

South Australian Walking Report

Baseline Data (2021)



Government of South Australia
Preventive Health SA

Contents

Executive Summary Page 1

Introduction Page 2

Objective 1: More South Australians making short trips by walking (Walking for Transport) Page 3

Objective 2: More South Australians accessing green space for walking (Walking for Recreation and Sport) Page 6

Objective 3: More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking (Walking for Health and Wellbeing) Page 8

South Australian Walking Strategy Suite



Our 10-year vision



2022-2025 actions to progress



Monitoring our progress

Executive summary

The South Australian Walking Report - Baseline Data (2021) establishes a baseline for tracking progress against our objectives in the South Australian Walking Strategy 2022-2032 and provides a snapshot of walking trends in South Australia. The identified baseline measures will help us monitor and report progress against the Walking Strategy objectives.

To achieve our vision of ‘more South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities’, the Walking Strategy refers to three types of walking that have overlapping functions and outcomes. These walking types are Walking for Transport, Walking for Recreation and Sport, and Walking for Health and Wellbeing. We acknowledge that many members of our community are involved in all three types of walking, while there are others who partake in one or two. The Walking Strategy recognises all three equally. The segregation of walking types will enable us to measure and monitor success.

The objectives and associated baseline measures for tracking our progress of the South Australian Walking Strategy 2022-2032, include:



Walking for Transport

Objective 1: More South Australians making short trips by walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data*
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who take trips of 1km or less per week by walking**.	70.4%

* Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished
** This includes responses of All The Time, Often and Sometimes.



Walking for Recreation and Sport

Objective 2: More South Australians accessing green space for walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data*
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who walk weekly for recreation or leisure.	43.1%
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who have access to green spaces within 400m of where they live.	73.2%

* Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished



Walking for Health and Wellbeing

Objective 3: More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data*
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) walking more than 30 minutes per week.	73%

* Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

Introduction

Walking in South Australia is a great way to explore our state, to travel to and from places and spaces, and to enjoy our beautiful parks and coastline. Walking also provides a variety of benefits to our physical and mental wellbeing.

The South Australian Government's vision for walking as set out in the South Australian Walking Strategy 2022-2032 is to 'get more South Australians walking more often; all ages, all abilities'. To do this, multiple government and non-government agencies have committed to working together over the next ten years, with an aim to: (1) plan walkable neighbourhoods, towns and cities; (2) build connected, safe and pleasant walking environments for all; and (3) create a South Australian walking culture.

The South Australian Walking Report - Baseline Data (2021) establishes a baseline for tracking progress against our objectives in the South Australian Walking Strategy 2022-2032 and provides a snapshot of walking trends in South Australia. The identified baseline measures will help us monitor and report progress against the Walking Strategy objectives.

The data provided for the baseline measures were collected by Preventive Health SA (formerly Wellbeing SA) through the Population Health Survey Module System during 2021 (May-August)¹. The 2021 data collection occurred while Covid-19 restrictions were in place therefore were likely to impact on some change to usual exercise patterns. The snapshot of walking trends includes the Population Health Survey Module System 2021 data, once-off mobility data² collected for Wellbeing in 2021 that takes billions of data points generated daily by mobile phone devices, then cleans, aggregates and anonymises it to generate valuable demographically grouped insights, and relevant literature as referenced.

¹ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

² Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished

The objectives and associated baseline measures for tracking our progress of the South Australian Walking Strategy 2022-2032 include:



Objective 1: More South Australians making short trips by walking (Walking for Transport)

- Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who take trips of 1km or less per week by walking.



Objective 2: More South Australians accessing green space for walking (Walking for Recreation & Sport)

- Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who walk weekly for recreation or leisure.
- Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who have access to green spaces within 400m of where they live.



Objective 3: More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking (Walking for Health & Wellbeing)

- Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) walking more than 30 minutes per week.

