

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

**MENZIES** 

Institute for Medical Research

## Communities for Walkability

A citizen science project to  
connect local spaces and places

# Low Head Report

[walkrural.com.au](http://walkrural.com.au)



# Acknowledgment of Country

The University of Tasmania pays its respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continues to care for Country.

We acknowledge the profound effect of climate change on this Country and seek to work alongside Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, with their deep wisdom and knowledge, to address climate change and its impacts.

The Palawa people belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures, continually resident on this Country for over 65,000 years. They have survived and adapted to significant climate changes over this time, such as sea-level rise and extreme rainfall variability, and as such embody thousands of generations of intimate place-based knowledge.

We acknowledge with deep respect that this knowledge represents a range of cultural

practices, wisdom, traditions, and ways of knowing the world that provide accurate and useful climate change information, observations, and solutions.

The University of Tasmania likewise recognises a history of truth that acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people, resulting in forcible removal from their lands.

Our island is deeply unique, with cities and towns surrounded by spectacular landscapes of bushland, waterways, mountain ranges, and beaches.

The University of Tasmania stands for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language, and history, and a continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights paving the way for a strong future.

## Acknowledgments

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- Public Health Services, Tasmanian Government Department of Health
- Local Government Association Tasmania
- Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University
- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT
- Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney



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### Project Investigators:

- Associate Professor Verity Cleland, Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania
- Professor Anna Timperio, Deakin University
- Dr Kim Jose, Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania
- Associate Professor Melanie Davern, RMIT University
- Dion Lester, Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Dr Lynden Leppard, Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Kate Garvey, Public Health Services, Tasmanian Department of Health
- Dr Yvonne Laird, The University of Sydney
- Dr Samantha Rowbotham, The University of Sydney

### Low Head Community Members:

We would like to thank the Low Head community members involved in collecting data and information for the audits and those who attended the workshops to discuss the findings and provided feedback on the report. Your input has been invaluable and critical to the development of this report.

~~HEROVS~~

Roads

beach

us

NATURE 

Speed

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# Executive Summary

The Communities for Walkability project aimed to identify features of Low Head that make it easier or harder for community members to be active and walk around their town ('walkability'). Low Head has a range of community facilities including an aged care facility, a community garden, a maritime museum, accommodation and a bowling club. Other facilities such as supermarkets, medical clinic, council offices, hall, shops and other services are located nearby in George Town (5km to the south). Low Head is a scenic historic coastal town known for its maritime history and popular beach activities.

This report summarises the information collected through spatial walkability assessments, audits of the town and street segments, program and policy assessments and discussions at the community workshop. Findings from the three project phases have provided an insight into the key issues impacting walkability in the area.



## Key Findings

In the spatial walkability assessment, Low Head's walkability was rated low in comparison to the 91 other towns in the study. The spatial maps indicate that Low Head has low walkability throughout however this was not reflected in the findings from the audits and workshop discussion. The spatial walkability assessment captures daily destinations that were scored low in Low Head. While Low Head is recognised to have minimal amenities, many facilities are found nearby in George Town and shared between the two towns.

The audits and workshop discussion suggest that Low Head has some features that support walking and active recreation in the area. In the town wide audit, natural assets including beaches and the shared use kanamaluka Trail were reported as important spaces for recreation. Community members feel that the facilities within the community (which are more recreational or commercial) are in walking distance for most residents. The program and policy audit recognised some important programs and policies in the area including the 'Healthy George Town' program (providing free health and wellbeing activities to residents in the local area). There have also been noted improvements to the built environment encouraging more walking and active recreation.

## Priorities

Community members recognise there is a good range of infrastructure throughout Low Head that supports walkability. Two priorities were identified as having potential to enhance walkability throughout Low Head. These priorities include:



# 1

### **Improving general infrastructure**

The audits and workshop discussion suggests additional pedestrian infrastructure could support walkability throughout the town. Additional infrastructure including seating, lighting and signage would encourage community members to walk more.



# 2

### **Extending footpaths**

While community members were generally happy with the presence and quality of footpaths in Low Head, there were some areas where improvements could be made. Extending the kanamaluka Trail to the lighthouse was considered important to enhance connectivity and accessibility. Furthermore, the construction of new paths along Friend Street and Agnes Street was considered important to connect to key spaces such as the supermarket and primary school to the new development on North Street.

