

What Australia Wants

National summary and Victorian results



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Methodology

What Australia Wants presents results from a Heart Foundation survey measuring community sentiment around qualities of active neighbourhoods and support for initiatives to increase infrastructure for physical activity in and around neighbourhoods.

The survey covered several themes of active living and healthy neighbourhoods, using seven key questions asking:

1. What individuals want in a neighbourhood/suburb in general (unprompted).
2. What level of importance people give to a list of neighbourhood design elements, based on the seven Healthy Active by Design features.
3. How individuals rank these design elements from most to least important in deciding where to live.
4. How individuals rate the availability of active living elements in their current neighbourhood.
5. What level of support individuals have for governments' funding for active living infrastructure.
6. What level of support individuals have for a National Physical Activity Strategy for Australia.
7. What level of knowledge individuals have about the connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing.

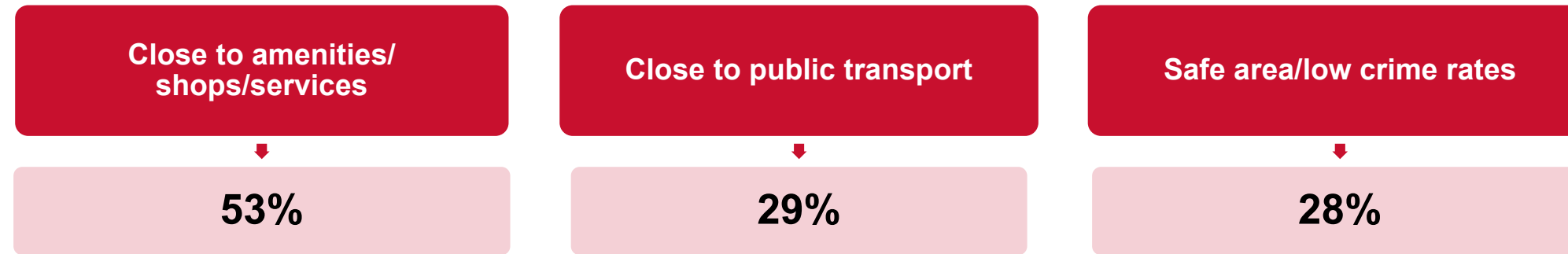
Surveys were conducted online over a three-week period. Survey results are based on a pool of 2,895 total respondents, weighted to be nationally representative of the population in terms of age, gender and location. This included 618 participants in Victoria (482 based in Melbourne), compared to 619 in NSW and 456 in Queensland.



Summary of national results

What Australians want

Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)



Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



When deciding where to live, participants overwhelmingly indicated their desire for **proximity to fresh food and services, neighbourhood safety** and **access to public outdoor and open areas**.

‘Housing diversity’ was mentioned when asked to prioritise some features over others but did not feature when broken out into individual elements. This suggests that **the right type of house in the right area is more of an essential need and will be prioritised over elements such as parks and open spaces if necessary**.

Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

Best performers
(percentage who
rated
excellent/good)

Public parks, open spaces,
reserves, gardens
76%

Natural elements,
vegetation
76%

Facilities in convenient,
accessible areas
75%

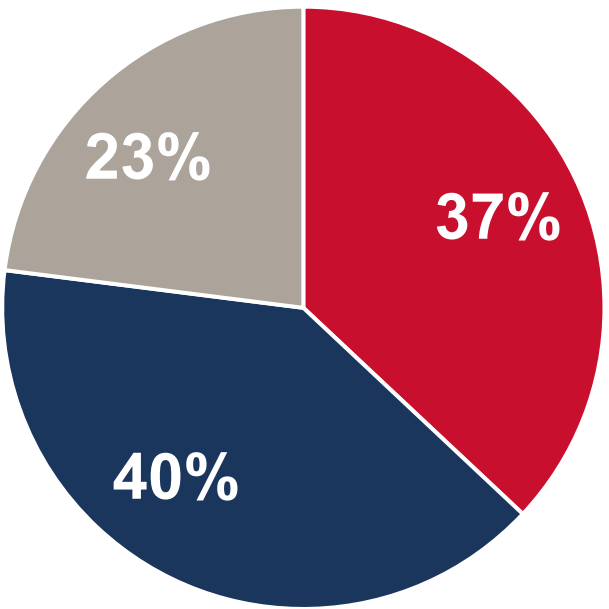
Worst performers
(percentage who
rated poor/area
does not have)

