napier	WALK 21 Director
Carolyn New	Waverley Council – Sustainable Transport
Harold Scruby	Pedestrian Council
Annette Stafford	Fairfield City Council & Parks & Leisure, Australia
Susan Thompson	Co-Director, Healthy Built Environments Program, UNSW
Helen Walton	P&C Federation of NSW
Rohan Weir	Connections Community Development
Warren Weir	Connections Community Development

A selection of stakeholders were unable to attend the workshop but still wished to provide comment regarding the development of a draft walking strategy. A list of stakeholders who provided written feedback is summarised in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Stakeholders who provided written feedback

Participant	Background
Colleen Glasson	Cancer Council NSW
Bruce Maguire	Vision Australia
Rouel Dayoan (6 responses were received from young people aged 13 to 17)	NSW Commission for Children and Young People

The workshop commenced with an initial general session and then divided into three working groups. The general session introduced the project objectives and background. It was structured to ensure that participant's expertise was recognised and every voice was heard. Attendees had opportunities to comment and question the process for the Strategy, as well as share their best ideas for walking strategy development.

The working groups facilitated in-depth discussion of walking infrastructure, walking as active travel and walking as recreation. The working groups considered barriers to walking in these areas and then formed solutions.

At the end of the workshop, attendees were invited to provide written feedback about their experience during the session. The majority of participants related that the session was conducted in a professional way, and allowed lively discussion to take place and participants views to be heard and recorded.

Some participants remained concerned that the workshop was limited to a general discussion of broad issues due to time constraints, and that some important details would benefit from further discussion. For example, it is agreed that walking requires funding allocations, but how much? Of the strategies in place already, what works and what doesn't? Some participants noted that a second workshop could be an opportunity to refine selected strategies and hone them in to be workable at the local level rather than just at the policy level. Participants also sought assurance that both metropolitan and rural issues would be tackled in the strategy.

These comments have been noted for consideration in the next stages of the project.

2.0 Emerging Stakeholder Issues

Participating agencies were selected on advice from the Walking Strategy Steering Group and on the basis of agency expertise and a commitment to the development of more walkable communities. The workshop presented PCAL and AECOM with a unique opportunity to access a collective expertise, to define and refine the aspirations, objectives and actions for inclusion in the Draft NSW Walking Strategy.

The workshop commenced by asking participants to share why walking is important to themselves and their organisation. The most commonly stated response was that they wanted to improve community health as well as to reduce car dependency. Others commented that walking is a sustainable option which has environmental benefits and also leads to more vibrant and cohesive communities. Walking is particularly important for vision or mobility impaired people who have less options for achieving physical activity. Walking is also very important for young people who make a variety of trips for school and recreational purposes and are often reliant on their parents for transportation. Representatives from local authorities stated that the community want better quality walking infrastructure.

Figure 1: Word map of key reasons why walking is important to stakeholders



Figure 2 summarises prominent group issues that became evident during the workshop.

Figure 2: Prominent issues from the workshop



The rest of this section of the report aims to record the key discussion points around each of the issues in **Figure 2**.

2.1 A culture of walking

Key messages from stakeholders

Action to support walking will require clear leadership from the most senior levels of government to establish that pedestrians are the priority, energise infrastructure planners and service providers, and engage the community.

Governance arrangements which can deliver integrated solutions to enhance walking are essential.

Current arrangements in NSW are insufficiently integrated, and would benefit from clear objectives, funding, and accountability.

There is a strong body of evidence to support the increased prioritisation of walking.

2.1.1 What are the issues?

Most participants agreed that there are challenges in implementing a coherent and consistent pedestrian strategy across NSW, and that success would require a significant change in overall culture and attitudes. Numerous participants commented that strong and sustained leadership from the highest levels of decision making would be required to make real change. Some felt including a numerical walking target in the State Plan would be a good first step. Others felt that adopting international guidelines such as the

International Charter for Walking which was developed through the Walk21 series of international walking conferences would provide important signals to the community. It was also noted that the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion provides a good model and procedure for consideration when developing the strategy.