In addition, improving visibility on the George Town end of the kanamaluka Trail (where the track winds through coastal bushland) was also suggested to increase personal safety. Community members also suggested that the informal bush track between East Beach and Bell Buoy Beach could become a formalised track and better maintained.

## Potential Solutions

Whilst community members were generally happy with the infrastructure in Low Head, the audit segments and workshop discussion suggest some ways of addressing these priority areas. This included:



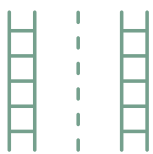
Distance signage along the kanamaluka Trail and East Beach to Bell Buoy Beach trail.



Seating at regular intervals along the kanamaluka Trail.



Extension of the kanamaluka Trail to the Low Head lighthouse.



Extending footpaths to connect to the development on North Street, as well as providing pedestrian access to the George Town IGA on Friend Street.



Beautiful

~~DANGEROUS~~

Roads

CARS

be

lines

NATUR

# What is the Communities for Walkability Project?

Communities for Walkability is a citizen science project to identify environmental characteristics that influence walkability and physical activity in rural Tasmania. This is important because the environments where people live, learn, work, play and age influence health and physical activity. The project involved three key phases:

1. A spatial assessment of walkability
2. Audits of the town's walkability using a town wide assessment tool, policy and program assessment tool and street segment walkability audits
3. A community workshop



## Phase 1 — Spatial Walkability Assessments

To inform the selection of the 10 towns involved in the Communities for Walkability project, phase 1 involved conducting a spatial analysis of walkability for transport in 92 small rural towns across Tasmania with populations less than 6,000 people. This work was completed by project team members at RMIT University in Melbourne who are world-leaders in spatial assessments of walkability. They have developed the Australian Urban Observatory ([auo.org.au](http://auo.org.au)), which includes liveability and walkability assessments across the 21 largest cities in Australia, including nipaluna/Hobart and Launceston in Tasmania. Spatial walkability assessments use Geographic Information Systems to understand the walkability of an area based on three key components: daily destinations (something to walk to), street connectivity (a way to get there) and dwelling density (people to service the destinations and shops). These three factors were summed to produce a final walkability score for towns resulting in an overall walkability rating of high (top third of walkability scores), medium (middle third of walkability scores) or low walkability (bottom third of walkability scores).

It is also important to note that factors like footpaths, roundabouts or signalled pedestrian lights are not included in these spatial walkability assessments. Previous research suggests that these urban design factors have a big influence on the willingness of residents to walk for transport which has a direct effect on physical activity levels and overall health. However, most of this previous research has been conducted in big cities and less is known about how valuable spatial walkability assessments are for understanding walkability in smaller rural towns. Thus, while spatial map scores are suggestive of walkability, this study aims to better understand how applicable they are within a rural context.

## Phase 2 — Town Audits

Building on the spatial walkability assessments, the second phase involved a Citizen Science approach in 10 towns across Tasmania. Citizen science is valuable within health-related research projects for many reasons, including:

1. Gaining new perspectives on problems and solutions
2. Monitoring policy and program implementation
3. Obtaining difficult to access data
4. Mobilising support for action to improve health
5. Gathering locally relevant data to inform policy and practice

In each town, local leaders ('Community Champions') contributed to the project by identifying which parts ('segments') of the town to audit, recruiting 'Citizen Scientists' and completing town audits (including the town wide assessment and policy and programs assessment). Next, the Citizen Scientists completed street segment audits of the physical environment using the online walkability audit tool with the purpose of providing greater understanding of specific features within the town.

As part of the segment audits, community members took photos of town features that supported or hindered walkability. These images have been used throughout this report. It is important to note that the findings are general in nature as not all sections of the town have been audited. Instead, the findings highlight the broader features supporting and hindering walkability throughout the town.

## Phase 3 — Community Workshops

Once each town had completed the audits and taken photos, a summary of the audit data was shared with community members at a community workshop. The workshop discussion enabled a greater understanding about the features impacting on walkability in the towns, identified priority areas for action and potential solutions. In each town, researchers facilitated a community workshop which was attended by Community Champion/s, Citizen Scientists and other interested community members.



