Active Victoria 2022-2026

a strategic framework for sport and active recreation

Victoria State Government Logo

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# Ministerial foreword

Sport and active recreation supports the health and wellbeing of all Victorians, builds the social fabric of our community, and delivers thousands of local jobs.

In 2021, around 5 million Victorians took part in some form of physical activity at least once a week. The annual value of community sport and active recreation infrastructure to the Victorian economy is estimated at $7.04 billion.

The Victorian Government developed Active Victoria in 2017 to provide a strategic framework for sport and active recreation in Victoria to meet demand; broaden and make participation more inclusive; build resilience and industry capacity; and connect investments in events, high performance, and infrastructure.

There have been many achievements over the last four years through Active Victoria. We led the way as the first state in Australia to establish a dedicated Office for Women in Sport and Recreation. The Office, through *Change Our Game* and other professional development initiatives, and together with dedicated actions from across the Government, is delivering a more level playing field for women and girls.

The record-breaking crowd of 86,000 people at the 2020 ICC Women’s T20 World Cup demonstrates that with the right kind of support, transformational change can be achieved. This change has not just occurred through our sporting events. We know that at a grassroots level more women and girls are playing community sport, and more off-field opportunities have been created.

In 2020, a joint commitment between the Ministers for Community Sport, Education and Health, created *Active Schools, Active Kids, Active Communities*. This work coincided with the introduction of the *Get Active Kids Voucher Program*, which has broken down barriers to participating in sport and active recreation. The program has provided more than 58,000 vouchers to Victorian families, helping more kids access community sport. In its first year of delivery, 45 per cent of people who accessed a voucher reported that they would not have been able to play if these vouchers did not exist. The *Get Active Victoria* initiative was also launched in 2020. *Get Active Victoria* encourages all Victorians to be more active, in a way that suits them.

Record investment in sport and active recreation infrastructure continues to deliver more opportunities to participate and supports delivery of *Victoria's Infrastructure Plan 2021*. This includes the $64.6 million investment for the new Melbourne Sports Centres in Parkville which opened in July 2021. This project revamped the home of state netball and hockey in Victoria, helping thousands of community and high-performance players be their best. These facilities will also support local sporting organisations to host future events that will welcome visitors from across Australia.

The Government has also supported a significant additional investment in the Victorian Institute of Sport. This means more athletes are being supported to achieve their dreams and inspire the next generation of stars. This investment sets a great foundation for success for our athletes as they prepare and compete in the lead up to the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The Commonwealth Games will bring global sport to every corner of our state, with a focus on four regional hubs – Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, and Gippsland. *Victoria 2026* will contribute to the economic recovery and growth of the state by contributing an estimated more than $3 billion to the economy, investing significantly in community infrastructure and delivering a legacy of affordable housing.

The sport and active recreation sector has experienced an extremely challenging period due to the coronovirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Government, via the $50 million *Community Sport Sector COVID-19 Short Term Survival Package*, supported the operational viability of community sport and active recreation organisations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We must continue to ensure the resilience and sustainability of the sector.

Now is the time to build on our successes to ensure that more Victorians secure the benefits of sport and active recreation, while we support the sector’s long-term recovery from the pandemic. Through *Active Victoria 2022-2026*, we reset and outline the Government’s plan to deliver an active Victoria.

The Hon. Ros Spence MP  
Minister for Community Sport

Steve Dimopoulos MP  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

# Laying the foundations for a more active Victoria

Since implementing the last strategic framework for 2017-2021, *Active Victoria* has been kicking goals in sport and active recreation with more money invested in local initiatives, more community facilities delivered and more Victorians leading active and healthy lives.

**Since 2017**

* More than $1.28b has been invested in community sport and active recreation infrastructure
* More than 920 community facilities have been supported
* 527 *Change our Game* grants and other professional development opportunities to level the playing field for women and girls
* More than 6,600 local clubs have been supported through *Sporting Club Grants*
* 165 *Together More Active* grants have supported peak organisations to enhance participation. This includes targeted investment for people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Victorians, those experiencing greater disadvantage, and those who participate less
* An average of 14,373 children annually received swimming, water safety and survival skills over five consecutive days in January through the *VicSwim SummerKidz* program
* $3.5m to encourage Victorian children to ride, scoot and walk to and from school
* More than 1,900 combat sports licenses, registrations and permits have been issued
* More than 300,000 Victorians have enjoyed the great outdoors by visiting one of five Victorian Government sport and active recreation camps
* In 2020, a new 20-year lease focusing on social outcomes was established with the YMCA to continue managing the award-winning camps at Mt Evelyn, Mt Eliza, Rowsley, Falls Creek and Anglesea. Through these camps, Victorians of all ages get to experience the unique offerings of the great outdoors
* More than 235 significant sporting events have been facilitated. Through to 2018, these events resulted in:
  + 153,000 additional interstate visitors
  + $98m tourism spend
  + More than $40m in sector wages and profit
  + Almost 100 more jobs
* 80 projects progressed that relate to the planning and development of state level facilities such as the State Netball Hockey Centre Redevelopment, Marvel Stadium Upgrade, Kardinia Park Stadium Stage 5, and the State Basketball Centre redevelopment