A number of participants felt strongly that new governance arrangements would be required to deliver a walking strategy. Participants observed that while other travel modes (for example road and rail) have specific bodies accountable for delivering necessary resources to meet demand, walking had no equivalent body that could be held accountable for performance on walking outcomes. Some mentioned the need to prevent “agency churn” and to develop a group of committed professionals within the public service who could develop a strong corporate capability and memory in relation to walking. It was generally felt that walking could not “compete” with better resourced modes of travel. Participants generally felt that the amount of funding allocated to walking did not reflect its significance as a travel mode, or the potential social, environmental and health benefits derived from investments in walking.

Participants consistently raised the significance of transparency and accountability. Some participants commented that the arrangements governing design and maintenance of public space are technocratic and opaque. Others felt that more systematic collection and publication of data would assist in making better decisions about walking. A co-ordinated approach to research and program evaluation would also improve the effectiveness of current and future measures to support walking.

Participants also felt strongly that successful strategies to support walking required integrated solutions, and that this reinforced the need for a single body with responsibility for integrating actions across government to support walking.

2.1.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Establish clear lines of accountability within NSW Government agencies for walking, including responsibility for implementing the Strategy, gathering data and research associated with walking, and evaluating the success of the Strategy.
- Appoint a Minister for Walking.
- Include a numerical walking target in the NSW State Plan
- Consider adopting the Walk 21 Guidelines or the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion
- Consider creating “NSW Walks” - a policy and advocacy body to support walking.

“We need a push from the top to make it clear that pedestrians come first...”

“Develop an integrated approach across all levels of government that takes into consideration all user needs but gives priority to pedestrians...”

2.2 Supportive land use and spatial planning

Key messages from stakeholders

Planning for “walkability” is essential to support walking. This means designing neighbourhoods to ensure businesses, parks, public transport and shops are located where people can easily reach them on foot.

Connecting and improving public transport will significantly enhance walking.

“Retrofitting” suburbs will require creativity, and local and state level leadership.

Existing tools and guidelines need to be properly rolled out and integrated so that these principles are applied on the ground.

2.2.1 What are the issues?

The “walkability” of our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods was the most significant theme to emerge from the workshop. Participants noted the benefits of planning which creates better connectivity, gives priority to pedestrians, and ensures that businesses, parks, public transport and shops are located where people can easily reach them on foot. However most participants felt that Australian patterns of development rarely meet this standard and that “sprawl” was the norm. Cul-de-sac development was considered so damaging to walking culture that a number of participants suggested it ought to be banned.

Participants also noted the significance of public transport as a driver for walking, and sought well integrated public transport infrastructure with levels of service which could support higher levels of walking.

Many participants felt that many useful tools are already in existence but perhaps that planners and engineers at local authorities may not be using these as much as is possible. Others noted that funding was not available for implementation of guidelines which otherwise provide strong support to walking. Some noted the availability of funding to prepare “PAMPs” (Pedestrian Access Management Plans) but suggested that the outcomes of PAMPs were inadequately evaluated. Others suggested additional resources be provided to local government to conduct “walkability” audits.

Participants acknowledged that “retrofitting” existing suburbs was a challenge that would be difficult (and perhaps costly) to address. High density living, while walkable, is not always supported by communities. Some suggested that given limited resources for enhancing walkability, priority ought to be given to low socio-economic neighbourhoods where the equity and health benefits were likely to be maximised. Others suggested that the State Government should work with local government to create “pre-packaged” areas for redevelopment which could remove some of the transaction costs faced by developers who are seeking to revitalise existing suburban or brownfield sites.

Participants identified a range of planning instruments which could effectively be used to drive walking including Local Environment Plans, Development Control Plans, and individual development applications. Some felt that consistent standards across Local Government would mean compliance and utilisation would be higher, while others felt that standardisation (such as the standard LEP) and centralisation (Part 3A) was limiting the ability of local councils to make good decisions.

Participants acknowledged that supporting walking in regional centres was likely to be most successful when it was acknowledged that driving is an integral part of travel in those regions.

