



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

PLAY.

SPORT.

AUSTRALIA.

# AusPlay

Participation data for the sport sector

Summary of key national findings

*October 2015 to September 2016 data*

Release date,  
21 December 2016






# AUSPLAY

**THE SINGLE SOURCE DATA**

**CURRENCY FOR THE SPORT SECTOR**

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) aims to make Australian sport stronger.

The AusPlay Survey (AusPlay) is a key pillar of *Play.Sport.Australia*, the ASC's game plan to get more Australians participating in organised sport more often.



The ASC is helping sports to thrive in a rapidly changing environment. This starts with research and insights into changing participation trends.

AusPlay is a national population tracking survey funded and led by the ASC. It will provide the sport sector with vital insights, inform strategy and fills a major information gap left by the Australian Bureau of Statistics when it stopped collecting sport and recreation data in 2014. AusPlay is an independent research project at the population level which measures all types of activities in a consistent and comparable way.

### Objectives

AusPlay provides accurate and reliable information on Australia's participation trends in sport and physical activity. The three main objectives of AusPlay are to:

- Provide insights to help sports grow participation and track trends
- Provide data that informs government investment, policy and program delivery
- Identify and describe links between sport participation and other influential factors.

### Methodology

- Overlapping dual sample frame design (mobile and landline)
- Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI), continuous tracking all year long
- 20,000 interviews conducted annually with Australian adults aged 15 years and over\*
- More than 3,600 interviews conducted annually with Australian parents/guardians of a child aged 0-14\*

\* The Australian Sports Commission produced this report based on data collected and generated by ORC International. From October 2015 to September 2016, a total of 20,021 interviews were conducted amongst adults aged 15 years and over, and 3,849 interviews were conducted with parents/guardians of a child aged 0-14

### What is new here?

Adults' and children's sport and physical recreation participation data is being collected together for the first time.

AusPlay will help us to better understand the relationship between the activity habits of children and their parents.

Ausplay will deliver more detailed reporting, delivered faster (just three months after data collection) and will be updated every six months. This will enable us to identify and monitor key trends over an extended period of time.

Compared to previous national data tracking tools, AusPlay covers a larger breadth and depth of topics, allowing for deeper analysis of issues.



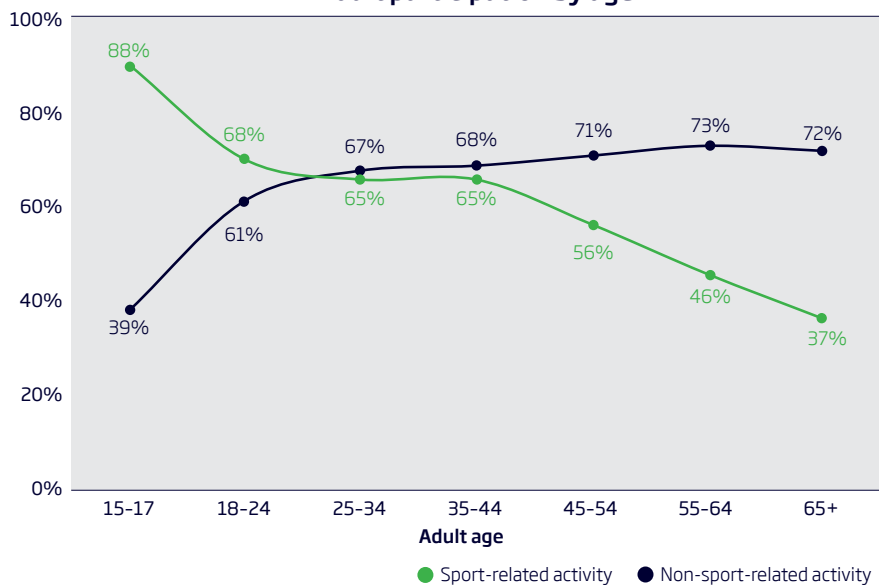
## HOW ACTIVE ARE AUSTRALIANS?

AusPlay captures a wide variety of activities and a distinction is made between sport-related activities (e.g. team sports, athletics, golf) versus non-sport related physical activities (e.g. gym memberships, bushwalking).