### *Images.*

- ▲ Documents to aid discussion at the workshop
- ◀ (opposite page) Citizen Scientist completing an audit segment using the online audit tool

# Introduction

Being active is good for our health – it can prevent us from getting diseases like heart disease, diabetes, breast and colon cancers, and osteoporosis. It is also great for managing our weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, and for keeping us mentally healthy and well. Research has shown that people living in rural parts of Australia are less active than those who live in urban areas. It is also known that rates of preventable health conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure tend to be higher in rural Australia than in urban Australia.

It is well known that walkable neighbourhoods provide health, environmental, social and economic benefits. A neighbourhood's walkability is the degree to which it has safe, designated areas for people to walk or bike to work, school, dining, shopping, medical services, recreation and entertainment. Walkable communities are easier to get around, they support everyday connections and foster a greater sense of community through increased informal and spontaneous social interactions. In cities, research shows that the physical environment where people live, work, study and play can affect physical activity levels.

However, there is minimal research showing what 'walkability' looks like in rural areas. Small towns and some rural council areas may have access to fewer resources to develop the infrastructure to support walkability and active lifestyles. This project was designed to help find out more about walkability in rural areas and what might be needed to support this.

Most of the research studies looking at walkability focus on cities and large towns and not much is known about how our environment helps or stops communities from being active in rural and regional areas.

The report includes quotes from people who attended the workshop or from comments they made using the online audit tool. Photos have been included to provide local examples of features that hindered or supported walkability. It is hoped the findings included here will support further discussions in the town as well as support local action to encourage walking in the area.

*Image.*

► (opposite page) Community members enjoy coastal views along the kanamaluka Trail



# Overview of Low Head

This project explored walkability in Low Head, a small town on kanamaluka/River Tamar in the north of lutruwita/Tasmania. Low Head is located 54 kilometres north of Launceston and 5 kilometres north of George Town in the George Town Council municipality. Low Head has a population of 619 people<sup>1</sup>. The area has a population density of 0.8 residents per square kilometre (compared to Inner nipaluna/Hobart which covers an area of 62.2 square kilometres and has a density of 1,356 residents per square kilometre).

Low Head sits on a long peninsula and there is only one main road in and out of the town (Low Head Road) connecting to George Town. The nearby residential locality of Bell Buoy Beach

(11.5km northwest) is also included within the town boundaries. Access to Bell Buoy Beach is from a turn off along North Street, which creates the Low Head-George Town boundary and is located 2.9km south of the Low Head Pilot Station.

The town has a strong maritime history with attractions including the Low Head Lighthouse as well as the Low Head Pilot Station, which is the oldest continually used pilot station in Australia. Low Head is also known as a scenic coastal area popular for beach activities including fishing, snorkelling, scuba diving and surfing. Residents also share their town with a population of Little Blue Penguins whose nesting habitat is protected by the Low Head Coastal Reserve and Conservation Area.

Given the proximity of Low Head to George Town, many Low Head residents share the facilities within the two towns and feel somewhat connected to George Town.

It's attached to George Town...[but] it's separate...for me, I think of Low Head as being just part of George Town.

Connectivity between Low Head and Bell Buoy Beach is limited, thus George Town provides easier access to community facilities for Bell Buoy Beach residents.

*Image.*  
◀ The Low Head Lighthouse



<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021

In Low Head there is an aged care facility (that services the George Town municipality), a café, a caravan park, a community garden, a maritime museum and various accommodation. Residents use other facilities in George Town including the supermarkets, medical clinic, council offices, hall, shops, schools and other services. Many sporting clubs and recreational facilities are also located in George Town; however Low Head has a bowling club and the well-used walking trail from the Low Head Conservation area to George Town.

Low Head community members describe their town as ‘one of the most beautiful places in Tasmania’.



Peaceful seaside village of Low Head... one of Australia's best kept secrets.

[The] lighthouse, and the beautiful beaches, and the coastline...now that I've lived here for as long as I have, it's just a beautiful village. The village community, it's just lovely.

*Image.*

- ▼ The riverside beaches provide aesthetic spaces for people to walk and engage in other physical activities



# Findings From the Project

## Spatial walkability assessment findings

The spatial analysis completed in the first phase of the project examined the local neighbourhood attributes of street connectivity, dwelling density and an index of access to services of daily living. These three attributes were used to indicate overall walkability and then given a rank to represent its position in relation to the other 91 small towns in Tasmania. Each attribute, as well as the overall walkability score, is classified as low, medium or high walkability.

