

SURF COAST SHIRE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY 2015-2019

Prepared by G21 Geelong Region Alliance

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1. ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This Physical Activity Strategy has been developed to support a strategic objective of the Surf Coast Shire as outlined in the **Council Plan 2013-2017** and the **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017**, which is to actively engage with our diverse and growing communities to establish quality services, healthy and safe environments and long term community partnerships; through the planning, coordination and development of:

- healthy engaged communities
- local opportunities; and
- service accessibility

The development of this Strategy has involved a review of current strategic and operational plans and policies at all levels and across departments to identify links with physical activity and it:

- provides an overarching framework for all of Council's commitments pertaining to physical activity; and
- will inform a coordinated and integrated approach to the planning and development of appropriate infrastructure, facilities, services and programs.

This Strategy:

- outlines Council's current commitments to physical activity;
- profiles the health and physical activity status of our residents;
- provides a brief summation of the benefits of and factors impacting on participation in physical activity including the minimum requirements for different age groups; and
- details the suite of commitments made by Council to enhance the health and wellbeing of our community through increased physical activity.

2. COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Council recognises that participation in physical activity is a cornerstone of good health and wellbeing and that participation contributes to the building of successful, connected and active communities, hence a strategic approach to encourage physical activity at every opportunity is embraced.

Council's multiple service areas including Leisure and Wellbeing, Aged and Family Services, Planning and Development, Environment, Community and Safety, Economic Development and Infrastructure Services all have a direct role in facilitating and supporting physical activity through, but not limited to:

- Policy development and advocacy
- Strategic and land use planning
- Partnerships with key stakeholders
- Providing information
- Funding and resourcing infrastructure, services, facilities and programs
- Licensing and regulation
- Leadership and governance

It is these activities that have and will continue to contribute to our community's sense of health and wellbeing as evidenced in data from the **Indicators of Community Strength Survey (2008)** and the **VicHealth Survey (2011)** that compared to state averages, Surf Coast residents were much more likely to report being involved in their community as volunteers, members of clubs and groups, participants or attendees at local community events or in arts activities or events and to have participated in citizen engagement.

In addition, compared to state averages, Surf Coast residents were more likely to report that their community has: a pleasant environment, nice streets, is well planned and has open spaces; is an active community; and has a wide range of community and support groups.

Physical activity outcomes are contained in the following Council documents:

- [Council Plan 2013-2017](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Plan, 2013-2017](#)
- [Pathways Strategy, 2012](#)
- [Recreation Strategy, 2010](#)
- [Access and Inclusion Plan, 2009](#)

3. THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Surf Coast Shire is a member of the Geelong Region Alliance (G21), which is a formal alliance of government, business and community organisations working together to improve the lives of people across five municipalities - Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast.

Eight Pillar Groups, which are based on the region's key priorities, support the objectives of the G21 and in 2012 the Health and Wellbeing Pillar agreed to collaborate on the development of a planning framework to improve the health and wellbeing of people across the region. As a result of community and stakeholder consultations to inform the development of the **G21 Region Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-17**, three regional priorities were identified - one of which was to improve the opportunities for and uptake of physical activity.

Concurrently, the Sport and Recreation Pillar oversaw the development of an initiative jointly funded by the City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire and VicHealth to develop a regional and local physical activity plans. An outcome of this initiative was the preparation of two reports, which provide useful background data to this Physical Activity Strategy. They are the:

- **Geelong Region Physical Activity Strategy Background Report;** and
- **Geelong Region Physical Activity Strategy Evidence Review.**

These factors were the impetus for the development of this Physical Activity Strategy, which will also inform the **G21 Geelong Region Physical Activity Strategy**, whilst providing the Shire with the strategic opportunity to reflect on our practices through the lens of physical activity.

The G21 has supported the development of this Strategy and in doing so has identified common priorities and ensured links are made to our **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-17** and the **G21 Region Physical Activity Strategy 2015-19**.



4. OUR HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STATUS

The health and physical activity data herewith is sourced from the **Surf Coast Shire Region Profile (2014)**. This document includes a broad range of demographic, socio-economic, health, community and economic data as well as an update and expansion of many of the data elements contained in our **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-17**.

Physical activity levels

In 2011-12, the proportion of the Surf Coast population (69.8%) that undertook sufficient physical activity was higher than the state average (63.9%). Across the Barwon South Western region, males were more likely to undertake sufficient physical activity than females (62.5% v's 57.3%).