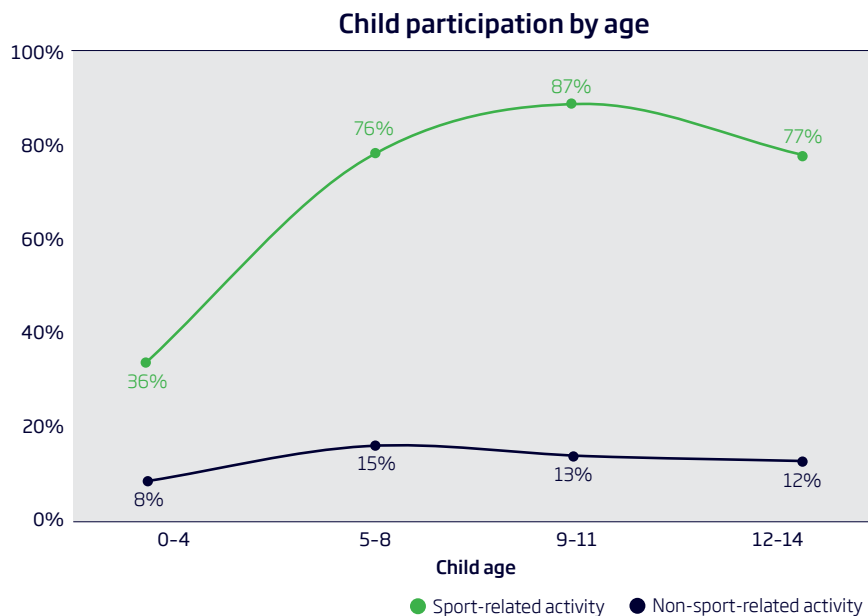
Over 17 million Australians aged 15 or over (87%) participated in a sport or physical activity in the last 12 months.

While sport remains an important form of activity throughout life, non-sport related physical activity becomes more important as we age.

Adult participation by age

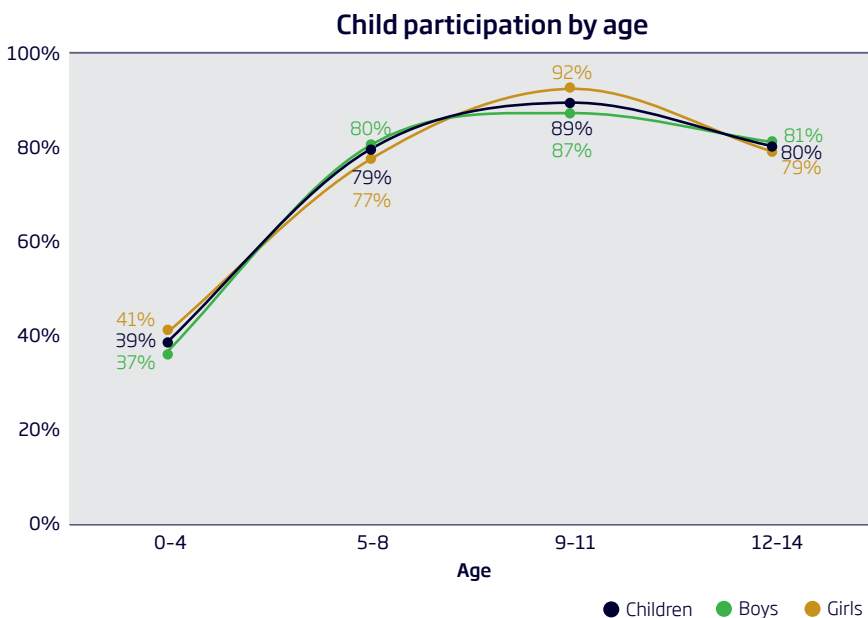


Nearly 3.2 million children (69%) participated in some form of organised sport or physical activity outside of school hours\*.



Adult men and women participate at similar levels across the life stages.

