

I'm a transport planner who specialises in strategies and interventions that encourage people to walk, ride and use public transport for more of their travel. I'm sharing a case study today of how we evaluated changes in walking trips to train stations to share some learning about evaluation approaches.

## Why evaluate?

Exposure versus outcomes

Many options and limited resources – we need to know what works

Knowledge gaps

Replicability and variation across settings

Unintended consequences

HERALDSUN.COM.AU THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2010



## Kids hit their stride

Walking trial gets children moving

BRIGID O'CONNELL

STICKERS, a colourful route marked out on the footpath and a healthy dose of transport that are the simple and cheap "nudges" that are significantly increasing the number of kids who walk to school, a new study has found.

A report released today by Victorian Walks showed small prompts and incentives were enough to keep kids active but also to change parental mindsets about the barriers to active transport.

Change to Walks, delivered by Victorian Walks, also took 100 per cent of the road during

school peak times, over the six weeks during winter.

The program, encouraged families to engage in active transport at least one more day a week.

A report released today by Victorian Walks showed small prompts and incentives were enough to keep kids active but also to change parental mindsets about the barriers to active transport.

Change to Walks, delivered by Victorian Walks, also took 100 per cent of the road during

school peak times, over the six weeks during winter.

The program, encouraged families to engage in active transport at least one more day a week.

A report released today by Victorian Walks showed small prompts and incentives were enough to keep kids active but also to change parental mindsets about the barriers to active transport.

Change to Walks, delivered by Victorian Walks, also took 100 per cent of the road during

"There's also been a big change in parent attitudes," Mr. Kilduff said. "I've thought their kids were too young, it was too far to walk, or it was too inconvenient."

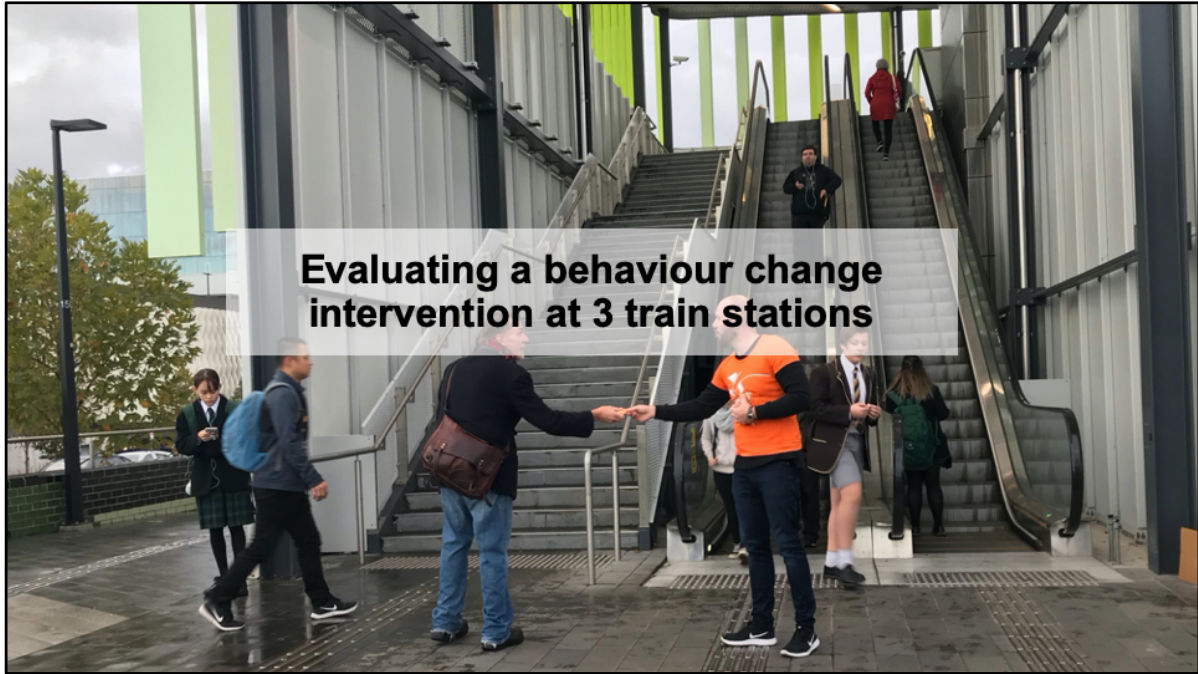
"But now parents who walk at the school, their kids are asking to be dropped off - they can walk - and they're still doing it."

Given just one in five children and teenagers get the recommended dose of physical activity each day, Victorian

Chief Jerrid Rafter said walking to school was an important way to break in more exercise.

http://www.heraldsun.com.au

Before I cover my case study it's worth considering the importance of evaluation, which I've found is often considered after a project is designed. Here is a common measure of project success – Herald Sun, happy kids, a minister or mayor getting recognition. But project exposure doesn't necessarily equate to measurable outcomes of more walking or bike riding.



