



UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

MENZIES 

Institute for Medical Research

Communities for Walkability

A citizen science project to
connect local spaces and places

Evandale Report

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.

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- Local Government Association Tasmania
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- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT
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Evandale Community Members:

We would like to thank the Evandale 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 Evandale that make it easier or harder for community members to be active and walk around their town ('walkability'). Evandale is located in the north of Tasmania and has a range of community facilities including an oval, parks and reserves and other services including a primary school, a medical clinic and pharmacy, a post office and general store, a tourist and information centre, churches, parks, a playground and cafes. Other facilities such as larger supermarkets, hospitals, additional medical services, recreational facilities and nature reserves are in nearby towns such as Launceston, Longford and Perth (between 7 to 18km away from Evandale). Evandale, a classified historic town, has a thriving arts scene and many popular festivals, markets and events.

This report summarises the information collected through spatial walkability assessments, audits (town wide, program/policy and street segments) and discussions at the community workshop. This report brings together the findings from the three project phases to provide a summary of the key issues impacting walkability in the area.



Key Findings

In the spatial walkability assessment, Evandale's walkability was rated medium in comparison to the 92 towns in the study. The town has lower walkability to the west of High Street and on the edges of the town whereas the main town area is slightly more walkable. Most of the residential areas, recreational facilities and town amenities are located to the east of High Street.

The audits and workshop discussion suggest that Evandale has a range of assets that support walking and active recreation in the area. In the audit, all facilities and features in Evandale were rated as good/excellent and the geography of the Evandale was reported to be generally quite flat which enhanced walkability in the town. The proximity of Evandale to larger towns nearby (including to Tasmania's second largest city, Launceston, with a population of 71,980) provides access to additional facilities and recreational spaces that are used by Evandale residents. The Program and Policy assessment found some council programs or policies in the area; however, there was an absence of policy around requiring bikeways or walkways in new infrastructure projects or specific programs encouraging physical activity within Evandale. The street segment audits reported a good range of recreational facilities. Overall, footpath quality was rated as good/excellent in four of seven segments. Discussion at the workshop suggested this was not always the case.

Priorities

Three priorities were identified as having potential to improve the walkability throughout Evandale. These priorities include:



1

Improving general walking infrastructure

Maintaining current footpaths to ensure they are good quality and not impacted by overgrowth or uneven surface quality. Provision of general infrastructure such as pedestrian signage, lighting and seating was also discussed to enhance walkability.



2

Improving accessibility

Ensuring access to facilities and amenities (including footpaths and crossings) are suitable for members of all abilities was considered a priority. Many of the older historical buildings are inaccessible for people with wheelchairs or other mobility devices.



3

Improving connectivity

Improving connectivity between footpaths, infrastructure and amenities was considered a priority by the community members. This would support the creation of walking trails between key locations (such as the local parks and reserves) which community members considered important. Upgrading the surface of the tracks through Honeysuckle Banks was also suggested to increased use and enjoyment of the natural environment along the South Esk River.

Potential Solutions

During the workshop, a range of solutions to address these priorities were identified to support walkability in Evandale. This included options such as improving the quality of footpaths and creating better connected footpaths. More specifically, solutions included:



Improving connectivity, focusing on linking the parks and reserves throughout Evandale.



Better maintenance of footpaths to ensure they are free from obstructions.



Improving paths along Honeysuckle Banks and ensuring they can withstand occasional flooding.



Implementing an accessibility policy to ensure all community members can access key amenities and facilities. This may need to consider the town's historic classification and associated building requirements.



Improving the general infrastructure around the town including more lighting, signage and picnic tables or chairs.

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), 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) 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)* The paved footpath stops at the beginning of the Honeysuckle Banks tracks



Overview of Evandale

This project explored walkability in Evandale, a classified historic town in the north of Tasmania in the Northern Midlands Council municipality. Evandale is approximately 20km south of Launceston and 7-15km west of nearby towns Longford and Perth. The town is a National Trust Certified Georgian Village and is home to 1058 people¹. The area has a population density of around 1000 residents per square kilometre (compared to Inner Hobart which covers an area of 62.2 square kilometres and has a density of 1,356 residents per square kilometre).

Evandale has a range of community facilities, shops and services including a primary school, a medical clinic and pharmacy, a post office

and general store, a tourist and information centre, churches, parks, a playground and cafes. The town is located on a bend of the South Esk River with most of the town amenities to the east of High Street, primarily along Russell Street and Barclay Street which run parallel to each other. Evandale is a well-known arts centre with many popular events including the Glover Prize, National Penny Farthing Championship, Veranda Music Festival and the local Sunday markets.

Evandale residents describe the sense of community as a key drawcard for living in the town.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021





Images.

