

Sport participation in Victoria, 2016

Research summary

This summary outlines the key findings and insights from the second year of VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria's joint research into organised community sport participation in Victoria across 12 sports. It illustrates participation across age, gender and location in 2016, and compares this data with the findings from research completed in 2015.

At a glance: organised sport participation in Victoria, 2016



The rate of overall participation in organised community sport increased from 2015 to 2016. This was driven by increases in male and female participation rates, with male growth much higher than female growth.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings for 2016 were the same as those for 2015:

- sport participation is highest among young children (aged 5–14 years)
- sport participation rates drop significantly during adolescence
- sport participation rates among females are half of those among males
- sport participation rates are higher in regional Victoria compared to metropolitan Melbourne.

The 2015 and 2016 data provide a robust measure, reiterating key trends in sport participation, and will continue to be monitored in future years' data.

Socioeconomic status and sport participation

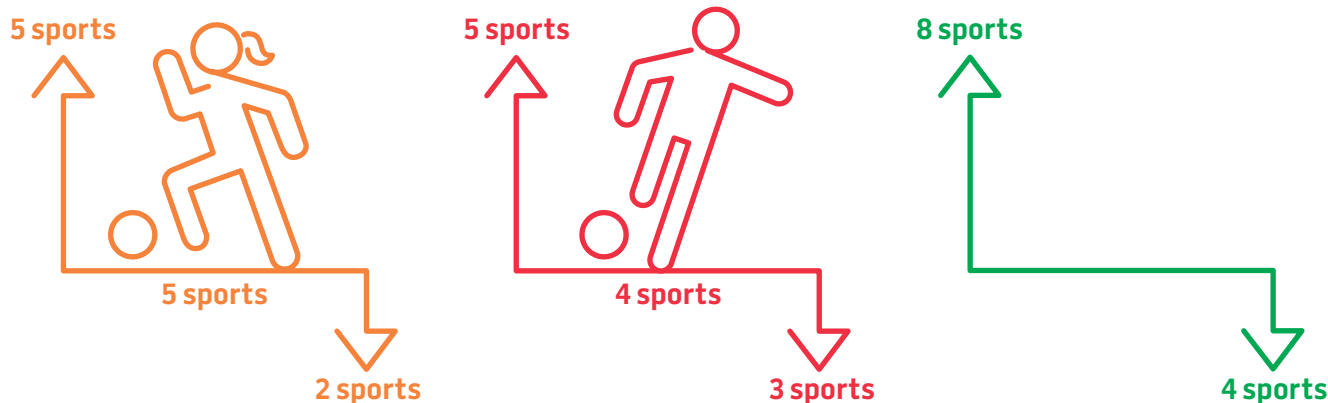
For sports participants aged 5–19 years, for almost all ages, genders and locations (metropolitan/non-metropolitan), participation rates were highest in the most advantaged socioeconomic status (SES) areas and lowest in the most disadvantaged areas. The only exceptions to this were for females and males aged 15–19 years in the non-metropolitan region, where the highest rates of sport participation were in the middle SES group, followed by the most advantaged areas. Furthermore, low SES areas not only have limited participation in sport in general, but also fewer participants playing multiple sports.

Local government snapshot

- There is considerable variation in organised sport participation rates across local government areas (Table 1). An understanding of how participation rates differ can inform local planning for facilities, programs and overall approach to increasing physical activity. However, this information should be considered in conjunction with other available data to build a total picture of the needs of the community. Lower participation rates do not necessarily mean the area has lower overall physical activity levels, it may mean, for instance, that there is a lack of sporting facilities and instead the community has higher rates of walking, cycling or other active recreation.
- The highest organised sport participation rate was 40% in Buloke Shire, in the Regional – Other area. The highest participation rates of the other regions were as follows: Regional – Growth: Surf Coast, 30%; Metropolitan – Other: Bayside, 29%; and Metropolitan – Growth: Cardinia, 17%.
- The lowest organised sport participation rate was 6% in the City of Melbourne, in the Metropolitan – Other region. The lowest participation rates in the other regions were as follows: Metropolitan – Growth: Melton, 10%; Regional – Other: West Wimmera, 15%; and Regional – Growth: Bass Coast, 17%.