**Since 2019**

More than 100 community sport and active recreation projects have been funded through *Access for All Abilities* with a focus on targeted communities. This supports sector capacity and participation outcomes for those that need it most, including 40 projects supporting people with a disability

**Since 2022**

* The State of Victoria confirmed as the host of the 2026 Commonwealth Games
* Launched The *Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women: Taking Action Through Community Sport*
* $2.3m invested in the *Preventing Violence Through Sport: Taking a whole-of-sport approach to engage young people and the broader community grants program*, to support cultural change to prevent family violence and violence against women

# Our Vision

To build a thriving, inclusive and connected sport and active recreation sector that benefits all Victorians.

## Defining the sport and active recreation system

*Active Victoria* recognises that sport and active recreation exist along the continuum of physical activity. Victorians will engage at different, or multiple points along the continuum. Engagement will also shift and change over time.

## The continuum of sport, active recreation, and physical activity…

Having a hit of tennis with a friend on a Saturday morning is **informal sport**…but playing every Saturday morning as part of an organised pennant competition would be **organised sport**.

Informal sport is sometimes also called **social sport**. Both formal and informal sport focus on participation, fun and sometimes competition.

Organised sport typically includes **pathways** to elite competition and professional opportunities.

High performance and professional opportunities are typically showcased through a calendar of **sporting events**, such as Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Going for a bike ride, swimming, dancing, or yoga for exercise or enjoyment is **active recreation**. Riding to or from work is **active transport**.

Sport, active recreation and active travel are all types of physical activity. Integrating **physical activity** as part of an active approach to life is often called **active living**.

## Partners supporting sport and active recreation in Victoria

*Active Victoria* cannot drive change alone, with partnerships essential to achieving the collective vision.

Via the transport sector, investment in active travel infrastructure occurs that can support more bike riding and walking. Planners, such as local governments, map out our suburbs and towns, providing access to green space, sporting fields and the facilities where sport and active recreation can occur. An integrated approach to planning and transport also makes our major stadia and world-class events convenient and accessible for visitors and residents alike.

Education, via the curriculum, delivery of adventure activities and interschool sports, provide access to sport and active recreation opportunities in schools that can introduce children and young people to new experiences. Schools are at the heart of all Victorian communities and are vital to influencing the lives of children and young people. As such, strong partnerships support the roll out of physical activity initiatives including *Get Active Kids Vouchers* and *Active Schools*.

Advice from healthcare workers is valued, and a simple conversation can prompt more physical activity. Community safety services use sport and active recreation programs as crime prevention tools, or as a strategy to engage disaffected youth.

Victoria’s calendar of sporting events can be showcased by our trade agencies working to expand international opportunities for Victorian businesses.

*Active Victoria* also recognises its obligations to meet the objectives set out in Victorian Government legislation and policies. For example, this includes obligations set forth in the *Climate Change Act 2017, Gender Equality Act 2020, Victorian Infrastructure Plan 2021,* and legislation that supports the operations of public entities including:

* Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board
* Victorian Institute of Sport
* Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust
* State Sport Centres Trust
* Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust

Kardinia Park Stadium Trust

Further, *Active Victoria* recognises that, in partnership with the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria, Victoria is currently establishing a framework to commence treaty negotiations with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. We will work to ensure relevant actions outlined in *Active Victoria* align with treaty negotiations and delivery of future treaty/treaties in Victoria.

# A snapshot of sport and recreation in Victoria

**Active Victoria supports**

* **6** Regional Academies of Sport
* **9** Regional Sport Assemblies
* **32** Victorian-based National Sports Organisations
* **36** State Sport and Recreation bodies
* **44+** State Facilities
* **52** Professional Sporting Teams
* **77** State Sporting Associations

**256+ organisations**

Graph showing adult male and female figures.

Description below.

65.1% of Victorian adults participated in sport or recreational activities at least three times per week in 2021

Graph showing children male and female figures.

Description below.

11.8% of Victorian children (0-14 years) participated in sport or recreational activities at least three times per week outside of school hours in 2021

**Participate in sport-only in 2021**

* Men and boys: 20.7%

Women and girls: 6%

**Participate in non-sport activities in 2021**

* Men and boys: 20.4%

Women and girls: 36.5%

**Participate in both sport and non-sport activities in 2021**

* Men and boys: 49%

Women and girls: 48.2%

Reference: Sport Australia. *AusPlay survey results January 2021 – December 2021.*

**Top five activities that Victorians participate in**

* Walking: 53.6%
* Gym: 37.1%
* Jogging/running: 22.7%
* Cycling: 17.8%

Swimming: 14.4%

**Participation at least three times per week**

* Victorian average: 65.1%
* People with a disability: 59.2%
* Low-income earners: 58.5%
* People who speak a language other than English at home: 57.6%
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: 54.1%

Those living in outer regional areas: 50.8%

#### $7.04b annual value generated by community sport and active recreation infrastructure in Victoria

65,000 annual visits to sport and active recreation Victorian Government-owned camps

**In 2017**

* Estimated $9.2b Gross Value add to Victoria’s economy
* 71,000 jobs from sport and active recreation sector each year
* Each year, around 400 Sport and entertainment events occur in Victoria’s major stadiums
* Events in major venues attract 9m attendees
* Generating $2.5b economic activity

More than $3b The estimated economic contribution of hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games to the Victorian economy

References:   
KPMG. *The Value of Community Sport & Active Recreation Infrastructure*. 2020.

