



# Doing sport differently

## Active Club Grants (2016–18) Program Summary

### About this document

This document provides a high-level overview of the objectives, results and learnings of the Active Club Grants program (from four rounds of the program delivered between July 2016 and June 2018) for sport organisations, governments, researchers and other interested stakeholders. It is part of a series designed to help the sporting sector 'do sport differently' to attract, engage and retain less-active Victorians in sport.

[www.doingsportdifferently.com.au](http://www.doingsportdifferently.com.au)

### Related resources include:

- Designing and delivering sport to engage people who are less active
- A guide for sports clubs
- VicHealth program summaries

# Introduction

**Sporting activities are a great way for people to improve their physical health and mental wellbeing.**

While many Victorians play traditional club sport to keep active, it's not the answer for everybody. People who are less active need access to other options, such as social sport.

Trends in physical activity and sport participation are shifting. Recent research has shown there is increased participation in social sporting activities and a decline in traditional, club-based sport.

Sport organisations are facing the challenge of how best to grow participation in a changing world. People are increasingly time-poor, have varied access to sport facilities, and have limited money to spend on participation. Not everyone wants to join a competitive sport team or is able to meet regular training commitments.

**The terms 'less active' and 'social sport' are defined on pages 8 and 9.**



# The Active Club Grants program

**Victorian sport clubs are at the heart of many communities, from inner Melbourne and suburban areas to regional and rural towns.**

They provide places for Victorians to get together, form friendships, enjoy their leisure time and have fun. The thousands of community sport clubs across the state also provide opportunities for people to be more physically active by participating in sport.

VicHealth has supported sport clubs through its small grants programs for more than 30 years.

Prior to 2004, VicHealth offered several grant schemes, including the Sport Injury Prevention Grants, which funded first aid training and safety equipment to prevent injury, and the Outdoor Sport Shade Grants.

In 2004, VicHealth consolidated its club grants into the Active Club Grants program. This program has primarily focused on funding clubs to achieve physical activity outcomes, including increasing opportunities for people to engage in regular physical activity.

From 2016 to 2018, the program focused on supporting new social programs and women and girls' teams to make it easier for less-active Victorians to play sport.



One of the significant barriers for our clubs taking part in participation programs is a fear around the initial start-up costs. The Active Club Grants have allowed clubs to have the resources in place to run the program successfully internally whilst receiving the support of Bowls Victoria externally. Having the Active Club Grants as an option has allowed us to target smaller clubs who are located near to the core demographic or key partners and encourage them to utilise the opportunity to run the program.'

**Neil Gray, Participation Manager, Bowls Victoria**



# What did VicHealth do?

**Applications for Active Club Grants are invited twice a year, aligned to the summer and winter sporting seasons.**

In the 2016–18 period, VicHealth offered two tiers of funding – up to \$3,000 to the majority of clubs and up to \$10,000 in cases where a club could demonstrate the potential to have a major impact in their community.

VicHealth received more than 1,300 applications over this two-year period, demonstrating the significant interest from sport clubs across the state in offering new and innovative sport participation opportunities.

VicHealth provided more than \$1.7 million to 613 clubs with an Active Club Grant between July 2016 and June 2018.

VicHealth supports a diverse range of populations through Active Club Grants and prioritises funding to clubs who can reach people in greater need. Our funding supports clubs spread across the breadth of Victoria, clubs that offer different sport activities, clubs located in areas of relative disadvantage and clubs that are seeking to engage under-represented communities.

**The high number of applications demonstrated sport clubs' interest in offering new and innovative participation opportunities.**

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVE CLUB GRANTS 2016–18

2016–17

**318 clubs**

**299 clubs** funded up to \$3,000

**19 clubs** funded up to \$10,000

**219 clubs** funded to implement initiatives to engage more women and girls in sport

**99 clubs** funded to implement new social or modified programs for Victorians who are less active

2017–18

**295 clubs**

**283 clubs** funded up to \$3,000

**12 clubs** funded up to \$10,000

**202 clubs** funded to implement initiatives to engage more women and girls in sport

**93 clubs** funded to implement new social or modified programs for Victorians who are less active

## FUNDED CLUBS 2016–18

2016–17

**44%** based in regional Victoria

**56%** based in the wider metropolitan Melbourne area

**69** of Victoria's 79 local government areas

**39** sport activities

**34%** located in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of Victoria

2017–18

**41%** based in regional Victoria

**59%** based in the wider metropolitan Melbourne area

**64** of Victoria's 79 local government areas

**47** sport activities

**38%** located in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of Victoria

# What was achieved?

Through the VicHealth Active Club Grants program, clubs successfully delivered new and creative opportunities for participation in sport. Consequently, more Victorians are seeing the health and wellbeing benefits associated with physical activity.

