

Rural Health and Research Congress
#RHRC2019

NSW FACS Liveable Communities Project

How Walkable are our Regional and Rural Towns for Older Australians?

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Where is Albury?

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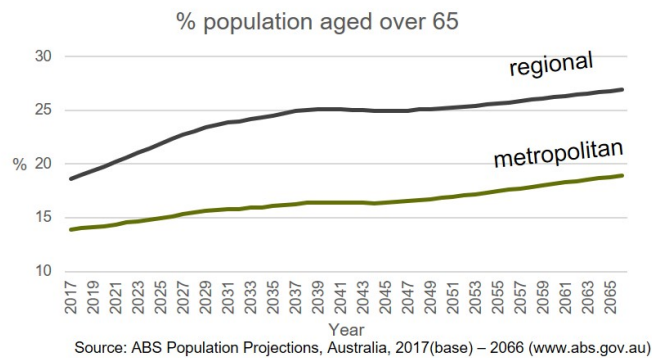
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## Our aim was to map and model walkability by location with a focus on older people

- Walking is important for older people
- Research shows that walking provides physical health, mental health and social benefits for older people
- Population over 65 years projected to double to around 25% in the next 40 years
- Increase will be greater in regional areas compared to metropolitan areas



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## What are we trying to find out?

- *How easy is it for older people to walk in regional and rural cities?*
- *Why do older people walk where they walk?*
- *What limits walking by older people?*
- *How can we make walking more accessible for older people?*



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## Our approach

**Data-driven (GPS) to measure of how friendly an area is to walking**

*Walking patterns explained in the context of participants' perceptions*

*Walking patterns related to the natural and built environment: terrain, distance to parks, footpaths, shops,...*



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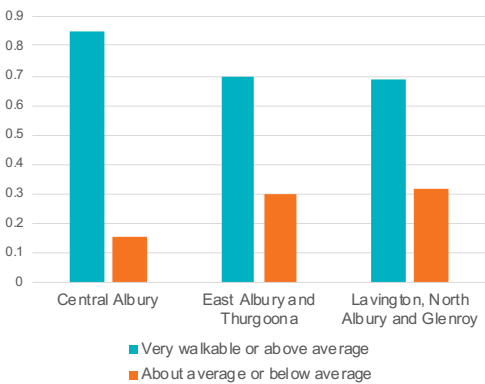
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## Some neighbourhoods are more walkable than others

*Project survey*  
50 participants, aged over 65)

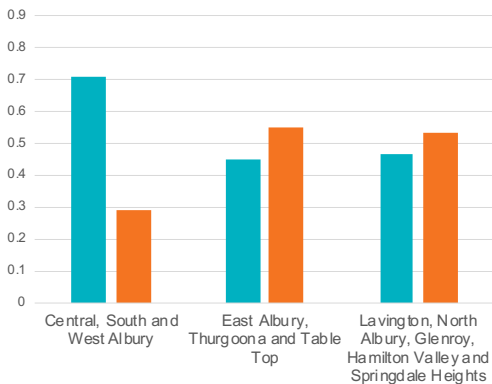
*Walkability by suburb*





| Suburb                              | Very walkable or above average | About average or below average |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Central Albury                      | 0.85                           | 0.15                           |
| East Albury and Thurgoona           | 0.70                           | 0.30                           |
| Lavington, North Albury and Glenroy | 0.68                           | 0.32                           |


*General survey*  
125 participants, all ages)

