

Case study

Project:

Safer Stonnington Streets

Victoria Walks & Common Cause
November - December 2024



***“Safer speeds on our streets
make a big difference to
families like ours and how
we feel about walking”.***

KIERA HANNIGAN, STONNINGTON
RESIDENT AND PARENT

**SAFER
STONNINGTON
STREETS**

Project objectives

Driven by Stonnington's Road Safety Strategy consultation (2022)

Aim: Improve community's understanding of link between speed limits and safety of VRUs

Why? Future council projects:

- Expand 40km/h neighbourhoods
- Trial 30km/h zones



Funding for *Safer Stonnington Streets*:

Department of Transport and Planning's 2024-2025 Community Road Safety grants

- Pedestrian Innovation grant
- Safer Drivers and Passengers
Innovation grant

transport.vic.gov.au/news-and-resources/transport-safety-campaigns/community-road-safety-grants-program

Victoria Walks & Common Cause
successful bidder for Stonnington RFQ



Community Road Safety Grants Program

/ Program Guidelines
2025-26

Our role

Health-promotion charity

More people walking more every day

Trusted expert (pedestrian safety)

Research, submissions and advisory

Advocate

Experience having the safer speeds conversation with decision-makers, media & public



Speed limits slashed to 30km/h in city's north

New speed limits a sign of the times

Patrick Hatch
Transport reporter

Traffic will be slowed to 30km/h around some schools and busy pedestrian areas, after the government quietly cemented it as a standard speed-zone option.

Though likely to trigger a backlash from some motorists, the implementation of 30km/h zones follows widespread use in Europe and Britain, where it has been credited with reducing road trauma among pedestrians and cyclists and drawn praise from road safety experts.

Transport Accident Commission data shows that 194 pedestrians and 58 cyclists were killed in Victoria and another 4798 were hospitalised in the five years to January 1.

'It is a safer speed for children who walk and ride to school.'

Sarah Pilgrim, chief executive, Victoria Walks

Research shows a pedestrian hit by a car at 30km/h has a 90 per cent chance of surviving. That drops to a 60 per cent chance of survival if hit at 40km/h and only 10 per cent if hit at 50km/h.

In Victoria, 30km/h zones have operated only through a handful of trials run by local councils and the Department of Transport and Planning. Councils have said the trials are slow and difficult to receive government approval for.

The largest trial is in the City of Yarra, where almost every street in Fitzroy and Collingwood is now 30km/h.

But an updated Speed Zoning Policy published by the Department of Transport and Planning this week cements 30km/h as a standard speed-zone option that councils and the state government can roll out in suitable areas. The policy recom-

mends the speed limit in built-up areas where pedestrians frequently cross the road, including the main streets of Melbourne's CBD, along busy shopping strips and near train stations.

A 30km/h limit is also proposed for school zones, or for arterial roads next to schools that currently have a 40km/h limit.

"Active travel precincts" with a 30km/h limit can also apply across a 200-metre radius around schools, "enabling pick-up and drop-off to occur further away from the school gate and greater active transport participation from children", the policy says.

Victoria Walks chief executive Sarah Pilgrim said she hoped local councils took the opportunity to roll out 30km/h limits in busy pedestrian areas, which would reduce the number and severity of crashes.

"It is a safer speed for children who walk and ride to school, and it also creates nicer neighbourhoods," Pilgrim said.

"The government has listened to the experts and the communities that have been calling for safer speeds, so this is a really positive outcome."

Councils will still need to apply to the state government for authorisation to change the speed limit on their local roads. The transport department sets limits on state arterial roads.

Australasian College of Road Safety chief executive Ingrid Johnston said more communities were asking for 30km/h limits as the benefits became clear.

"It not only saves lives, it also reduces emissions, it reduces fuel consumption, it reduces noise. In Wales, where it was introduced countrywide, it has even reduced insurance premiums for motorists," she said.

"You want to be able to have your local area where your kids can walk to school and ride their bike to the shops, and where someone who is elderly is able to cross a road."



Victoria Walks' Sarah Pilgrim welcomed the change. Photo: Simon Schluter

Our response

Victoria Walks created VBM* content

First-person stories as the foundation (*with* supporting evidence)

- Webpage explaining Stonnington's focus on safer speeds
- Produced personal stories with photos to share on social media
- Eleanor's workshop with council staff
- Pop-up at Prahran Market (& flyer)

*Values Based Messaging
(Common Cause)

Streets for everyone

Walking and bike riding are popular ways to get around in Stonnington, with active transport making up one-third of our transport trips.