Marsden Jacob Associates, 2018.

Home Ground Advantage Victoria’s Major Stadia Strategy.

## The value of sport and active recreation

Sport and active recreation make a valuable contribution to achieving a broad range of Victorian Government policy objectives, including:

1. Establishing thriving places and communities that are safe, fair, and inclusive

Sport is a vehicle to address social issues including discrimination, inequality, racism, family violence and violence against women that can help deliver more connected communities. As a setting where values are shaped and communicated, sport presents a unique opportunity to reach more people in new ways to address harmful attitudes, behaviours, and stereotypes. Sport and active recreation can also offer a way to increase social connections and build friendships. Volunteering through sport and active recreation can lead to new jobs or mentoring opportunities.

1. Supporting the health and wellbeing of all Victorians

Our physical and mental health and wellbeing are improved by participating in sport and active recreation. It makes us feel good and is fun, it brings purpose and structure to our daily lives, and even in small amounts is good for our health. Physical activity is a strong protective factor for mental health and wellbeing and the risk of developing a chronic condition such as heart disease, some cancers and Type 2 diabetes can be prevented, in part, by maintaining an active lifestyle. For this reason, *Active Victoria* supports Victoria’s new child health and wellbeing plan, *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures*, which focuses on building strong foundations for good health and wellbeing.

1. Building quality infrastructure

Investing in new and existing natural and built form assets provides more opportunities for people to be physically active. The aesthetics and liveability of Victoria is enhanced by high-quality sport and active recreation infrastructure. Appealing destinations encourage people to explore their local neighbourhoods and dwell in these places. Investment in quality infrastructure also provides jobs in engineering, construction, and manufacturing, whilst providing an opportunity to address global issues such as climate change. As host of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, Victoria’s regions will benefit from significant investment in new and upgraded sport and active recreation infrastructure, delivering a lasting legacy to these communities. Melbourne 2006 delivered critical upgrades across the metropolitan region, and it is anticipated this impact will be echoed across the whole state through *Victoria 2026* as competition and training venues are improved and developed in multiple locations, including Central Highlands, Loddon Campaspe, Barwon and Gippsland. The 2006 Melbourne Games enabled half of the MCG stadium to be rebuilt and its capacity to host future events enhanced with the addition of 55,000 extra seats. The outdoor competition pool at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC) was built, as was the State Mountain Bike course in Lysterfield Park. Lysterfield Park is now one of the most visited mountain biking parks in Victoria.

1. Developing a strong and innovative economy

Sport and active recreation provide a large boost to the Victorian economy. For example, people walking and bike riding in their local neighbourhoods can encourage greater spending in local shops. Growth in active tourism has been supported through targeted infrastructure investment (such as the *Regional Tourism Investment Fund*) that can help build prosperous economies, particularly in rural and regional areas. Estimates suggest that sport contributes between two and three per cent of Australia’s total gross domestic product (GDP). Sport can showcase Victoria to the rest of the world when amplified through major events. This promotes cultural understanding and shared interests, while creating international trade and investment opportunities. Many Victorians find employment through sport and active recreation, either directly as coaches, trainers, and administrators or indirectly through the construction and maintenance of major stadia and state facilities. For example, the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games will create more jobs for more people – including more than 600 jobs before, 3,900 jobs during and 3,000 jobs after the Games.

1. Contributing to Victoria's transition to a net-zero emissions and climate resilient economy by 2050

Investment in the sustainability and resilience of sport and active recreation infrastructure can reduce emissions and help provide environments that are safer for individuals and communities now and into the future. Improving walking and cycling paths, including ensuring adequate trees and shading, makes it easier and safer for people to ride, walk and actively travel to work, school, and social activities. This also reduces emissions, improves air quality, and contributes to urban cooling initiatives, supporting *Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy*. The current approach of individualised transport to scattered sporting commitments has significant disbenefits for the community, including congestion, climate, and health impacts. *Active Victoria* provides an opportunity for a more coordinated approach that enables shared travel options (e.g., car-pooling) and to reduce individualised long-distance travel.