Comparative findings: 2015–2016*

- The rate of overall participation in organised community sport increased from 2015 to 2016. This was driven by increases in male and female participation rates, with male growth much higher than female growth.
- Growth in the participation rate from 2015 to 2016 was highest in the 10–14 (increased 2.7%) and 15–19 (increased 3.6%) year age groups.



The female participation rate increased in five sports, remained the same in five sports and declined in two sports.

The male participation rate increased in five sports, remained the same in four sports and declined in three sports.

Eight sports demonstrated growth in participation rates from 2015 to 2016, and four sports declined.

* Data for 2015 and 2016 are not precisely comparable because one sport changed its registration procedures, which led to a sharp decrease in the numbers registered at State Sporting Association level for that sport from 2015 to 2016.

Progress towards addressing 2015 research findings

*Sport participation in Victoria, 2015: Research summary*¹ contains a discussion of key findings and recommendations for State Sporting Associations; sports clubs and associations; sporting policymakers and funding bodies; and researchers. Since the publication of the 2015 report, the Victorian Government, VicHealth and key industry partners have made progress towards addressing some of its recommendations. This includes:

- Launching Active Victoria – a strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017–2021, the Victorian Government’s plan to strengthen the sport and recreation sector and boost participation.
- Launching the VicHealth Physical Activity Strategy 2018–2023, which focusses on increasing the physical activity levels of children (5–12 years), young people (12–17 years), and women and girls.
- Establishing the Office of Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation to implement the nine Game Plan Inquiry recommendations from the recent Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. The Office is delivering a suite of Change Our Game initiatives to increase participation and enhance leadership opportunities in sport for females.
- Continuing to provide new opportunities for women to become more active through participation in sport (for example, VicHealth’s Active Women and Girls for Health and Wellbeing Program; VicHealth’s Active Club Grants).
- Continuing to encourage State Sporting Associations and clubs to offer new social or modified formats tailored to the specific needs of particular segment of the population (for example, VicHealth’s Growing Participation in Sport, which is targeted at less active 12–17 year olds, and VicHealth’s Innovation Challenge: Sport).
- Launching This Girl Can – Victoria, a campaign from VicHealth designed to encourage, motivate and inspire women to become more active, by smashing old-fashioned stereotypes about what they can and can’t do in sport, in the gym and in their neighbourhoods.
- Vicsport launching the Healthy and Welcoming Sport website, which gives advice about how a sporting organisation can improve its members’ health and create welcoming environments that encourage everyone to join in.
- Continuing to support sport and recreation organisations to improve their governance, capabilities and programming to increase participation through Sport and Recreation Victoria’s Supporting Victorian Sport and Recreation Program.
- Investing in sport and recreation facilities across Victoria through a range of Sport and Recreation Victoria programs and projects, including the Community Sports Infrastructure Program, Better Indoor Stadiums Fund, Female Friendly Facilities Fund and the Country Football and Netball Program.
- Confirming that drop-off in sport participation during adolescence and into early adulthood is real, and is not simply the effect of children² sampling multiple sports.



About this research

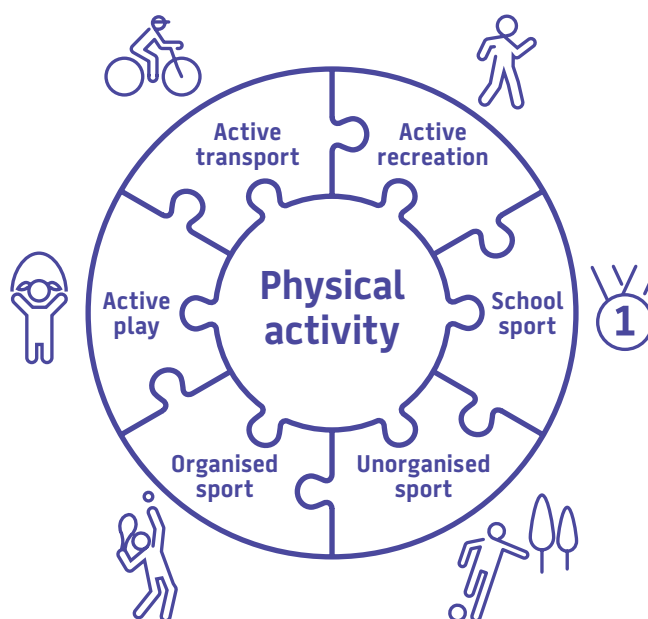
Participation in sport is associated with a range of physical, social and mental health benefits^{3,4}.