The spatial analysis resulted in the creation of a Spatial Map (Figure 1) that helps to show the walkability around Low Head. Overall, the spatial walkability assessment ranked Low Head as having low walkability compared with the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1. The map shows the whole of Low Head is dark pink indicating low walkability throughout. In comparison, the findings from the audits and workshop suggests Low Head has good walkability overall. Community members recognised that whilst Low Head has minimal amenities, the layout of the town is highly

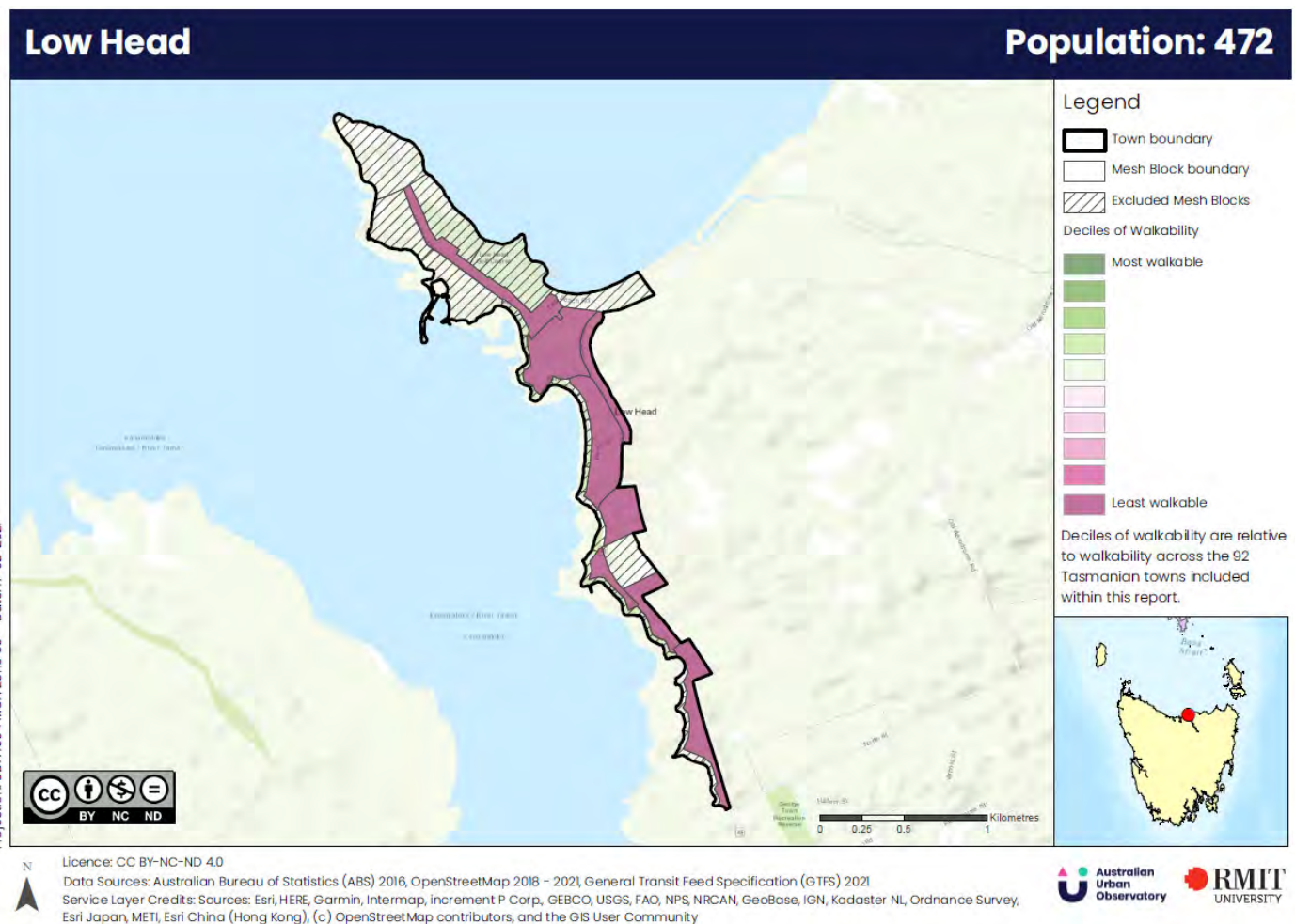


Figure 1. Low Head spatial map<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Spatial map data sources: ABS 2016, OpenStreetMap 2018-2021 and General Transit Feed Specification 2021.



conducive to walking and other recreational activities.