*Walkability by suburb*

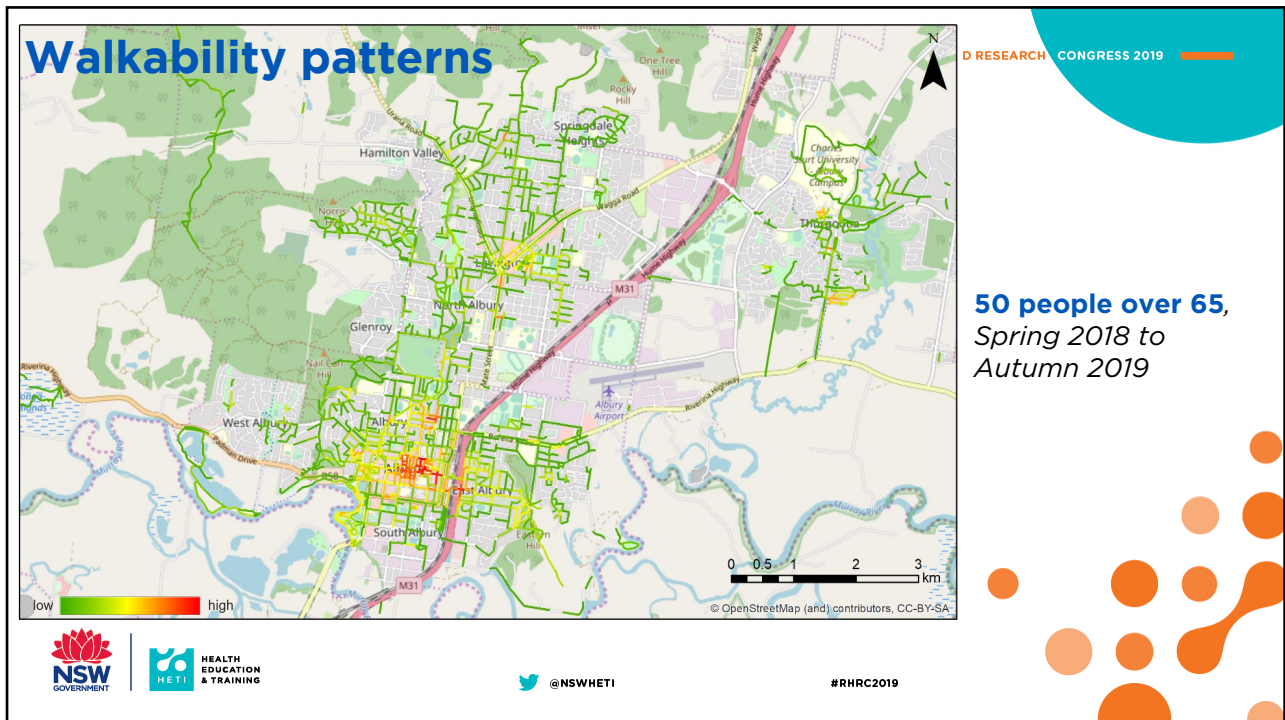


| Suburb   | Very walkable or above average | About average or below average |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Central, South and West Albury   | 0.70                           | 0.28                           |
| East Albury, Thurgoona and Table Top                                     | 0.45                           | 0.55                           |
| Lavington, North Albury, Glenroy, Hamilton Valley and Springdale Heights | 0.47                           | 0.53                           |