## Intervention

Six-week campaign (April to June) around Croydon, Mitcham and Ringwood station precincts

Series of 4 posters in the campaign

- Behavioural messaging
- Breaking down complex change to a simple action (walk just one day a week)

Web-based travel planner to help plan walking trips

Rewards for people walking



Jane finds it easier to walk to the station than drive.

**CHANGE  
TO WALKING**

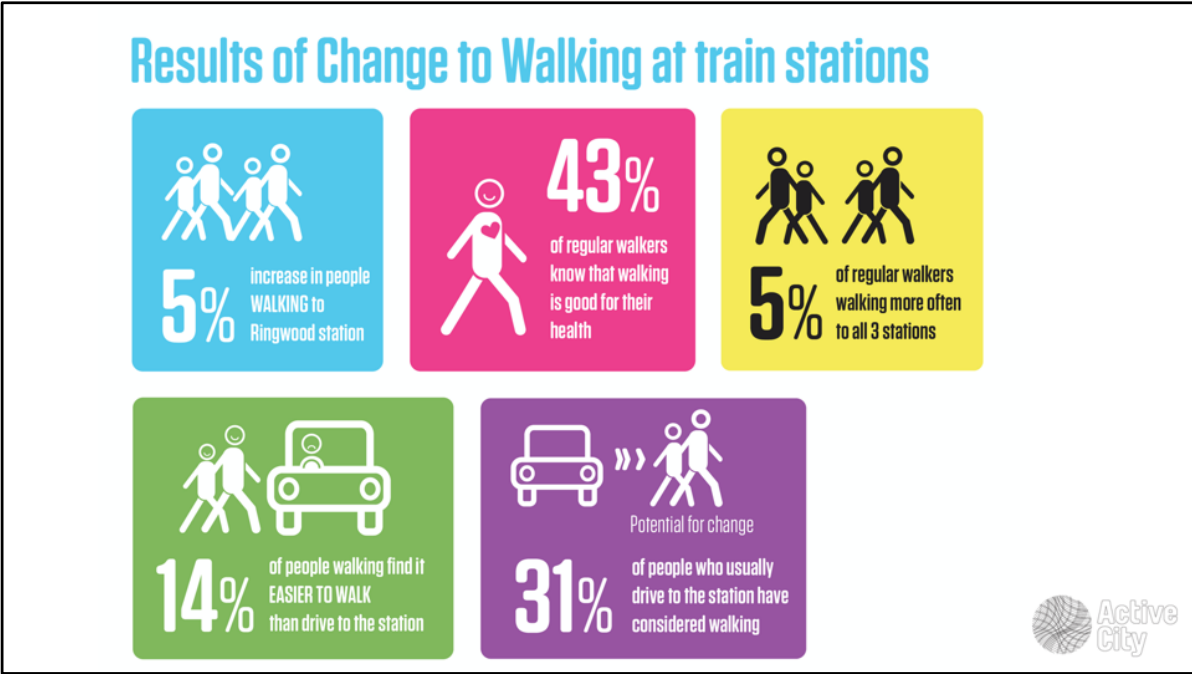
TRY WALKING TO THE STATION ONCE A WEEK

[change2walking.com.au](http://change2walking.com.au)

