



Media Release

New research announced on the benefits of gymnastics for children with Disability

EMBARGO: Tuesday 31st March, 11:15am

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MEDIA PHOTO, FOOTAGE & INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: 10:15AM – 12:00AM

Gymnastics Victoria Chief Executive Officer Jamie Parsons - in partnership with VicHealth Chief Executive Officer Jerril Rechter, The Minister for Sport the Hon. John Eren and Scope Chief Executive Officer Dr. Jennifer Fitzgerald – will be launching a Research Report on Tuesday 31st March, titled “The benefits of gymnastics for children with Disability” (The Research Report) and new resources available to promote and assist the development of gymnastics for people with Disability.

The research findings from The Research Report, a new Gymnastics Victoria App and the 7th edition of the ‘Gymnastics for Everybody’ campaign will be announced at the Gymnastics Victoria Stakeholder Launch from 10:45am - 11:15am at VicHealth in Melbourne (media access from 10am).

Launch to announce the key findings from The Research Report

Gymnastics Victoria Chief Executive Officer Jamie Parsons said the research conducted by Scope researcher Dr Rob Campaign and funded by VicHealth in conjunction with Gymnastics Victoria and affiliated clubs, demonstrates how participation in Gymnastics among people with a disability and underrepresented groups has increased to more than 3000 (800%) since 2011. Scope has been active in research for over 30 years and conducts research that improves life outcomes for people with disability and their carers.

“In 2011, research showed an estimate of 23.7% of people with Disability in Victoria participated in sport or physical recreation compared to the wider population average of 62%,” said Jamie Parsons.

“As the first piece of research undertaken in the world on the benefits of gymnastics for children with Disability, the findings show that gymnastics is of enormous benefit for the cognitive, physical and social development for people with disability.”

“In addition, 100% of the parents surveyed recognised the benefits of gymnastics for children with Disability.”

“Gymnastics is inclusive sport with almost 200,000 participants and over 40,000 members.”



Inclusion is embedded across all levels of Gymnastics Victoria, which has enabled the team to achieve evidence-based participation outcomes for our clubs and everybody across Victoria.

“The research undertaken by Scope also reveals how inclusive club practices are embedded in gymnastics clubs, with 89% of parents indicating their child participated in general gymnastics classes with their peers in an inclusive and welcoming environment.”

VicHealth supports Gymnastics to increase participation among people with Disability

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said approximately one in five Australians have a disability and that they are often socially excluded or marginalised.

“VicHealth has a long history of fostering inclusion across all Victorian communities and is proud to fund *The Benefits of Gymnastics for Children with Disability* research report and the Gymnastics for Everybody campaign series. As a world-class health promotion organisation, VicHealth pioneers progressive research and funds and supports innovative programs to ensure that physical activity can be enjoyed by all Victorians. These two fantastic initiatives from Gymnastics Victoria, which have been funded by VicHealth, have helped more than 3000 people with disability take part in gymnastics. The number of people with disability who take part in gymnastics has increased from 400 in 2011 to 3500 today and continues to grow.

“Many of the barriers to better health experienced by Victorians with a disability are not due to physical or intellectual limitations, but are instead due to the attitudes and structures in society that prevent people with disability from participating. From babies to children, as well as adults, we’re seeing more and more people with disability getting involved in gymnastics. It’s wonderful to see Gymnastics Victoria creating club environments where everybody in Victoria, regardless of age, gender, background, ability or sexual preference is welcome,” said Ms Rechter.

Sport & Recreation Victoria supports increased participation in gymnastics through inclusion

In addition to The Research Report, the Gymnastics Victoria Stakeholder Launch will also be releasing The Gymnastics Victoria App and the 7th edition of the Gymnastics for Everybody Campaign, of which the initiatives have been developed with full or partial funding support from Sport & Recreation Victoria.

The Minister for Sport, the Hon, John Eren, said the team at Gymnastics Victoria is leading the way in Australia when it comes to creating welcome and inclusive programs and club environments for people with Disability.

“With more than 3000 additional participants, 255 trained inclusive coaches and already more than 40 gymnastics clubs dedicated to completing the award-winning Inclusive Club Guidelines, gymnastics is a sport for everyone in the community,” said John Eren.

“As a State Sporting Organisation, Gymnastics Victoria embeds Special Olympics events into general gymnastics competition and is a leader not just in Victoria but across Australia in inclusive sporting practices,” said The Hon. John Eren.

“Special Olympics Gymnast and Gymnastics for Everybody Ambassador Kieran Johnson-Vickers, who is here with us today, is an example of inclusive Gymnastics in Victoria.”



A summarised two-page report of the Research Report "The benefits of gymnastics for children with Disability" is available.

View an animation based on the research findings for participation in sport or physical recreation among children with disability. <<http://vimeo.com/nicnacpictures/review/109983430/b14c1a5114>

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Gymnastics Victoria Stakeholder Launch Details

Date: Tuesday 31st March, access from 10am. Stakeholder Launch to run from 10:45am – 11:15am

Location: VicHealth Head Office, 15–31 Pelham Street Carlton, Victoria 3053

Speakers: VicHealth Chief Executive Officer Jerril Rechter, The Minister for Sport the Hon. John Eren MP, Scope Chief Executive Officer Dr. Jennifer Fitzgerald, the Chair of Gymnastics Victoria Board Michael O'Neill.

Media Interviews:

Gymnastics Victoria Chief Executive Officer Jamie Parsons: 11:15am – 12:00pm.

VicHealth Chief Executive Officer Jerril Rechter: 11:15am – 12:00pm

Scope Chief Executive Officer Dr. Jennifer Fitzgerald: 11:15am – 12:00pm.

Gymnastics for Everybody Ambassadors Cassy Geffke and Kieran Johnson-Vickers: 11:15am – 12:00pm.

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Launch Schedule:

10:00am. Media allowed access to set up at VicHealth conference room.

10:15am – 10:40am. Kinder Gym class: a live class takes place with coaches and children with Disability.

10:40am – 10:45am. Welcome to Country.

10:47am – 10:50am. VicHealth: organisations' strategic priorities and acknowledgement of the advances made in Gymnastics in sport development for people with Disability.

10:50am – 10:55am. Gymnastics Victoria Board Chair, Michael O'Neill: key outcomes achieved by Gymnastics Victoria to increase participation among people with Disability in Victoria and Australia.

10:55am – 10:58am. Sport & Recreation Victoria: priorities for increasing participation in sport and more specifically among people with Disability.

10:58am – 11:05am. Scope: announces the findings of The Research Report, including an animation.

11:05am – 11:15am. Gymnastics Victoria Development Coordinator (Inclusion): announces the Gymnastics Victoria App and the 7th edition of the Gymnastics for Everybody campaign.

11:15am – 12:00pm. Interview opportunities.