



Friday 22 May 2026
National Walk Safely to School Day

RETHINK THE SCHOOL RUN: NATIONAL PUSH TO GET KIDS WALKING AGAIN

May 2026: Australian parents are being urged to rethink the school run ahead of National Walk Safely to School Day next Friday, 22 May, as research shows active travel to school has halved since the 1970s and fewer than one in four Australian children meets daily physical activity guidelines.

Now in its 27th year and part of National Road Safety Week, the initiative calls on families to build regular walking into children's daily routines - not just on the day itself, but every day.

Pedestrian Council of Australia CEO Harold Scruby said the benefits of ditching the car, even partially, are impossible to ignore.

"If you have to drive, park a few blocks from school and walk the rest of the way together. In doing so, you teach your children about health and road safety and how to cross roads safely.

"You both get exercise - and we know children perform far better in the classroom when they are active before school. You won't cause a dangerous traffic jam at the school gate. Your car won't emit those dangerous particulates that cause respiratory disorders in children. And you can walk back to your car, getting more exercise for yourself. It ticks every box," Mr Scruby said.

**BETTER HEALTH • IMPROVED ROAD SAFETY • CLEANER AIR
REDUCED CAR-DEPENDENCY • INCREASED USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The 2026 Australian Government physical activity guidelines recommend children aged 5-17 accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Research shows only one third of Australian children use active travel for even part of their school journey.

"Until children are 10 years old, they should always hold the hand of an adult when crossing the road," Mr Scruby said.

**Until they're ten, children must always hold
an adult's hand when crossing the road**

It is not too late to get involved. Schools can register for publicity at walk.com.au and go into the running to win one of 28 x \$250 Woolworths vouchers to support healthy breakfasts. Entries close this Friday. **ENDS**



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FAST FACTS

WHAT: National Walk Safely to School Day

WHEN: Friday 22 May 2026

WHERE: Primary schools across Australia – See register of schools happy to work with media across the country [HERE](#)

WHY: This national initiative aims to encourage children to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle by simply including a walk at the beginning, at lunchtime and at the end of each day. The event also promotes reduced car dependency, greater use of public transport, cleaner air, improved diets and road safety to primary school children across Australia.

HOW: Encourage children to build regular walking in their daily routine by walking to, during, and from school

MORE INFO & ASSETS: <https://www.walk.com.au/WSTSD/> & <https://www.walk.com.au/WSTSD/material.asp>

MEDIA ASSETS & IMAGES: [HERE](#)

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

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X: <https://x.com/natwalktoschool>

Hashtag: #WSTSD

RESEARCH :

*ABS National Health Survey 2017-18

Australian Government Physical Activity Guidelines (updated 2026) - [HERE](#)

Heart Foundation / Healthy Active by Design – Active School Travel Research (2025) - [HERE](#)

Australian Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People (2022) - [HERE](#)