Objective 1:

More South Australians making short trips by walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data*	
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who take trips of 1km or less per week by walking**.	All the time	19.6%
	Often	29.3%
	Sometimes	21.5%
	Not often	15.1%
	Not at all	14.5%

*Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. O21. Unpublished

** This includes responses of All The Time, Often and Sometimes.

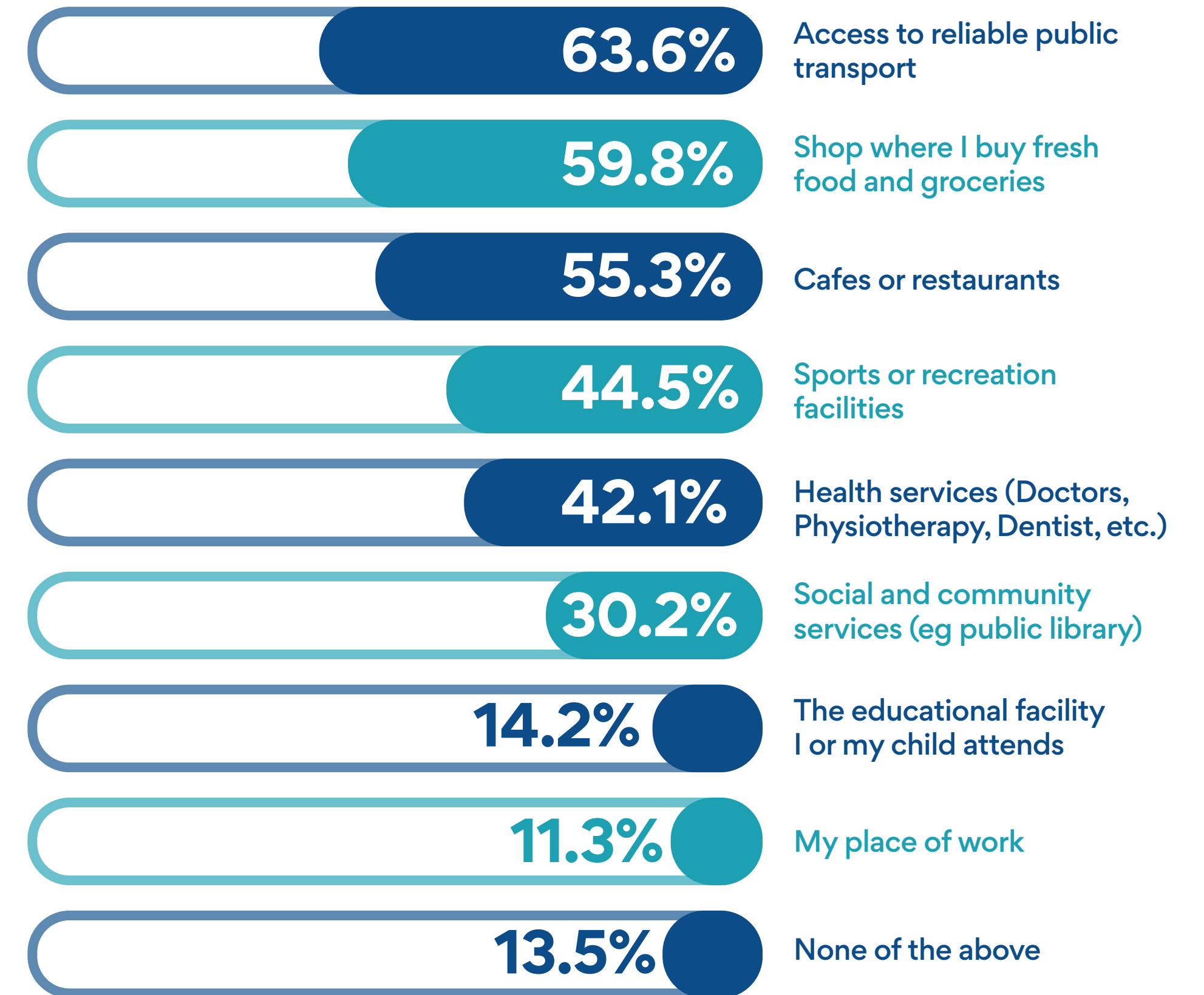
Snapshot of walking trends:

Short trips (usually less than one kilometre) are ideal for walking, with research showing that living within 400-800 metres of a mix of destinations is associated with higher levels of walking (and cycling).³ Longer trips can also be possible if considered a safe, convenient, and attractive option. Most South Australians are prepared to spend about ten minutes (which is approximately 800 metres) walking per day.⁴

However, only 5% of South Australian adults reported that they chose to walk because it was convenient, with lack of time identified as the largest barrier to walking.⁵ To get more people walking more often, our communities need to be planned to make walking a viable, attractive, and convenient option.