Safe cycling routes
19%

Traffic calming
measures in place
12%

Sports facilities
11%

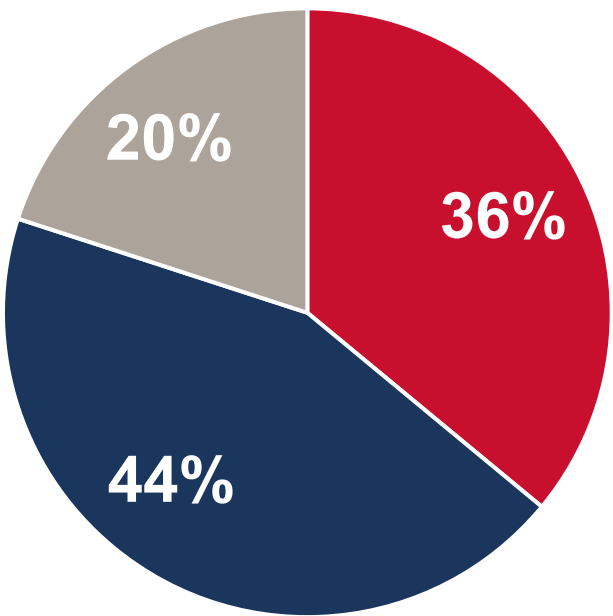
Importance of local area allowing physical activity



■ Very important
■ Somewhat important
■ Neutral/not important

77%
say it is important that
they can be active in
their local area

Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



■ Helps a lot
■ Helps a little
■ Doesn't help

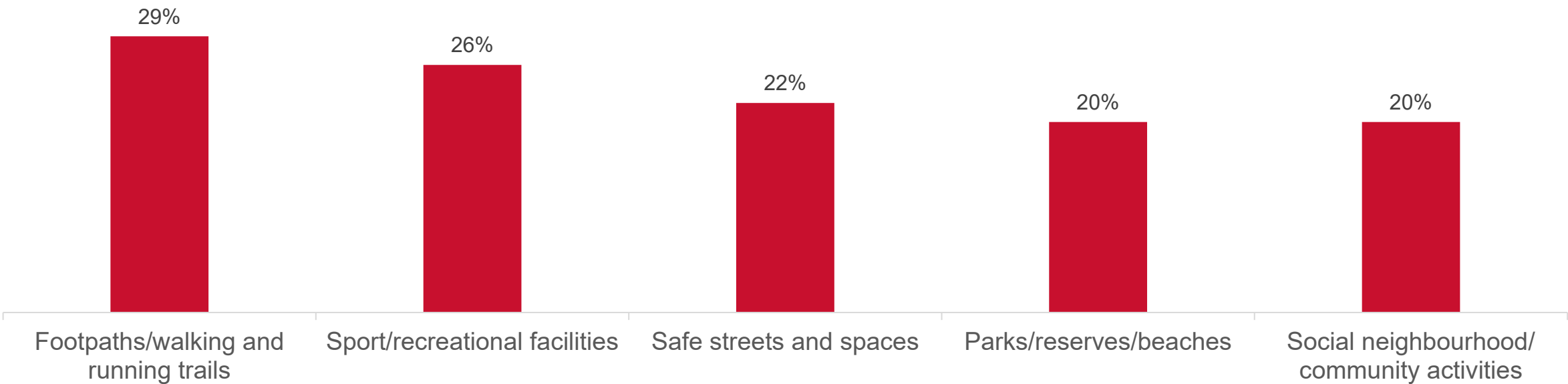
80%
say their
neighbourhood helps
them to be active

