

Monday, 9 October 2023

RAA and Walking SA launch first ever ‘Risky Walks’ survey to uncover pedestrian concerns

As the number of pedestrian lives lost this year has already doubled last years’ total, RAA and Walking SA are encouraging South Australians to have their say on pedestrian infrastructure issues in the joint ‘Risky Walks’ survey.

This year 14 pedestrians have lost their lives – compared with seven for the total of 2022.

As part of Walking SA’s ‘Step into Spring’ campaign, the survey targets walking for transport rather than recreation, to highlight barriers preventing South Australians from being more active as part of their commute.

The inaugural ‘Risky Walks’ survey joins a series of RAA surveys, including Risky Roads and Risky Rides, identifying the most dangerous roads, cycling paths and now pedestrian walks across SA.

RAA Senior Traffic Engineer Matt Vertudaches said RAA and Walking SA anticipate the survey will help inform future advocacy efforts and pedestrian infrastructure projects.

“Some of the main issues respondents can nominate includes paths with uneven surfaces, no footpaths at all and discontinued or unconnected paths and obstructions,” Mr Vertudaches said.

“Respondents will simply need to drop a pin on locations they wish to nominate as unsatisfactory before choosing their reason.

“Respondents can also identify broader issues, including inadequate crossings, sharing paths with other road users, and environment together with surrounding issues including traffic fumes and paths too close to traffic.

“Although the survey focuses on infrastructure issues, pedestrians need to continue a high-level of precaution even on well-maintained paths.

“It’s important to always go back to the basics, such as looking both ways, being mindful of other road users and keeping your eyes peeled for any obstacles.”

Walking SA Executive Director Sharon Kelsey said having a safe walkable neighbourhood and places that entice us to walk is the catalyst to get us moving, staying healthy and being socially connected.

“As humans, walking is really our earliest form of movement. When we learnt to walk, we used it as a reliable means to get from A to B. But today many things impact our decision to walk,” Ms Kelsey said.

“Firstly, even for short distances, walking competes with other transport options, like the car.

“Secondly, if paths aren’t safe or take us too long to navigate, we won’t walk.

“What we really need is a safe network of paths that not only link up to access local services but, in the process, activate public spaces and give us every reason to leave the car behind.

“Research shows the more we can do this then the happier, healthier and better our overall quality of life.

“So, to help us help you take up the walk option, tell us about the risky walks in your neighbourhood or along your commute path. Building a walkable environment is in all of our interests.”

South Australians can take the Risky Walks survey at raa.com.au/riskywalks.

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