Active travel is an ideal way to incorporate more physical activity into daily life, with walking considered a space-efficient travel mode. While 48.9% of South Australians identify that they take short trips (less than one kilometre) often or all of the time, another 29.6% identify they rarely or never walk short trips.⁶

The proportion of South Australians that report the following facilities within 1km from where they live



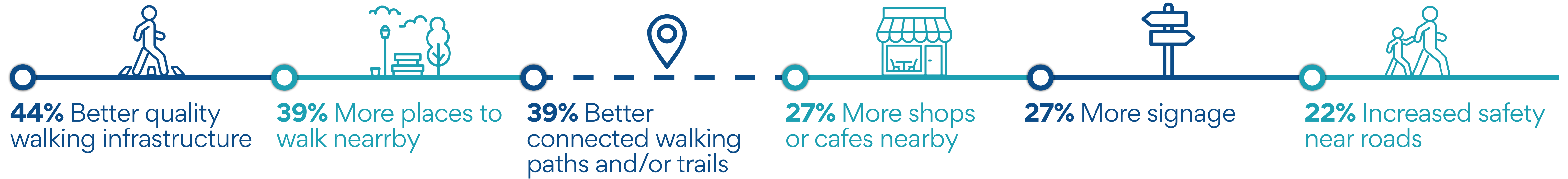
3 Sallis JF, Floyd MF, Rodriguez DA, Saelens BE. Role of built environments in physical activity, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. *Circulation*. 2012; 125(5): 729–737

4 Government of South Australia, Physical Activity Social Marketing Campaign Research Final Report. 2021. Unpublished

5 Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

6 Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

What would encourage more South Australians to walk short distances?



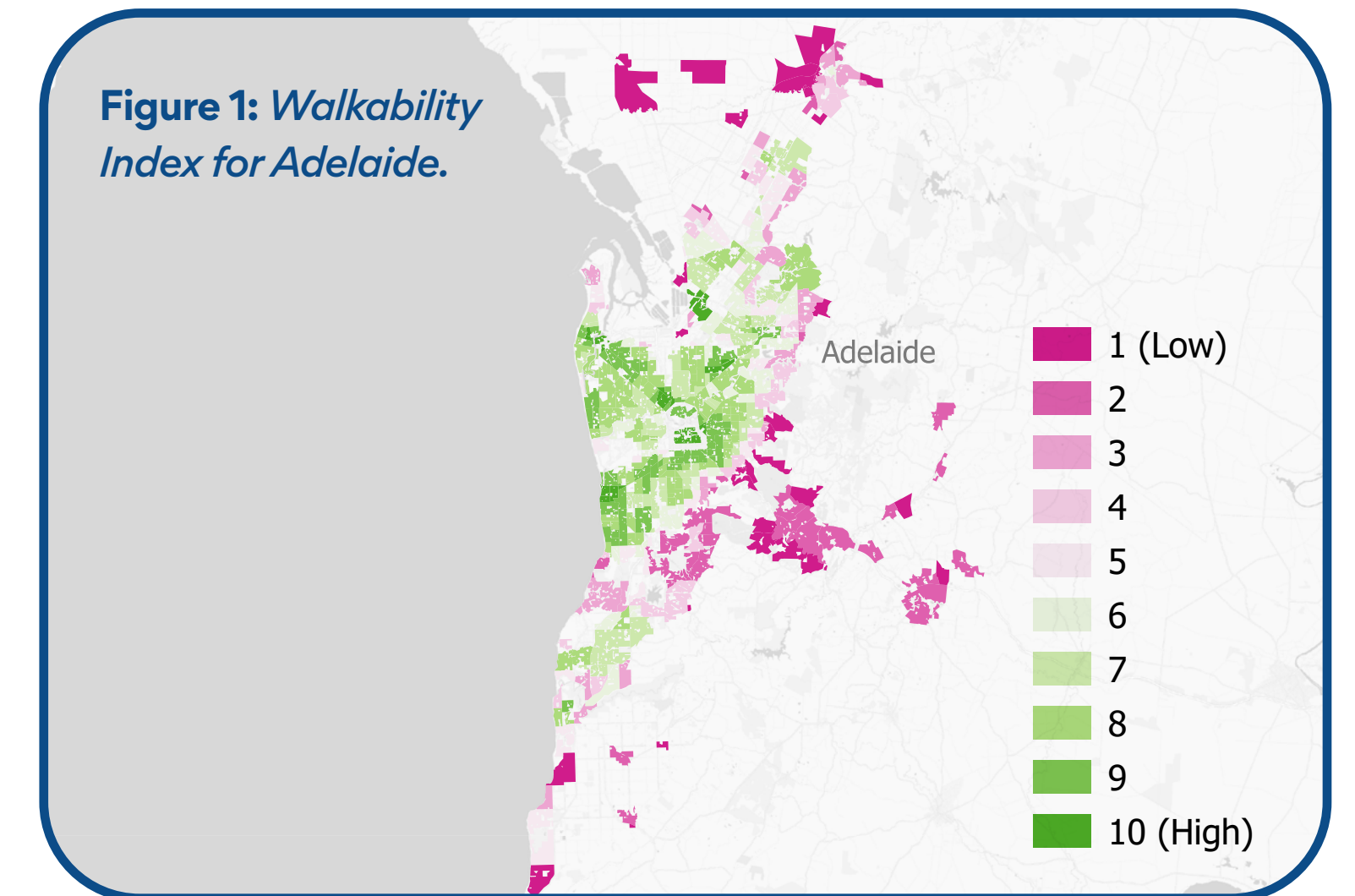
‘Walkability’ measures the ease of walking in an area. Neighbourhoods with shops and services to walk to, small blocks and good street connectivity, and higher population density tend to be more walkable. Being walkable encourages walking and discourages driving.