2.2.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Establish protocols and goals for mapping and collating data about existing walking infrastructure in NSW
- Adopt RTA and NSW Department of Planning guidelines on walking within regional/ subregional plans, including hierarchies that consider the needs of pedestrians first
- Educate traffic engineers and planners about the principles and practical application of principles for walkability.
- Ensure new public transport projects include a budget for safe paths of travel for pedestrians (and cyclists) from stops to major trip generators.
- Work with local government to make redevelopment of existing neighbourhoods or brownfield sites more attractive.

2.3 Walkable streets and neighbourhoods

Key messages from Stakeholders

Local level design features make a significant difference to the walkability of local areas.

Positive attributes for walkable neighbourhoods include cleanliness, traffic safety, signage, tactile indications for crossing, and clear passage on well constructed footpaths.

People with disabilities have distinct needs, but if you get it right for people with disabilities, you get it right for all.

Greater clarity about responsibility for maintaining local walkable environments is needed.

More education and enforcement of the existing road rules is essential to protect pedestrians.

Motorised traffic creates both benefits and barriers when it comes to walkability. Appropriate speeds and pedestrian right of way can support “co-existence” in some instances.

“If you get it right for people with disabilities, you get it right for all.”

2.3.1 What are the issues?

Workshop participants brought with them detailed knowledge about street level design issues which are significant for the general population, and for specific demographics with particular needs.

Many participants raised the lack of footpath infrastructure. Participants called attention to lighting, cleanliness, traffic safety, signage, tactile indicators for crossings and footpath obstructions; noting that these elements combine to render areas walkable or impassable for some users.

Some participants considered that aspects of road design and operation inadequately consider pedestrian needs, highlighting concerns with roundabouts, pedestrian refuges, and timing on traffic light cycles.

A number of participants highlighted the need for a more consistent approach to kerbside dining, noting that while kerbside dining enhanced informal surveillance of the street (and hence security for pedestrians) the proliferation of street furniture made it difficult for mobility and sight impaired users to negotiate the footpath. Best practice which reserves the ‘building side’ of the footpath for pedestrians was recommended for roll out across NSW.

The workshop discussed the benefits that flow from improved signage, noting that this can produce particular benefits for vision impaired pedestrians.

Participants felt that these issues should be simple to address at a local level, but that responsibility for maintaining walkable streets and neighbourhoods was complicated by an unnecessarily high number of participants with confused accountabilities. In particular, participants highlighted the way that activities driven by local government, electricity distribution utilities (street lighting), public transport authorities (bus providers) and the RTA combine to create confused and difficult street-scapes for pedestrians. Participants also considered it is important to engage local communities in planned changes, noting that without engagement, there is a risk that local communities will resist change.

“We must respect the sovereignty of the footpath.”

A number of participants highlighted the lack of knowledge and enforcement of road rules designed to protect pedestrians as a key issue. Some considered that penalties for parking illegally on the footpath were not aligned with other penalties for illegal parking, creating perverse incentives for drivers to park illegally on the footpath at the expense of pedestrians. Similarly, others noted that the priority for pedestrians in shared zones is inadequately understood, observed or enforced by road users and regulators. In the same vein, participants considered that roll-top kerbs encourage parking on the footpath.

The workshop discussed the interplay between safety and security; noting that conflict with other modes of travel (particularly vehicles and bicycles) was a significant issue for safety, but could have some benefits for security from crime. Generally participants felt that volumes of traffic were less significant than the speed at which traffic travels. While noise from motorised traffic was considered a barrier to walking, it was also noted that completely silent vehicles represent a hazard for vision impaired pedestrians. Some participants felt shared footpaths are unworkable, whereas others felt they could work if managed appropriately. Some participants considered that current regulation of design standards for vehicles inadequately consider pedestrian safety, noting that frontal protection systems (bull bars) are not legal in other jurisdictions. Safety was identified as particularly important for young adults and people that are mobility impaired.