# Strategy framework: An active future

## Objectives

### Connecting communities

All Victorians have access to high-quality environments and appropriate participation opportunities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sustained participation | Infrastructure |
| Outcomes | More Victorians participate equitably in sport and active recreation | Victoria has inclusive, accessible, and respectful places and spaces for sport and active recreation |
| Key directions | 1. Increase and promote opportunities so Victorians can participate in ways that suit them 2. Target efforts towards individuals and communities who participate less | 1. Improve community sport and active recreation infrastructure coordination to better meet demand, with a focus on areas and populations who need it most 2. Deliver inclusive, multi-use and sustainable community sport and active recreation infrastructure |

### Building value

The sport and active recreation workforce create positive experiences for people

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sector capability | Good governance |
| The sport and active recreation workforce is highly skilled and leads a strong, sustainable industry | Sport and active recreation is a safe, inclusive, and resilient sector |
| 1. Attract and retain a skilled sport and active recreation workforce (paid and unpaid) 2. Promote more financially sustainable organisations that reduce duplication and inefficiencies in service delivery | 1. Implement frameworks to create safe and inclusive sport and active recreation settings 2. Build insights through better use of evidence and data |

### Enduring legacy

A connected system that generates long-term benefits for the sector and Victoria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| High performance | Events |
| Victorians can achieve success at the highest level | Victoria maintains a strong pipeline of sporting events within the Victorian events calendar |
| 1. Develop a world-leading suite of major stadium and state facilities 2. Connected and co-ordinated pathways exist to pursue sport at the highest level | 1. Invest in state infrastructure that can host international and regional events and support event content that boosts the Victorian economy 2. Partner to maximise leverage from investment in Victoria’s major events |

# A focus on the future: *Active Victoria 2022-2026*

*Active Victoria 2022-2026* outlines three objectives and 12 key directions to guide activities and investment in sport and active recreation. By working in this way, *Active Victoria* aims to deliver six main outcomes. Comprehensive stakeholder consultation helped identify the current and emerging issues for sport and active recreation and the necessary responses.

## Objective: Connecting communities

All Victorians have access to high-quality environments and appropriate participation opportunities

### Outcome

#### Sustained participation

More Victorians participate equitably in sport and active recreation

#### Challenges and opportunities

Shifting preferences in sport and active recreation

The coronavirus (COVID-19) may have accelerated emerging trends in sport, active recreation, and physical activity. Many Victorians, particularly young Victorians, missed out on the community sport they love. However, this may have increased the appeal of informal opportunities such as recreational activities, visiting parks and nature reserves, and accessing online content to stay active at home.

National trends show people are moving away from organised sport towards less structured, informal physical activity opportunities. However, sport has a broad value proposition meaning it contributes far more to communities than just a way to be physically active. This is particularly true in regional areas where sport is often at the heart of local communities. The distributed delivery model planned for the 2026 Commonwealth Games will enhance the social fabric of the communities where the Games will take place and connect all Victorians through the shared experience.

***"We are a tiny community and this (our tennis club) is the only thing we have.”***

– As cited in Australian Sports Foundation Impact of COVID-19 on community sport, July 2020 (p31)

Sport will always be central to life in Victoria, however there is a need to better recognise the attributes of active recreation that make it appealing to many people. Active recreation can be undertaken at almost any time and can be free or low-cost.

Active recreation does not usually require an ongoing commitment to structured training or competition. Victoria’s natural reserves and bushlands, topography, spectacular coastlines, and climate provide for a large variety of active recreation experiences.

The Victorian Government is making it more affordable and easier for communities to access and enjoy our state forests and parks by investing $106.6 million in *Victoria’s Great Outdoors* program. This will deliver more camping grounds, better four-wheel-drive-tracks, and new walking trails.

#### Sport and active recreation for all

The benefits of sport and active recreation should be available for all Victorians to experience. However, some groups have less access and opportunity to participate equally. This includes people with a disability, people from different cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, economically disadvantaged communities, and people from LGBTIQ+ communities. And even though women and girls’ participation in community sport has grown in recent years, we still have more to do to bridge the gender gap and ensure the impacts of COVID-19 do not erode progress.

Women and girls, and those who participate less, often experience unique barriers to participation in sport and active recreation. As such, different approaches are needed to increase participation and, in some cases, other organisations are best placed to lead this change. For example, Aboriginal organisations have a leading role in promoting and supporting sport and active recreation for Aboriginal Victorians.

The difference in who participates, and who does not, is not new. Yet too often actions aimed at expanding the reach of sport and active recreation are viewed as desirable, but not a core responsibility. Further, responsibility is often placed on the individual to change their behaviour. However, addressing structural barriers, such as cost, improving culturally appropriate practices, creating equitable access policies and inclusive community environments, can be a more effective strategy.

The Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games represent a significant opportunity to enhance the inclusiveness of sport and active recreation, through a fully integrated para-sports program and a broad range of sports anticipated in the competition program. The breadth of activities and diversity on show through the Games will increase the appeal of sport to a broader cross-section of the Victorian community. In the lead-up, during and post the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games, *Active Victoria* can support local initiatives to drive ‘sport for all’ outcomes.

Taken together, a balance must be struck between developing opportunities that better support the types of activities most Victorians want to participate in, while growing equitable and inclusive participation in sport and active recreation.

