Tasmania’s Plan for Physical Activity 2011–2021

Developed by the Premier’s Physical Activity Council in consultation with the Tasmanian community
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Tasmania’s plan for physical activity 2011–2021 is a long-term plan for all of Tasmania. Prepared by the Premier’s Physical Activity Council, in consultation with many other Tasmanians interested in physical activity, it sets a unifying direction and framework for action.

The plan is for anyone involved in physical activity, whether as a participant, promoter, provider, researcher, policy maker or funder.

If you would like to be part of this work – now or in the future – you are warmly invited to contact the Council.

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Acknowledgements
Sincere thanks to the many people who assisted in developing this plan. In particular, thanks to those who contributed ideas at the statewide consultation forum in Launceston in August 2010, to those who provided valuable feedback on the various drafts, and to those who featured in the photographs.

Suggested citation
THE VISION FOR TASMANIA

All Tasmanians experience and enjoy the many benefits of regular physical activity.

To make our vision a reality, we have set four goals. While each has its own distinct focus, they are all connected.

GOAL 1
Become a community that values and supports physical activity

GOAL 2
Create built and natural environments that enable and encourage physical activity

GOAL 3
Develop partnerships that build and share knowledge and resources

GOAL 4
Increase opportunities for all Tasmanians to be physically active where they live, work and play

More details about each of the goals and why they have been chosen are on pages 18–21.

We will keep an eye on how well we are going through two main measures of progress: statistics and stories.

1. Statistics – 10 per cent in 10 years
We are aiming for a 10 percentage point increase in the rates of participation in physical activity by different age groups by 2021. Specific indicators are on page 16.

2. Stories – 1000 stories in 10 years
We are aiming to gather stories about people participating in regular physical activity and how it has made a difference to their enjoyment of life. Tasmanians are invited to submit stories in text, images, video, audio and other art forms, by either uploading them onto an interactive website or posting them in to be uploaded. The target is 100 stories each year, which will be publicised throughout the state to help inspire and encourage us all. All up, we are aiming for 1000 stories by 2021. Further information is on page 17.
Physical activity is any sustained body movement that uses energy. It is widely recognised that we all need regular physical activity for good physical and mental health, and for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Regular physical activity by individuals also brings many benefits to the whole community. At a social level, it encourages family and community connectedness, improves social skills and networks, and reduces isolation and loneliness. Economic spin-offs include increased employment, improved workplace productivity and reduced health costs.

Increased physical activity can also bring environmental benefits. Traffic congestion, air pollution and greenhouse emissions reduce when people choose to use cars less, and walk and cycle more.

Currently, many Tasmanians are not enjoying the benefits of regular physical activity. In 2007–08 seven out of 10 Tasmanians aged 18 years and over were classified as sedentary or having low exercise levels.1

The extent of problems associated with being inactive is increasing. Studies show that physical inactivity contributes to 6.6 per cent of the overall health burden in Australia, measured by the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability and early death.2 It also contributes to over 16 000 deaths per year in Australia. The impact on the Australian economy in terms of direct healthcare costs, reduced productivity and increased mortality is estimated to be $13.8 billion each year.3

The reasons for the current high levels of inactivity are varied, and are happening not just in Australia, but in all developed countries.

The ways our towns, suburbs and cities are laid out influences how active we are. In some communities, physical infrastructure and public spaces – footpaths, cycle ways, roads, mixed-use activity centres, parks and sporting facilities – are abundant and well-designed. In others, they are less so.

Meanwhile, technology is encouraging us to be less active than at any other time in history. Many of us now do our work and seek information and entertainment through screens, and most of us travel by car.

Some of us face barriers to taking part in physical activity because of an absence of programs in our local areas, or lack of childcare, or low incomes. Some of us find it difficult to take part because of health conditions or disabilities. For some of us, it is hard because of language or cultural differences.

The good news is that barriers can be addressed and many different opportunities created to suit our diverse community.

This 10-year plan is a plan for the whole Tasmanian community. No one organisation or agency can do this work alone – it requires a truly collaborative effort from hundreds and thousands of people across the state.

While ambitious, with many of us contributing – individual advocates, grassroots groups, community organisations, the private sector and government agencies – together we can make it possible for all Tasmanians to take part regularly in physical activity and enjoy its many benefits.
In 2005, the Premier’s Physical Activity Council consulted widely with the community to develop the first state plan for a more active Tasmania. Many people were involved in the work of Live life, get moving: the Tasmanian physical activity plan for 2005–2010, which helped bring about a number of significant achievements. These included:

- raising the profile of physical activity in the state
- recognising the various stakeholders involved in physical activity
- increasing the investment of national funding for physical activity in Tasmania
- taking an increasingly coordinated approach to improving physical activity levels.

