

Media Release

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VICHEALTH FUNDING MAKES THE HEALTHY CHOICE EASY FOR VICTORIANS PLAYING LOCAL SPORT

VicHealth today announced an investment of more than \$6 million over three years to 23 State Sporting Associations (SSAs), to motivate more Victorians to get physically active and make healthier eating choices when they're playing sport in their local community.

CEO Jerril Rechter said many SSAs showed out-of-the-box thinking in their funding submissions by coming up with imaginative initiatives and opting to focus on people in their community that often to miss out on regular sporting activities.

"Traditional sporting activities aren't for everybody. The great thing about the VicHealth State Sport Program is that we've focused on funding new ideas that are tailored to suit people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to participate.

"To receive funding, SSAs have adapted or developed programs to include people from diverse cultural backgrounds and people with a disability, as well as increasing the participation of women and those aged over 55.

"We're also excited to invest in such a vast range of activities. There's something to interest everyone, from social football and learn-to-swim activities, to fast-format barefoot bowls and a couch-to-finish-line introduction to Triathlon," Ms Rechter added.

Research shows there are still segments of the community where participation in sport remains low, and according to ABS data, less than a third of Australians (aged 15 years and over) are getting enough physical activity to benefit their health.ⁱ

Many of the new initiatives propose a simple variation on a traditional sport - a low-cost, social format which allows people to play in a short amount of time.

"We know people are attracted to opportunities that fit with their lifestyle rather than having to fit their lifestyle around sport. VicHealth has invested in programs that are designed to break down some of the common barriers to participation in traditional sporting activities, including time constraints, accessibility and cost."

Providing accessible and appealing healthy eating choices at sporting clubs and organisations is another way to encourage healthy behaviour. So VicHealth is also investing in several healthy eating programs to be delivered by Baseball Victoria, Basketball Victoria, Netball Victoria, Touch Football Victoria and AFL Victoria.

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“These SSAs have a range of plans including reassessing food and beverage sponsorship contracts, updating catering guidelines at sporting venues, and promoting healthy eating messages throughout clubs. This will influence the healthy eating options available and make a huge difference to the health of participants, their families and everyone involved with the clubs.

“By providing fun, new programs we can get participants engaged and enthusiastic. All of these great projects will contribute to helping Victorians live healthier lives over the next three years and beyond.” Ms Rechter said.

Successful State Sporting Associations set to deliver game-changing healthy sporting projects include:

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| • AFL Victoria* | • Cycling Victoria | • NRL Victoria |
| • Badminton Victoria | • Football Federation Victoria | • Swimming Victoria |
| • Baseball Victoria* | • Golf Victoria | • Tennis Victoria |
| • Basketball Victoria** | • Gymnastics Victoria | • Touch Football Victoria** |
| • Blind Sports Victoria | • Hockey Victoria | • Triathlon Victoria |
| • Bowls Victoria | • Lacrosse Victoria | • Yachting Victoria |
| • Calisthenics Victoria | • Lifesaving Victoria | |
| • Canoeing Victoria | • Netball Victoria** | |
| • Cricket Victoria | | |

Notes:

** healthy eating focus*

*** focus on both healthy eating and physical activity*

The program will be evaluated by La Trobe University, who are also evaluating VicHealth’s Regional Sport Program and Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport program.

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics - Australian Health Survey: First Results, 2011-12

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