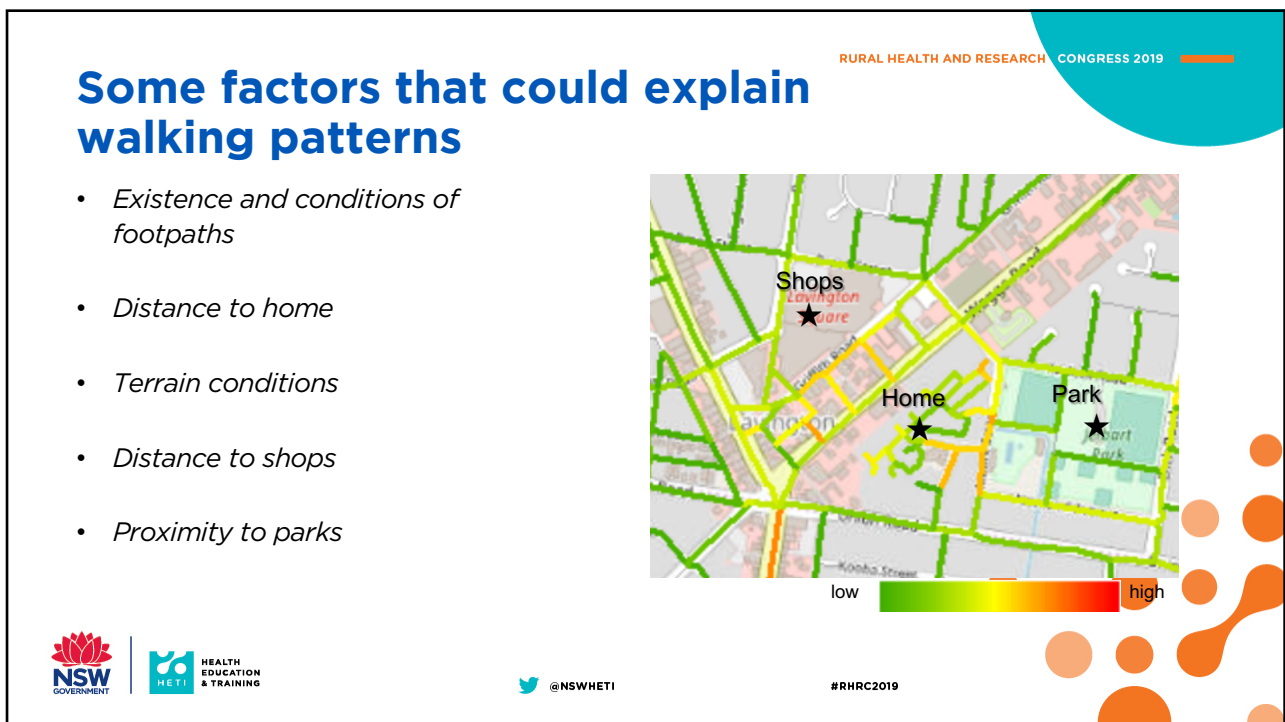



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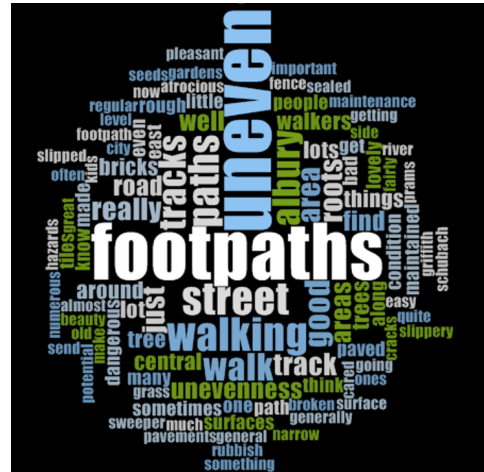


## Footpaths matter a lot

*"In general I find Central Albury anyway really lovely to walk around, but I have to watch my step, a lot of unevenness"*

*"Moore St, Kaylock Road, Griffith Road with uneven paths and loose tiles"*

*"It's almost as if the beauty of the roadways is really important, but the beauty of the walkways is just not even considered"*