A review of the Walkability Index by the Australian Urban Observatory identified wide variation over Adelaide council areas for walkability, with inner suburbs scoring higher, and outer suburbs scoring lower, on walkability (see Figure 1).⁷

Being close to a supermarket supports active living by providing easy access to food supplies within a walkable distance. However, the average distance to a supermarket for Adelaide was 1,216 metres. Commuting to work or school is another great way to add physical activity to your day. While only 11.3% of South Australian’s reported living within one kilometre of work, 21.2% of South Australians reported walking to work at least once per week.⁸

People living in Adelaide City and City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters were the most likely to walk to work. In relation to children, only 18% of parents with at least one child < 18 years of age reported walking to or from school or childcare on a weekly basis.

Walking is also often part of a longer journey, through the use of public transportation or car sharing. For example, most public transport trips start and end with a walking stage to and from the train, tram, or bus stop. To encourage people to use public transport, they must have access to public transport. 64% of South Australians report living within one kilometre of walking distance to reliable public transport.⁹



(Source: Australian Urban Observatory, RMIT University, https://auo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AUO_Scorecard_Adelaide.pdf)

⁷ Gunn LD, Davern M, Higgs C, Both A, Roberts R, Rozek J, Giles-Corti B. 2020. Measuring liveability for the 21 largest cities in Australia: Liveability Report for Adelaide. 2020. Melbourne: RMIT University, Centre for Urban Research

⁸ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

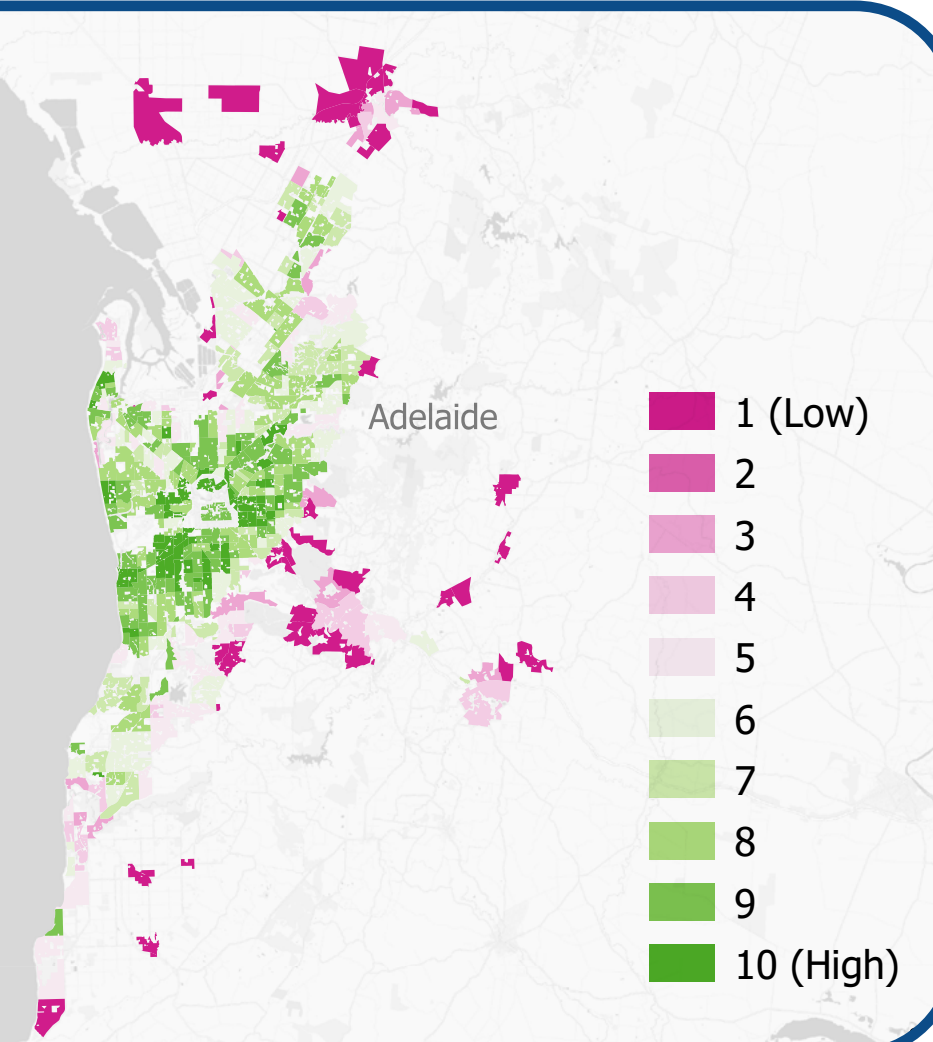
⁹ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

