

Media Release

7 July 2015

VIBRANT NEW COMMUNITY SPACES TO INSPIRE PEOPLE TO GET ACTIVE

Five under-used spaces across Victoria including a park, garden, plaza and street spaces are to be transformed to inspire people to get physically active.

VicHealth is funding five councils to create temporary areas for physical activity within their local communities. All five spaces will be open from September this year.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said regular physical activity was one of the most important factors in promoting good health and preventing chronic disease.

“With our lifestyles becoming increasingly sedentary, less than a third of Australians are getting enough physical activity to benefit their health. While there are many barriers preventing Victorians from increasing their level of physical activity – be it time, access to local opportunities, cost or simply a lack of motivation – getting active regularly is critical to tackling obesity and improving people’s health. VicHealth will fund the transformation of five spaces that will help get people moving now and show them ways to be active for life.

“This program is part of VicHealth’s long-term plan to get more Victorians living healthier and happier lives. Programs like this improve people’s health and prevent chronic disease,” Ms Rechter added.

The five successful projects are:

Brimbank City Council: Pollard Gardens on Corio Street in Sunshine will be converted into a pop-up leisure centre that will target mothers with young children and young people in the area. The centre will feature shipping containers for storing equipment, dancing boxes, pole art gardens with bike-powered lights, and a sports area. The range of activities to be offered from local providers and the council may include tai chi, body pump, volleyball, circus skills and kids fitness.

Golden Plains Shire Council: The council plans to transform a local car park and grassed area on High Street in Bannockburn which will target families and women. The park will focus on adventure, nature and water-based play areas, art installations, giant games and will also have a grassed area for fitness and games. The range of physical activity opportunities will include a giant 3D jigsaw puzzle, adventure and play as well as organised activity delivered by local providers and clubs which may include soccer, tai chi and dance classes.

LaTrobe City Council: The north-western end of Tarwin Street in Morwell will be converted into a public plaza with synthetic grass, temporary landscaping, tables and seating, Wi-Fi, and a space for physical activity opportunities. The community will be encouraged to participate in a range of fitness and movement classes such as tai chi, dance, giant chess, join walking groups, learn to cycle or participate in tug of war, bocce and sports.

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Manningham City Council: The plaza forecourt of City Square in Doncaster will be transformed to include a vertical green wall, exercise stations and dedicated spaces for fitness and sporting activity as well as yoga and dance. A grassed area, sandpit and sporting equipment are also included in the council's plans. The council will encourage local providers and clubs to organise dance, hula hoop, tai chi, Zumba, all abilities basketball, hip hop, skate classes and golf lessons.

Melton City Council: A piece of vacant land on the corner of Palmerston Street and McKenzie Street in Melton will be transformed to encourage a range of physical activities ranging from circus skills and dance to tai chi and sport. The council is planning to install comfortable surfaces, moveable objects for play and light exercise and artistic elements in the park which will be designed for use by everyone in the community.

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