2.3.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Increase opportunities for local community members to participate in developing local plans to improve walkability; consider rolling out “audit” processes in partnership between local authorities and communities.
- Improve consideration of walkability in local government design processes; consider actions to promote use of existing guidelines of designing for walking and cycling, or mandate “walkability impact statements”.
- Develop and roll out best practice guidelines for kerbside dining and pedestrians.
- Guidelines for other street furniture such as frames, stalls, signage.
- Review penalties and enforcement arrangements for parking on the footpath to create a stronger culture of compliance.
- Clarify arrangements for local management of walkability, with a clear hierarchy that prioritises pedestrians, and governance arrangements that support an integrated response from individual agencies.
- Consider further speed reductions – to 40km per hour in general suburban areas and 30km per hour in “greenways”

2.4 Destinations that work for walkers

Key messages from stakeholders

Pleasant destinations provide strong motivation for recreational walking, especially when they are within walking distance of homes or well networked public transport.

Green spaces that are well lit, shady, serviced with toilets and drinking water, and have pleasant, safe places to rest or play are ideal.

End of trip facilities are important in encouraging commuters to walk, and may be particularly important for women.

2.4.1 What are the issues?

Whether walking for travel or walking for leisure (or some combination of the two) a pleasant walking environment and destination which is set up for walkers can be a key factor in decision making.

Parks which are within walking distance of homes or public transport were considered a significant driver. Where parks are well lit, have good pathways, shade, and pleasant, safe spaces to rest or play, participants felt they would be well used. Conversely, some participants noted that in some instances parks are not used because they are not seen as safe spaces. Participants highlighted the significance of parks with children's play areas in encouraging walking in children, particularly when those parks are within walking distance of children's homes. Many participants noted the practice of families driving to a walking destination on weekends, and observed that integrated public transport which linked parkland and iconic walks to people's homes could be beneficial.

For many people, the availability of public services such as toilets, seating and water makes the difference between walking and staying home. This can be particularly significant for older people, and people with young children, who require more frequent access to these services.

"In a hot climate, you really do need somewhere to change..."

Participants highlighted the need for change, storage and showering facilities for people walking as part of a commute to work. Some considered that this issue could be more significant for women, as women are expected to maintain higher standards of personal hygiene and grooming in the workplace than men.

Some participants noted the potential for new commercial models which support combining walking and shopping, suggesting delivery arrangements and trolley pickup.

Participants also felt there was significant potential to develop an Australian recreational walking culture similar to that which exists in New Zealand and Europe, where walking takes place on iconic trails over relatively long distances. To facilitate this, some suggested a review of the access issues to private land; others suggested an examination of the national park system to develop overnight accommodation in parks. Participants noted that significant tourism opportunities could be associated with walking.

2.4.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Undertake an audit of public transport connections to parks and other destinations for recreational walking
- Develop electronic versions of existing brochures which provide information about iconic walks (including information about public transport links) and make them available on a centralised website.
- Develop programs to "activate" underutilised spaces; working with local communities to implement physical changes, as well as communicate those changes and encourage people to use the space through events.
- Investigate models to encourage workplaces to provide end-of-trip facilities
- Invite politicians to join walking groups to encourage awareness of walking and walkable spaces

2.5 A level playing field for all travel types

Key messages from stakeholders

It is too easy to use a motor vehicle and the costs of using a vehicle are not properly apportioned to the users.

Addressing this imbalance will require a combination of incentives and penalties.

2.5.1 What are the issues?

Many participants felt it was “too easy” to use a motor vehicle; particularly when compared to using public transport or walking. While some participants support greater penalties associated with car use, most felt that a combination of incentives and penalties would be most effective.

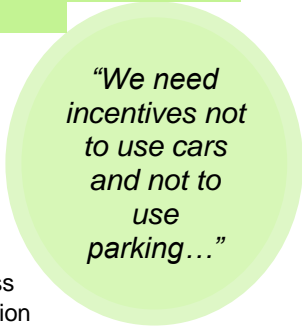
Participants commented on the costs associated with free parking which are not transparently apportioned to the user. These include loss of the space for other uses, loss of biodiversity, and other environmental costs derived from running the vehicle (air pollution and greenhouse gases). Participants sought a level playing field which accurately transferred the social, economic and environmental costs to the user. The idea of partially allocating revenue raised by cost-reflective pricing to adjacent landowners was raised as a way of securing support from local residents and businesses for increased parking costs.

