

VICHEALTH FUNDS SIX NEW SPORT & RECREATION PROGRAMS TO HELP VICTORIANS GET ACTIVE

Victoria will be the testing ground for new and fun variations of traditional sports like basketball, football, squash and water polo as part of VicHealth's strategy to get 400,000 more Victorians physically active by 2023.

VicHealth is providing grants totalling \$354,000 to six sporting organisations to deliver new and different sport and recreation experiences including pop-up squash courts, walking basketball, and a new take on water polo – played from the comfort of an inflatable inner tube.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter commended the winning proposals – selected based on impact, innovation, scalability and feasibility – for their clever approaches to getting more Victorians physically active.

“VicHealth is proud to support such exciting and inventive concepts. We know that being more active is good for the health of all Victorians, and these projects could make a world of difference for anyone finding it hard to get moving,” said Ms Rechter.

The funding is provided through VicHealth's Innovation Challenge: Physical Activity which encourages organisations to think about sport in a new way to make it easier for Victorians to get active. It aims to kick-start pioneering ideas that make the most of sport and recreational trends towards flexibility, a social focus, and less structure.

Ms Rechter said these programs will give Victorians more opportunities to get moving and to reap the health benefits of being physically active.

“Across Australia, people are leading less active lives, with less than a third of Australians getting enough physical activity. We also know that while many Victorians play traditional club sport to keep active, it's not for everyone.”

“We're excited to be partnering with these organisations as they trial their programs and get even more Victorians active in new and creative ways,” she added.

The winners of this year's challenge are:

- **City in the Community (Melbourne City Football Club)** – City Strikers (\$100,000): A modified walking football program to encourage older people primarily from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to become more physically and socially active. The program is flexible with a focus on passing the ball rather than running speed.
- **BMX Victoria** – Pumped for BMX (\$30,000): This project will access under-used BMX tracks and deliver fun, fitness, atmosphere and adrenalin for the young people who take part.

Media Contact

Ray Dunne, Acting Media Advisor | P 03 9667 1319 | E rdunne@vichealth.vic.gov.au

- **Squash and Racquetball Victoria** – Pop Up Squash Shop (\$54,000): Will introduce and re-engage people with squash and racquetball by transforming empty retail spaces into temporary street squash courts.
- **Basketball Victoria** – Stride Basketball (\$60,000): A low impact, social and fun form of walking basketball aimed at women who are looking to get more active.
- **Softball Victoria** – Active Families Playing Together (\$60,000): In partnership with Bluearth Foundation and Playgroup Victoria, Softball Victoria will deliver an active recreation program to playgroups around Victoria.
- **Water Polo Victoria** – Bumpa Ball (\$50,000) – A variation of water polo where players float in inflatable inner tubes, allowing less contact and a lower level of swimming ability than the traditional format.

Key dates and information:

- The next VicHealth Innovation Challenge: Physical Activity funding round opens January 2016 and closes 18 February 2016.
- More information on the Physical Activity Challenge can be found on the website: <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/innovation-challenge-physical-activity>.

-ENDS-

Media Contact

Ray Dunne, Acting Media Advisor | P 03 9667 1319 | E rdunne@vichealth.vic.gov.au