LOCATION	SEDENTARY	INSUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Surf Coast	5.8*	22	69.8
Victoria	5.5	26.6	63.9
Sex breakdown for BSW Region#			
Male	5.2	27.1	62.5
Female	3.9	34.0	57.3

Victorian Population Health Survey 2011-2012 Selected Preliminary Survey Findings, DoH 2013

** Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25 and 50 per cent and should be interpreted with caution
BSW region data is from 2010 Victorian Population Health Survey*

Overweight and obesity

The proportion of population that is overweight or obese is lower in the Surf Coast male and female population than the state averages. Males were much more likely than females to be overweight, however obesity was slightly more common among females.

LOCATION	MALES		FEMALES	
	OVERWEIGHT	OBESE	OVERWEIGHT	OBESE
Surf Coast	36.5	11.7	20.6	12.9
Victoria	40.6	17.4	24.6	17.2

Victorian Population Health Survey 2011-2012 Selected Preliminary Survey Findings, DoH 2013

Type 2 diabetes

Compared to the state average (4.8%), Surf Coast (2.4%) had a much lower (half the rate of) population with type 2 diabetes (self-reported). However this figure has a low level of statistical reliability and should be interpreted with caution.

Figures from Diabetes Victoria indicate that the prevalence of all types of diabetes in Surf Coast (3.2%) is lower than the state average (4.5%) however the Surf Coast figure has more than doubled since 2001.

Healthy eating and sedentary behaviour

In 2011 the daily consumption of soft drinks in Surf Coast was lower than the state average (6.6% vs 12.7%).

Compared to the state average (32.8%) Surf Coast (29.7%) had a lower proportion of residents that spend seven or more hours per day sitting.

LOCATION	DAILY SOFT DRINK CONSUMPTION	SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR (SITTING > 7HOURS PER DAY)
Surf Coast	6.6	29.7
Victoria	12.7	32.8

VicHealth Indicators Survey - age standardised results (2011)

5. HOW MUCH ACTIVITY IS ENOUGH?

The Australian Government is committed to enhancing the health of the population with a reduction in the incidence of preventable mortality and morbidity through regulation and national initiatives that support healthy lifestyles and disease prevention. This is in part because 62.8% of Australians aged 18 years and over are either overweight or obese and physical inactivity has been estimated to cost Australian taxpayers more than \$719 million a year.

The evidence demonstrates that being physically active and limiting sedentary behaviour will:

- Reduce risk of, or help manage, cardiovascular disease (CVD)
- Reduce risk of, or help manage, type 2 diabetes
- Maintain and/or improve blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels
- Reduce risk of, and assist with rehabilitation from, some cancers
- Help prevent unhealthy weight gain and assist with weight loss
- Build strong muscles and bones
- Create opportunities for socialising and meeting new people
- Help prevent and manage mental health problems
- Help develop and maintain overall physical and mental wellbeing

To this end the Australian Government has developed **Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines**, which aim to encourage people to 'move more and sit less'. These Guidelines state the minimum levels of physical activity required to enhance health per age group and have been informed through extensive research and consideration of the relationship between:

- physical activity (including the amount, frequency, intensity and type of physical activity) and health outcome indicators, including the risk of chronic disease and obesity; and
- sedentary behaviour/sitting time and health outcome indicators, including the risk of chronic disease and obesity.

AUSTRALIA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES	
0-5 years	Babies should be encouraged to take part in physical activity from birth, particularly supervised floor-based play in safe environments. Toddlers and pre-schoolers should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.
5-12 years	Primary school aged children should take part in a combination of moderate and vigorous activities for at least 60 minutes a day. Children should engage in activities that strengthen their muscles and bones on at least three days per week.
13-17 years	Young people of secondary school age should take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. This can build up throughout the day with a variety of activities. They should also engage in activities that strengthen their muscles and bones on at least three days per week.
18-64 years	Adults 18-64 years of age should accumulate 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity each week (or an equivalent combination of both). Muscle strengthening activities should also occur on at least two days each week.
Older Adults (65+)	Older adults should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, Preferably all days of the week.

6. BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The **VicHealth BE ACTIVE Framework** identifies a broad range of determinants that influence whether or not people participate in physical activity. Consideration of these in the planning and development of infrastructure, facilities, services and programs can significantly influence the nature and scope of participation in physical activity.

Individual factors

- Injury was reported by just under 20% of those aged 18 to 59 years as a barrier to being more active, and was a barrier for nearly 40% of people aged 60 and over.
- Lack of time is consistently reported as a major constraint on participation in physical activity. People perceive that they have less discretionary time for exercise and sporting activities.
- Other factors impacting on physical activity participation include lack of social support, lack of time, lack of enjoyment, having children, having health problems and feeling self-conscious.

