

Wednesday 15 August 2018

This *regional* girl can: New funding to get regional Victorians active

Regional Victorians will be supported to get active with \$4.5million in new funding from health promotion foundation VicHealth.

The three-year funding will be shared by [nine Regional Sport Assemblies](#) to make sport and physical activity more accessible and attractive to regional teenagers, and women inspired to get active by VicHealth's *This Girl Can – Victoria* campaign.

The funding will be used to introduce sport activities for local teens such as surfing, sailing and skateboarding. Regional Sports Assemblies will also help local clubs deliver new female-friendly activities, like sports programs for new mums.

The funds will also be used to make sports clubs more inclusive for women and girls, by identifying quick, simple and cost-effective changes like scheduling women and girls' matches on the main grounds and promoting women's sport on social media.

In addition to providing more opportunities for women, girls and young people to get active, some Regional Sports Assemblies will work to improve participation rates of other community groups, such as children, men aged over 30, and less active adults.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said it was critical the sports clubs were supported to be more welcoming and attractive to women, young people and less active Victorians.

"As part of our *This Girl Can – Victoria* campaign, we've heard from so many Victorian women who've gone to a sports club or gym and never gone back because they've felt intimidated, embarrassed and ashamed," Ms Rechter said.

"It only takes one bad experience – whether that's being mocked by other members to being ignored by a coach or instructor – to make a woman feel like she never wants to try a sport or physical activity again.

"Over 90 per cent of teenagers aren't getting an hour of physical activity every day to benefit their health and half of teens drop out of sport when they turn 15.

"We know sports clubs want to get more people in their community involved in their sport, which is why we're working with them to make their clubs more accessible to everyone – regardless of their gender, age, ability, cultural background or what they look like."

Ms Rechter said the program aimed to address declining rates of physical activity and the associated impact on the health of Victorians.

"Less than a third of us do enough physical activity in a week to benefit our physical health and mental wellbeing," she said.

Media Contact

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“This funding is about making sport and physical activity fun, accessible and local for less active regional Victorians.

“Regional Sports Assemblies have such fantastic knowledge of their local areas so we’re proud to work with them to meet the physical activity needs of regional Victoria.”

For more information about the Regional Sport Program visit

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/regional-sport-program>

Local statistics and interviews available on request.

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