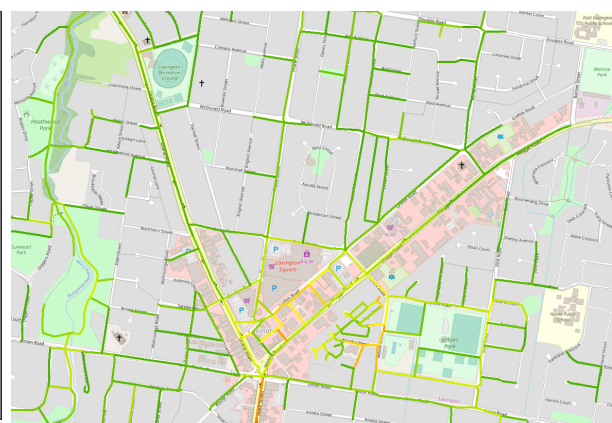
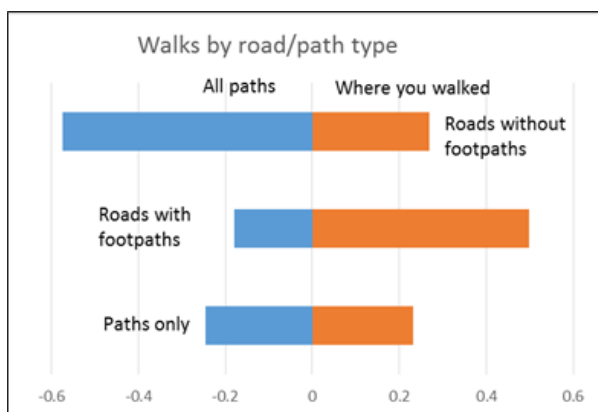


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## Older people are much more likely to walk on roads that have footpaths



Lavington example

low high



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## No footpaths – examples provided by participants

*“Footpaths not always available, some areas of heavy traffic”*

*“Several streets lack footpaths, so walkers have to share the road with traffic or dodge hazards on nature strips”*




*Hanel St, East Albury*      *Macauley St, Albury*




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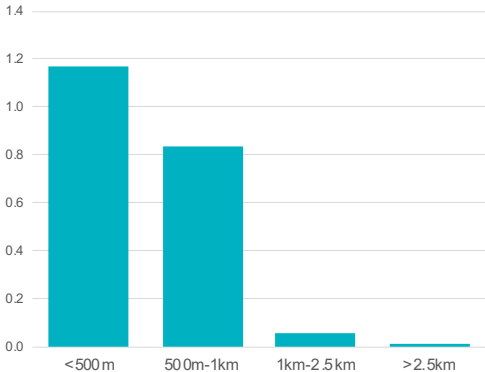
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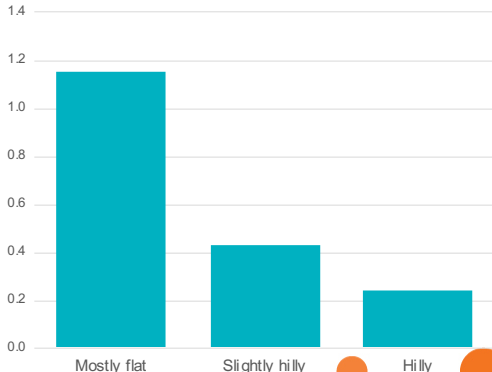
## Older people are much more likely to walk close to home and where it is flat

*Walks by distance to home*





| Distance to home | Frequency |
|------------------|-----------|
| <500m            | 1.15      |
| 500m-1km         | 0.85      |
| 1km-2.5km        | 0.05      |
| >2.5km           | 0.02      |


*Walks by terrain*




| Terrain        | Frequency |
|----------------|-----------|
| Mostly flat    | 1.15      |
| Slightly hilly | 0.45      |
| Hilly          | 0.25      |