- ▲ Wide gravel paths along High Street
- ◀ (opposite) The National Penny Farthing Championships are held in Evandale.
Credit: Tourism Tasmania and Rob Burnett. All Rights Reserved.

Evandale is a wonderful village.

It's the people in Evandale that make it so special for us. We have found them to be so wonderfully warm and generous and kind.

“

P1: Friendly, yes very friendly town.

P2: Very friendly.

P3: Incredibly supportive place.

Given the proximity of Evandale to Launceston, Longford and Perth, many residents use key facilities (such as supermarket or medical services) in these neighbouring towns. There was a perception by community members that the council was directing more funding to the Longford township than that of Evandale:

“

It's a little community joke isn't it really? You go to Longford you always get the impression that it's almost pristine and they've planted things and they landscape things.

With a recent increase in urban development in Evandale, community members are passionate about keeping the village nature of the town.

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 Evandale. Overall, the spatial walkability assessment ranked Evandale as having medium walkability compared with the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1. The maps indicate that Evandale has medium walkability throughout with lower walkability (dark pink) to the east of High Street whereas the main town area is slightly more walkable (light pink). Most of the residential areas, recreational facilities and town amenities are located to the west of High Street in the light pink area.

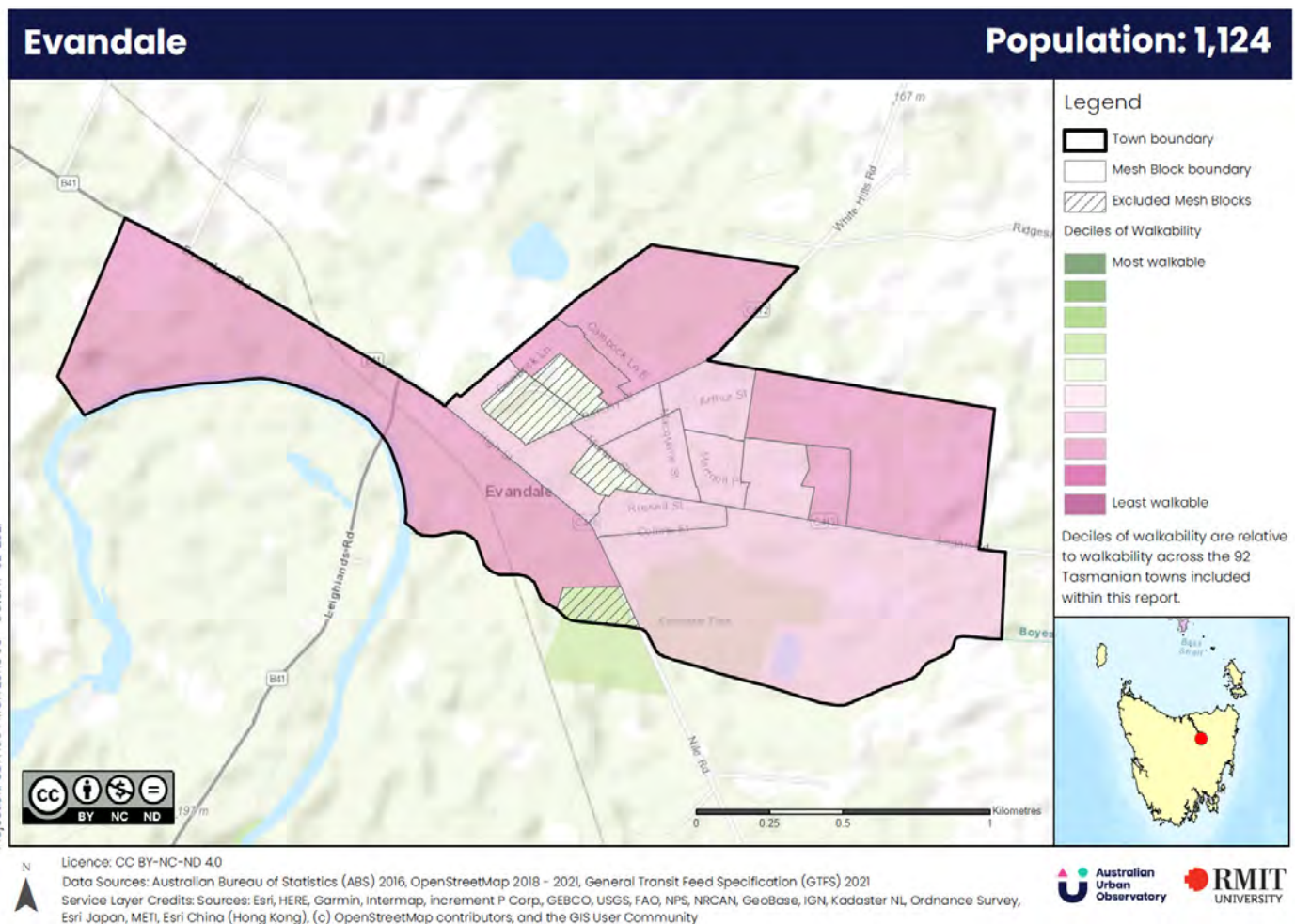


Figure 1. Evandale spatial map²

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

Audit and workshop findings

In Evandale, one Community Champion completed the town wide facilities and programs/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 May and June 2023. Six 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. The community workshop was held in Evandale on 27 June 2023 with seven community members present to discuss the findings. Following the workshop, this report was produced for the Evandale community. Community Champions and Citizen Scientists provided feedback on this report and can use the findings in the report to bring about change in their community.

Image.

▼ Residential cutting towards Russell Street from Pioneer Park



Town wide and policy/ Program audit findings

The range of community facilities in Evandale was reflected in the town wide audit. The assessment captured the availability of amenities and physical features including: the Evandale Information and Community Centre, parks, playground, ovals and the trails along Honeysuckle Banks. In the audit, all facilities and features in Evandale were rated as good/excellent.



Parks/reserves are generally free of rubbish and used as walking thoroughfares especially by dog walkers throughout all times of the day.

In addition, the geography of the Evandale was reported to be generally quite flat which enhanced walkability in the town.