**The *Get Active Kids Voucher Program* supports eligible children aged 0 to 18 to get involved in organised activities by providing more than 100,000 vouchers to help families with the cost of participating in sport.**

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Increase and promote opportunities so Victorians can participate in ways that suit them

* Incentivise and support sport and active recreation providers to develop and deliver flexible, equitable, and innovative participation programs

Boost collaborations with community groups, sport and active recreation organisations, schools, healthcare, and other key partners to increase local sport and active recreation options that are appealing to Victorians

1. Target efforts towards individuals and communities who participate less

* Invest in initiatives that address common barriers and provide more equitable participation for all Victorians, including women and girls (e.g., cost, equitable access policies)
* Ensure program design and delivery supports more equitable participation outcomes, including through weighted investment criteria

Enable an Aboriginal community-led and self-determining approach to sport and active recreation

### Outcome

#### Infrastructure

Victoria has inclusive, accessible, and respectful places and spaces for sport and active recreation

### Challenges and opportunities

#### Active environments

Accessible, high-quality places and spaces can increase population-wide physical activity levels. The availability of open space, and the development of high-quality sport and active recreation infrastructure, is highly variable. Regional and rural Victoria often has different requirements, due to the unique characteristics of these locations. Several factors affect environments for sport and active recreation including population growth, urbanisation, climate change, bushfires, classification of open space, and changes in population demographics.

Net migration shifted in favour of regional areas during COVID-19. However, Melbourne’s growth corridors will accommodate much of the rapid population growth expected over the coming decade. Poor air quality and extreme heat can impact the safety of outdoor environments for sport and active recreation. In contrast, increasing vegetation and tree cover provides shading and cooling which can encourage people to walk and cycle more. Inequity exists across metropolitan Melbourne’s open space network, with some areas having very low availability of open space where sport and recreation can occur.

The quality of the open space also influences activity levels. Recreational spaces that include a mix of elements such as grassy open spaces, trails, play spaces, and sporting facilities are more likely to promote activity. Victorian Government strategies, such as *Open Space for Everyone 2021*, focus on unstructured green open spaces to provide settings for informal active recreation. To support the delivery of this strategy the Victorian Government is investing $315 million in the *Suburban Parks Program*, which will create 6,500 hectares of public open space, including parkland, trails, pocket parks and off-leash dog parks.

Supply and demand analysis completed on behalf of Sport and Recreation Victoria indicates that by 2038, Victoria will need to facilitate approximately 1.5 million more regular participants in physical activity. To meet this demand, it is estimated that more than 5,000 new sport and active recreation facilities designed to suit the needs of all users will be required. Sport and Recreation Victoria and other parts of government including Local Government Authorities, invest to develop facilities and infrastructure for sport and active recreation. For example, via the *Growing Suburbs Fund* the Victorian Government has invested $425 million to support critical community infrastructure upgrades including playscapes, trails and shared paths.

While 2022 marks 50 years of Victorian Government investment in community sport and active recreation infrastructure through initiatives such as the *Local Sports Infrastructure Fund*. Given Local Government Authorities critical role in the provision and management of community sport and active recreation infrastructure, *Active Victoria* must complement and enhance their efforts. This includes working with partners to ensure that sport and active recreation infrastructure is connected, safe and coordinated, and supports multiple outcomes that will help meet future demands. For example, walking infrastructure surrounding sport facilities that supports recreational activities and active travel.

Working with partners will be particularly important in the lead up to the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games. Through the Games, significant investment in new and upgraded regional sporting infrastructure is planned, which will create a network of world-class facilities – with many of these sites to become community assets after the Games conclude, servicing local clubs and communities. Delivering infrastructure to meet the international standards for the sports they will host will also create new opportunities to host world-class events in Victoria’s regions, attracting visitors and local business activity.

In the lead-up to the Games, multiple training venues will host visiting and local athletes. Strategic selection of training and competition venues, together with local activation planning will ensure communities across Victoria derive maximum, long-term benefits from the investment in Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games infrastructure.

Taken together, there is growing pressure on Victoria’s open space network and to deliver the range of facilities and infrastructure needed to enable a variety of sport and active recreation participation opportunities. Strategic planning and investment that considers community needs within a state-wide approach to securing places and spaces for sport and active recreation is required. This will also need to incorporate adaptation measures that address the impacts of climate change to support the range of activities that Victorians seek to undertake.

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Improve community sport and active recreation infrastructure coordination to better meet demand, with a focus on areas and populations who need it most

* Develop a shared understanding of Victoria’s community sport and active recreation infrastructure priorities to support coordinated local, regional, and state-wide approaches to planning and investment

Work across agencies to embed sport and active recreation needs in Victorian land-use planning, infrastructure, and service delivery to create more active communities

1. Deliver inclusive, multi-use and sustainable community sport and active recreation infrastructure

* Support action on climate change and universal design principles through infrastructure policy, planning and investment

Help activate places and spaces through sport and active recreation to promote the liveability of local communities

## Objective: Building value

The sport and active recreation workforce create positive experiences for people

### Outcome

#### Sector capability

The sport and active recreation workforce is highly skilled and leads a strong, sustainable industry