Neighbourhood analysis

Reasons active neighbourhoods are important



Elements that could increase physical activity

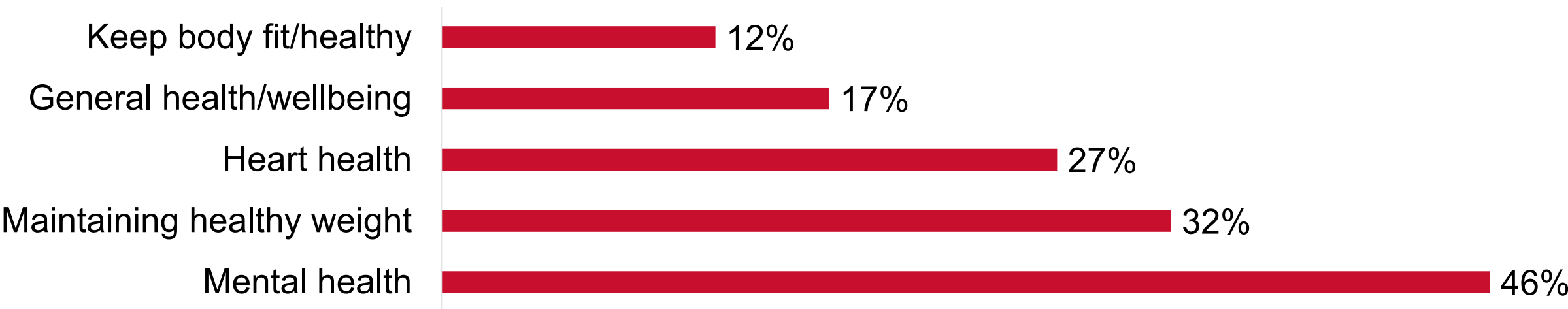


Support for infrastructure funding

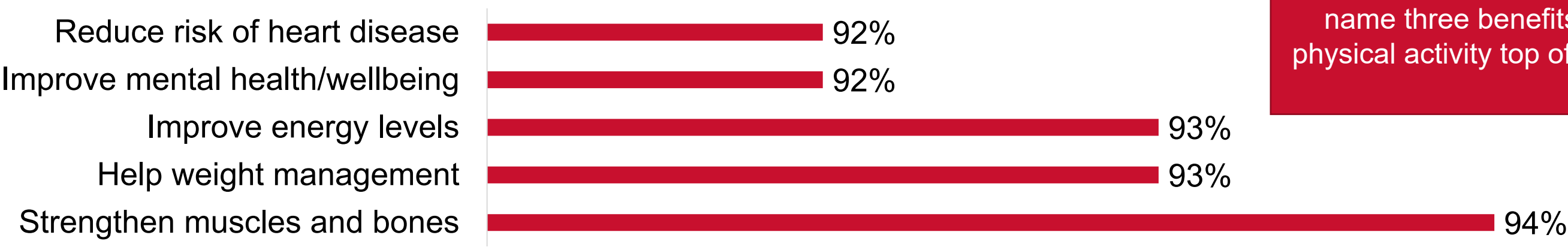
	Support for active infrastructure Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	67%
	Support for public transport funding Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	68%
	Support for speed limit reductions Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	64%
	Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	78%

Knowledge of health benefits

Benefits of physical activity (unprompted)



Benefits of physical activity (prompted)



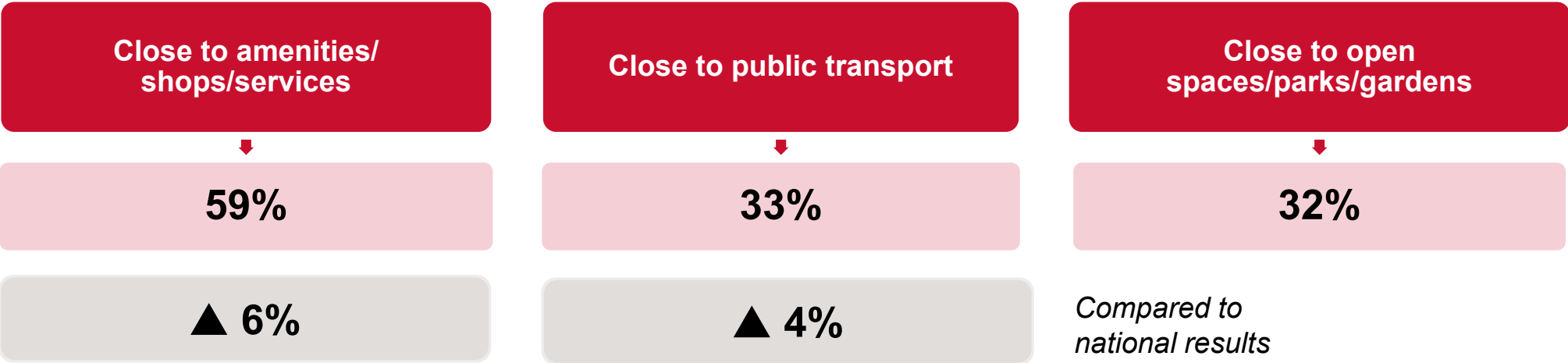
Only **24%** of people can name three benefits of physical activity top of mind