The town is very flat which is a positive incentive for all ages to comfortably walk throughout the village.

Given the proximity of the town to larger towns nearby (including Launceston, Longford and Perth), many other local facilities and recreational spaces were considered accessible to Evandale residents. This includes public swimming pools, parks and reserves located in Launceston (19km away) and supermarkets (8-20km away). While Evandale residents are able to access public transport (buses), these are somewhat limited and only connect the town to Perth and Launceston.

The town programs/policies audit examined the availability of health and physical activity related programs and/or policies in the area, including those run at the local school. The Program and Policy assessment found some council programs or policies in the area; however, it was recognised that the council does not have a policy requiring bikeways or walkways in new infrastructure projects or specific programs encouraging physical activity within Evandale. When contacted by the Community Champion, the Council advised that: “where possible, council endeavours to have these included”.

Facilities rated Good/Excellent

Facilities rated Fair/Poor

Facilities not present

Public park
Public Toilet
River
Skate park
Town recreational centre
Playground
Playing field (football/cricket oval)
Indoor or outdoor courts (half size basketball court in Falls Park)
Other facilities: Fitness equipment at Morven Park, Launceston Aquatic Centre, Lake Leake

None reported

Swimming beach
Private gym

Table 1. Facilities in Evandale as captured in the town wide audit.

The audit did not capture the presence of a walk to school program or knowledge of public access to recreational facilities outside of school hours which may reflect a lack of awareness about these programs and policies amongst the general community.

Street segment audits: Overview of facilities

Seven segments of Evandale were audited by six Citizen Scientists (Figure 2). This includes three Citizen Scientists who completed two segments each. The street segment audits revealed the following:

- All segments had paved footpaths present. Four segments had paved footpaths on both sides of the street and three segments had paved footpaths on one side of the street.
- The condition of paved footpaths was rated as poor/fair in three segments.

- Of the six segments with unpaved footpaths, the quality was rated as poor/fair in four segments.
- Traffic volume was reported as low in five segments, medium in one segment and high in one segment.
- All segments were considered easily walkable; however, three segments were not considered appropriate for an older person, someone with limited mobility or a pram. Only one segment was reported to be walkable for a child (aged 10 or below) to walk on their own.
- All segments were rated as aesthetically pleasing.

In general, Evandale community members felt they have access to a range of recreational facilities and spaces that were well maintained by the council and used by the local community.