The Council, in its coordinating role, began to gather information on the many activities that offer opportunities for Tasmanians to be physically active. Listed are some examples that show the range of effort already underway and making a difference.

- Programs within local communities, such as Active Launceston, the Fit Club, the Get Active Program and Heart Foundation Walking Groups.
- Successful collaborations across sectors to develop programs such as Move Well Eat Well in primary schools (Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services) and Partnering Healthy@Work (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania and Department of Health and Human Services).
- Unique opportunities created for the community by sectors not traditionally involved in physical activity such as the Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy developed by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, as part of the Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework.
- Production of resources such as the Get moving at work kit, developed by the Council with support from WorkCover Tasmania; and Healthy by design: a guide to planning and designing environments for active living in Tasmania, developed by the Heart Foundation with support from the Council and the State Government.
- Award programs such as the Medibank Active Tasmania Awards, National Heart Foundation Local Government Awards, WorkCover Safety Awards and the Fitness Industry Awards of Excellence, which recognise the efforts of people working to promote active and healthy lifestyles.
- Numerous tracks and trails for walking and cycling, built by local and state governments.
- Numerous community events across Tasmania such as fun runs and walks, festivals and come and try days.
- Strong political leadership and support for increasing individual and community participation in physical activity.

In developing this new plan, members of the Council and others who contributed considered several sources of information:

- what was achieved over the five years of the first plan
- what we have learnt in Tasmania during that time
- the growing body of scientific evidence about the conditions needed for people to be able to take part in regular physical activity.

Drawing on this collective knowledge, a set of principles and practices is recommended to guide this work:

- All of us can benefit from regular physical activity, whether we are a young child, a teenager, an adult or an elderly person, and whatever our individual ability.
- The physical activities we prefer and are able to do may change over the course of our lives.
- Our individual physical activity level is influenced by many factors including social and economic conditions, the design of the built environment in which we live and travel, local facilities and resources available to us, and our individual motivation.
- Reliable evidence about what helps to increase physical activity levels is now readily available and informs our efforts.
- More public health gains are made when people who have very low levels of activity move towards moderate activity levels, than when people who are already active become very active.
- It makes good sense to work cooperatively on common interests and programs, and to share information, research, facilities and ideas.
- Lasting change is more likely if we take a long-term view and work together.

TASMANIA’S PLAN FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
A useful way to think about how to plan for a better future is to consider it in light of the society in which we live. Researchers call this a social ecology approach, suggesting that we each have a greater chance of reaching our potential when the whole system is supportive of our efforts.

Social ecology as it relates to physical activity is made up of individuals; families, friends and others; organisations; the built and natural environment; and public policy. All are closely connected.

During 2010, the Council worked with many individuals and groups from the Tasmanian community to develop this new plan, which looks ahead 10 years to 2021. It sets out a vision for Tasmania, with four interconnected goals to make that vision a reality (see page 7).

Many activities arising from this plan will cross traditional sectors and organisations. Working in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation will be crucial for success.

While the Council is coordinating the overall work in this plan, various organisations will be taking the lead role for different strategies. At times, one organisation may take the lead role and also provide resources such as skilled people, specific funds and other materials. At other times, several organisations may contribute a share each of the total resources needed. Significant funding may be needed for some strategies. Others may be low cost or no cost.

To ensure Tasmania’s plan for physical activity 2011–2021 remains relevant, useful and practical, it will be broken down into a series of three-year implementation plans, annual action plans, and routine processes for monitoring and evaluating progress.

Implementation plans
While it is anticipated that the goals in the plan will remain fixed over the 10 years, strategies and tasks are likely to change in response to new opportunities and challenges.

The first implementation plan will cover 2011–2014. At the end of this period, progress will be evaluated (see ‘monitoring and evaluation’ on pages 16–17) and a new implementation plan developed for the next three-year cycle.

It is anticipated that these three-year cycles of implementation and evaluation will continue over the life of the plan. In the tenth year, a comprehensive evaluation will be undertaken prior to considering a new long-term planning cycle.

