

# Physical Activity in Regional Victoria 2014 to 2018

*proposal from Regional Sport Victoria to VicHealth*

**Regional Sport Victoria** (RSV) is the peak body that provides advocacy and leadership for nine Regional Sports Assemblies (RSA) across the state of Victoria. RSV provides a platform for collaborative strategic thinking and RSA program development, which supports the transfer of information, support and club development opportunities for the sports sector in regional Victoria.

With a unified position RSV is able to positively support our funding partners and provide a service not replicated in any other state or territory across Australia. By supporting community sport and recreation in regional Victoria, sporting clubs have access to training, information, advice, skill development, linkages and advocacy support.

RSV works across **48 local government authorities** in Victoria that covers a population of **1.5 million Victorians**. The RSV membership has conservatively **6,500 community based sport and recreation clubs** with a geographic coverage of **90% of Victoria**

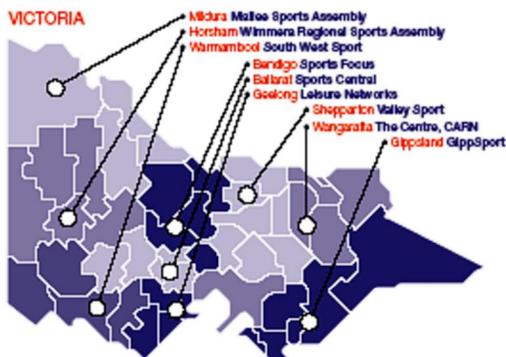
In regional Victoria our network is:

- ~ Connected to local sport and recreation clubs
- ~ Delivering State Government and peak body funded programs
- ~ Facilitating and delivering training, support and advice to community sport and recreation clubs and their volunteers
- ~ Advocating and contributing to local sport and recreation planning
- ~ Independent and stand alone

This level of support and assistance is an unique asset for Victoria. No other sporting body in the nation has the capacity to deliver services in this coordinated manner.

Regional Sport Victoria through its affiliate members is well placed to support state policy to promote, support and grow regional Victoria through community building.

<b>Geographical Coverage:</b>	214,500 Square Kilometres (90% of Victoria)
<b>Population Reach:</b>	1,500,000 Victorians
<b>Regional Presence:</b>	9 Regions with 17 regional offices across Victoria
<b>Club Connections:</b>	8,500 sporting & recreation clubs within the regional catchment
<b>Partnerships:</b>	State & regional partnerships across sport, health, education, business and government
<b>Skills:</b>	Training (delivering, coordinating, developing); providing advice & information; advocacy; networking & project delivery
<b>Capacity:</b>	Able to reach out to grass roots clubs, develop club & volunteer capacity, promote health benefits of physical activity & foster new partnerships, across regional Victoria



## VicHealth Support

VicHealth currently provides funding to the network membership to deliver the Healthy Sporting Environments Program.

VicHealth is partnering with nine Regional Sports Assemblies to deliver club training, education and participation programs to community sporting clubs. Creating a healthier culture within community sporting clubs can lead to benefits such as a positive club image as a family-friendly/welcoming environment, opportunities for increased sponsorship, and the potential for greater volunteer, administration, coaching and officiating services and skills.

The aim of the statewide Healthy Sporting Environments (HSE) program is to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease through community sports clubs, by adhering to minimum standards across six health areas. These include:

- ~ responsible use of alcohol
- ~ healthy food choices
- ~ reduced tobacco use
- ~ protection from harmful effects of UV
- ~ creation of an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for women, girls, people from culturally and linguistically backgrounds, and Indigenous people
- ~ injury prevention and management.

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Programs-and-Projects/Healthy-Sporting-Environments.aspx>

## State Government Support

The Victorian State Government currently provides funding to the network members to deliver two key and essential regional programs:

- Access for All Abilities (AAA) Program
- Regional Sport and Recreation (RSR) Program



### Access for All Abilities Program

Access for All Abilities is a Victorian Government initiative coordinated by Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The program supports and develops inclusive sport and recreation opportunities for people with a disability throughout Victoria.