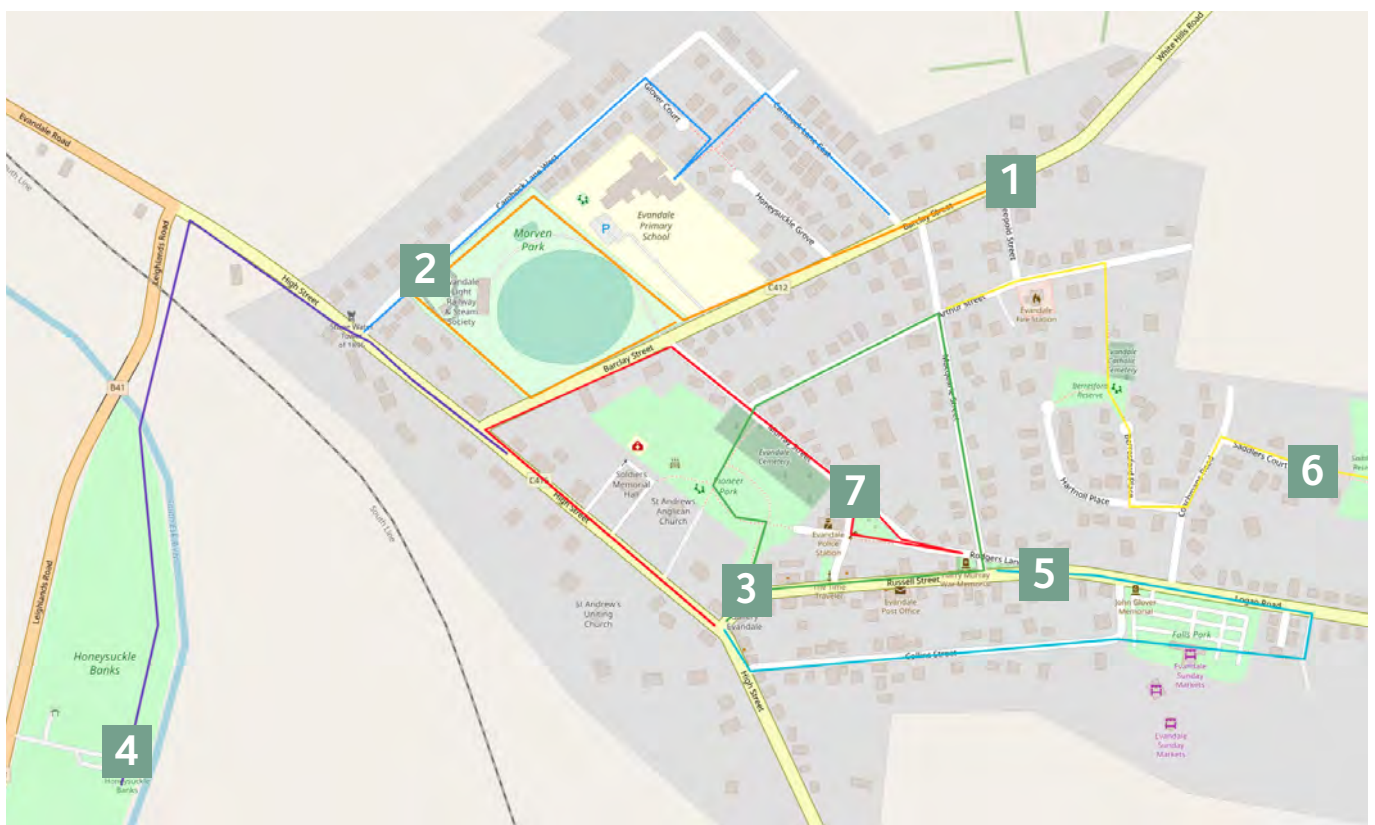


Figure 3. Audited segments in Evandale



Image.

▲ A small park along Russell Street

Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)

Community members described the town design, facilities, social and physical environment and topography in Evandale as highly conducive to walking.

It is completely flat with lovely wide footpaths.

“

It is an easy walk to shops, post office, restaurants, school, bus stop, hotels and the pharmacy.

Most of the town's key facilities are located along Russell Street and High Street, and there are some pedestrian links between key locations. This includes good connections between Russell Street towards Barclay Street which links to Morven Park and the Evandale Primary School. Community members say that the centre of town has a short loop that many people walk.

Various local parks [are] all quite well maintained and paths which connect some of the local facilities.

We see a lot of people walking because they do a bit of a loop with their dogs and kids on little bikes and things like that, which is nice.

In addition, important open green spaces such as Honeysuckle Banks and Falls Park are within 1-2km walking distance from the town centre.

Community members felt the town had a lovely aesthetic environment and key recreational spaces were generally clean and usable. The surrounding natural environment and streetscapes enabled community members to

Image.

- ▶ Exercise equipment
- ▼ Some residential streets have wide footpaths, but this is not consistent throughout the town



enjoy the surrounding farmland and the historic houses and gardens.

“ Many of the houses in Cambock Lane East and West back onto farmland [and are]...nice and tidy and green with cows grazing in the fields. There are some nice farm buildings also.

Beautiful gardens and trees, attractive gardens.

Area includes pleasant streetscapes and outlooks to scenic rural landscapes.

“ Parks/reserves are generally free of rubbish and used as walking thoroughfares especially by dog walkers throughout all times of the day.

In general, footpaths were reported to be in good condition and all segments had some paved footpaths present.