Walking for Transport

How South Australian's use public transport



Figure 2: Percentage of residences with proximate access to regular public transport for Adelaide.



Looking at Adelaide more specifically, 57% of metropolitan residences live within proximate access to regular public transport, although there is wide variation among suburbs (see Figure 2).¹⁰ Positively, Adelaide ranks third best across major Australian cities in relation to access to public transport (behind Canberra and Sydney).

Despite many living in close proximity to public transport, only 19% of adults report regularly (at least weekly) using public transport¹¹. Public transport is used most often to get to work or an educational facility (57.4%), to travel to shops, cafes, restaurants (49.6%), to get to personal appointments (39.6%); and least often to travel to or from school or day care with a child (4.3%).¹²

When travelling to work, approximately 84% of those living in Adelaide used a private vehicle to get to work. Further, of all journeys taken by South Australians to a destination, 10% included walking only to get there and only 4% included a walking-portion in the journey, which suggests most trips taken do not include walking.¹³

¹⁰ Gunn LD, Davern M, Higgs C, Both A, Roberts R, Rozek J, Giles-Corti B. 2020. Measuring liveability for the 21 largest cities in Australia: Liveability Report for Adelaide. 2020. Melbourne: RMIT University, Centre for Urban Research

¹¹ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

¹² Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

¹³ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished

(Source: Australian Urban Observatory, RMIT University, https://auo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AUO_Scorecard_Adelaide.pdf)

Objective 2:

More South Australians accessing green space for walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data*
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who walk weekly for recreation or leisure.	43.1%
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) who have access to green spaces within 400m of where they live.	73.2%