Our 2022 road safety consultation found people who live and work in Stonnington have strong concerns about the safety of people walking and riding bikes. Respondents felt that tram stops in Stonnington were very unsafe, and almost half described Chapel Street as unsafe or very unsafe.

In the five years from July 2015 to June 2020 there were 1373 crashes in Stonnington including eight fatalities and 404 serious injuries.

More than half of all crashes in Stonnington — and 60 per cent of fatal or serious injury crashes — involved vulnerable road users. This means people who were walking, riding a bike or riding a motorbike.

About 70 per cent of vulnerable road user crashes occur on Stonnington-managed streets, with Chapel Street among Melbourne's most dangerous streets for people who ride a bike.

Our Road Safety Strategy sets out actions to make our streets safer for all users, so everyone can get to schools, public transport, shops or other local destinations safely.



Mya Cubitt: Caring for others in my community



Marcelo Arditte: Helping older adults to connect



Kiera Hannigan: Safer streets for children

Our personal stories

Council staff community connections

#1 Kiera's story

- Reality check: walking with kids
- Reminder: We want kids to walk!
- Speeds on local (residential) streets
- Living with disability (equity)

Content key messages assisted by Eleanor's research:

"Children sometimes act without stopping to look and think, no matter how well they've been taught about road safety."





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#2 Marcelo's story

- Older adults (who may no longer drive)
- Reduced ability / vulnerability
- Importance of staying active as we age (for health and community connection)



Eleanor's survey:

Statements that resonated with persuadables about why safer speeds are beneficial:

- *'Pedestrian crossings work better because drivers are more likely to see people walking and stop in time for them to cross safely.'*
- *'There is enough time for people who walk more slowly to cross the street, including older people and people with disability'*



"Older people can't walk as fast, so if a car is coming they can't get out of the way... If drivers are coming more slowly of course it feels safer."

MARCELO ARDITTE, STONNINGTON
RESIDENT AND REGULAR WALKER

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#3 Mya's story

- A doctor (and Stonnington resident)
- Experience of public advocacy
- Mya walks and shops locally (main streets) – loves where she lives
- Family uses trams (but stops can feel unsafe)
- Chapel Street feels least safe for locals











***“Driving at a safer speed
is about caring for others in
our community.”***

**MYA CUBITT, EMERGENCY DOCTOR
AND STONNINGTON RESIDENT**

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IMPACT SPEED (KM/H)		SURVIVAL RATE
 30		90%
 40		60%
 50		10%



