

# Case Study 1

## Walk to School Program in Yarra Ranges

The Walk to School Program builds healthier, safer, and more active school communities by encouraging students and families to incorporate walking into their daily routines. A strong partnership between Access Health and Community, Eastern Health, Yarra Ranges Council, and local schools supported an integrated approach, combining education, infrastructure, and student-led promotion. The program is tailored to meet the unique needs of each school, placing a strong emphasis on student voice and agency, in alignment with FISO 2.0 priorities around student engagement and empowerment.

In late 2025, the program was delivered at Bimbadeen Heights Primary School and Rolling Hills Primary School in the Yarra Ranges. At each site, Grade 5 students participated in three interactive workshops focused on road safety, the benefits of physical activity, and building confidence in active travel. Students developed their own promotional materials and messaging to encourage peers and families to walk to school more often. This student-led approach acknowledged barriers such as time constraints, working parents, and busy traffic environments, ensuring messages were practical and relevant to each school community. In partnership with Yarra Ranges Council, minor infrastructure improvements enhanced safety and traffic flow around each school, extending the program beyond education alone. Safe “walk and drop” routes were identified, particularly for students living near major roads or further from school, with families receiving maps and information through school newsletters to support active travel.

The program culminated in a whole-school Walk to School Day at each site, celebrating student efforts and reinforcing key messages. Participation was strong, with 84 students and parents walking at Bimbadeen Heights and 30 at Rolling Hills. Student feedback described the workshops as engaging and informative, with many reporting greater understanding of the benefits of physical activity and increased confidence to walk or use active transport. The program will continue to have a lasting impact through infrastructure improvements including kiss-and-drop zones, new footpaths and clearly identified safe walking routes. Rolling Hills Primary School has already built on the 2025 pilot by introducing safe cycling training, improving bike storage, and continuing to promote walking on Wednesdays and Fridays. Building on this momentum, the program is expanding in 2026, with four additional Yarra Ranges schools already committed to participating. Continued collaboration with local partners will help embed active travel into school planning and ensure the program remains responsive, sustainable and locally relevant.

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By combining student leadership, environmental improvements and school wide promotion, the program strengthened the conditions that support active travel beyond the life of the project.



Image: Children and families walking to school in Yarra Ranges