The Sport Participation Research Project analyses data for organised sport participation over three years, from 2015 to 2017. It also reports participation levels (number of registered participants and participation rate per head of population) and participation trends annually.

The project aims to provide a reliable measure of **organised sport*** participation in Victoria to inform planning, decision making and investments from State Sporting Associations, governments, funding bodies and sport participation promoters, among others, in particular relating to participation initiatives and facility planning. It does not include school sport programs run during school hours.

This research summary is the update for the 2016 calendar year and should be read in conjunction with the [Sport participation in Victoria, 2015: Research summary](#).

This summary isn't intended to provide a total picture for sport and physical activity participation in Victoria. It does not include organised sports not in this group (for example, athletics, taekwondo, rowing), unorganised sport (for example, a casual swim, soccer in the park), active play, school sport, active recreation and transport (for example, walking, cycling).



About the data

This analysis captures 937,368 'participants', or players, aged four and older, who were registered with a Victorian community sports club or program affiliated with one of the following 12 State Sporting Associations: Australian football, basketball, bowls, cricket, football (soccer), golf, gymnastics, hockey, netball, sailing, swimming[†] and tennis. It includes participants registered in:

- club competitions
- junior or modified sport programs (e.g. NetSetGo, or AFL Auskick)
- social programs (e.g. Cardio Tennis).

The data excludes participants registered in school programs or school competitions.

Participation rates are expressed as a percentage of the estimated resident population for each age group as at 30 June 2015 (ABS 2016).

Individuals who play multiple sports are included in the data for each individual sport, and are therefore counted multiple times within the overall total.

Reported rates are 'registrations per 100 persons in the relevant population cohort', but are presented as percentages for simplicity.

* Organised sport for the purposes of this research means activities that are coordinated by one of the 12 State Sporting Associations included in the scope of the study, and does not include, for example, a social hit of tennis or casual swim. It also excludes some new or pilot social sport programs coordinated by State Sporting Associations, but not formally recorded on their databases.

[†] Swimming was not included in the research program in 2015, but 2015 and 2016 data for swimming have been included in this update.