Many clubs created new teams, delivered club-based initiatives or implemented sport programs developed by their respective state or national governing body and supported by VicHealth's other physical activity programs. These include Bowls Victoria's Jack Attack program, Netball Victoria's Rock Up Netball program, Hockey Victoria's J-Ball program and Golf Victoria's Swing Fit program.

## THOUSANDS OF NEW PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED

2016–17

**More than 9,300** new participants  
**7,877** new female participants  
**1,417** new participants taking part in social or modified sport programs

2017–18

**More than 8,400** new participants  
**5,665** new female participants  
**2,454** new participants taking part in social or modified sport programs

## VALUABLE SUPPORT TO CLUBS

Clubs were motivated to apply for the grant to:

- attract new club members
- respond to changing community demographics and demands
- create new participation pathways
- deliver more inclusive and accessible opportunities
- provide non-traditional, social, recreational sport opportunities.

Clubs used the funding to increase participation in various ways, including:

- establishing new junior, senior or female teams
- setting up new competitions and/or events
- creating new social sport activities that focus on fun and socialisation
- creating more opportunities for under-represented groups, such as people with disabilities
- offering introductory programs for beginners
- using modified programs to create new participation pathways.

## INCREASED FEMALE LEADERSHIP

While clubs were not directly funded to increase the number of female leaders within their club, many clubs (47%) that increased the number of participation opportunities for females also increased the number of women in leadership roles.

This suggests that when clubs offer more participation opportunities for women and girls to play sport, they also create more off-field opportunities in areas such as coaching, umpiring, board and committee membership and other leadership positions. This creates great outcomes for females both on and off the field.

**Sport clubs highly valued the funding they received through the Active Club Grants program. On average, clubs consistently rated the value of the grant at least 9 out of 10. Many also stated that without an Active Club Grant they would have been unable to purchase equipment and create new opportunities for people in their local community.**



# What did we learn?

Through the Active Club Grants program and other initiatives aimed at involving less-active people in sports, VicHealth has gained valuable insight into 'doing sport differently'. Six key principles have been developed to guide the sporting sector and others in future initiatives.

The six key principles are discussed in more details in **Doing sport differently: Designing and delivering sport to engage people who are less active**



## Principle 1

Engage with the target market throughout the design process to reduce barriers and fulfil motivations



## Principle 2

Think about participants as customers and consider their total experience



## Principle 3

Participation should cater to different levels of skill, ability and fitness



## Principle 4

The deliverer is the most vital person to participants' experience and retention



## Principle 5

Participants need a clear pathway for retention or transition as their skill, fitness or interest changes



## Principle 6

Best-practice project management and delivery will enable scale and sustainability

# Definitions

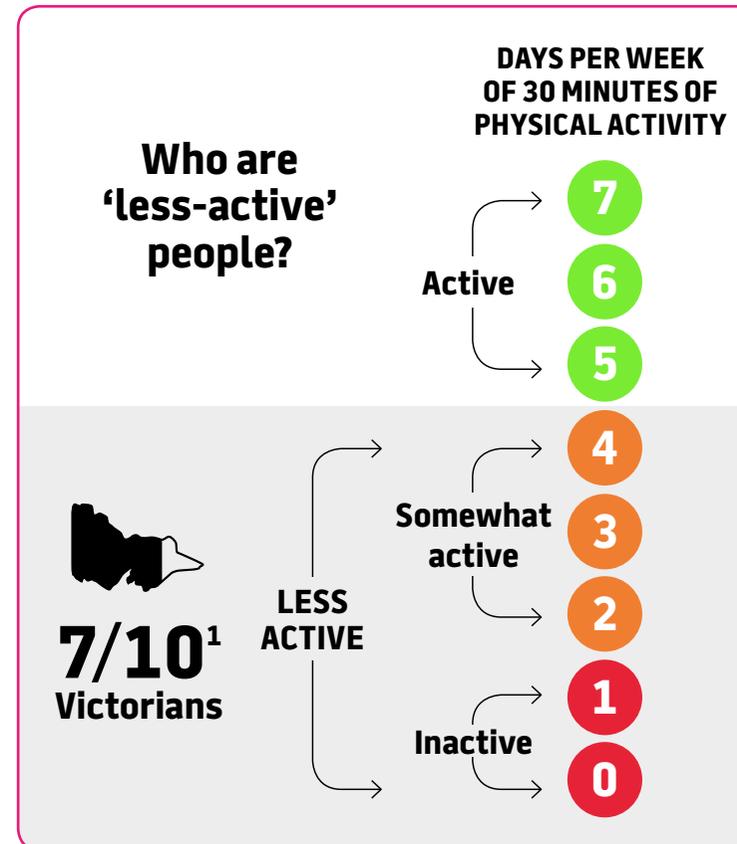
## WHO ARE 'LESS-ACTIVE' PEOPLE?