Generally, the footpaths and walkways are in good condition and quite walkable. Where there is no footpath there is [a] grassy area, which when I did the study was well-mowed and firm underfoot.

“

Most footpaths have surfaces in good condition with little interruption re driveways.

The many popular community events held in the town throughout the year attract visitors as well as locals. It is suggested that these events and activities support and encourage locals and visitors to walk around.

You have a lot of people walking when the [National Penny Farthing Championship] is on and the Verandah Music Festival.

“

Every Sunday the market runs so it draws so many people into town. They might say, 'I'll go and explore', and a lot of them have got prams.

The Evandale Tourist and Information Centre is also a valuable community asset, for both local residents as well as tourists. The historical society associated with the centre has produced an historic town walking map that encourages people to walk around the town. Whilst this is primarily targeted towards tourists, community members feel it is a valuable resource for the community.

“

P1: The other people who walk Evandale is when they get handed a historic walk brochure. We'd go around...[and] you'd tick all the boxes of all the houses you've seen.

P2: There's a lot of reading on the little plaques and things.

Community members recognised that the council has made some improvements throughout the town, including fixing the camber of some footpaths and improving footpath linkages.

There used to be a concrete path in this little accessway off Cambock Lane towards the primary school, but it only went two-thirds of the way and then it just stopped, and it was mud until it joined the asphalt paths... Eventually [the council] concreted the rest of that path.

There are also some seating and picnic tables in some locations throughout town.

“

I really think – people walk here more than any other place I've ever lived, and especially dog walkers.

I'm interested in walking much more than I used to because I can walk to places here much more readily than previously.

“

There's [a picnic table] ...near the river on the left.... and then there's...the little gazebo thing down underneath the oak trees near Macquarie Street. [Then] there's two [tables and chairs] near Pioneer Park I think.

Image.

► (opposite) The entrance to Honeysuckle Banks



Honeysuckle Banks





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

Footpaths and trails

The segment audit data suggests that footpaths are generally of good quality throughout Evandale, however the discussion at the community workshop highlighted that some paths could be improved.

While the path along High Street is wide, in many other locations the narrow width of footpaths and roads created barriers for pedestrians. Some sections of footpaths in Collins Street created issues for pedestrians when combined with cars parked on footpaths.



Images.

- ▲ There are some rough gravel tracks that are difficult for pedestrians to navigate
- ◀ (*opposite*) Many of the historic buildings in Evandale are not accessible for all residents

“ Collins Street, essentially, it’s a no go zone really because cars are parked both sides of the road, sometimes on the footpath as well, there are no sealed footpaths, and the quality of the gravel varies, the width varies.

As a result, pedestrians avoid particular routes or choose to walk on the road.

We choose to walk in areas that have broader pathways. The pathways on one side of Barclay Street vary substantially with some areas being very narrow and uneven - from Murray intersection to Macquarie Street is particularly difficult so we walk on the road with our golden retrievers.

A lot of folk will choose not to walk on the footpaths, they’ll chose to walk on the road.

Path quality was also discussed as an issue for people walking at Honeysuckle Banks. The tracks at Honeysuckle Banks lie along the South Esk River which can be prone to flooding. The paths along Honeysuckle Banks are made of varying quality gravel and often have overgrowth alongside the track.

“ There is a walking [path] from High Street to river, but after footbridge needs widening and grass cut back along edges of current narrow track.

Once stepping off the foot and road bridge the track deteriorates remarkably.



Community members also note that there are different types of footpaths throughout the town which is reflective of the differences in footpaths style over time.



Cambock Lane is a classic because there are literally five different surfaces used for the footpaths...depending on the era. Once upon a time all the paths...were gravel, and specifically ironstone. That was the...heritage footpath material.

Every five years they'd try a different thing. We've got exposed aggregate concrete, plain concrete, paving, other types of gravel. They did try some ironstone but with a seal on it to stop the stones moving around.

Whilst community members felt it is important to keep footpaths in a style that reflects the history of the town, there is also a need to ensure the footpaths are safe and suitable for all members of the community. Sometimes the footpath surface or poor maintenance posed safety issues.

Image.

- ▲ Narrow paths make it difficult for people with mobility devices to use footpaths

Some of those areas, especially in the dark, are really tricky.



In winter when it rains the walkway is slushy because it's a bit bowed, and then if you get a frost after that it's like a skating rink.

Laneways that cut through from one street to another are soil/gravel and quite even but can be slippery when wet.



The residential crossovers vary in quality and can restrict access - especially if pushing a stroller or using a mobility scooter.

There are areas around Cambock [Street] where there's that little section that's all paved. That's fairly lumpy, and the crossovers are quite severe. They're good if you're in a car, but they're not really for walking.