Summary of Victoria results

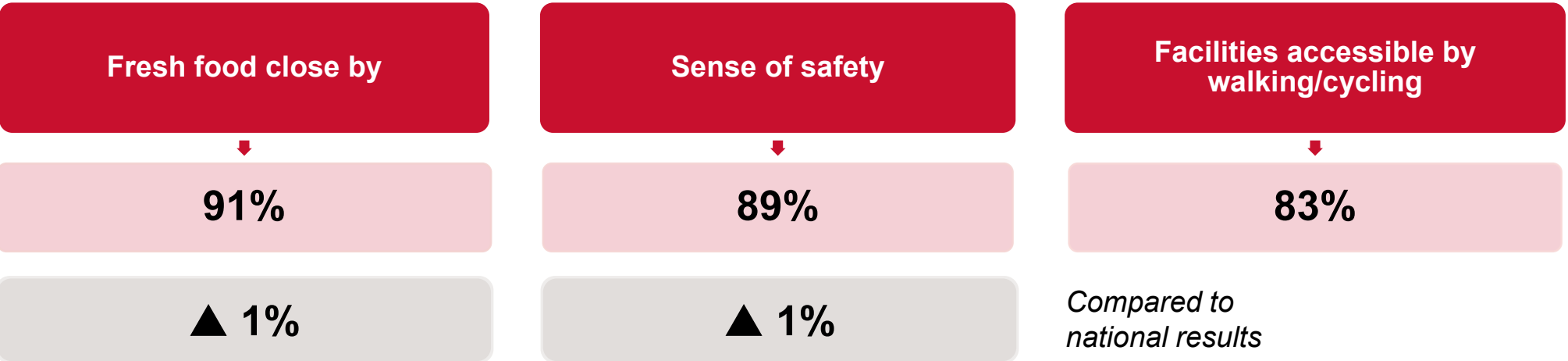


What Victorians want

Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)

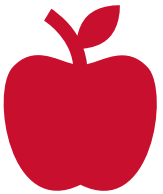


Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



Top three types of features
that are important in deciding
where to live (prompted)

Access to healthy food



Housing diversity



Sense of place



Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

Best performers (percentage who rated excellent/ good)	Natural elements 79%	Facilities in convenient accessible areas 78%	Public parks, open spaces, reserves 78%
<i>Compared to national results</i>	▲ 5%	▲ 3%	▲ 2%
Worst performers	Safe cycling routes	Traffic calming measures in place	Sports facilities

Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



■ Doesn't help at all ■ Doesn't really help ■ Helps a little ■ Helps a lot

84% of Victorians believe their neighbourhood helps them to be active

Support for infrastructure funding

			Compared to national average
	Support for active infrastructure Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	72%	▲ 5%
	Support for public transport funding Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	75%	▲ 7%
	Support for speed limit reductions Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	66%	▲ 2%
	Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	81%	▲ 3%

Knowledge of health benefits

Top three benefits of physical activity mentioned by Victorians



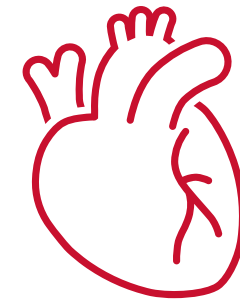
46%

Mental health



32%

Weight management



27%

Heart health

Only **24%** of Victorians can name
three benefits of physical activity top of mind

