

Living Well in Yarra

Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2024

Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2018-2024



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/

Foreward

Streets Alive Yarra is a community group who advocate for:

- shopping streets that build wealth for traders by attracting regular business from local residents;
- a network of safe streets that enable those who wish to use active transport to do so, thus freeing up space on the streets for those who prefer to drive; and
- evidence based and economically rational investment in transport infrastructure.

Our vision is for **vibrant and profitable local businesses**, owing to increased patronage, and **traffic that still flows freely**. Residents and shoppers are able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra. We see our streets being used by people from **8 to 80** years old, irrespective if they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 450 likes on Facebook, increasing by 20-30 per week. A network of local champions develop concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at:

- www.streets-alive-yarra.org
- facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/

Summary

Streets Alive Yarra is grateful for the opportunity to contribute feedback to the City of Yarra review of their Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2024 and Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2018-2024.

Both people with disabilities and people who are older deserve the ability to move safely, conveniently and enjoyably around Yarra.

The most effective and just way to enable this is to fund the construction of a best practice network of protected footpaths and protected bicycle paths throughout Yarra, including level access to public transport.

Note that it is economically rational to invest in safe travel infrastructure (such as wider, level footpaths) because this enables people to age longer in their own home; and to live healthier, happier lives with less need for external care and support, thus imposing a lower total cost to the ratepayer and taxpayer, across all levels of government.

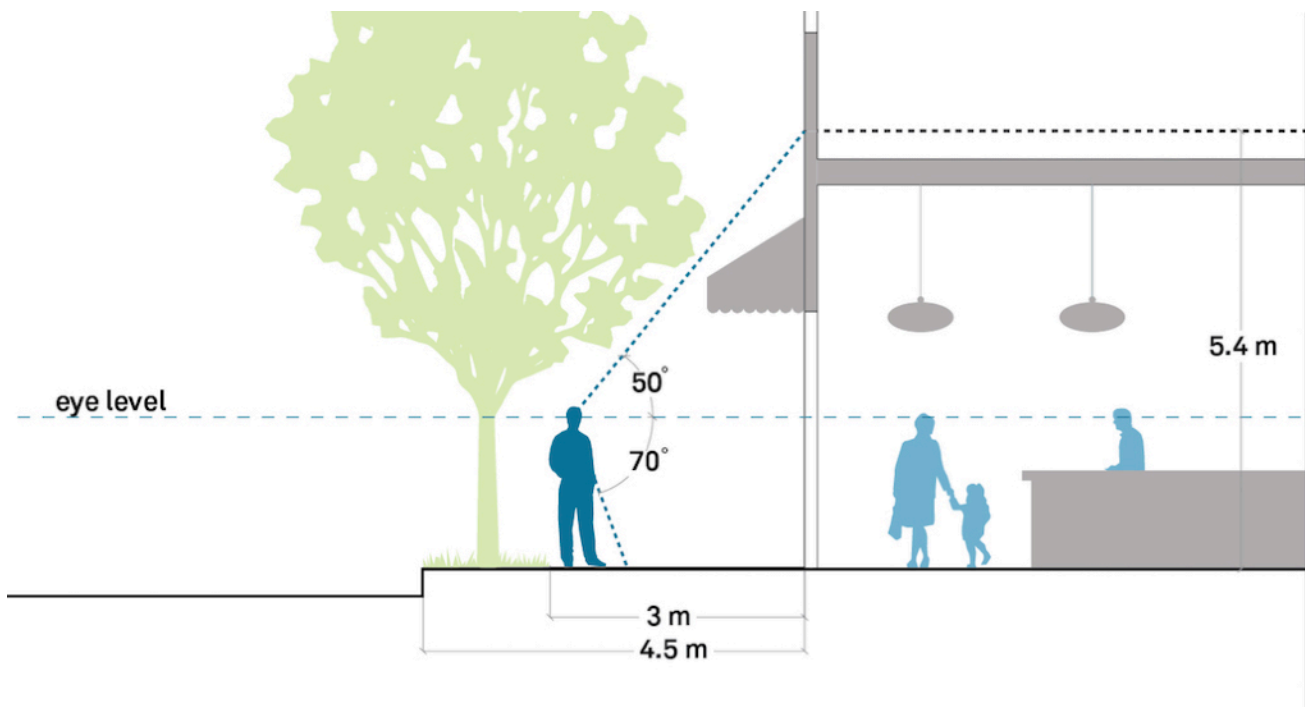
Getting around

Both people with disabilities and people who are older deserve the ability to move safely, conveniently and enjoyably around Yarra. Being able to “get around” enables people to maintain independence and agency, supporting health and happiness. Being able to “get around” often means non-car transport, such as walking, rolling (in a wheelchair) or using public transport. It can also include pushing a pram or pulling a shopping cart.