And when it floods [Honeysuckle Banks is] all washed out, and then [it takes] forever to fix that up.

In addition, at some times of the year many of the oak trees drop acorns onto footpaths and roads which makes it difficult to walk.



The acorns cause a hazard. As a resident I rake the acorns off the path around Morven Park area where it intersects with the Tennis Club and Information Centre.

We elect not to walk our dogs in the area around the tennis club and in the Information Centre carpark because of the litter and acorns making it hazardous. Also, the section from the lane to the end of Barclay Street is very uneven also with acorns.

While community members acknowledge the council does complete regular street cleaning, this often does adequately address the acorns.

Connectivity

In the segment audits, the Citizen Scientists reported most segments to be well-connected to other trails or locations in the town. However, the community workshop discussion suggested this was not an entirely accurate reflection of street connectivity. Discussions revealed that there were some areas where connectivity was limited which resulted in physical disconnections in the town. Currently, there is a paved footpath along High Street and Leighlands Road, however this ends after the pedestrian bridge crossing the South Esk River. There are no structured footpaths

Image.

- Gravel footpaths are present in some locations but sometimes will end abruptly

around Honeysuckle Banks so people must walk on rough informal paths or on the grass.



[The Council was] proactive... [by building the] pedestrian walkway onto the side of the bridge, but then again like so many other things it just goes to nothing. You get across the other side of the bridge and suddenly you're in the mud.

While community members acknowledge footpath quality is good throughout the town, some areas were not strongly linked. For example, there could be better links between the parks and reserves in town to create walking circuits such as between Pioneer Park and Morven Park.





Traffic and cars

While traffic was reported to be generally low throughout Evandale, there were times where traffic volume increased dramatically. Road and traffic safety was a consideration around school pick up/drop off times and over the weekend due to the regular Sunday market.

The population of the village can double or triple on a Sunday.

Barclay Street is a very quiet street on most days at 2pm, however this changes at school start and finish times and at weekends when the park and oval are used by the community. Heavy traffic on Friday nights and Saturdays and Sundays.

The Sunday market also leads to increases in the number of vehicles parked on nearby streets.

Movement is restricted by the narrowness of the Street and the various cars parked both sides.

“

Sunday is Market Day in Evandale, and the Street is packed and essentially one-way.

In some locations, cars park on the side of footpaths creating obstacles and reducing visibility for pedestrians.

Image.

◀ (opposite) Some paths have designated pedestrian crossing areas, however, some are not in safe locations

Parked cars do present obstacles and can restrict visibility to pedestrians.

“

Two cars [parked] back here for a couple of days, and if two people want to walk with a dog you just cannot get past, you're out on the street.

While this increases during times of higher traffic, such as during the Sunday market, some residents also tend to park on nature strips and permanently block footpaths.

Accessibility

Although the quality of walking paths and trails was generally reported to be well-maintained in the segment audits, it was acknowledged during the community workshop that this was a significant barrier for many individuals within the community. In the segment audits, three segments are not considered accessible for older people or people using a mobility device.

“

Quite walkable for able-bodied people with good eyesight but restricted for people with mobility issues or low vision.

Murray Street [is] not suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, skateboards, prams, kids on bikes.

In addition, many of the older historical buildings in the town were not accessible for many people. As highlighted in the previous discussion, the lack of accessibility is exacerbated by cars parking on footpaths and the narrow width of footpaths.

Access to shops is very poor for people with limited mobility and many shops are not at all accessible for wheelchair or mobility scooter users.

Although sealed footpaths are in place the depth of residential crossovers are significant to the extent that strollers and mobility scooters use the road in preference.

“

The narrow sections of footpaths may not be so easy for someone with limited mobility.

Recently, an elderly lady...was on her mobility scooter...and she couldn't cross Russell Street wherever she normally crossed, because there was a car parked there, so she went up a bit further, and apparently the edge of the footpath, that actually collapsed and she got tipped out of it.

Lighting

Whilst there is lighting along the main roads, residents felt that there could be additional lighting in key spaces to increase walking and other recreational activities at certain times of year.

I elected to walk in daylight as lighting at night is poor if sports facilities/oval are not being used.

“

The lighting maybe, someone mentioned the lighting was poor.

There are some areas that have gaps between footpaths and the road which creates hazards for people using a wheelchair as the wheels can get stuck. As a result, many people choose to avoid certain streets during busy periods or even choose to use the road.

“

If I'm in my wheelchair I can do a little bit of a hop and skip, but if I was in an electric scooter my front wheel's probably going [to get stuck].

“

If I was crossing Russell Street, I'd have to go down somebody's driveway cutout. But on High Street for example I have to be very careful.... They hadn't considered the practicalities of someone having to cross over that little gap.