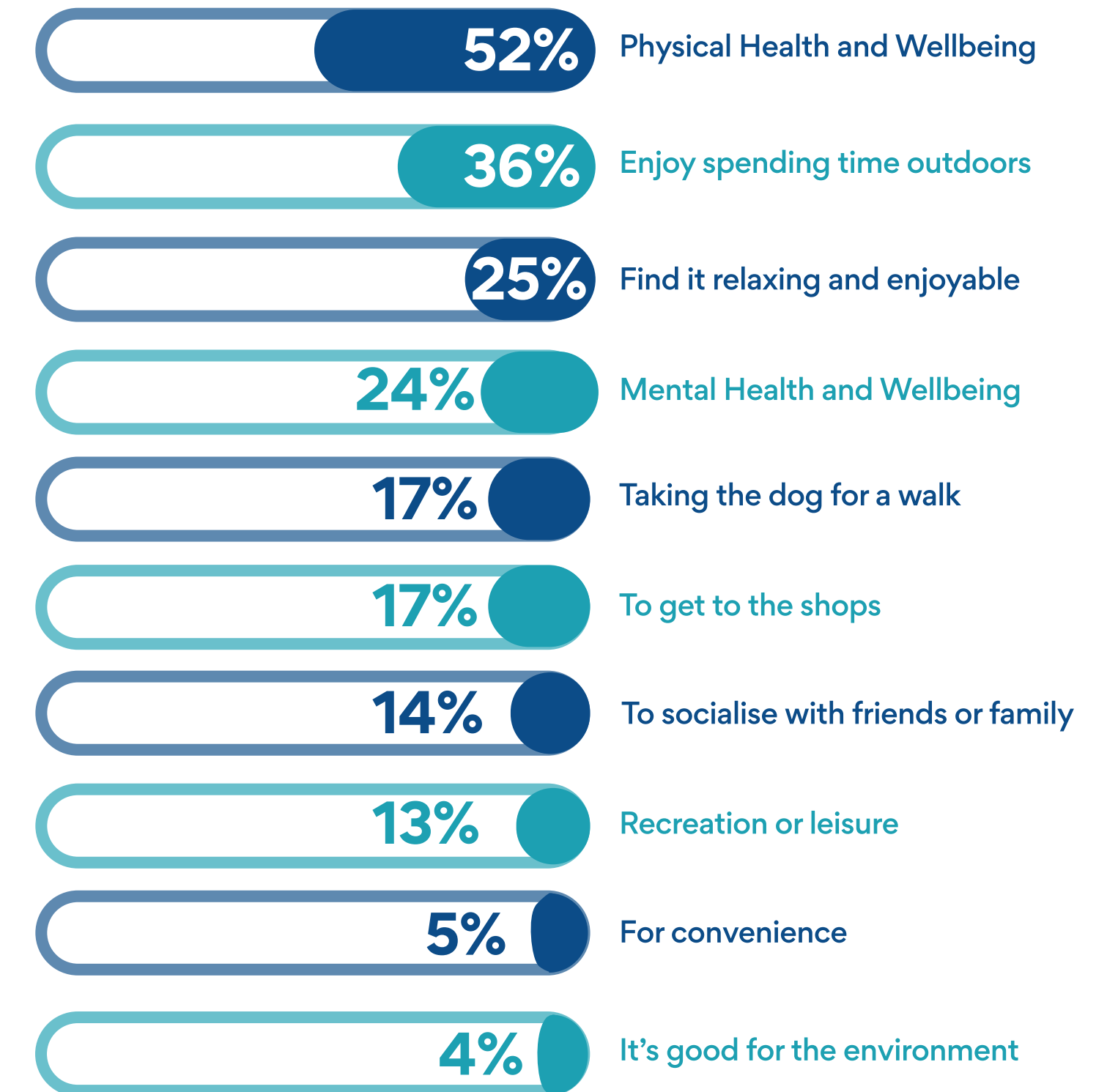
*Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

Snapshot of walking trends:

There is strong evidence demonstrating that spending time in natural green and blue spaces, like local parks and reserves or the coastline, can have a positive impact on a person’s health and wellbeing.¹⁴ When we consider nature as a destination or setting for walking, the evidence suggests that adults are more likely to engage in walking with greater exposure and access to green spaces compared to those with no or limited access to green space.¹⁵ Also, people who engage in group walks in nature can experience improvements in mental wellbeing and positive emotions, regardless of frequency.¹⁶

In terms of why South Australians walk, the second highest reason identified is to enjoy time spent outdoors, with walking for recreation or leisure (e.g. walking trails) also a popular reason. Combining these two reasons, individuals undertaking walking at a location of leisure, such as recreational areas or national parks, recorded an average of 100 minutes per visit.¹⁷ Additionally, 27% of South Australians visit recreational areas or national parks on an average of 5.8 visits per month.¹⁸

Reasons why South Australians like walking



14 Twohig-Bennett C, Jones A. The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. Environmental Research. 2018; 166: 628-637
 15 Astell-Burt T, Feng X, Kolt GS. Mental health benefits of neighbourhood green space are stronger among physically active adults in middle-to-older age: evidence from 260,061 Australians. Prev Med. 2013 Nov; 57(5): 601-606
 16 Marselle MR, Warber SL, Irvine KN. Growing Resilience through Interaction with Nature: Can Group Walks in Nature Buffer the Effects of Stressful Life Events on Mental Health? Int J Environ Res Pub Health. 2019; 16(6): 986
 17 Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished
 18 Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished

Walking for Recreation and Sport

The proportion of **Metro Adelaide** that have access to green spaces within 400m of where they live