Families, friends, carers, clubs, sporting associations, leisure centers and community groups can get involved. Everyone involved benefits from Access for All Abilities+

<http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/sport/inclusive-sport/Access-For-All-Abilities>

The AAA Program aligns with the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and the principles of current and emerging disability reforms under the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013. 2016 and the National Disability Strategy 2010. 2020 (that aims to increase determination, choice and access to the mainstream community for those with a disability).

## Regional Sport & Recreation Program

### Regional Sport and Recreation Program

Sport and recreation plays a vital role in strengthening communities, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. The Victorian Government recognises that small populations and distance can make sustaining local sport and recreation groups difficult.

Sport and Recreation Victoria funds the Regional Sport and Recreation program (previously known as the Supporting Country Sport program) to help provide volunteer support, information and training and development opportunities to local clubs in rural and regional Victoria.+

<http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/sport/Grants-and-Funding/supporting-country-sport-program>

The Regional Sport and Recreation Program is well placed to support state policy to promote, support and grow regional Victoria and promote healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

## Regional Sport Victoria – VicHealth Opportunity

### HSE continuation

As mentioned previously in this document, the Regional Sport Victoria network membership delivers the Healthy Sporting Environments Program which is nearing the second year of the state wide regional rollout.

The program provides a strong focus on environment changes to environments sporting settings that promote health outcomes.

The program provides a systemic process to addressing health issues in a targeted setting.

Regional Sport Victoria believes that current program realistically needs to be extended by at least 2 years to allow the current participating clubs to achieve the core standards of the program and then provide a timeframe to finalise reporting and evaluation of the program.

A key risk to the program would be to abandon clubs that are partially through the HSE modules without a sufficient exit strategy. It is suggested that a two-year extension would also provide for tailed evaluation once participating clubs have completed all the modules.

A two-year extension also provides a lead time to transition to a post-HSE participation based strategy and it would also allow an adequate a timeframe for active engagement between RSV and VicHealth on the development of a potential regional participation program.

### Participation Strategy

Regional Sport Victoria believes that, whilst it is essential to continue the work on improving environments for health outcomes, a parallel regional participation strategy is necessary to be developed so that community participation is enhanced. The concern of not investing in participation strategies is that we lose ground on the current levels.

Sport clubs provide existing environments that could see enhanced participation levels subject to additional support. Whilst active recreation contributes to community participation levels, we also believe that local and state government already provides key investment in both physical infrastructure (walking paths, pools, open spaces) and integrated planning and therefore there should be a renewed focus on club-based support that will provide regular and sustainable opportunities.

Rural and regional Victoria have lower life expectancy at birth and lower levels of sufficient physically activity than their metropolitan counterparts and therefore a specific regional participation strategy is needed.

## VicHealth: Action Agenda for Health Promotion

“Regular physical activity is ranked second only to tobacco control as the most important factor in promoting good health and preventing chronic disease in Australia.”

10-year goal

“More Victorians engage in physical activity”

3-year goal

“More people physically active, participating in sport and walking”

### Health status of regional Victoria

As described in the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012-2022: Rural and Regional Health Plan 2011 Figure 4 show the life expectancy at birth is lower for both males and females than for their metro counterparts whilst Figure 13 indicates the growing prevalence of chronic disease in rural and regional Victoria.