Image.

- ▶ (opposite) Many footpaths are narrow which makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk on. Instead, many residents will walk on the roads



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 general walking infrastructure, accessibility and connectivity throughout Evandale.



Priority 1: Improving general walking infrastructure

Improving and erecting general infrastructure to support walking around Evandale was highlighted as a key priority. Ensuring footpaths and laneways are appropriately maintained, that there is suitable lighting, and improvements to the surface of some current tracks or trails was considered important. The addition of some picnic tables and seating was also discussed.



Priority 2: Improving accessibility

Discussion suggested that there is a lack of safe and accessible spaces for all members of the community. In some cases, the older historical

buildings are inaccessible for people with wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Also, it was considered important to ensure footpaths and crossings are suitable for all community members.



Priority 3: Improving connectivity

Improving connectivity was identified to enable the community members to easily walk around the community. In the main town area, improving connections to create walking circuits between key locations (such as the local parks and reserves) was important. In addition, upgrading the surface of the tracks through Honeysuckle Banks would lead to increased use and enjoyment of the natural environment along the South Esk River.

Image.

► (opposite) Pedestrian entry to Morven Park from Cambock Road

MORVEN PARK



DOGS PERMITTED ON LEAD
DOGS NOT PERMITTED ON OVAL

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 Evandale.



The next step would be going around and identifying specific opportunities and [working with] Council [to make improvements].

Footpath connectivity

Community members said that improved footpath quality and better connections between paths could ensure there is a connected network of paths across the area.

It could be so much better if there [were] the proper connections... and decent path materials, consistency of surfaces.



You can provide so many more opportunities for people to make little circuits and things if things connect.

There is actually a dirt path that goes through an avenue of trees and connects over to Murray Street and there's a pipe laid in the drainage channel. Everything is there to create a path, but there's no path.

This includes links such as between Pioneer Park and the western side of Morven Park. Currently there is an existing laneway from Barclay Street to the western side of Morven Park with community members suggesting that this could be extended to connect to Pioneer Park. Other suggestions included exploring other connections to Honeysuckle Banks and access to the northern entrance of Morven Park.



[There is] a redundant easement that relates to when Evandale had its own train station...and my suggestion was to create a path [from High Street to Honeysuckle Banks] ...so that when you were going down to the river you had an alternative route. Anything that can make the walk more interesting by making a circuit rather than an out and back...is worth exploring.

In Morven Park there is a little gate at the end here, but there isn't really a proper access into Morven Park from Cambock Lane until you go right along in line with the school. [It would be good to have] some kind of path that connects past the light rail.

In addition, many feel improvements to connections between key locations would be preferable over building new paths in locations where paths may not be required.



P1: [There is] one new [footpath]... heading out of the village along White Hills Road. They've just put in a path next to the paddocks there...

P2: But it doesn't lead to anything.

P3: It doesn't need to be there.



“ I understand that there are pig farmers in Scottsdale who acorns would be perfect for, and that’s why I thought maybe if I ask the school, senior students come up and bag the acorns then they could send them off to Scottsdale to the pig farmers.

Community members also discussed continuing the current aesthetic of footpaths to align with the town’s heritage.

“ P1: I wouldn’t be such a purist as to say have the ironstone gravel – loose is dreadful for [mobility devices] but...

P2: [footpaths should] be in the heritage [of the town].

Finally, the addition of structured footpaths around Honeysuckle Banks was also suggested to increase accessibility along the river and to ensure the paths can withstand potential flooding.

Image.