The term 'less active' includes people defined by the Australian physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines as 'inactive' and 'somewhat active'.

People who are less active are those who do not undertake at least 30 minutes of physical activity on at least 5 days of the week. Children who are less active are people under 18 who haven't participated in organised sport (outside school) in the past 3 months.

People might be less active because they have dropped out of sport or decreased their activity levels as their life circumstances changed, or they may never have been active enough. Some people may not like sport, or might have had bad experiences in the past.

Some people may face particular barriers that prevent them from being active (e.g. a lack of confidence, financial difficulty, limited time).

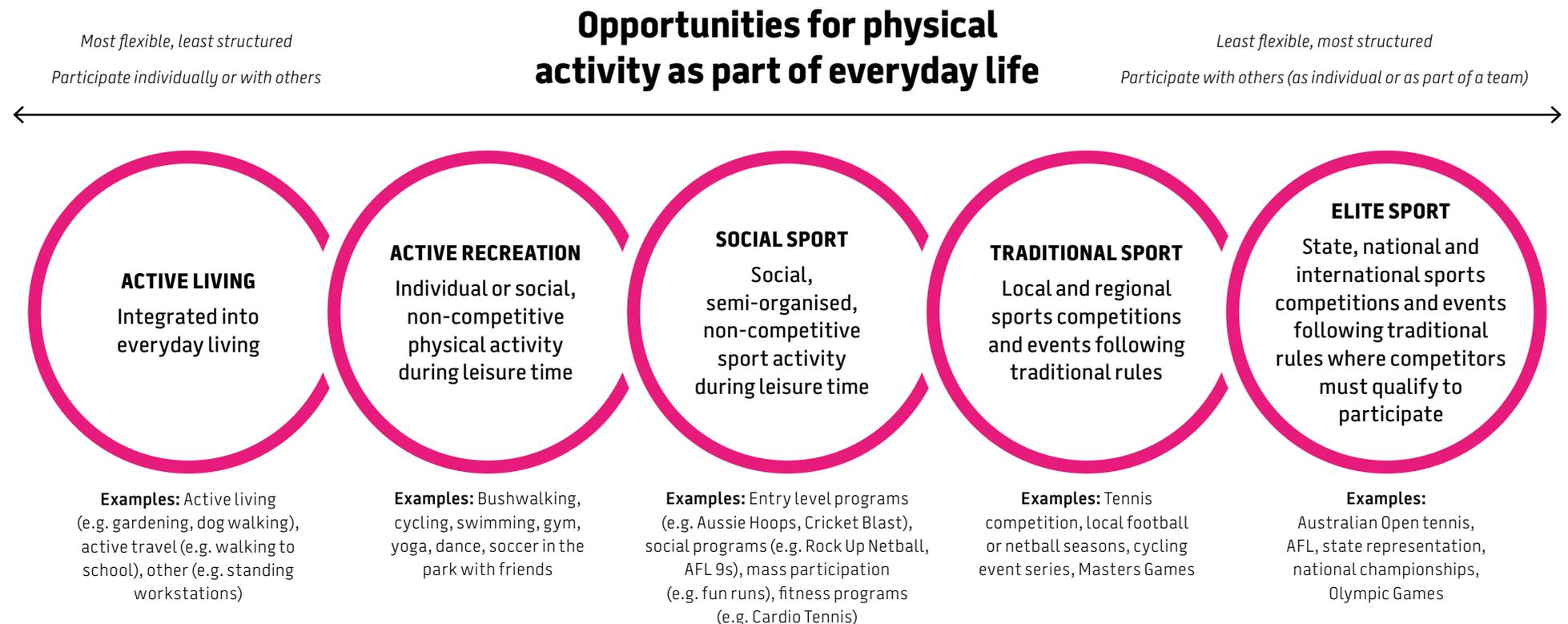


<sup>1</sup> ABS 4364055001D0021\_20172018 National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18 — Victoria.

## WHAT IS 'SOCIAL SPORT'?

Social sport is less structured than traditional sport. It has fewer rules and more flexibility, but is more structured than active recreation activities. Social sport can be designed and delivered by an organisation (e.g. state sporting association), sport club, local council or other individuals and groups. Social sport places a greater emphasis on fun, social interaction and enjoyment than on performance, results and competition.

**A current focus for VicHealth is to help sporting organisations get ahead of sports participation trends by creating and offering more welcoming and flexible approaches to sport.**



# How to get involved

Are you interested in finding out more or applying for an Active Club Grant?

All the information you need is available at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/activeclub](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/activeclub)

The application process is simple and straightforward and there are case studies to help you come up with ideas for your club.



## More information

You can find more information at [www.doingsportdifferently.com.au](http://www.doingsportdifferently.com.au)

*This Girl Can – Helping women and girls get active guide* provides tips for engaging and retaining women who are less active.

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