## Audit and workshop findings

In Low Head, one Community Champion completed the town wide facilities and programs and policies audits that examined the features in the area that supported walking and physical activity. The Community Champion then selected the segments of the area to be audited by the Citizen Scientists between October 2022 and January 2023. Four Citizen Scientists conducted detailed walkability audits to examine specific segments of the area. While they walked a segment, Citizen Scientists used the audit tool to respond to questions about the segment including the presence of features such as paved footpaths, unpaved footpaths, crossing, signage, roads, and other safety features. Citizen Scientists also took photos of key features that impacted on walkability in the segment.

Initial findings from the audits were presented to the community at the community workshop held in Low Head on 8 March 2023, with two community members present to discuss the findings. Following the workshop, this report was produced in consultation with Community Champions and Citizen Scientists, for use to bring about change in the Low Head community.

### Image.

- ▼ The Low Head Conservation Area is home to a colony of Little Blue Penguins



## Town wide and policy/ Program audit findings

The range of community facilities in Low Head was reflected in the town wide audit. The assessment captured the availability of amenities and physical features including: the community garden, lighthouse and pilot station, shared walking trail from the lighthouse to George Town, park, playground, bowling club and golf course. In the audit, all facilities and features in Low Head were rated as good/excellent.

Whilst many amenities are not available in Low Head or Bell Buoy Beach (such as a supermarket or medical services), many are available in George Town. Community members indicated that they feel somewhat connected to George Town as most people use the facilities there despite Low Head having a distinct identity as a township. The close link between the two towns

was demonstrated in the town wide audit with many amenities from George Town included in the audit (see Table 1). Thus, while the spatial map scored walkability in Low Head low, overall community members felt there were a range of good facilities to support walking and other physical activities.

The town program and policy audit examined the availability of health and physical activity related programs and/or policies in the area, including those facilitated by the local school. Many programs and policies identified were linked to the George Town Council document ‘George Town Area Structure Plan, April 2021’. The Council’s ‘Healthy George Town’ project provides free health and wellbeing programs and activities for residents with the aim of creating healthy, safe and vibrant communities. While most of the ‘Healthy George Town’ events are offered in George Town, they are open to residents of Low Head.

Facilities rated Good/Excellent	Facilities rated Fair/Poor	Facilities not present
Hiking or walking trails (around the pilot station and lighthouse, as well as hiking trail between East Beach and Bell Buoy Beach)	None reported	Lake
Biking path (shared trail from lighthouse to George Town)		Indoor or outdoor courts
Public park (Lagoon Beach Park)		Private gym
Public toilets (Lagoon Beach and East Beach)		
Swimming beach		
Public use swimming pool (away in George Town)		
River (kanamaluka/River Tamar)		
Skate/BMX park (located in George Town)		
Town recreational centre (located in George Town)		
Playground (Lagoon Beach Park)		
Playing fields (located in George Town)		
Other: Low Head Community Garden, golf course and lawn bowls club		

Table 1. Facilities in Low Head as captured in the town wide audit.



*Image.*

▲ The historic Pilot Station buildings



The majority of programs are run in... George Town, with only one program I know of offered in Low Head which was beach yoga. This was only during warmer months. The main town of George Town has outdoor exercise equipment, whereas Low Head does not have any facilities like this. And the kids park, while adequate, is small and not designed for older youth.

The Community Champion expressed support for council-run health and wellbeing programs and felt the council was actively making improvements to walking-related infrastructure:

In the four years I have lived in Low Head there have been upgrades to existing pathways and new/extended paths to improve walkability.