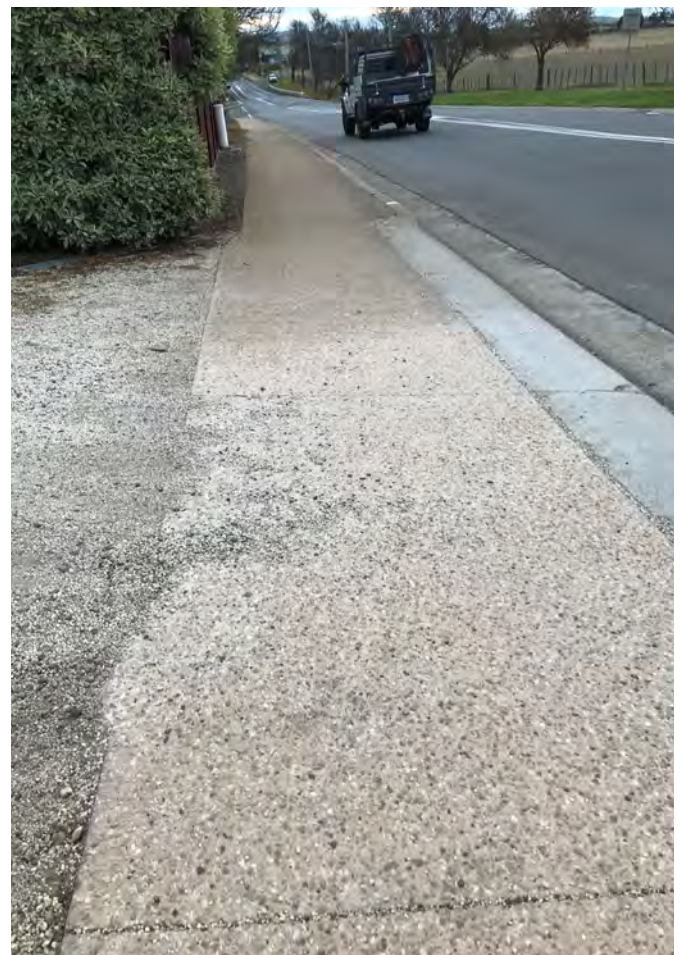
- ▲ Rough gravel paths create hazards for pedestrians
- ▶ Gravel on a footpath creates hazards for pedestrians

Footpath maintenance

Improved maintenance of footpaths and laneways could also ensure greater use and reduce safety issues.

There is a walking track from High Street to river but after footbridge needs widening and grass cut back along edges of current narrow track.

Additionally, community members discussed creative solutions to addressing the safety issues created by acorns.





A figure of eight loop [would be great] ...so you could even do the little loop and come back, or you could do the full figure eight or – it gives you multiple options of how you do it.

Accessibility

Community members also discussed the importance of accessibility programs and policies to ensure all members of the community could access spaces within the community.



All commercial premises in Evandale should be required to provide disabled access.

Currently, many of the shops and services in Evandale do not have disabled access, partly due to the historic nature of many buildings. Community members expressed the importance of improving accessibility throughout the town whilst also maintaining the historical character of the town. It will be important to examine current regulations and make improvements that balance accessibility needs alongside the history of the town.

Furthermore, in line with the previous discussion around footpaths, ensuring quality surfaces and maintained footpaths would also increase accessibility for people who use mobility devices.

Image.

◀ (opposite) There are informal tracks through Honeysuckle Banks

Other solutions

Suggestions of additional lighting, signage, tables and seating was also considered to improve walkability throughout Evandale.



P1: I think there's room for some additional...seating.

P2: Yeah, seating and picnic tables.

Pioneer Park would benefit from the addition of additional seating, better developed landscaping and more connecting paths, e.g., from Murray St adjacent to the memorial rose garden.

Additional signage could align with the historical society map and point out key walking circuits throughout the town. At the workshop, newer community members were unaware of some of the public laneways or residential cuttings. Signage could ensure all residents are aware of paths and walking loops throughout town.

I'm just thinking there's a dog park down further, but there's probably not a sign at the beginning of one of those cut through laneways to say, 'This way.' There's a sign when you get there, but a lot of people are unaware that that's there.

Finally, community members recognise the town is undergoing some residential development. In addition to maintaining the nature of the town as a historic village, community members also felt it was important for new developments to include paths that link to existing paths and maintain or include green spaces.

Conclusion

Evandale is a classified historic town in the north of Tasmania with a range of community facilities that support walking and other physical activities. The town's flat topography along with the contained nature of the residential areas and town services helps to create a walkable environment. The town centre is in close proximity for most residents and there are some good walking circuits throughout Evandale. In addition, Honeysuckle Banks and Morven Park are key open green spaces for engaging in walking and other physical activities. The audits completed by the Community Champions and Citizen Scientists highlight the valuable assets in Evandale as well as areas that could be improved.

The audit process and workshop identified features in Evandale considered a priority to increase walkability and physical activity participation in the area. Community members felt that the key priorities were:

- Improving connectivity focusing on creating linkages between parks, reserves and other community amenities throughout Evandale.
- Ensuring footpaths are well-maintained, particularly areas with unsafe surfaces. Exploring opportunities to develop footpaths around Honeysuckle Banks was also considered important.
- Increasing footpaths and buildings are accessible for all members of the community.
- Improving the general infrastructure around the town, including lighting, signage and seating.

A range of possible solutions were discussed to address these priorities including maintaining footpath surface, developing footpaths in key locations, implementing accessibility policies and infrastructure measures including seating, signage and lighting.

Images.

- ▲ *(opposite)* There are footpaths along both sides of Russell Street
- ▼ *(opposite)* A historic carriage along Russell Street highlights Evandale's history



ous

boards

beach

walkrural.com.au

trees

NATURE 