Evidence: a picture tells a thousand words

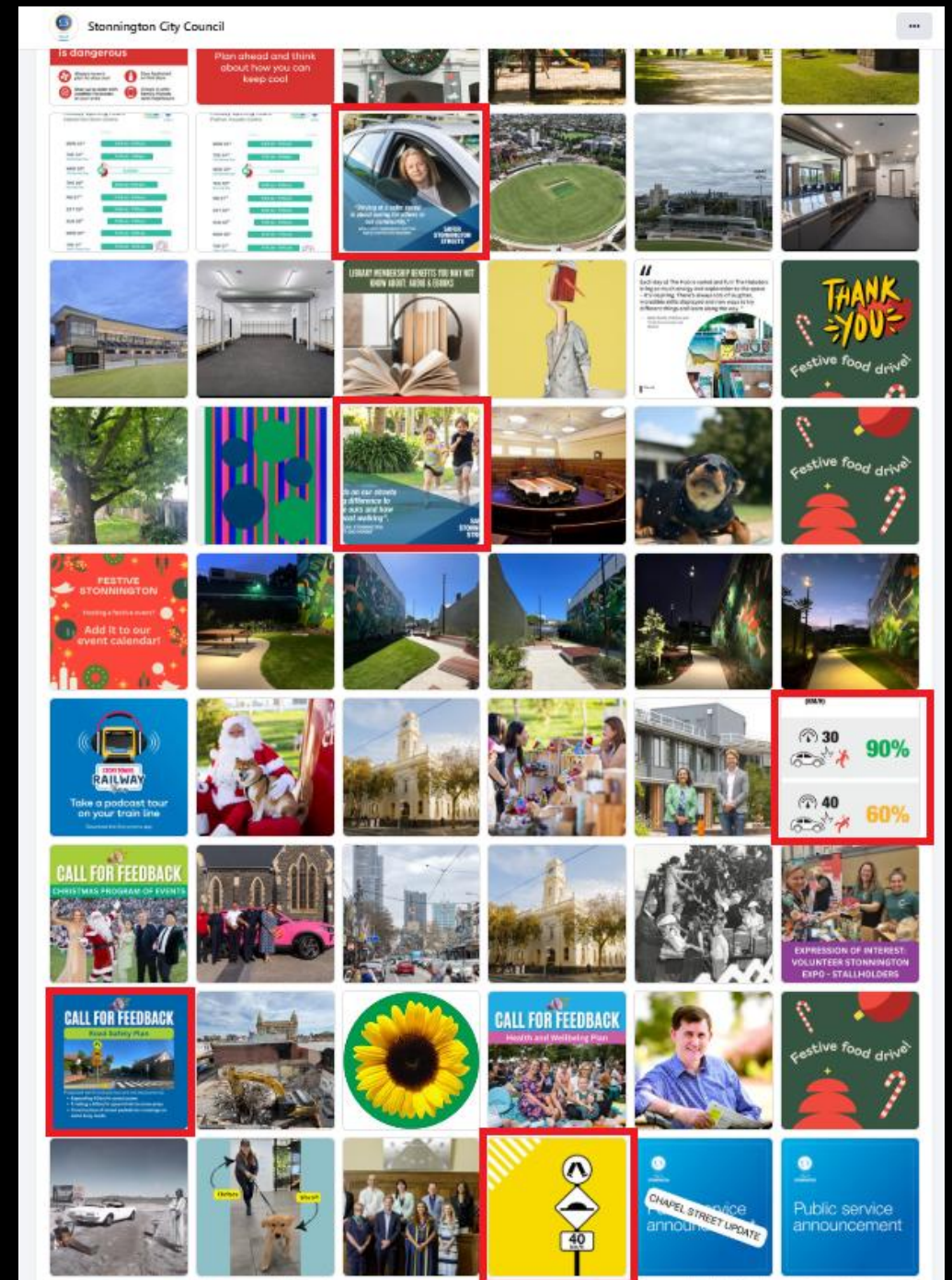
Embedding understanding and agreement of the safety imperative

Repeat repeat repeat

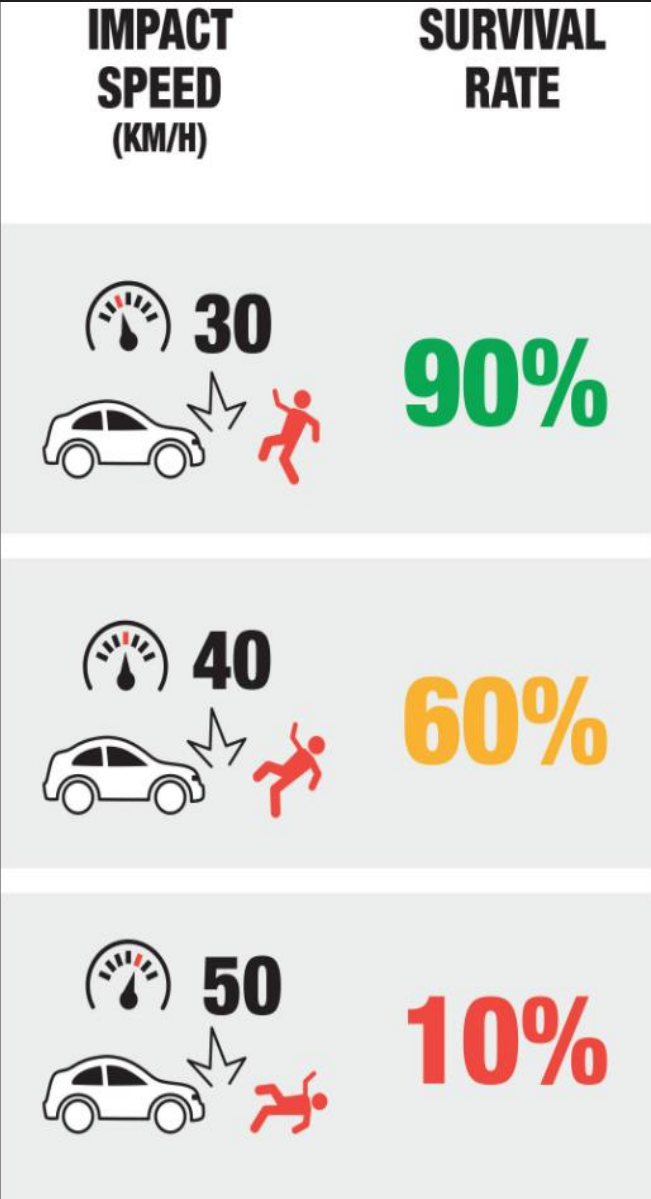
key messages (safety & inclusion)

