



Regional Sport Victoria is the peak body that provides advocacy and leadership on behalf of the nine Regional Sports Assemblies (RSA) across the state of Victoria.

Regional Sport Victoria provides a platform for collaborative policy development and strategic program delivery with a range of key partners and invests in the leadership development of the Regional Sports Assemblies to ensure a strong and vibrant community sport and recreation sector in regional Victoria.

The reach of Regional Sport Victoria is broad encompassing **48 local government authorities** covering a population of **1.5 million Victorians**. Collectively, Regional Sports Assemblies work with over **6000 community sport and recreation clubs** which when combined provide a geographic coverage of **90% of Victoria**

Our Agenda

1. **Regional Sport Victoria** will take an **active role** in relevant sector **policy development** affecting regional Victoria health and well-being and **support key stakeholders** with the implementation of those policies
2. **Regional Sport Victoria** will continue to **advocate about the importance of both club-based sport and active recreation** to deliver participation, social and health outcomes **to lift regional health and well-being levels**.
3. **Regional Sport Victoria** will advocate for the **regional- metro health disparity to be addressed** through policy, partnerships, programming and resourcing.
4. **Regional Sport Victoria** will maintain **a reputation for credible, considered and evidenced-based positions**

Current State Supported Programs Delivered By The RSV network

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 centres 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>

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>

Our Local Priorities

1. **Regional Sport Victoria** will **Connect communities** to local sport & recreation clubs and physical activity opportunities
2. **Regional Sport Victoria** will **Build capacity and sustainability** of community sport and recreation clubs and volunteers
3. **Regional Sport Victoria** will **Deliver programs to increase participation**, activate communities and strengthen connections
4. **Regional Sport Victoria** will **Grow participation and the lifelong enjoyment** of sport and physical activity

Connect Communities

Connecting communities to local sport and recreation clubs and physical activity opportunities.

Regional communities view their local sporting clubs as a vital community hubs, providing social connection as sense of community and a place where local and regional identities enjoy a shared focus and outlet.

The social opportunities afforded through sport can sometimes be as important as the competitive aspect of engaging in sport. Working in partnership with sport and recreation clubs to broaden their participation opportunities will ensure both a focus on social as well as competitive involvement.

Build Capacity

Building the capacity and sustainability of community sport and recreation clubs and volunteers is critical to the future of regional communities.

Training, support and advocacy are ongoing requirements for regional community sporting clubs to ensure they can respond to the needs of their communities and provide places and settings where sport, social inclusion, health and wellbeing outcomes can be achieved.

Deliver Programs

Delivering programs to increase participation, activate communities and strengthen connections are the foundations of how regional sports assemblies work.

While the personal health and social benefits of physical activity are generally well understood, sport is being re-prioritised below other more demanding aspects of people's lives such as work and family commitments.

Working with key partners such as state sporting bodies, local government, schools and other stakeholders, RSAs will help to ensure the benefits of being involved in community sport can be sustained while promoting a view to encourage broader participation such as highlighting social sport aspects, opportunities for family involvement and flexibility in participation opportunities.

Grow Participation

Growing the participation and the lifelong enjoyment of sport and physical activity for regional Victorians will produce a broad range of health and social benefits for our society.

Being active in youth can assist with enjoying a lifelong experience with sport and physical activity. Connections between schools and clubs can assist in supporting young people into the continuum of participation, club programs and development pathways

Supporting the community sport sector in regional Victoria to respond to the needs of people who would like a less structured approach is core to growing participation and keeping people active throughout their life.

The Regional – Metropolitan Health Disparity

Health and physical activity status in Regional Victoria

Physical activity participation

- **Regional Victoria has a consistently lower participation rate**, a lower percentage of the population who are active at least 2 times weekly (on average).¹
- The prevalence of Victorians undertaking sufficient levels of physical activity was higher among metropolitan Victorians than in rural Victoria.²
- **Sedentary and low levels of exercise were significantly higher in** the highest disadvantaged quintile, **those from regional** and remote areas and those who speak a language other than English at home.³

Cardio-vascular Disease

- The prevalence of **cardiovascular disease was higher in rural areas** than in the metropolitan area of Victoria.²

Lifestyle Choices

- **Rural Victorians were more likely to be daily smokers** than were metropolitan Victorians.²
- Rural and regional Victorians are less healthy overall than their metropolitan counterparts, with many displaying poorer health-related characteristics and behaviours.⁴
- **People in rural and regional Victoria on average are more likely to be overweight or obese, have higher rates of tobacco smoking, higher levels of alcohol consumption, and insufficient consumption of fruit and vegetables.**⁴

Obesity

- **Rural Victorians were more likely to be obese** than were metropolitan Victorians.²

Life Expectancy

- **Victorians living in rural areas overall have lower life expectancy** than those living in metropolitan areas.⁴

Disability

- **The proportion of all people with a disability is higher in rural and regional Victoria** (22 percent) than in major cities (17%). The Same trend applies for people with the need for assistance with a core activity, which is 4.3% in metropolitan Melbourne, compared with 5 per cent outside Melbourne.⁵

Sources

¹ERAS 2009,2010,2011

²The Victorian Health Monitor – Revised 2013

³Heart Foundation Fact Sheet: Level of exercise by socio-demographic status

⁴Rural and Regional Health Plan December 2011 Victorian Government

⁵State Disability Plan 2013-2016 Companion Document: p13

Considerations for State Government

To address the physical activity and health disparity between regional and metro Victoria:

1. Escalate the funding support for the RSV network to:
 - i) Connect communities to local sport & recreation clubs and physical activity opportunities
 - ii) **Build capacity and sustainability of community sport and recreation clubs and volunteers**
 - iii) Deliver programs to increase participation, activate communities and strengthen connections
 - iv) Grow participation and the lifelong enjoyment of sport and physical activity

2. To develop a physical activity and wellbeing criteria component on regional and rural state funding grants/allocations whether the funding pertains to planning, services, programming or infrastructure

Conclusion

Regional Sport Victoria and its affiliate members, through its current structures, networks and reach, is **well positioned to support the state governments sport, recreation and health agenda regional Victoria.**

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

Regional Sport Victoria welcomes continued engagement with **State Government** to improve 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 in regional and rural Victoria.**