## Street segment audits: Overview of facilities

Six segments of Low Head were audited by the four Citizen Scientists (Figure 2). The street segment audits revealed the following:

- All Citizen Scientists considered their segment was aesthetically pleasing.
- Paved footpaths were available in four segments and were rated as good/excellent quality in all.
- Traffic volume was recorded as low in five segments and medium in one segment.
- Four Citizen Scientists reported that their segment was walkable. The two segments that were not considered walkable were located along North Street where there is no pedestrian infrastructure.
- Three segments were considered accessible (segment 1, 2 and 3, all include the kanamaluka Trail).
- Half of the segments were reportedly well-connected to other segments in the town.

In general, Low Head community members have access to a range of recreational facilities that are well maintained by the council and used by people of the local community.

*Image.*

- ▶ The Low Head Boat Ramp along the kanamaluka/River Tamar



Figure 3. Audited segments in Low Head

## Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)

The natural environment around Low Head was one of the key features supporting walking and other physical activities. The town is surrounded by beaches including East Beach and Bell Buoy Beach (popular with surfers), as well as the more protected beaches such as Lagoon Beach or Pilots Bay along the peninsula facing kanamaluka/River Tamar.

There is also a shared walking/biking path known as the kanamaluka Trail, that connects Low Head to George Town, and is hugely popular and easy for people of all abilities to use and access.

“ The footpath is approximately six years old and in good condition without impediment. Terrain is flat and easy going. Easily accessible to walkers, cyclists and those with mobility assisted vehicles.

Flat terrain with gentle slope up towards the north. Wide shared pedestrian and cycle pathway in excellent condition with no vegetation or other issues impacting on walkability. benches at either end of segment to rest with beautiful view of [kanamaluka/River Tamar].

Community members commented that path-use increases during holiday periods (particularly by cyclists), though this does not affect how people enjoy using the path. Similarly, road traffic also increases marginally during holiday periods.

“ Sometimes the traffic can get not too bad, just a little bit busier than it usually is, but most of the time it's fine to cross the road.

In the last year the Low Head Community Garden has become another important space for community members to connect.

“ Low Head Community Garden I feel should have a mention as it has become a fantastic amenity that provides social cohesion, regular working bees and an important place for the Low Head community.

The garden has community and individual vegetable plots, as well as a greenhouse, pizza oven, bush foods gardens and native frog gardens. Many locals attend the monthly working bee with numbers commonly between 20-40 people in attendance.

It is lovely. The stories are coming out about the people that have moved to this area and felt disconnected and connecting to there, and then all of a sudden they've got this great group of people.



*Image.*

- ▲ Lagoon Beach picnic area alongside the kanamaluka Trail



## Features that make it difficult to walk and be active (barriers)

### Footpaths and trails

While the existing footpaths were rated good/excellent, community members felt that additional footpaths could increase walkability throughout the town. Paved footpaths are found along the kanamaluka Trail whereas the rest of the town requires pedestrians to walk along the road or road buffers. Currently, the paved section finishes suddenly at the Low Head Conservation area carpark which is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife service.

#### *Images.*

- ◀ (opposite page) Colourful seating amongst the veggies at the Low Head Community Garden
- ▼ The kanamaluka Trail ends at the Low Head Conservation Area carpark. From here, pedestrians are required to walk on the road to the Lighthouse Station



P1: It just stops, doesn't it...Yeah, it stops.

P2: Yep, we've come to the end of the footpath now. Oh, okay.

P1: And then just no footpath.

The lack of paths on the remaining streets of Low Head and the Bell Buoy Beach residential area were not considered an issue due to the lack of traffic on the roads. However, the quality of the informal walking trail from East Beach to Bell Buoy Beach (approximately 5km) was rated as fair/poor due to being a rocky bush track.

The paths were not as well maintained as...they are around the lighthouse; it's not a very popular or widely publicised [walk].





Community members also discussed concerns about the lack of footpaths along North Street on the border between Low Head and George Town where the housing developments are:

“ Currently you need to walk on gravel or the road.

While this was not of great urgency as the development is still underway, community members want to ensure there are plans to include paved footpaths. Footpath connection along North Road would increase connectivity for pedestrians by joining Low Head Road (and the kanmaluka Trail) to both Friend Street and Agnes Street. As these streets have been recently extended, this would create footpath connections to key services in George Town including the school and supermarket.

Both Agnes Street and Friend Street [roads] have been extended and opened up to North Street. Agnes Street makes it an easier access road to Port Dalrymple School and [the] neighbourhood house and Friend Street to IGA.