### Challenges and opportunities

#### Supporting the workforce

Volunteers and ‘passionate people’ are the glue that holds many local clubs and associations together. As we re-emerge from COVID-19, attracting and retaining volunteers will be a challenge. Approximately 72 per cent of roles in sport are held by volunteers. As of June 2021, research by Sport Australia suggested around 61 per cent of volunteers had resumed their usual volunteering roles, but more action was needed to bring others back. Traditional methods used to attract and retain volunteers may no longer be effective and different approaches will be required. Initiatives such as *Together More Activ*e and *Sporting Club Grants* provide support to build the capacity of the sport and active recreation sector. These programs aim to address barriers to participation, develop safe and sustainable practices, and build volunteer opportunities. It is expected that the 2026 Commonwealth Games will support increased volunteer participation. The Games will attract a new generation of volunteers to community sport and active recreation that can be harnessed to build the volunteer-base in Victoria.

It will be important to create pathway opportunities to retain new volunteers within local associations and clubs after the Games. This will ensure the knowledge, skills and competencies developed through the Games can be retained within the community sport and active recreation sector. Current volunteers will also be well-placed to engage in new opportunities that will arise through hosting the Commonwealth Games.

Supporting the workforce in skill development and education to create a culture of ongoing learning is also important. This should consider the breadth of roles in sport and active recreation (e.g., outdoor sector, media and broadcasting, and specialist performance staff) and look for efficient ways to build learning into busy schedules.

Targeting development opportunities for people who historically have less opportunity to reach leadership positions and progress their career in sport and active recreation is needed. The *Change Our Game* Scholarship Program for instance supports women working and volunteering in the sector to access professional development opportunities to enhance their leadership and management skills.

Ensuring these opportunities are inclusive of people with a disability, Aboriginal communities, multicultural and multifaith Victorians, and other communities who may experience greater barriers to working and volunteering in sport and active recreation is also needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted limitations of traditional investment and delivery models in sport and active recreation. Stakeholder consultations show that some organisations believe it will take up to five years to fully recover from the impact of the pandemic. Efforts are needed to develop more efficient and effective operating models. These models should recognise the sector’s reliance on volunteers, the need to return and grow the paid workforce, and the competing demands facing the workforce.

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Attract and retain a skilled sport and active recreation workforce (paid and unpaid)

* With the sector, support an industry-led plan that addresses current and future workforce trends (paid and unpaid)

Build industry capability and readiness through development and education opportunities, with a particular focus on women and girls

1. Promote more financially sustainable organisations that reduce duplication and inefficiencies in service delivery

* Incentivise resilient financial models that grow participation and the sustainability of the sector

Support localised delivery models that test different partnership approaches to support more effective and efficient services

### Outcome

#### Good governance

Sport and active recreation is a safe, inclusive, and resilient sector

### Challenges and opportunities

#### Creating safe settings

Governance and integrity standards are vital to creating positive experiences that help grow sustainable participation. Strong governance practices establish the values and culture of an organisation and help set clear roles, responsibilities, and transparent processes. Diversity on boards allows different experiences and views to be represented, leading to more inclusive decision-making. Efforts are needed to ensure leadership in sport and active recreation reflects the diversity of Victorian communities. The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and *Active Victoria* recognise that ongoing support is required to create awareness and compliance with the minimum 40 per cent women on boards quota for funded sport and active recreation bodies.

Strong governance practices extend to supporting integrity standards that provide protection for people and create culturally safe and welcoming environments. This includes protecting people from harassment, discrimination, vilification, racisms, abuse, and other forms of inappropriate behaviour. Through *Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32*, *Active Victoria* will continue to support the capacity of professional and community sports to be LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

Further, in Victoria, children aged 5 to 14 have the highest participation rates in organised sport8. As such, child safety should be a core business strategy for sport organisations.

Providing a safe environment also extends to injury prevention, heat health, maintaining equipment and grounds, and establishing health promoting settings where people spend their time. Nationally, Victoria has led the way through implementing *Healthy Choices in Sport and Recreation Facilities*. Continuing to adopt a comprehensive view of safe sport and recreation environments will be important into the future.

The Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games can be leveraged to elevate the importance of creating safe, welcoming, healthy, and inclusive sport and active recreation environments. The purpose of the Games is broader than the delivery of an elite sporting event, with the core values of the Commonwealth Games Federation being humanity, equality and destiny. By working directly with our sport and active recreation organisations, industry bodies, role models and building on ambassador programs, the values of the Commonwealth Games can be realised.

Accountable decision-making is fundamental to good governance practices. There is significant opportunity to improve decision-making through better use of data, evidence and leveraging innovation. This can be achieved by working with the sector and research partners to implement ongoing monitoring and evaluation practices to generate greater insights that guide practice. This should deliver a better understanding for how the whole sport and active recreation system is functioning across the state.