The core of all these issues is a footpath network.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/footpath-network>
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-footpaths>

The Global Street Design Guide describes how to design a good footpath, including “provide sufficient width, 1.8–2.4 m, so two people using wheelchairs can comfortably pass each other. In shopping streets with heavy pedestrian volumes the width should be 2.4–4.5 m.”



To support best practice designs, Yarra should class its streets as either:

- Shopping streets (with heavy pedestrian volumes)
- Access streets (linking quiet residential streets with shopping streets)
- Quiet residential streets (that can be 20-30 km/h shared zones)

These changes can align with Yarra’s integrated transport strategy, utilising a hierarchy of streets:

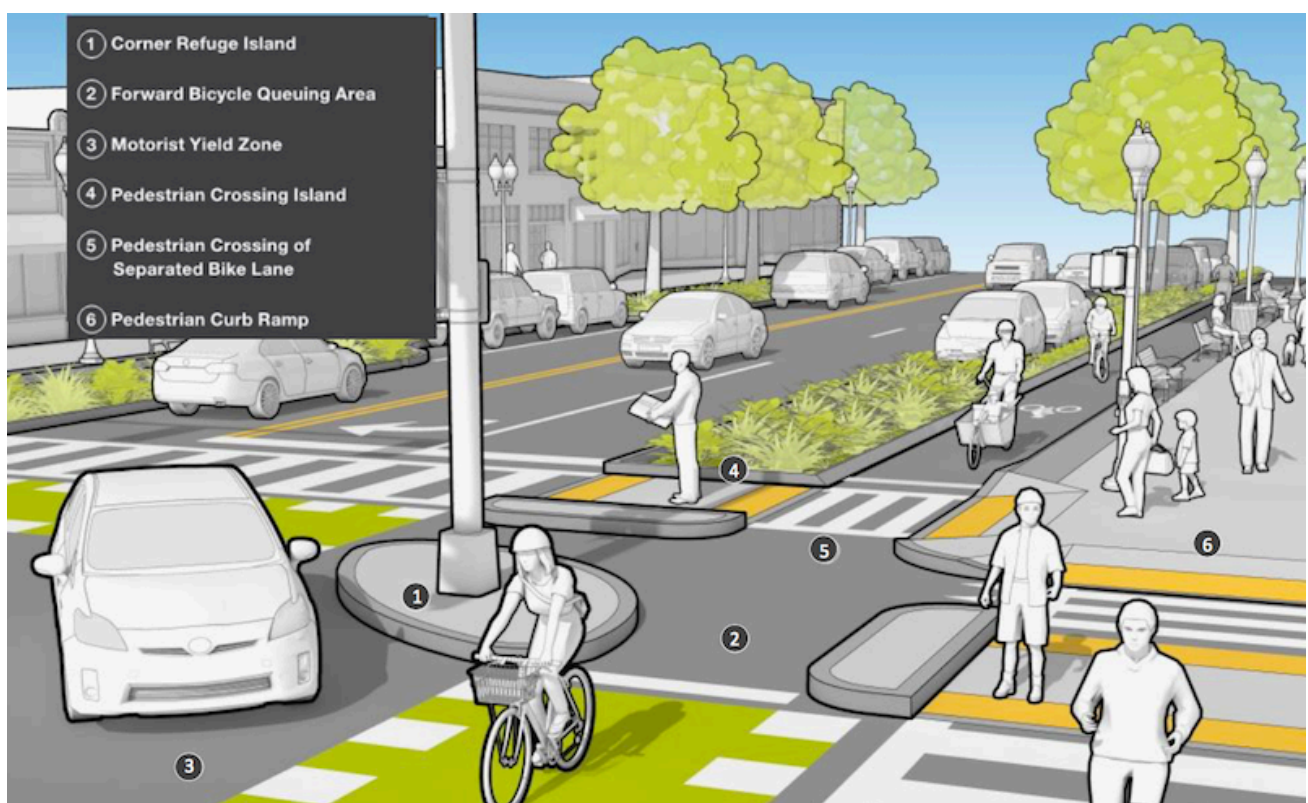
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/street-hierarchy>

Footpaths on shopping streets and access streets should continue at grade across quiet residential streets:



Where shopping streets and/or access streets intersect each other, intersections should be of the protected type with reduced crossing distances:

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-intersections>



Recommendation #1: The City of Yarra should:

- *allocate a budget of \$10 million per year for safe travel infrastructure*
- *define a network of shopping streets and access streets throughout Yarra that link quiet residential streets with destinations such as shops, libraries and clubs*
- *progressively upgrade all footpaths on shopping streets and access streets to best practice; including adequate width for two wheelchairs to pass each other; and continuing at grade across quiet residential streets*
- *progressively upgrade all intersections (where two shopping or access streets intersect) to best practice; including protected intersection designs with reduced crossing distances*

Note that Yarra has enough public land to build a footpath network that complies with best practice. All we have to do is relocate on-street parking from shopping streets and access streets, to the first few spots on each quiet residential side street.