The addition of footpaths along North Street will improve connectivity for pedestrians to access these facilities.

In the community workshop, some community members mentioned feeling unsafe along the southern part of the kanamaluka Trail to George Town due to lack of visibility and occasional anti-social behaviours. After North Street the trail becomes gravel and veers away from Low Head Road following the kanamaluka/River Tamar through coastal bushland where there is tall vegetation obscuring visibility. Whilst this part of the Trail is in George Town rather than Low Head, it is a common route for Low Head residents to

*Images.*

- ▲ Housing development is planned along North Road. Currently there are no footpaths available
- ▼ Access along North Road is currently limited for pedestrians
- (opposite) The George Town end of the kanamaluka Trail is set back from the road. Some community members feel unsafe due to a lack of visibility







*Image.*

- ▲ The George Town end of the kanamaluka trail is set back from the road. Some community members feel unsafe due to a lack of visibility

access George Town services and facilities. This section of the kanamaluka Trail is also more isolated with no roads or houses nearby, and people often congregate along the trail, making some community members feel unsafe.

It's a great path to a certain point... We've had a couple of experiences with people that don't feel that comfortable...I wouldn't feel comfortable...riding all the way to George Town.

Recent council discussions are proposing upgrading the gravel section to a paved footpath; however, some residents do not want this to happen.

Furthermore, at North Street the Trail diverts away from the road into coastal bushland, and there is no footpath alongside the road into George Town making it difficult for people to access the supermarket.

## Footpath accessibility

The lack of footpaths from the end of the kanamaluka Trail to the lighthouse is a concern, particularly for people with mobility devices, as pedestrians need to use the road for access.



There is no footpath to continue up to the tourist attraction of lighthouse, and therefore poses a safety risk.

Only walkable section for some people is the lighthouse footpath. [People with disabilities or mobility devices] could not use the walking trails or the road from gate to lighthouse path start safely or easily.

## Seating and lighting

The lack of seating along the kanamaluka Trail was identified as a barrier, particularly as the length of the township (from the Lighthouse to North Street) is almost 5km. There is some seating available in key locations (such as at Lagoon Beach Park), however, community members felt there could be more seating at regular distances along the kanamaluka Trail. For example, seating was limited outside the aged care facility and independent units.

It was actually only [in] the last couple of weeks that [I noticed] there are not enough seats/benches to stop...there's long lengths between them.

Alongside seating improvements, community members reported more street lighting beyond the main road would encourage them to walk and be physically active at certain times of the year:

Street lighting is sparse.



## Weather

Low Head is situated next to a large estuary with sea winds and climatic pressures which can subject the town to severe weather at times. The impact of the weather was mentioned by community members as affecting their desire to walk, cycle and move outdoors.

We could barely open our front door this morning because of the wind...so if you're on the footpaths, it can be quite uncomfortable.

“

P1: When the rain comes in as well, and it just goes all over the place.

P2: You think your roof's going to be blown over.

“

Strong cold winds in winter may cause discomfort.

## Images.

- ▲ Currently, pedestrians must walk along the road to the Low Head Lighthouse Station entrance
- ▼ Information board overlooking the kanamaluka/ River Tamar at the Low Head Lighthouse



# Priorities

During the community workshops participants were asked which of the identified barriers they considered a priority for action. The key priorities were to improve connectivity and general walking infrastructure throughout Low Head.



## Priority 1: Improving general infrastructure

The discussion highlighted the key priority of improving general infrastructure to support walking in Low Head including seating, lighting and signage. Adding seating at regular intervals along the kanamaluka Trail was considered important and would increase accessibility for all people and provide spaces to enjoy the surrounding environment. Lighting and signage were also discussed with some community members suggesting that these could increase participation in walking.



## Priority 2: Extending footpaths

There were some areas where extending the footpath would help to increase accessibility and enable community members to walk around the community more easily. Extending the kanamaluka Trail to the Lighthouse was considered important to improve connectivity and accessibility. Similarly, completing

footpaths in the George Town housing developments (including paths along North Street, Friends Street and Agnes Street) will allow Low Head residents to access key amenities in George Town. In addition, the informal bush track between East Beach and Bell Buoy Beach could be better maintained and signposted. Furthermore, improving visibility and increasing personal safety on the George Town end/southern end of the kanamaluka Trail was also suggested as a solution to encourage more people to use the path.