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Implement frameworks to create safe and inclusive sport and active recreation settings

* Work with Sport Integrity Australia to facilitate the inclusion of State Sporting Associations within the National Integrity Framework to ensure organisations that need the support of the framework can access services

Support state entities and funded organisations to create safe, inclusive, and well-governed environments by ensuring responsiveness through funding agreements

1. Build insights through better use of evidence and data

* Develop data, research and information systems that strengthen the evidence-base for sport and active recreation from grassroots participation to high performance (e.g., working to standardise measures across the sector to demonstrate collective impact)

Support communities of practice and ‘knowledge hubs’ that bring together policy makers, the workforce, and researchers to translate evidence into practice

### Victoria 2O26 will showcase the best of Victoria to the world.

In a first for the event, four regional hubs across Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Gippsland will create a ground-breaking distributed delivery model for the Commonwealth Games. Hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games also provides an opportunity to grow participation, build capacity, and create a lasting legacy for Victoria that will be driven through Active Victoria.

### Objective: Connecting communities

All Victorians have access to high-quality environments and appropriate participation opportunities

#### Outcome:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sustained participation | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| More Victorians participate equitably in sport and active recreation | showcase the best athletes in at least 16 sports from up to 72 Commonwealth nations. The Games are estimated to result in up to around 250,000\* more Victorians increasing their physical activity. |

\* Figures are estimate based on previous Commonwealth Games

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Infrastructure | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| Victoria has inclusive, accessible, and respectful places and spaces for sport and active recreation | update and build sporting infrastructure across four regional hubs. This includes world-class infrastructure for aquatics, hockey, cricket, and athletics. This will enable these regions to host international events in the future and provide on-going access across the community. |

### Objective: Building value

The sport and active recreation workforce create positive experiences for people

#### Outcome:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sector capability | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| The sport and active recreation workforce is highly skilled and leads a strong, sustainable industry | develop workforce capability in regional Victoria, enabling the sector to attract and host events beyond the life of the Games. At its peak, the event will create 3,900 jobs and be supported by 10,000 – 15,000\* volunteers. |

\* Figures are estimate based on previous Commonwealth Games

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good governance | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| Sport and active recreation is a safe, inclusive, and resilient sector | have a para-sport program that will run concurrently with the able-bodied competition, promoting the talents of all competitors. It will showcase Traditional Owners’ and our multicultural society. This will reinforce Victoria’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. |

### Objective: Enduring legacy

A connected system that generates long-term benefits for the sector and Victoria

#### Outcome:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| High Performance | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| Victorians can achieve success at the highest level | support our high‑performance athletes, including VIS scholarship holders, to train, compete and develop through the Games. Many athletes and officials will be given the chance to perform in front of family and friends, providing the community with inspiration. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Events | Victoria 2O26 will… |
| Victoria maintains a strong pipeline of sporting events within the Victorian events calendar | deliver infrastructure and workforce capability in regional Victoria that will support the hosting of future significant state, national, and international events. This includes lead-in tournaments and training camps for the Games in regional facilities. By way of comparison, Queensland attracted an estimated 100 national and international events because of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. |

## Objective: Enduring legacy

A connected system that generates long-term benefits for the sector and Victoria

### Outcome

#### High performance

Victorians can achieve success at the highest level

### Challenges and opportunities

#### Major stadium and state facilities for high performance

The high-performance system relies on modern and functional state facilities and major stadium infrastructure. Investment in Victoria’s major sport infrastructure provide venues for sport and entertainment events and generates employment and economic uplift across the state.

Victoria has more than 40 state facilities within the network. Without sustained investment these venues are at risk of ageing, becoming unfit for purpose, and failing to meet the needs of sports, event owners and spectators in modernised, competitive environments. Further, supporting climate resilient developments and infrastructure will also be essential in our changing climate. The Victorian Government’s leading role in developing the state facilities network is well-recognised and essential to supporting our public entities in their day-to-day management of those facilities. There is a need to revisit funding and operating models through the state facilities network to maximise high performance, legacy, and associated community outcomes.

An essential part of the high-performance system is providing pathways for progression to the elite level. There are many providers and different operating structures in the high-performance system (e.g., for Olympic versus non-Olympic sports). Supporting the Victorian high-performance sector to develop talent identification pathways that provide coordinated and streamlined opportunities for athletes to progress is important. Working with the high-performance sector to leverage economic development, place marketing and community outcomes will remain a high priority for Victoria.