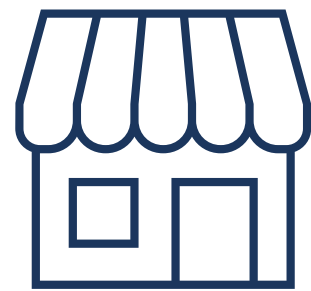
Consistent with the national average



Key areas of comparison between National and Victoria results

Points of difference

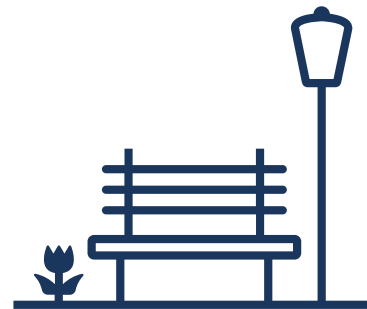
Victorians place more value on **easy access to amenities and natural elements**



59%

Value proximity to local shops

Compared to 53% nationally



32%

Value proximity to open spaces

Compared to 27% nationally

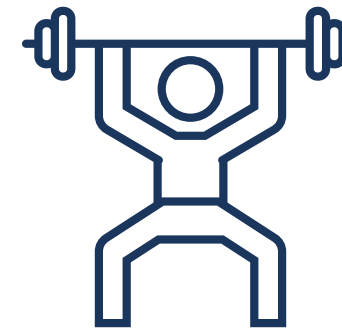
Victorians rate their local area **more highly than the national average**



72%

Rate footpaths as excellent/good

Compared to 66% nationally

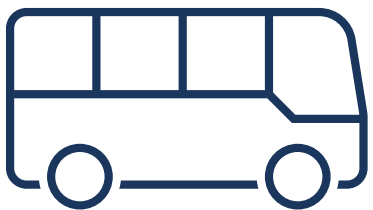


84%

Believe their local area helps them to be active

Compared to 80% nationally

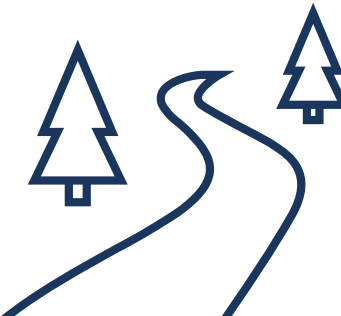
Victorians are **more supportive of funding for active infrastructure**



75%

Are supportive of greater funding for public transport

Compared to 68% nationally



72%

Are supportive of greater funding for active infrastructure

Compared to 67% nationally

Australians who believe it is important to be active in their local area

77%

Victorians who believe it is important to be active in their local area

81%

Comparing the findings

Commonalities

- Overall, the results for Victoria compared to the rest of Australia do not differ dramatically.
- Like those in other states, Victorian participants expressed a desire to live close to shops and amenities, close to public transport and open spaces, and live in a safe neighbourhood with low crime rates.
- Like other Australians, Victorians believe housing diversity is necessary, and place it above access to open spaces such as parks when asked to rank importance of design features.
- Victorians prioritise the design features of access to healthy food and sense of place above most others, however housing diversity was rated as slightly more important than public open spaces – which was prioritised in the national results.

Differences

- Victorians place more value on proximity to shops and open spaces, up more than 5% compared to national results.
- Victorians are also more supportive of increased funding for active infrastructure and public transport.
- High proportions of Victorians rate the natural elements, proximity of facilities and public parks in their local area as being good or excellent, and roughly three in five rate the cycle paths as good or excellent – a figure higher than most other states.
- More Victorians believe that it is important to them that they can be active in their local area, up 4% from the national average and higher than all states except the Northern Territory.



Take action for healthier places

The Heart Foundation advocates for policy changes to prioritise physical activity and healthy built environments that enable healthy active lives, because we know that physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for developing heart disease.

We are working in partnership with a range of industry, government, community and academic organisations to create environments that support healthier living through better planning, built environments and transport solutions.

We are creating positive change and are directly influencing healthy active urban planning within our states and territories.

Please share, engage with us and advocate for *What Australia Wants*. Together, we can create a healthier Australia.

Share the link:

<https://healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/publications/what-australia-wants-report>