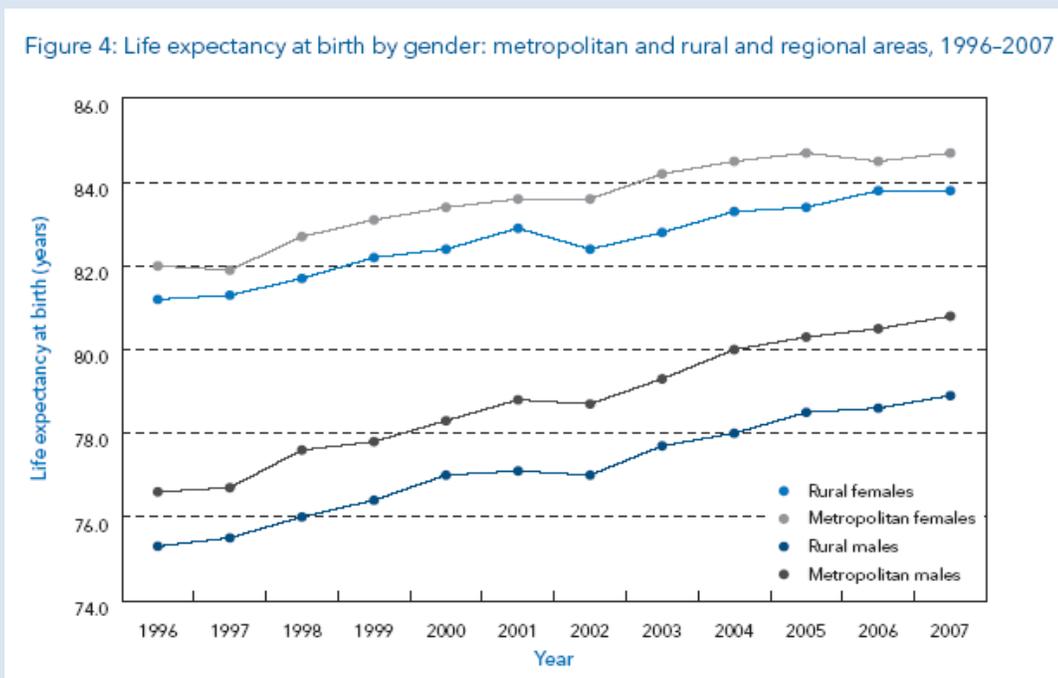
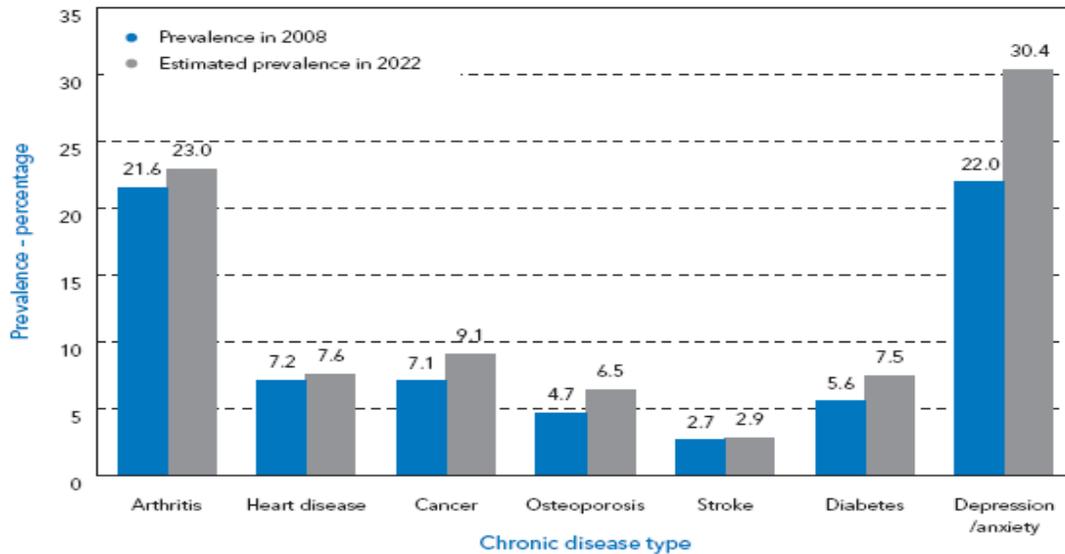