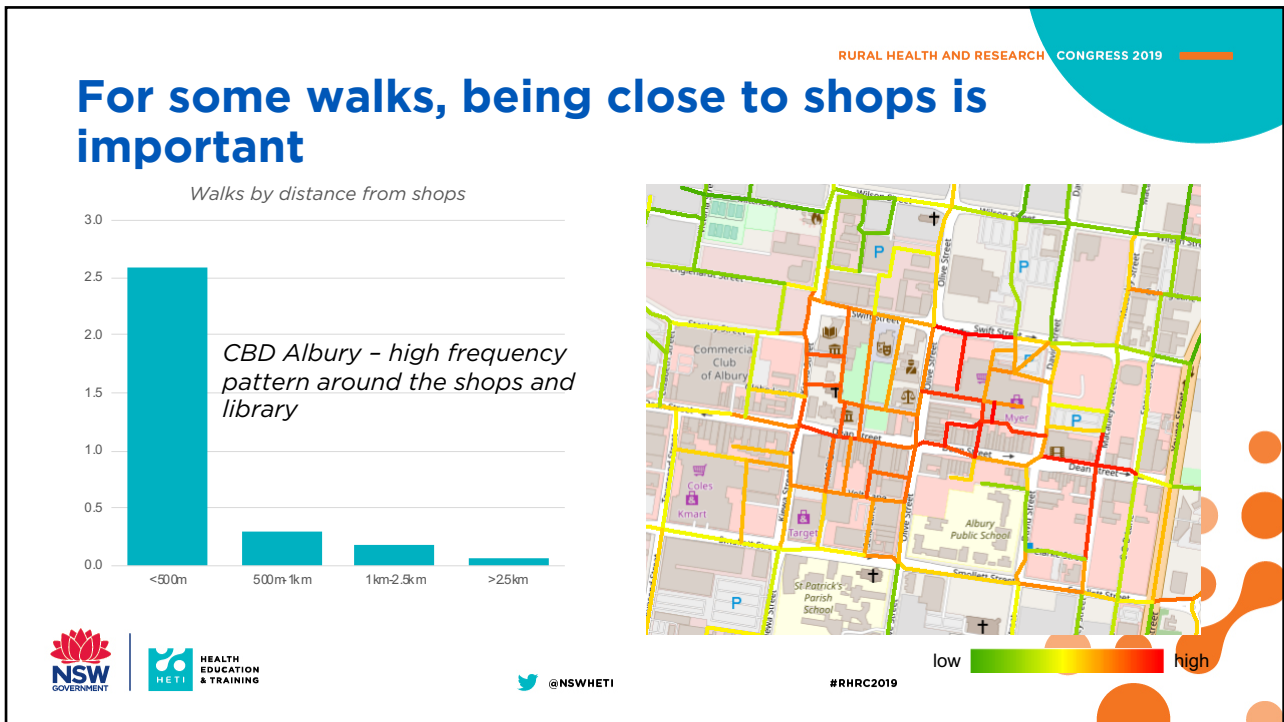
*“I walk through the gardens... and down by the river and round the block and back home again”*

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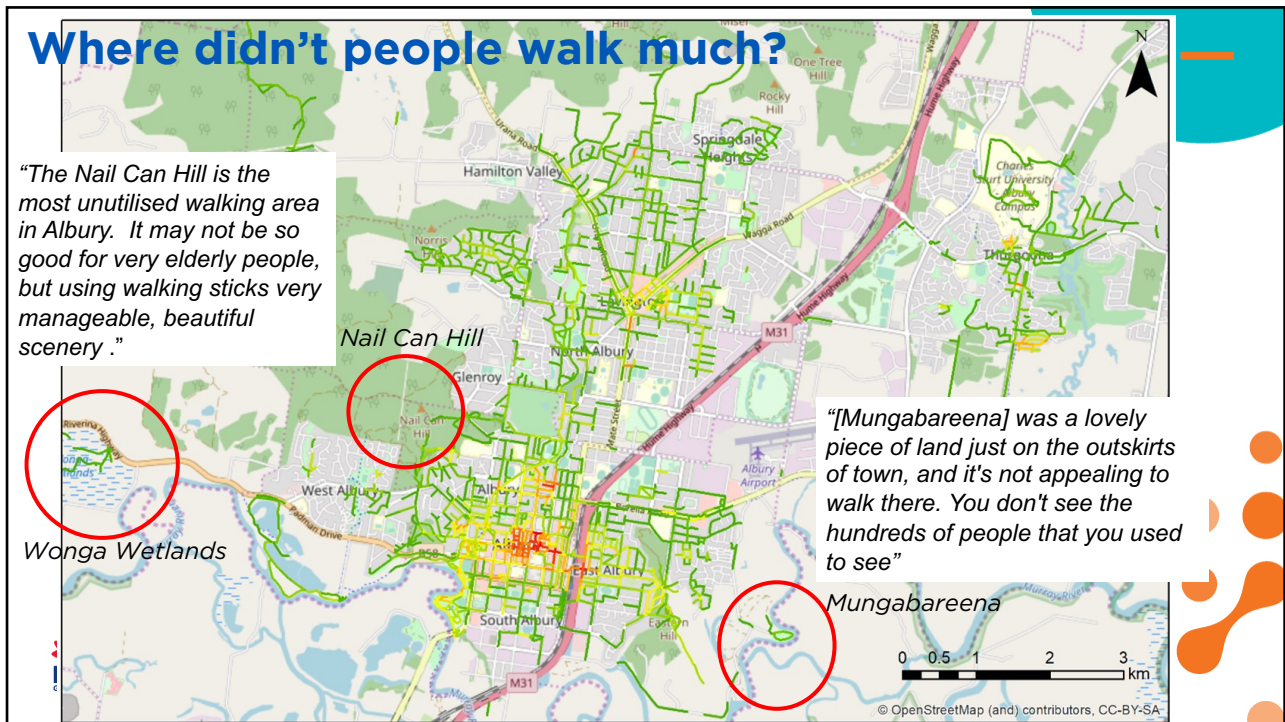