Figure 1. Age-specific participation rates, 2016, Victoria

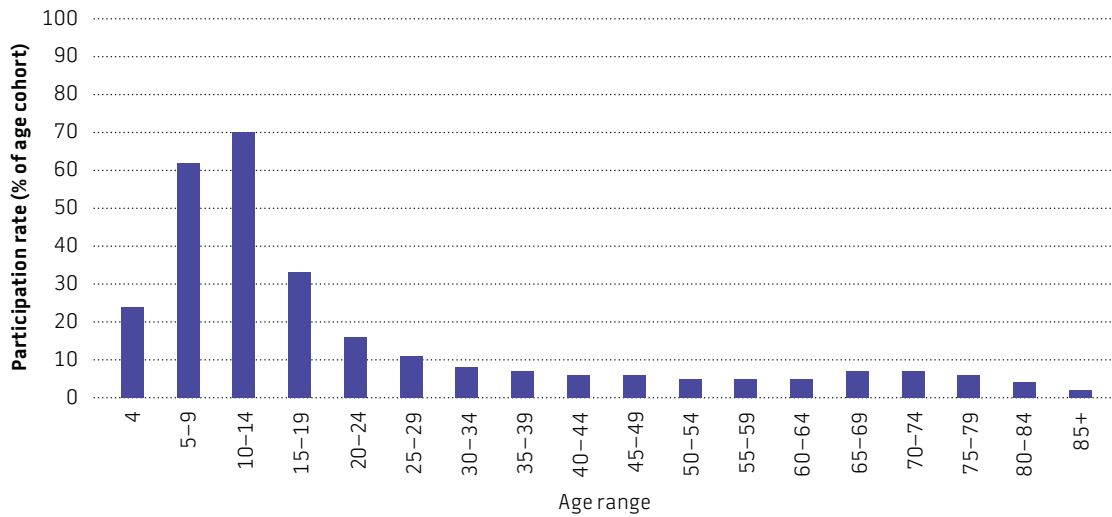


Figure 2. Age-specific participation rates, 2016, Victoria: by sex

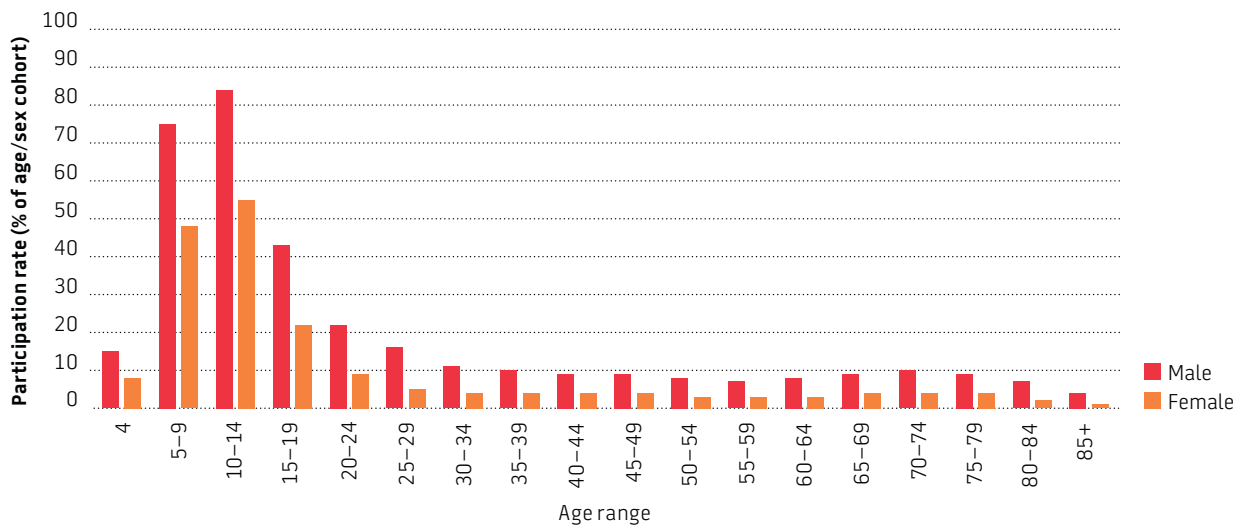


Figure 3. Age-specific participation rates, 2016, Victoria: by region

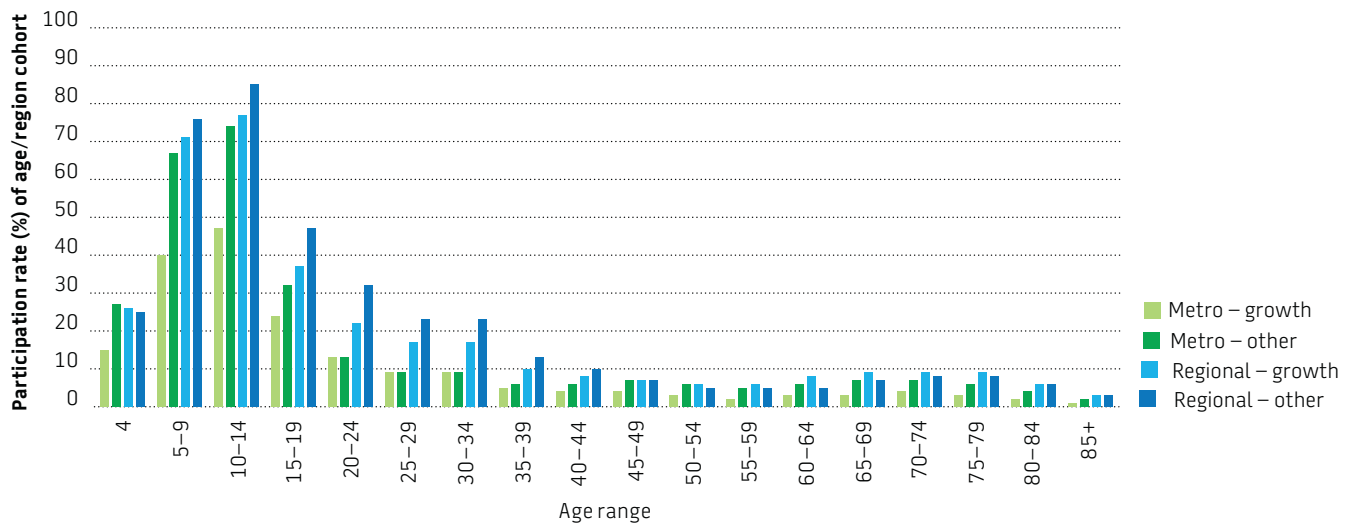


Table 1. Participation rates, 2016, Victoria: by Local Government Area

LGA name	Participation rate*	LGA name	Participation rate*
Metropolitan – growth		Regional – other	
Cardinia (S)	16.8	Alpine (S)	19.3
Casey (C)	12.6	Ararat (RC)	19.8
Hume (C)	11.6	Benalla (RC)	19.2
Melton (S)	9.9	Buloke (S)	39.9
Mitchell (S)	15.3	Campaspe (S)	23.5
Whittlesea (C)	11.1	Central Goldfields (S)	20.9
Wyndham (C)	10.4	Colac-Otway (S)	26.1
Metropolitan – other		Corangamite (S)	31.1
Banyule (C)	18.3	East Gippsland (S)	17.6
Bayside (C)	29.0	Gannawarra (S)	29.0
Boroondara (C)	21.8	Glenelg (S)	22.0
Brimbank (C)	7.3	Golden Plains (S)	19.2
Darebin (C)	10.5	Greater Shepparton (C)	19.7
Frankston (C)	16.3	Hepburn (S)	16.0
Glen Eira (C)	16.1	Hindmarsh (S)	29.3
Greater Dandenong (C)	6.3	Horsham (RC)	24.4
Hobsons Bay (C)	14.5	Indigo (S)	19.0
Kingston (C)	17.3	Latrobe (C)	18.6
Knox (C)	17.2	Loddon (S)	27.6
Manningham (C)	16.0	Macedon Ranges (S)	20.8
Maribyrnong (C)	9.1	Mansfield (S)	20.4
Maroondah (C)	18.7	Mildura (RC)	18.2
Melbourne (C)	6.1	Mitchell (S)	23.9
Monash (C)	13.0	Moira (S)	17.1
Moonee Valley (C)	14.6	Mount Alexander (S)	28.8
Moreland (C)	8.7	Moyne (S)	17.7
Mornington Peninsula (S)	22.9	Murrindindi (S)	20.4
Nillumbik (S)	25.6	Northern Grampians (S)	19.7
Port Phillip (C)	11.5	Pyrenees (S)	31.5
Stonnington (C)	17.7	Queenscliffe (B)	26.5
Whitehorse (C)	17.7	South Gippsland (S)	31.5
Yarra (C)	9.8	Southern Grampians (S)	19.3
Yarra Ranges (S)	18.6	Strathbogie (S)	25.9