Multiple posts on council channels
about Stonnington's Safer Speeds
approach during December 2024

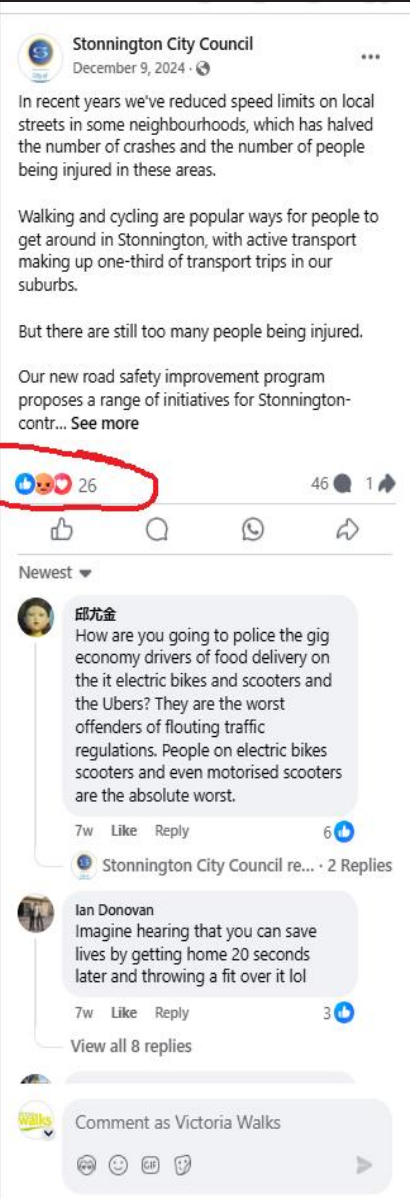
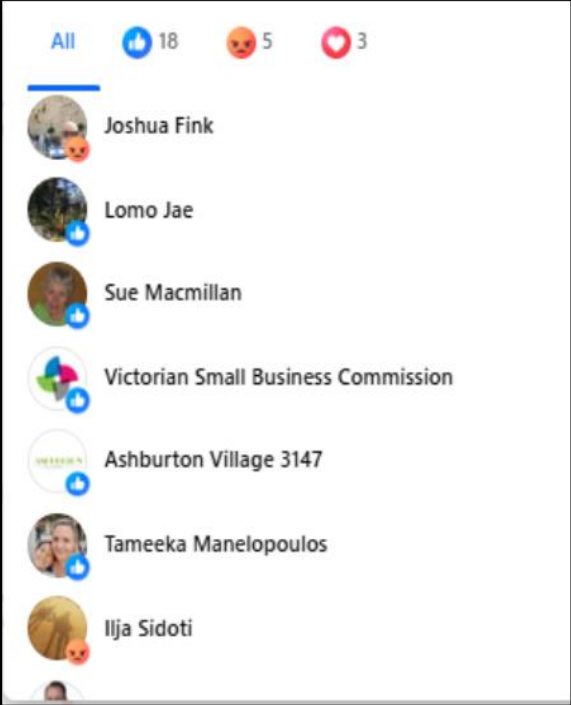
Our content used to promote council's
Road Safety Improvement Program
community consultation & provide
context / rationale for decision-making



How content was received on council social media



Engagement:
Noisy objectors vs silent majority?