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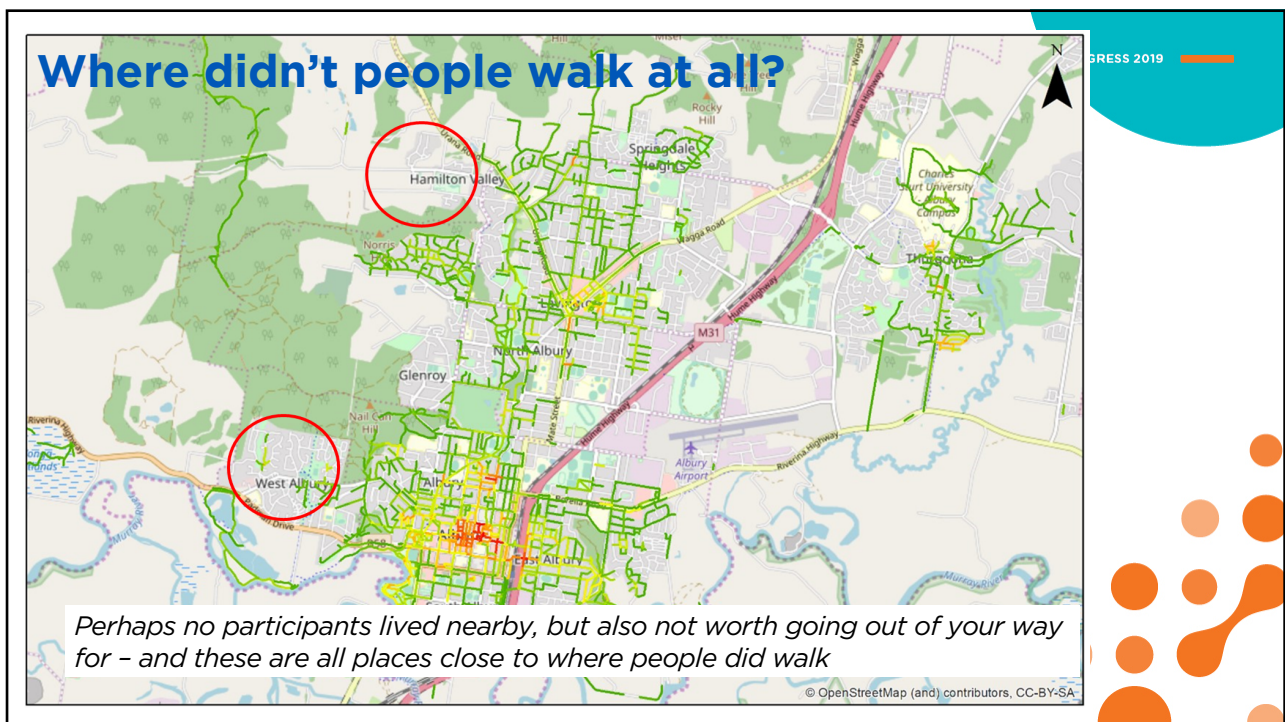


