

Media Release

Sunday 1 March 2020

#FITSPO a flop at inspiring women to get active: New This Girl Can campaign focuses on the feeling not the scales

While it might be popular on Instagram, new research from health promotion foundation VicHealth has found most Victorian women are turned off exercise by images of taut and toned #FITSPO influencers.

The research found around two-thirds of women are not motivated to get active after seeing “fitspiration” or #FITSPO photos on social media. What’s worse, these images make a third of women feel bad or inadequate about their own bodies and fitness.

Conversely the research found over three-quarters of women are motivated to get moving after seeing images and videos of everyday women with a wide range of body shapes getting active.

The research comes as VicHealth launches a new [This Girl Can – Victoria campaign](#) featuring everyday women of all different ages, cultures, body-shapes and abilities getting active.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today launched the new campaign and television advertisement which aims to show that getting active is for *all* women – not just those with a six-pack and the latest activewear.

“This Girl Can – Victoria is all about empowering women to believe in themselves and feel comfortable getting active, whether it’s going for a walk with their dog, doing yoga in their trackies at home, dancing with their friends or kicking goals on the sports field,” Minister Mikakos said.

“I encourage Victorian women to give physical activity a go and show that in Victoria this girl definitely can!”

The new campaign is the follow up to the first highly successful This Girl Can – Victoria ad which launched in 2018 and has so far inspired over 400,000 women to get active.

Featuring everyday women from right across Victoria, such as body-positive personal trainer Natasha Korbut and amputee swimmer Karen Veldhuizen, the new ad encourages women to focus on how getting active makes them feel rather than what they look like.

VicHealth Head of This Girl Can Melanie Fineberg said the campaign aims to smash the stereotype that active women have to look a certain way.

“We’re bombarded with imagery of women with so-called “perfect” bodies working out without even breaking a sweat, which sends a message that there’s something wrong with us if we don’t look like that,” Ms Fineberg said.

“Our research shows women want advertising that shows women of all shapes and sizes getting active in a realistic way – sweat, red faces, jiggles and all.

“The women featured in our campaign are everyday women with real stories and realistic bodies. We hope other women will relate to their struggles and triumphs and think if she can, I can too.”

Ms Fineberg said that too often, marketing and social media tells women to think about being active as a way to lose weight or improve how they look.

Media Contacts –

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“Our new research clearly shows that for many women what keeps them coming back to physical activity is the feeling they get rather than the number on the scales,” Ms Fineberg said.

“The women in our ad celebrate how getting active makes them feel – whether it’s the fun of playing in a team, the calm of yoga or the joy of diving in the water.

“This Girl Can – Victoria isn’t about weightloss. It’s about moving our bodies because it feels good and because we can.”

Watch the new [This Girl Can – Victoria campaign](#).

Local statistics, interviews and images available on request.

The Girl Can – Victoria is a lot more than a multimedia campaign. It’s a statewide movement of women, supporting each other to become more active.

Victorian women are encouraged to join the This Girl Can movement by heading to thisgirlcan.com.au and joining the community on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and follow the #ThisGirlCanVic.

In order to provide women with more inclusive opportunities to get active This Girl Can Week will be held across Victoria from 23-29 March 2020. Women wanting to get involved can visit thisgirlcan.com.au to find activities and events in their local area. Sports clubs, councils, gyms or community groups interested in hosting a This Girl Can Week activity are encouraged to register as a campaign supporter at thisgirlcan.com.au.

Key stats:

- A new VicHealth survey of over 1000 Victorian women found:
 - **Around two-thirds of women** (66%) aren’t motivated by #FITSP0 images of women on Instagram.
 - **Over three-quarters of women** find seeing women of all different body shapes getting active motivating.
 - **A third of women feel bad or inadequate** about their own bodies and fitness when they see #FITSP0 images on Instagram.
 - Younger women aged 18-34 were more likely to compare themselves to women on Instagram and women wearing the latest active wear in fitness advertising than older women.
 - **Over half of women** said seeing women with a range of body shapes makes them feel ok or good about their own bodies and fitness.
 - **Young women aged 18-34** were more likely to feel bad about themselves after seeing #FITSP0 images than older women.
 - **Almost 80% of women** want to see more women with a range of body shapes included in physical activity advertising.
- Since 2018, more than **400,000 Victorian women were more active** after seeing the campaign
- **Almost 90% of women** who have seen the ad believe it helps women be more confident
- **52% of Victorian women** worry about being judged when exercising
- **41% of Victorian women** are embarrassed or intimidated when exercising in public

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For editors:

This Girl Can – Victoria is a six-year VicHealth campaign aiming to increase physical activity among Victorian women. It focuses on less active women, and supports gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes in sport and by celebrating women .

This Girl Can – Victoria is the local implementation of the original ‘This Girl Can’ campaign in England, which is owned and operated by the English Sports Council (Sport England). Sport England used National Lottery funding to create the This Girl Can campaign in 2015.

VicHealth is the first organisation in the world to license the campaign from Sport England. VicHealth is promoting This Girl Can – Victoria in partnership with a range of organisations and community groups across the state including high profile sporting codes, sporting clubs and charities.

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