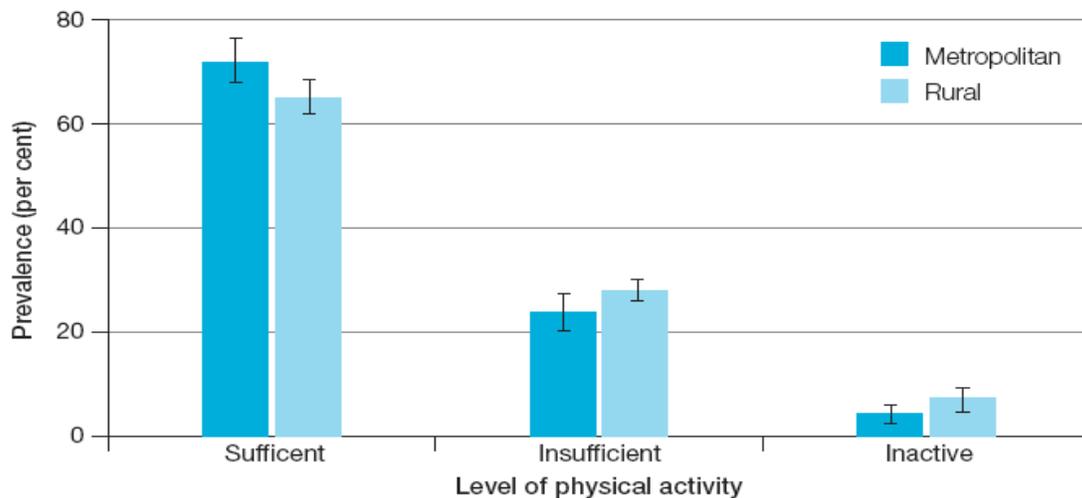
Figure 13: Projected prevalence of selected chronic diseases in rural and regional Victoria in 2022



Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012-2022: Rural and Regional Health Plan 2011 Victoria State Government

Department of Health: The Victorian Health Monitor indicates the prevalence of Victorians undertaking sufficient levels of physical activity was higher among metropolitan Victorians than in rural Victorians

Figure 1.2 Prevalence and 95% CI of physical activity levels according to locality



The error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval.

Data are weighted to the age and sex distribution of the 2008 estimated residential population of Victoria and standardised to the 2006 Victorian population.

Refer to pages xiii–xvi for definition of terms.

Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012-2022: Rural and Regional Health Plan 2011 Victoria State Government

**Table 1.8 Prevalence of physical activity levels according to locality**

	Metropolitan			Rural		
	%	95% CI		%	95% CI	
Sufficient	71.6	67.4	75.4	65.3	61.2	69.1
Insufficient	24.0	20.7	27.5	27.9	25.6	30.4
Inactive	4.4	3.0	6.4	6.9	4.8	9.6

Department of Health: The Victorian Health Monitor - Revised 2013, State of Victoria

Regional Sport Victoria proposes that a **Regional Participation Strategy** needs to be developed based on the following principles:

- Systemic initiatives that will:
  - i) Have a cost effect reach
  - ii) Provides support in regional Victoria
  - iii) Considers individual differences and needs in regional catchments

What needs to happen:

- Engagement between Regional Sport Victoria and VicHealth to identify:
  - i) How the biggest gain in physical activity levels can be achieved in regional Victoria;
    - Target group/s
  - ii) Stakeholders
  - iii) Resourcing
  - iv) Program design

## Conclusion

Regional Sport Victoria suggests a two-year transition strategy form HSE to a **Regional Participation Strategy**.

Regional Sport Victoria and its affiliate members, through its current structures, networks and reach, are well positioned to support VicHealth's Action Agenda for Health that:

1. Recognises that *“Regular physical activity is ranked second only to tobacco control as the most important factor in promoting good health and preventing chronic disease in Australia”*
2. Has as its short-term goal for *“More people physically active, participating in sport and walking”* and its long-term goal to have *“More Victorians engage in physical activity”*.

As a cohort, regional and rural Victorians in general fare worse in chronic disease and physical activity than their metropolitan counterparts.

Regional Sport Victoria would like to partner with VicHealth to develop a systemic, cost effective and sustainable approach to improving the health of those in regional and rural Victoria through strategies that aim to increase levels of physical activity to lower the levels of chronic disease.

Regional Sport Victoria would like to engage in proactive dialogue with VicHealth to develop a strategy to address this critical health issue in regional and rural Victoria.

**Proposal**

**HSE Program**

Minimum of a 2 year extension of the HSE Program  
Commencing: 01/07/2014  
Further review 30/06/2016

**Regional Participation Program**

Development of a 4 year model program  
Project Development Phase: Commencing 01/07/2014  
Rollout Phase: 01/7/2015