### Images.

- ▲ The kanamaluka Trail has wide paved footpaths suitable for wheelchairs and mobility aids
- ▶ (opposite) Coastal views along the kanamaluka Trail



# Possible Solutions

During the workshop participants were asked to consider possible ways to address the identified priorities. The following presents the solutions discussed by community members to address the key challenges in Low Head.

## Footpaths and trails

Extending the kanamaluka Trail all the way to the Low Head Lighthouse was suggested, as the paved footpath currently ends at the Low Head Conservation Area carpark.

The northern end where the path finishes is a section that could have the pathway cross the road and the footpath extended right to the gate of the lighthouse to make it 100% safe and easy to walk.

The Low Head Historic Site (which includes the lighthouse) is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife service; thus solutions may need to consider land ownership in order to increase accessibility.

Building footpaths to connect the new housing developments on North Street was also considered important.

It was suggested that this could help connect to the kanamaluka Trail and better link Low Head residents to access key places in George Town.

### *Images.*

- ▶ *(opposite)* The kanamaluka Trail
- ▼ Playground, barbeque and picnic facilities at Lagoon Beach







*Rhonda*

Containers



Currently access to the supermarket is limited for Low Head pedestrians.

“

I definitely [think] extending that path for students from Low Head to be able to go up that way; even just to get to IGA. There's a new road going in [the Friend Street extension] that's going to make it easier for us just to shoot across [to George Town].

[Footpaths on] both [streets would] make it easier and safer to access by bike or foot to schools, sporting grounds, pool etc as long as the North St footpath is connected to kanamaluka Trail from corner of Low Head Road and North Street.

Finally, improved maintenance of the East Beach to Bell Buoy Beach trail could increase the usage of this path. As this is an informal track, solutions may also need to consider land ownership.

## Seating

Benches and seats were suggested to provide spaces for people to stop, sit or rest, and enjoy the natural environments surrounding Low Head. While there are some seating at key areas (such as Lagoon Beach park), community members felt there could be more spaced along the kanamaluka Trail.

“

I think there's a [few] bench seats... [but]... if you're walking, there's nowhere else for quite some time.

*Image.*

◀ (opposite) Colourful seating in the Low Head Community Garden

Extra seating was considered important to assist those with mobility issues to confidently walk throughout the area whilst being able to rest along the way if needed.

## Signage

Additional signage was discussed as a measure to direct pedestrians to tracks and paths. This would help to link footpaths and trails throughout the community and create a more unified networks of trails (including along the East Beach to Bell Buoy Beach trail). There were suggestions regarding improving signage about how it might take you to walk between key destinations.

“

[The council is] going to be putting signage around...First Nations and the history which I'm really, really proud of... But yeah, there's never been any talk about having signs of, "This is how long this walk will take you," which I think would be a really good thing.

Signs...could list the full trail with makers and names of each beach right up to the light house, broken into distances to reach each beach. Hav[ing] a seat at each beach with another sign showing where you are and how far to the next beach. This would be great for locals and tourists alike.

# Conclusion

Low Head is a small town along kanamaluka/River Tamar in the north of Tasmania. The town has a range of features and facilities that supports walking and physical activity including beaches, the kanamaluka Trail, a community garden and a bowling club. While Low Head has a small range of community amenities (such as an aged care facility and independent units, a caravan park and a café), many other recreational and other facilities are available nearby in George Town. The audits completed by the Community Champions and Citizen Scientists highlight the valuable assets in Low Head, as well as areas that could be improved.

The audit process and workshop identified areas in need of improvement to increase walkability and physical activity participation in the town. Community members reported that key priorities were:

- Improve general infrastructure focusing on seating, lighting and signage, particularly along the kanamaluka Trail.
- Extending footpaths at key locations to increase accessibility and connectivity.

A range of possible solutions would help to address these priorities including seating at regular intervals along the kanamaluka Trail, extension of the kanamaluka trail to the Low Head Lighthouse, distance signage around the area and additional footpaths (including along North Street and connecting to key locations in George Town).

*Image.*

- ▶ *(opposite)* Looking towards the Pilot Station along the kanamaluka Trail



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