**Victoria 2026 will contribute an estimated more than $3 billion to the state’s economy, with significant investment in new and upgraded state-of-the-art sports infrastructure in regional Victoria including Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, and Gippsland. This will help make regional Victoria the ideal place for major world-class sporting and entertainment events for years to come. It will provide regional sporting clubs and athletes with access to world-class facilities for training and events, and the opportunity for athletes, from high performance to beginners, to be the best they can be. The Commonwealth Games is also expected to encourage thousands more Victorians a year to get moving more often, helping them realise the physical, health and wellbeing benefits associated with physical activity.**

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Develop a world-leading suite of major stadium and state facilities

* Continue to invest in world-class infrastructure and fan experiences in Victoria’s major stadia

Conduct a review of Victoria’s suite of state facilities and develop investment and delivery models to maximise high performance, events, and associated community outcomes

1. Connected and co-ordinated pathways exist to pursue sport at the highest level

* Support the Victorian Institute of Sport in delivering the *National High Performance Sport Strategy* and increase its connection to communities

Work with high-performance providers to better connect and develop high-performance pathways so that every dollar invested maximises athlete outcomes

### Outcome

#### Events

Victoria maintains a strong pipeline of sporting events within the Victorian events calendar

### Challenges and opportunities

#### Retaining a competitive edge and supporting a thriving sport economy

There is growing competition at the elite level and within the sports economy, meaning Victoria must continue to innovate to lead the way. Victorian Government insights show Melbourne is consistently perceived as the sporting capital of Australia, and we have held this position for some time. However, we also know this reputation is highly regarded, with significant investments in major sporting events from other competing states. The investment in world‑class regional infrastructure through the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games will create new opportunities to host major events in regional locations. By working with partners, including Visit Victoria, a pipeline of events in regional areas can be established in the lead-up to and after the Commonwealth Games that deliver jobs and opportunities to the people of Victoria.

Events are an important part of Victoria’s visitor economy, attracting visitors from overseas and interstate. They also help to build Victoria’s sporting expertise by attracting visiting experts such as coaches and high-performance staff who can provide education and development opportunities to students and volunteers.

Events can also showcase activities and our infrastructure in Victoria’s natural environments, contributing to outdoor sector development. Strategically planned legacy programs from sporting events can also change the social fabric of communities. This was evidenced through the 2020 ICC Women’s T20 World Cup, where many local events were hosted to support women and girls’ participation in sport. It will be important for legacy outcomes identified through the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games to complement and help deliver on the priority outcomes and actions identified through *Active Victoria*.

Supporting work across the Victorian Government, *Active Victoria* helps to deliver global opportunities by inviting trade and business opportunities. Through collaboration with national sporting codes, professional teams and event organisers, Victoria’s reputation for innovation and sporting excellence is leveraged to deliver trade, tourism, and investment outcomes.

Events such as *Victoria 2026*, Australian Open, Formula 1® Australian Grand Prix and the *2022 SportNXT – Business of Sport Conference* bring global thought leaders to Melbourne, shape the future of sport, and connect Victorian businesses to international markets.

Further, the sports technology industry in Australia has grown to $1.2 billion per annum with more than 50 per cent of the revenue generated in Victoria. Around two-thirds of Australia’s sports technology companies are also based in Victoria, employing more than 7,500 people. As such, we have a thriving industry at our fingertips that can enhance fan experiences in major stadium, bring sports science innovations to the high-performance sector, and help weekend warriors track their personal health and wellbeing goals.

Taken together, securing an annual calendar of sporting events within Victoria’s events calendar is important for Victorian communities and the sector.

### Key directions

#### Active Victoria will:

1. Invest in state infrastructure that can host international and regional events and support event content that boosts the Victorian economy

* Ensure investment in major stadia and state-level facilities accommodates and leverages increased state, national and international-level event content

Ensure Sport and Recreation Victoria camps participate in events showcasing Victoria’s outdoor sector, supporting nature-based tourism efforts

1. Partner to maximise leverage from investment in Victoria’s major events

* Partner with Visit Victoria and the sector to help build a pipeline of sporting events that better leverages state sport infrastructure, including through development of legacy programs

Work with Global Victoria and other agencies to improve opportunities for Victorian sport businesses to access global markets

# Measuring success

## Active Victoria contributes to existing physical activity and climate change targets:

### The Victorian public health and wellbeing outcomes framework states

#### By 2025:

* achieve a 20 per cent increase in sufficient physical activity prevalence of adolescents

achieve a 10 per cent increase in sufficient physical activity prevalence of adults

### Victoria’s climate change strategy states

#### By 2030:

we are aiming for 25 per cent of trips to be by foot or cycle (or other forms of active transport)

**Ambitious goals aligned to the three objectives of *Active Victoria* – *connecting communities, building value, enduring legacy* – are also established. We recognise that we cannot achieve success without the efforts and actions of our partners. Therefore, we set forth intentions for success that invite collective effort.**

#### By connecting communities through sport and active recreation we want to:

* see an increase in all Victorian adult and children’s participation rates in sport and active recreation

improve access to community sport and active recreation infrastructure across Victorian communities

#### Success in building value means that we will:

* grow and retain a workforce (paid and unpaid) in sport and active recreation

achieve and maintain greater diversity in sport and active recreation leadership

#### To deliver an enduring legacy for Victoria through sport and active recreation we will:

* see a network of world-leading major stadia, state facilities and high-performance pathways to underpin the high-performance system

support growth through Victoria’s sports event market

#### Tracking our progress

The Victorian Government pursues an outcomes-based approach to drive better policy and service delivery across the state. An outcomes approach means that we define success according to the impact of our work and not just by reporting what we do. We will also track progress through better evaluation practices, targeted research initiatives, and working to a translational evidence model.

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