Fringe benefit tax concessions for motor vehicles based on distance travelled were also highlighted by participants as a significant and distorting incentive.

Others raised restrictions on motor vehicle access to certain areas during certain times as a potential way of encouraging public transport use and walking.

2.5.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Transparent and cost reflective pricing for car parking and road use
- Investigation of a limit on the number of cars per household



“We need incentives not to use cars and not to use parking...”

2.6 Engaging the community

Key messages from stakeholders

Perceptions about distance can be a significant barrier to walking, and can be effectively targeted through communications and signage.

Key demographics to target should include older people, children, mobility impaired, women, multicultural Australians, Aboriginal Australians, lower socio-economic groups, and people in mid-life who may be time poor.

2.6.1 What are the issues?

Participants emphasised that perceptions can be as big a barrier as actual conditions when people are considering whether to walk. Many highlighted the opportunity to capture big gains by providing more information, especially when that information is targeted at people's individual priorities and perceptions. People highlighted the need for both broadcast and targeted information campaigns to support walking.

Many participants felt that people generally underestimate how far one can comfortably walk and in what time. Conversely, many people expect car travel to be quick, and underestimate the time costs associated with congestion and finding parking. Participants felt that similar issues applied to walking routes; particularly in relation to safety. It was suggested that the provision of information would be the most effective way to tackle this issue: through signage with distances and times, maps, and general education campaigns.

Participants noted the particular issues associated with walking to school, noting that parental perceptions of "stranger danger" possibly overestimated that risk, whilst other more material risks were underestimated. Walking school buses can be an effective way of responding to these issues, however there are substantial unresolved issues about legal liability and risk; a concerted effort should be made to resolve this issue.

"I don't think people understand how much quicker and more convenient walking can be..."

Participants noted that walking can be social, and is innately local. To this extent, local government is the most logical entity to introduce walking programs, but councils would need financial support and training to do this effectively. Walking groups may well benefit from involvement of local GPs; participants highlighted the potential role for divisions of general practice. Participants also noted that existing walking groups could be used to model and document "best practice" and support other interested communities in establishing similar groups. Once established, walking groups could audit local walking routes and provide feedback to councils, providing data and monitoring, as well as delivering social and health benefits to the local community.

In considering target demographics, participants highlighted the differentiated needs and perceptions of both multicultural and Aboriginal Australians, and suggested that strategies should be tailored to these groups.

Participants also noted that for middle aged working people, many of whom have families, time is a key constraint. Campaigns targeted at this group should directly address issues of time, explaining how walking can be a time-effective way to travel.

2.6.2 Stakeholder priorities for action

- Generate new information (such as maps) and consolidate existing information in a single place (such as a website)
- Intensify promotions like Walk to Work Day and Walk Safely to School Day
- Increase take up of workplace travel planning
- Trial integrated bus and walking services for schools, and address over supply of parking zones at schools to improve safety of young pedestrians and promote walking
- Trial a "walking buddies" program (run online) with support of local GPs
- Promote a culture of cross-country walking involving local landowners as a boost to tourism and local economies
- Develop and promote self-guided walks from public transport stops as has been done with brochures promoting walks from some ferry wharves and the maps produced under the Sharing Sydney Harbour and Walking Coastal Sydney programs.

- Invite politicians to join walking groups to enhance awareness amongst decision makers.
- Local government to be subject to performance indicators on active travel – part of management plans

3.0 Next Steps

The consultation represents one of four inputs which will be used to develop the Draft NSW Walking Strategy.

The Draft NSW Walking Strategy will be informed by the following work streams.

- Walking for travel and recreation in NSW: What the data tells us
- Literature Review
- Stakeholder Consultation
- The value of walking: Assessing the benefits of walking

An options paper has also been commissioned to inform draft strategy development. All work will be guided by a multiagency steering group consisting of PCAL Member Agencies.

Figure 3: Approach to developing a Draft NSW Walking Strategy