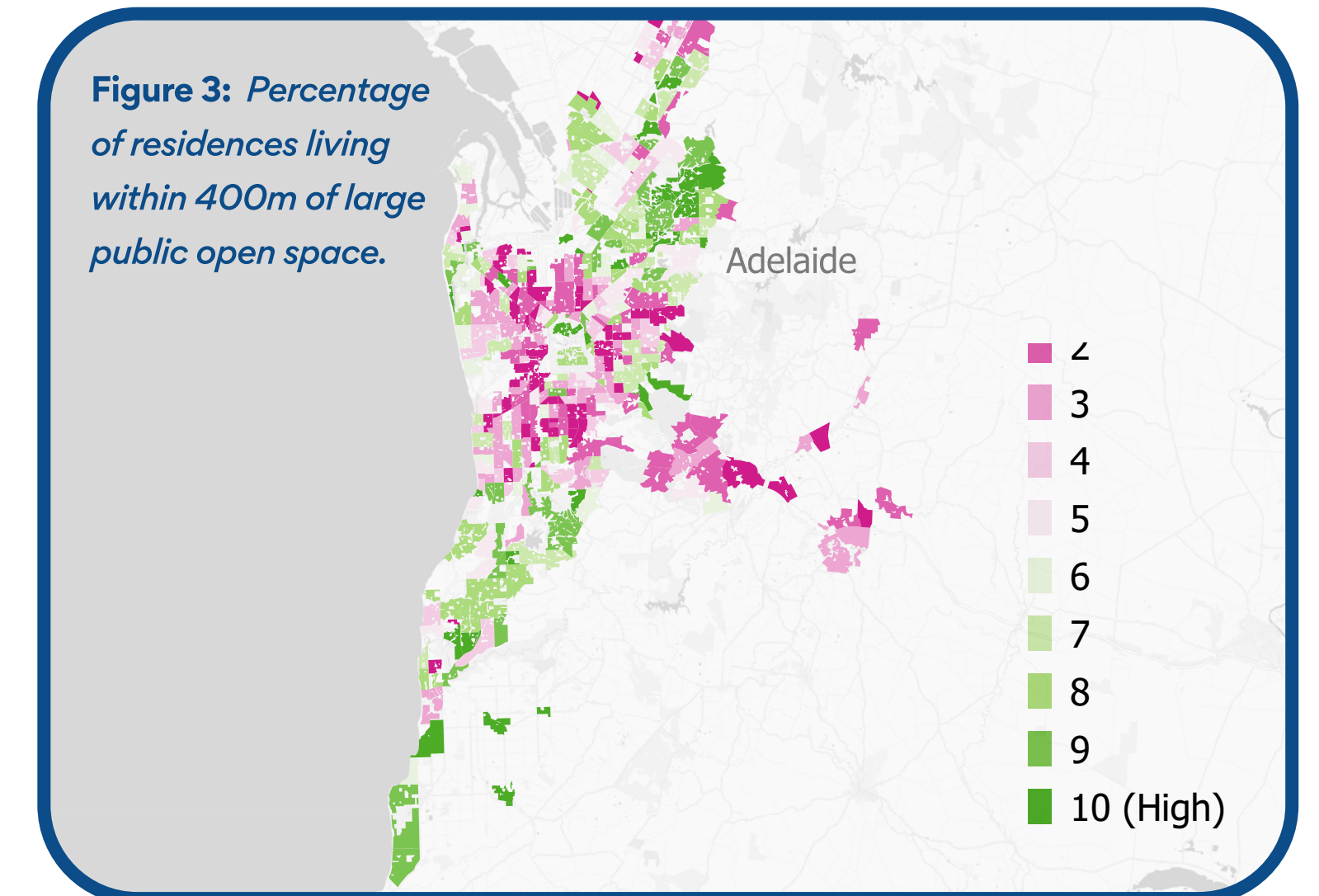
The proportion of **South Australians** that have access to green spaces within 400m of where they live



Despite this, 22.2% of South Australian adults identified that they never walk somewhere for recreation or leisure purposes.

38% of South Australians reported that if there were more places to walk nearby (such as parks and/or trails), and there were better connected walking paths and/or trails, they would be more encouraged to walk in green spaces.

As such, access and proximity to parks, reserves and reservoirs is important. Encouragingly, 73.2% of South Australians report that they have access to green spaces, such as parks, trails, ovals or a community garden, within 400m of where they live. Within the Adelaide metropolitan area more specifically, 47% of residences were found to be within 400m of a public open space of at least 1.5 hectares in size, with large variation found across suburbs (see Figure 3).¹⁹ Adelaide ranked below Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth in relation to residents' access and proximity to public open spaces.