Annual action plans
In February each year, the Council will develop an annual action plan in partnership with relevant organisations. This will cover detailed tasks for each of the major strategies for that year. It will set out responsibilities, timelines, funding and other resources required. It will also suggest how other government, not-for-profit, volunteer and private sector organisations at local, regional and national levels can be involved if they wish to.
Each year, the Council will prepare a simple report on progress being made. Every three years, it will analyse progress in more detail and the findings will shape the next three-year implementation plan. This approach will allow for continuing evaluation of how well we are going in achieving the goals and making our vision a reality. Two specific measures will be monitored.

**Measure 1: Increasing rates of participation**

**Target: 10 per cent in 10 years**

We are aiming for a 10 percentage point increase in the rates of participation in physical activity by different age groups by 2021.

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<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>2021 TARGET</th>
<th>INFORMATION SOURCES</th>
<th>(AND EXPECTED RELEASE DATES)</th>
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<td>Percentage of children aged 5–12 who are physically active for at least 60 minutes each day.</td>
<td>62% (2009)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>Tasmanian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, Tasmanian Government² (unknown)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students aged 12–17 who are physically active for at least 60 minutes each day.</td>
<td>15% (2008)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Australian Secondary Students’ Alcohol and Drug Survey, Cancer Council Tasmania (2013, 2016, 2019)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Percentage of people over the age of 18 who are physically active for at least 30 minutes on at least five days of the week.</td>
<td>27% (2007-08)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>National Health Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012, 2015, 2018, 2021)</td>
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**About the information sources**

The Tasmanian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, an initiative of the Tasmanian Government, has been conducted once to date, in 2009, and is currently the only source of physical activity information for Tasmanian children aged 5–12. At the time of printing, it is unknown if and when this survey will be repeated.

The Australian Secondary Students’ Alcohol and Drug Survey is coordinated by Cancer Council Victoria, with the Tasmanian component funded by Cancer Council Tasmania, the Premier’s Physical Activity Council and several state government agencies. It has been conducted every three years since 1984. Physical activity questions were first introduced in 2002, with further questions added in 2005 and repeated in 2008.

The National Health Survey is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics every three years and collects information on the frequency, intensity and duration of structured physical activity. While it does not include incidental forms of physical activity such as for work, transport or gardening, the overall trends revealed are valid.

**Measure 2: Success stories**

**Target: 1000 stories in 10 years**

We are aiming to gather stories about people participating in regular physical activity and how it has made a difference to their enjoyment of life.

Tasmanians are invited to submit stories in text, images, video, audio and other art forms, by either uploading them onto an interactive website or posting them in to be uploaded. The target is 100 stories each year, which will be publicised throughout the state to help inspire and encourage us all.

**About the stories**

It is expected that each story will have one or more of these features:

- creates a physical activity opportunity that didn’t exist before
- previously inactive children or adults have become more active
- resources and infrastructure are being shared within and across communities
- a new partnership has been formed that encourages participation in physical activity
- a program that has resulted in ongoing regular physical activity of participants
- those taking part feel fitter and healthier
- those taking part have formed new social connections and networks
- those taking part have enjoyed themselves while being physically active
- contributes to one or more of the goals in the 10-year plan.

Further details are available on the Get Moving Tasmania website.
Goal 1: Become a community that values and supports physical activity

There are many good reasons for becoming a community that values and supports physical activity. Improved health and wellbeing for individuals, more sustainable modes of transport, and economic benefits through reduced healthcare costs are some. For many people, regular physical activity also brings positive social connections and long-lasting friendships.

Physical activity can range from incidental activity – moving from one place to another, using the stairs at work, gardening, walking the dog – through to more organised and structured activity like taking gym classes and playing sport.

Ideally, physical activity is enjoyable and fun. Having a diverse range of opportunities on offer makes this more likely.

We know from other campaigns for health and wellbeing that when people see the benefits of a particular activity they are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviour. We can learn from current research in this area and also be creative in coming up with ideas and approaches that suit our Tasmanian setting.

Over the next 10 years, we envisage that more and more people will understand the importance of physical activity, take part in it regularly, and encourage it among their families, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

The main work in achieving this goal will involve leadership and advocacy.

Many people working in their local communities will play a part, along with people in sectors like transport, urban planning, arts, health, education, sport and recreation, and economic development.

Goal 2: Create built and natural environments that enable and encourage physical activity

The way our built environment is designed and maintained impacts on our levels of activity more than we often realise.

Thoughtfully designed built environments can provide many opportunities for incidental activity as we go about our daily routines: staircases that are welcoming and attractive to use; footpaths, walking and cycling paths that are safe, pleasant, well-connected and with end-of-route facilities; public transport linked to walking and cycling routes; public land set aside as open space for recreational use.