Regional – growth		Swan Hill (RC)	24.8
Ballarat (C)	18.0	Towong (S)	20.7
Bass Coast (S)	17.3	Wangaratta (RC)	22.2
Baw Baw (S)	20.5	Warrnambool (C)	20.5
Greater Bendigo (C)	18.9	Wellington (S)	21.1
Greater Geelong (C)	19.9	West Wimmera (S)	15.3
Moorabool (S)	17.6	Wodonga (RC)	30.7
Surf Coast (S)	29.5	Yarriambiack (S)	16.0

* Player registrations per 100 residents

Legend: B = Borough, C = City, RC = Rural City, S = Shire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The State Sporting Associations involved in this research are: AFL Victoria, Basketball Victoria, Bowls Victoria, Cricket Victoria, Football Federation Victoria, Golf Victoria, Gymnastics Victoria, Hockey Victoria, Netball Victoria, Swimming Victoria, Tennis Victoria and Yachting Victoria.

References

This summary is based on:

- Eime, R, Harvey, J & Charity, M 2018, *Sport Participation Rates – Victoria 2016*, Federation University, Victoria University.

Copies of this report can be found at:

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au
www.sportandrecreationspatial.com.au
www.sport.vic.gov.au

- 1 Eime R, Harvey J, Charity M: *Sport participation in Victoria, 2015: Research summary*. In. Melbourne: VicHealth; 2016.
- 2 Eime R, Harvey J, Charity M: Sport drop-out during adolescence: Is it real, or an artefact of sampling behaviour? *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 2018, Under review.
- 3 Eime R, Young J, Harvey J, Charity M, Payne W: A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for adults: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition & Physical Activity* 2013, 10(135).
- 4 Eime R, Young J, Harvey J, Charity M, Payne W: A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition & Physical Activity* 2013, 10(98).



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