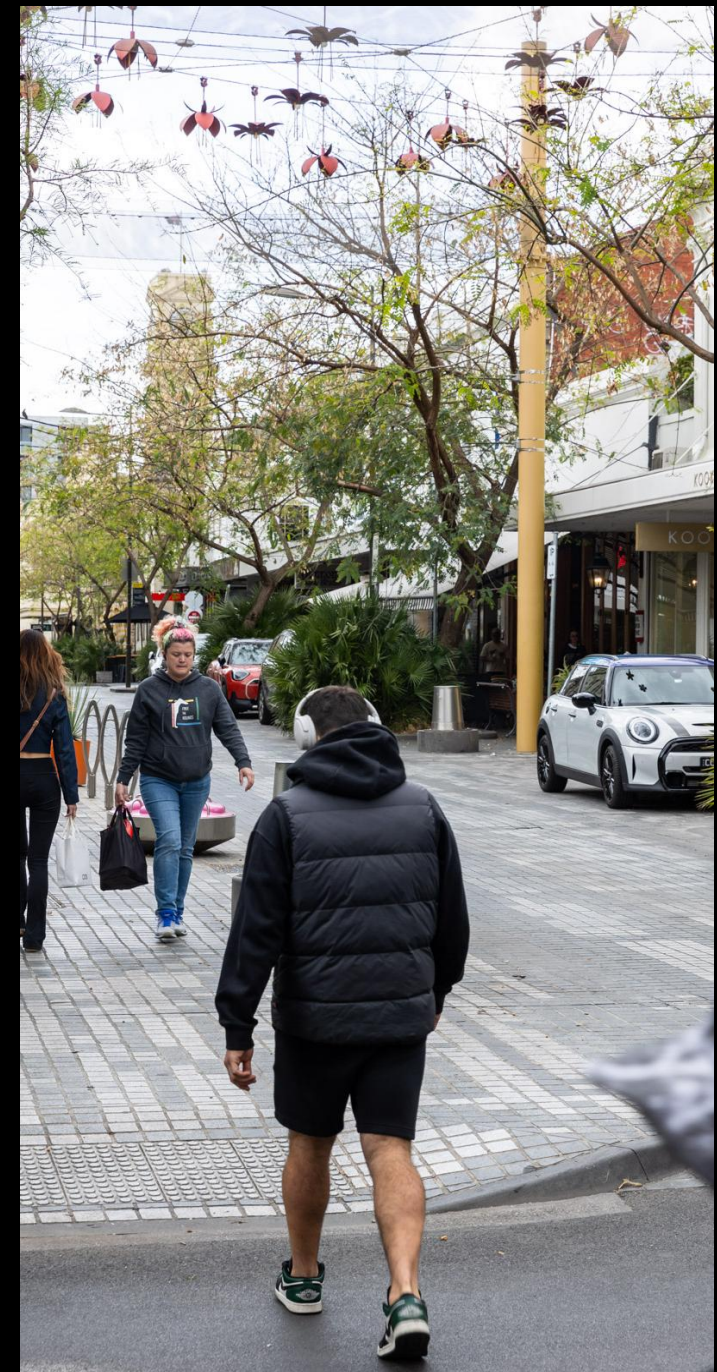
Decision time (June 2025)

768 responses to the council consultation.

Stonnington adopts safer speeds

Community response a factor in decision to approve (and secure funding) for many of council's safer speed proposals:

- 40km/h speed zones for local streets in Armadale, Malvern and Malvern East (down from 50km/h)
- 30km/h speed trials in 4 x school precincts, 8 x cycling routes and on the council-managed section of Chapel Street.
But another 4 x school street & 5 x cycling street 30km/h trials are knocked back due to opposition (support below 40%).
- + 7 x new raised pedestrian crossings



Some key takeaways

- **Words matter**
Use Eleanor's research/toolkit: knowing the frames that are best to tap into when communicating speed policy keeps conversations focused and less inclined to go down rabbit holes
- Importance of **community connections** to unearth champions / advocates to support your work
Real stories lend authenticity (role of Rosie Cramp at Stonnington)
- **Telling people's stories takes skill and sensitivity** (not something to do lightly!)
Make sure the subjects are equipped
- **A communications plan (getting eyeballs on your content!)**
How will you get your key messages out to the community, frequently and with confidence?
REACH everyone (not just those on social media / attend council meetings)
- Ensure staff know how and when to respond to community comments and feedback (bring in all relevant teams to the communications strategy / key messages).

We provided a tip sheet ('Objection Handling') to Stonnington staff.

Publishing and moderating was outside our scope.