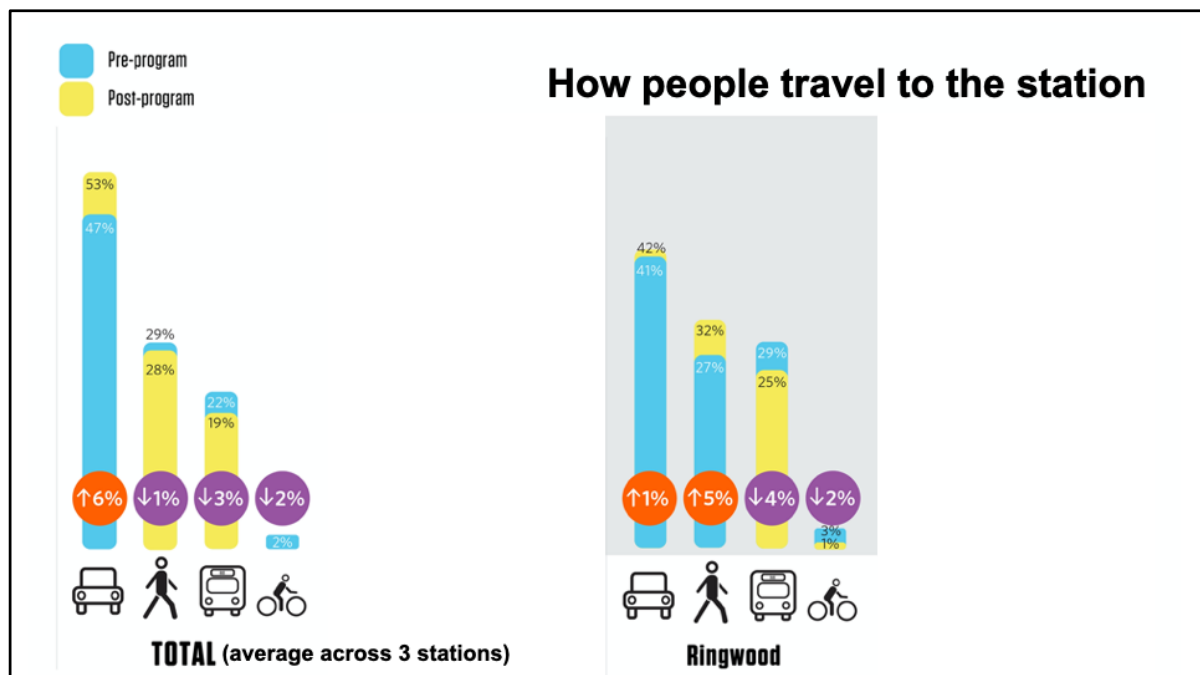


victeam

Walks



And these are the high-level project results



We got mixed results. Overall, driving trips went up as an average across the three stations. A first lesson on evaluation: talk about the projects that didn't get great results, these are also valuable learnings.

BUT there was a lot of variation between stations. How did we measure this change?

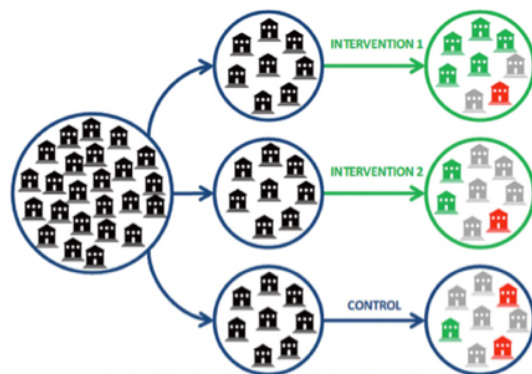
## How did we measure these changes?

**A randomised control trial compares an intervention population against a randomised control.**

**Preferred statistical method to evaluate behavioural interventions.**

**Removes other confounding factors and influences**

**BUT**



Ideally we would have used an RCT

## How did we measure these changes?

Randomised control trial **not an option**:

- Project scale and budget
- Lack of 'control' sites (demographics, station types, walkability characteristics, disruptions at other stations)

### Train station selection criteria

- > >3,000 people boarding each weekday
- > High frequency peak-hour services
- > Exclude any with disruptions during project (e.g. level crossing upgrades)
- > RMIT research: walkability ranking of train stations
- > Driver or car passenger to station >25%



Most often with walking and cycling projects we are working with small budgets and limited resources. We also had the challenge of not having any valid 'control' sites



## How did we measure these changes?

Delivered a pre/post intercept survey

Surveyed commuters on station platforms over four days before and after the intervention

Statistically valid sample and results

Evaluation questions designed to respond to program objectives (guided by program logic)

**KEQ1**  
**Has the program encouraged more people to walk for short trips?**

- Change in proportion of participants walking (post – pre)
- Change in frequency of walking
- Intentions to increase walking/maintain increased walking (sustainable)



Program logic workshop at start of the project linking program outcomes with objectives then defined evaluation questions and confirmed our methods for data collection and measures of success. The blue box shows the key evaluation questions that shaped our survey

## Challenges and constraints

Survey respondents – are people telling the truth?

Before/after measurements –other influencing factors

Defining 'target population at train stations'

Limited budget: no option to do quantitative counts or collect other data to validate one source with another



Other influencing factors – definite YES – the weather – this was reflected in the survey results themselves and we also asked people about their barriers to walking, by far the greatest issue was colder, wet weather.

## Evaluation

Design your evaluation as part of your project scope

Run a program logic workshop: objectives > evaluation questions > data collection > indicators of success

Qualitative and quantitative data

Allocate sufficient budget to evaluate your project – proportional to the scale of your project

Victoria Walks Guide to Measuring Walking



Tina Arora, Walking to Ringwood Station

Tina is studying to be a nurse. Her morning walk to the station gives her time to listen to music and just enjoy the fresh air before a busy day of study.

"Walking to the station is actually quite peaceful" she says; a contrast to her intense hospital training.

Tina commutes from Ringwood station to the city four times a week to study and saw the positive Change to Walking messages.

She now walks more often to the station, having decided it would be the easiest way to build some exercise into her day.

Tina's noticed she's lost weight as a result of her walking commute. "I don't get time for other exercise but the walk to the station gives me 20 minutes of exercise each day."



We are confident in the results of this intervention because of the effort we put into the evaluation. Small projects – qualitative data important  
Trade-offs between project delivery and evaluation – 25%+ budget spent on the evaluation