Also note that Yarra does not suffer from a lack of adequate parking, it suffers from a lack of adequate pricing. To solve this, and to bring demand for on-street parking back into balance with supply, Yarra should introduce time-of-use parking charges to all on-street parking spots controlled by Council.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/time-of-use-parking-charges>

Recommendation #2: Yarra should bring the demand for on-street parking back into balance with supply by introducing time-of-use parking charges, as per Shoup.

In addition, note that it is economically rational to invest in safe travel infrastructure (such as wider, level footpaths) because this enables people to age longer in their own home; and to live healthier, happier lives with less need for external care and support, thus imposing a lower total cost to the ratepayer and taxpayer, across all levels of government.

To solve Yarra's problem of funding, owing to fiscal imbalance, Yarra should publish a clear costed plan and apply to state and federal governments for funding.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/budget>

Recommendation #3: Yarra should publish a clear costed plan to invest \$10 million per year in safe travel infrastructure; estimate the fiscal benefits accruing to the state & federal governments; and ask state and federal governments to fund Yarra's investment from the fiscal benefits that they accrue.

Resting and connecting

Streets Alive Yarra supports the points made in the background paper, listing the benefits of pocket parks.

Recommendation #4: Yarra should build more pocket parks, rest stops (e.g. seats on footpaths, next to a tree) and places where people can interact. A good place to start is to convert Gleadell Street to a shared zone with reduced on-street parking.

The City of Yarra should not accept the excuse published in the background paper that “many streets in Yarra are too narrow to accommodate traditional park bench style seating”. As stated above, Yarra has enough public land to build a footpath network that complies with best practice, including seating. All we have to do is reallocate space from on-street parking to walking (and bench seats).

The City of Yarra should not limit its aspirations to a “communications campaign” as suggested in the background paper: “Senior pedestrians, currently account for almost half of all pedestrian fatalities in Victoria. This provides an opportunity for a communications campaign.” A much better approach is to reduce pedestrian fatalities by actually constructing best practice walking infrastructure.

20-minute neighbourhoods

20-minute neighbourhoods is a principle of Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, managed by the Victoria State Government. Plan Melbourne will guide the growth of Melbourne for the next 35 years.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/20-minute-neighbourhoods>

In a 20-minute neighbourhood people have the choice to live locally, with the ability to meet most of their everyday needs including access to shops, childcare and schools, parks, doctors and public transport, within a 20-minute walk, or alternatively cycle or local public transport trip from their homes.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is all about creating walkable, healthy, cohesive, sustainable communities with strong local economies, while reducing the need to travel and cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Plan Melbourne states that a 20-minute neighbourhood must:

- be safe, accessible and well connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport;
- offer high-quality public realm and open space;
- provide services and destinations that support local living;
- facilitate access to quality public transport that connects people to jobs and higher-order services;
- deliver housing/population at densities that make local services and transport viable; and
- facilitate thriving local economies.

Recommendation #5: Yarra should support Plan Melbourne and the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods by ensuring every resident can walk (on safe, level, wide footpaths) to the shops, library or a park within 20 minutes.

Recommendation #6: Yarra should publish a map showing the time required for each resident to walk to a Yarra park, to demonstrate compliance with Plan Melbourne.

Enabling older people to cycle

As people age they lose their ability to operate a motor vehicle, however they still wish to get around. Cycling is an option that offers almost as much independence as a car; but without the cost and risk of harming other street users. There are two barriers preventing older people from cycling; getting up hills and the fear of being hit by a car. These two barriers can be solved by modern e-bikes and by constructing a network of protected bicycle lanes and shared zones.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-bicycle-lanes>
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/bicycle-network>

Recommendation #7: Yarra should:

- *progressively upgrade all shopping streets and access streets to include protected bicycle lanes*
- *progressively upgrade all quiet residential streets to 20-30 km/h shared zones*

Further information

Further information, context and suggestions are available at:

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/>
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/8-to-80-cities>
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/walkability>

14th March 2018