Active transport – walking or cycling to school, work, the shops, the playground and so on – is better for our health and wellbeing than driving or being driven all the time. Creative combinations of active and passive transport, like catching the bus and getting off early, or driving and parking the car some way from our destination, can quickly build up our levels of activity.

Meanwhile, the natural environment – bushland, rivers, mountains and sea – offers great scope for incidental activity, as well as a wide variety of sport and recreation. We can extend what is already possible by having well-maintained parks that encourage public use of walking tracks and trails, and guidelines that make activities in nature as safe as possible.

The main work in achieving this goal will involve modifying building standards and codes of practice, tailoring the design of buildings and infrastructure, making sure planning schemes adequately zone and protect open spaces, and marketing and promoting what is on offer.

Over the next 10 years, architects, engineers, urban and regional planners, urban designers, park and open space planners, and health and community development professionals will come together to do this work alongside people in their local communities.
GOAL 3: Develop partnerships that build and share knowledge and resources

Many people in Tasmania are passionate about being physically active, and readily see its value for themselves, their families and their communities. They lead and support a variety of activities and, collectively, hold a great deal of practical wisdom. There are also people who have in-depth knowledge of academic research, government policies, specific programs and inspiring studies and stories related to physical activity.

Across the state, there are many wonderful places and spaces where we can be physically active. We have public parks, sport and recreational facilities, private gyms, school grounds, public roads, cycle ways, footpaths and walking tracks, as well as great scope for activity offered by the natural environment. Some communities have easy access to resources for physical activity; for others, it is more difficult.

In Tasmania, with our small population of half a million, it is relatively easy for people to make contact with each other and build productive relationships. This is aided by developments in information technology which are giving us new ways of sharing knowledge and resources across the whole community.

The main work in achieving this goal will involve sharing information, supporting locally relevant research, and extending the use of existing infrastructure for physical activity.

With people from all areas of life – within and across communities, the private sector, academic institutions, professional associations and governments – working together cooperatively, the gains for the whole state will be significant.

GOAL 4: Increase opportunities for all Tasmanians to be physically active where they live, work and play

Currently, not everyone has the same opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. There can be many barriers to participating in physical activity. These are minor for some individuals and communities; for others, they are significant.

Barriers can include:
- financial costs for individuals and organisations
- limited access to equipment and infrastructure
- poorly planned built environments
- poor access to transport
- lack of childcare
- safety concerns
- lack of social support
- low self-esteem and self-confidence
- inclement weather
- lack of knowledge about services, facilities and support available
- unintended consequences of legislation and policies
- having physical or mental health conditions
- different physical and intellectual abilities
- limited literacy skills
- poorly understood cultural differences
- lack of time
- increasingly sedentary workplaces.

The main work in achieving this goal will involve supporting and expanding programs that are working well, and systematically analysing barriers and finding solutions.

The wisdom and expertise of many people working together will break down barriers and create more opportunities, particularly in communities where physical activity rates are currently low to very low. As a result, many more Tasmanians will be able to experience and enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity.
The Premier’s Physical Activity Council was set up by the Premier in 2001. Its role is to lead a coordinated approach to promoting and providing opportunities for physical activity in Tasmania.

Members of the Council and its sub-committees represent many sectors and organisations with an interest in physical activity. They come from state and local government, community organisations, business, research, planning and industry.

The Council’s responsibilities in relation to coordinating opportunities for physical activity are to:

- consult with the community to create a vision and specific action, set out in a plan
- monitor that plan and report on progress to the Premier and Parliament
- set up and support links between people and organisations interested in physical activity
- support and foster community leaders
- take on initiatives in response to specific gaps and demand.

The Council is not a central body directing work or providing funding. It is a coordinating body, and is most effective when it is linking people involved in physical activity. The ways that the Council, its sub-committees and its small support team work on a day-to-day basis include:

- building and supporting relationships among people interested in physical activity
- making the range of practical wisdom within the state more widely available
- gathering together people’s ideas and incorporating them into the different levels of planning
- advocating and negotiating for funding of strategies on behalf of organisations and communities.

This long-term plan is the main vehicle for the work of the Council. It is endorsed by the Premier and other political leaders. As part of its role, the Council works closely with government agencies, assisting and supporting them to implement specific strategies and incorporate relevant sections of the plan into routine policy and planning processes.

Council members and staff are committed to working collaboratively with everyone who wants to be involved in making the vision set out in this plan a reality. They look forward to meeting, talking and working on this plan with many Tasmanians over the next ten years.