(Source: Australian Urban Observatory, RMIT University, https://auo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AUO_Scorecard_Adelaide.pdf.)

38% Would walk more often if there was more access to green areas and better connected paths

Objective 3:

More South Australians improving their health and wellbeing through walking

To track our progress, we will measure	Baseline data *
Percentage of South Australians (18+ years) walking more than 30 minutes per week.	73%



*Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

Snapshot of walking trends:

People who walk regularly can improve their overall health and reduce their risk of chronic diseases. The Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) each week, and children do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (such as active play) every day. Indeed, key motivations for walking in South Australia are health-related, with both physical and mental health identified by adults as main reasons for walking.²⁰

The further and longer an individual walks the greater the benefit to their health. In 2021, the average duration spent by South Australians on a walk for health was 43 minutes and the average distance achieved was 2.1 kilometres.²¹ Shorter durations were seen in Adelaide CBD when walking for health at an average duration of 32 minutes but is likely due to walking habits in the CBD relating to active travel where 27% included walking only to get to a destination.²²

Adults report the following support activities are most likely to encourage them to walk more

- 
○ 37%
More information about where to walk
- 
○ 30%
Better education on the benefits of walking
- 
○ 28%
Online/App based programs to track my walking and steps
- 
○ 26%
More support for events or group-based activities
- 
○ 22%
Organisational support from my employer/school
- 
○ 18%
Better education on road rules and road safety

²⁰ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

²¹ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished

²² Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, DSpark - South Australia wellbeing walking study. 2021. Unpublished

Walking for Health and Wellbeing

Encouragingly, in 2021, 60% of South Australians self-reported meeting these physical activity guidelines, with 43% of South Australians identifying that they walk for more than 150 minutes per week. While 56% of South Australians are happy with the amount of walking they do, almost 42% would like to walk more.²³ That translates to around 540,000 South Australians wanting to walk more often. Additionally, in 2021, more South Australians identified that they walked less often (compared to more often) than they had 12-months prior, indicating a downward shift in walking levels from 2020.

Despite a good proportion of adults meeting the guidelines, around 40% of adult South Australians are still not getting enough physical activity, with 18.6% engaging in less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.

The greatest health benefits can be achieved when those who are currently doing very little physical activity start to do any amount of physical activity.²⁴ Therefore, walking is considered an easy and accessible activity for most that could have a large health impact. In fact, only 3.5% of South Australians who want to walk more often, reported the lack of general fitness as a barrier to walking more.

To increase physical activity levels, it is well documented that monitoring and tracking your activity, through wearable activity trackers²⁵ or using your phone Health app, is associated with greater physical activity engagement. Approximately 45% of South Australian adults report using their smartphone, an activity tracker (e.g., Fitbit, Garmin), or pedometer to track their physical activity or steps. Of those who didn't report using an activity tracker, 27% were interested in tracking their physical activity and steps using an activity tracker.



○ **40%**

of South Australian adults are not getting enough physical activity



○ **73%**

of South Australian adults agree or strongly agree that using an activity tracker helps keep them motivated to achieve their activity goals

²³ Government of South Australia, Preventive Health SA, Population Health Survey Module System. 2021. Unpublished

²⁴ Warburton DER, Bredin SSD. Health benefits of physical activity: a systematic review of current systematic reviews. *Current Opinions in Cardiology*. 2017; 32(5): 541-556

²⁵ Ferguson T, Olds T, Curtis R, Blake H, Crozier A, Dankiw K et al. Effectiveness of wearable activity trackers to increase physical activity and improve health: a systematic review of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *Lancet Digital Health*. 2022 Oct; 4(8): 615-626

Preventive Health SA's Open Data Portal provides access to a wide range of data regarding the health and wellbeing of the South Australian community. Interactive summary visualisation from our Open Data Portal are available to the public, and are drawn from statewide population health data sets managed by Preventive Health SA's Epidemiology Branch.

For more information

Preventive Health SA

Website: preventivehealth.sa.gov.au

Email: preventivehealthsa.pphhealthpromotionbranch@sa.gov.au



© Preventive Health SA, Government of South Australia. This work is licensed under a creative commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike Licence.



Government of South Australia
Preventive Health SA