Built environment factors

The built environment can either facilitate or discourage physical activity. Consideration should be given to aspects of the built environment that have a significant impact on levels of physical activity, including:

- The neighbourhood environment, such as provision of footpaths, street connectivity, mixed land use and urban density.
- The road environment and safety measures, such as provision of pedestrian crossings, traffic volume, speed limits and traffic calming.
- The amenity of the neighbourhood, such as green spaces and less urban decay, and distance to destinations.
- Proximity, as adults are more likely to walk if they have a variety of destinations within 400 meters. The closer sports centres and parks are to young people, the more likely they are to use them.
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Social and cultural environment factors

- The cost of participating in physical activity is increasingly onerous for many families. The importance of physical activity opportunities that are affordable is evidenced by the strong correlation between sport participation and family income.
- Contemporary lifestyles have become increasingly sedentary. Technological advances, labour-saving devices and passive forms of electronic entertainment used during leisure time require less energy expenditure in the domestic and occupational settings and have resulted in minimising physical activity.
- Recent studies found that adult television viewing time and other sedentary behaviours are directly associated with disease, including type 2 diabetes and some cancers.
- Increased car ownership and use, along with safety concerns, have led to less walking, cycling and transport-related physical activity.
- Contemporary social norms of being a 'good parent' have led to parents seeking to protect children from potential risks of strangers or hazards in the built environment. This has resulted in more children being driven to school, picked up from school and kept off the streets. Often the only physical exercise children get is when their parents have time to supervise them.
- Sporting environments need to be inclusive of the whole community and ensure safe, supportive and culturally inclusive environments for women, Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disabilities.

7. COUNCIL'S PLAN OF ACTION

In order to improve physical activity levels and ultimately the health and wellbeing of people living in the Surf Coast Shire, Council has committed to the following initiatives, which have previously been stated in the **Council Plan 2013-2017** and the **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017**:

Policy development and advocacy

1. Review Open Space Strategy, Cycling Strategy, Access and Inclusion Plan, Youth Strategy, Positive Ageing Strategy and Early Years Plan. (CP)
2. Develop an Indoor Stadium Strategy for Torquay. (RS)
3. Develop a Skate Park Strategy. (RS)
4. Review update Pathways and Cycling Strategy. (HWBP & RS)
5. Explore opportunities to market and position Anglesea as an outdoor adventure hub. (RS)

Strategic and land use planning

6. Undertake a place-based assessment of recreation infrastructure needs. (RS)
7. Implement the Pathways Strategy, which makes a suite of commitments to regional bicycle routes, touring training routes, local bicycle routes & bicycle parking facilities. (PS)

Partnerships

8. Maximise use of Council's recreational facilities through a partnerships approach. (HWBP)
9. Engage with relevant sports associations &/or peak bodies to proactively assess opportunities for the establishment of new clubs/groups. (RS)

Information and awareness

10. Review Council's website to improve user friendliness and accessibility to recreation information. (RS)
11. Develop, publish and promote health and wellbeing data. (HWBP)
12. Develop local area township health and wellbeing data. (HWBP)
13. Promote active transport options. (HWBP)
14. Promote the Community Gardens and the Sensory Garden. (AIP)
15. Promote the mental health benefits of increased participation in physical activity. (HWBP)
16. Actively promote the benefits and encourage participation in the Club Network program facilitated by Leisure Networks. (RS)
17. Promote open space settings for physical activity. (HWBP)

Funding and resourcing infrastructure, services, facilities and programs

18. Identify and progress recommendations in the Recreation Strategy. (HWBP)
19. Support ongoing maintenance of Surf Coast Walk
20. Enhance access to open space. (HWBP)
21. Implement Council adopted outcomes of the G21 AFL Barwon Football Strategy. (HWBP)
22. Implement Council adopted outcomes of the G21 Tennis Strategy
23. Implement outcomes of the Torquay Hockey Strategy
24. Investigate opportunities for increased beach access and accessibility to nature reserves for people with disabilities. (AIP)
25. Implement recommendations from the Playground Strategy. (PS)
26. Develop a program to introduce new sport and recreational opportunities for informal/social use. (HWBP)
27. Support the ongoing development of the Anglesea Mountain Bike facilities. (RS)

Licensing and regulation

28. Review and update Council's three-year agreement with Leisure Networks. (RS)

Leadership and governance

29. Support governance model for Sport and Recreation (S86) Reserves
30. Support established community Houses and Men's Sheds (CP)

- CP: Council Plan 2013-2017
- HWBP: Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- PS Pathways Strategy 2012
- RS: Recreation Strategy 2010
- AIP: Access and Inclusion Plan

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