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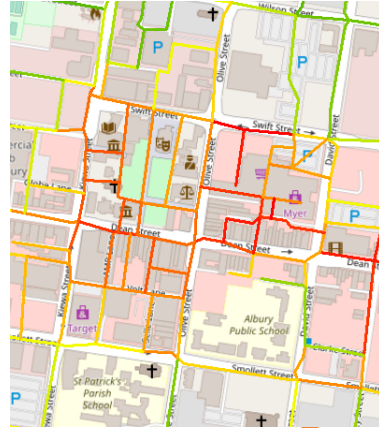


## Different factors are important for different types of walks

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### 1. "Active transport" walking

- Walking from home, a bus stop or a car park to go into town, the library, the doctor, etc.
- Trips are close to town centre, flat, accessible



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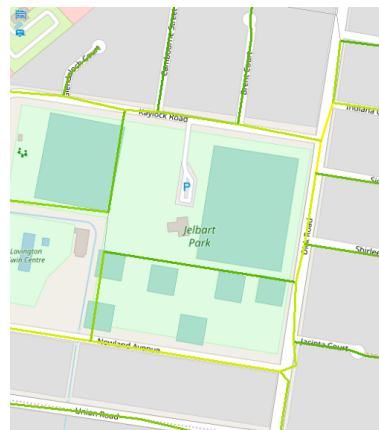
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## Different factors are important for different types of walks

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### 2. "Constitutional" walking

- Walking around the block from home, needs to be safe and accessible, "walkable neighbourhood"
- Trips are close to home, flat, accessible



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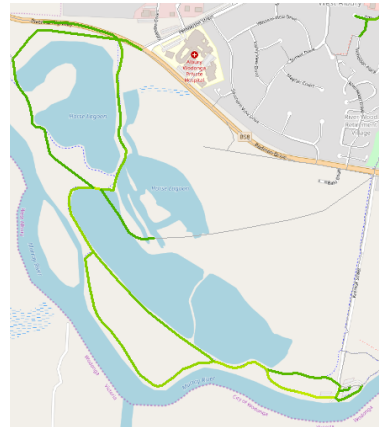
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## Different factors are important for different types of walks

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### 3. “Destination” walking

- Travelling to a destination (Wonga Wetlands, Hume Weir) and then walking for pleasure
- Trips are away from home and the town centre, and have scenic amenity, not necessarily flat or accessible



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## What will we do with this information

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- We will create models of walkability based on what you've told us and what we can see from your walking patterns, using information about terrain, shops, parks, shade, paths, etc.
- We will create maps of what places in Albury are most walkable for older people
- We will identify places that are not walkable and why
- We will also apply these methods to other locations



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## Why it is important to address these issues?

### We want Albury to be an age-friendly city

- *There are well-maintained and safe green spaces, with adequate shelter, toilet facilities and seating that can be easily accessed*
- *Pedestrian-friendly walkways are free from obstructions, have a smooth surface, have public toilets that can be easily accessed*
- *Pavements are well-maintained, smooth, level, non-slip and wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs*
- *Pavements are clear of any obstructions and pedestrians have priority of use*
- *Services are clustered, located in close proximity to where older people live*



Source: World Health Organisation (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide ([www.who.int/ageing](http://www.who.int/ageing))



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## What do we think is needed ?

- *Existence and condition of footpaths should be a priority (not just around the CBD)*
- *We need to consider connectivity from residential to scenic areas as well as within neighbourhoods*
- *We need an holistic approach that looks at making it easier for people over 65 to walk regularly*



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# Thank you!

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