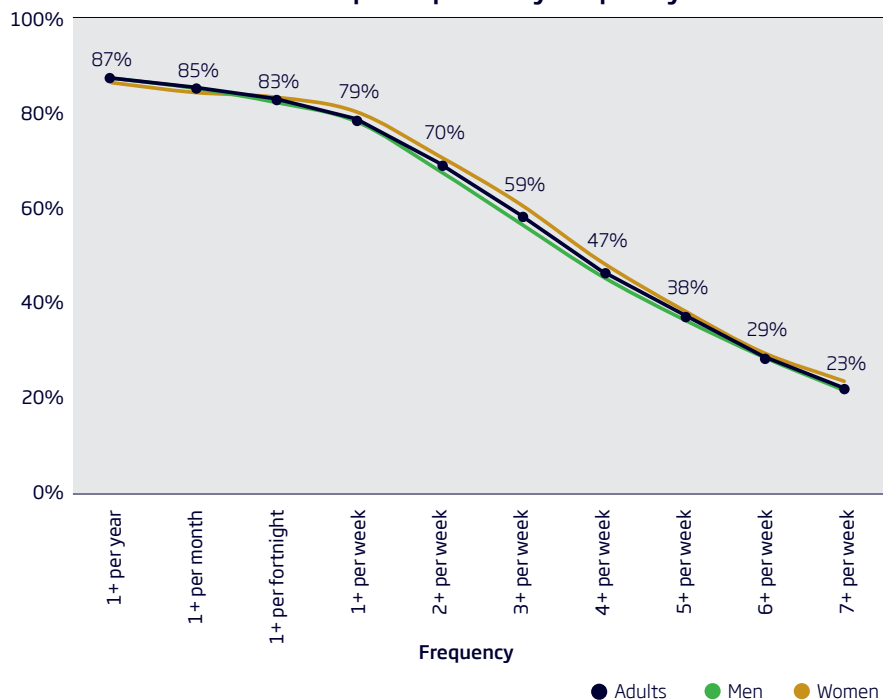
However girls 9-11 years old are slightly more likely to participate in sport or physical activity (at least once a year) compared to boys of the same age!



\* AusPlay obtained information from parents about their child's participation data. Information was not collected on children's school activities or casual play outside of school as parents would not be able to provide this information accurately.

## How often (frequency) and for how long (duration) are Australians getting active?

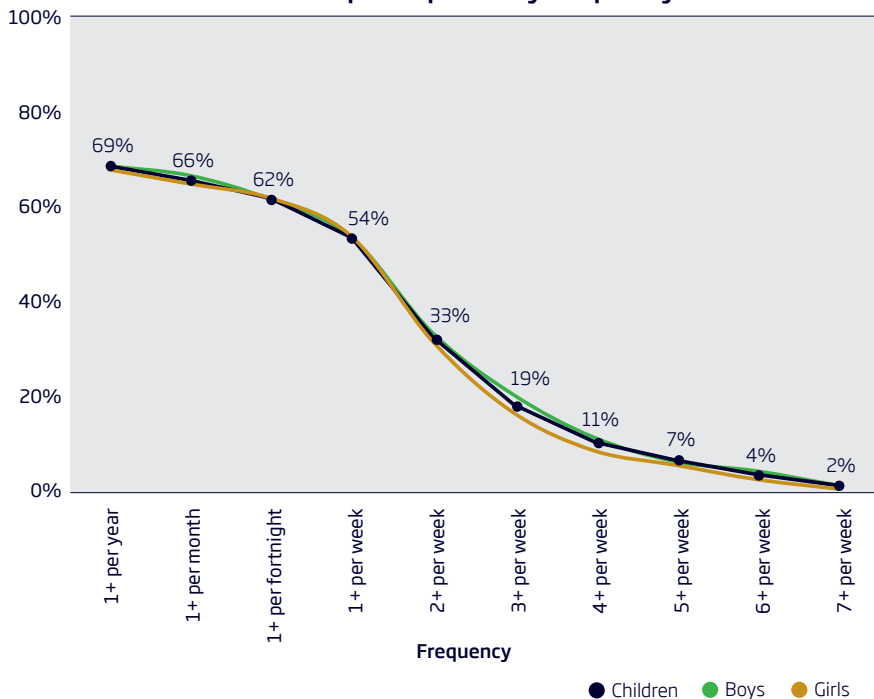
### Adult participation by frequency



11.6 million Australians (59%) aged 15 or over are participating in sport or non-sport related physical activity three or more times per week.

2.5 million Australian children (54%) aged 0 to 14 are active at least once a week through organised sport/physical activity outside of school hours. Only 19% or 0.9 million children are active at least three times per week.

### Child participation by frequency

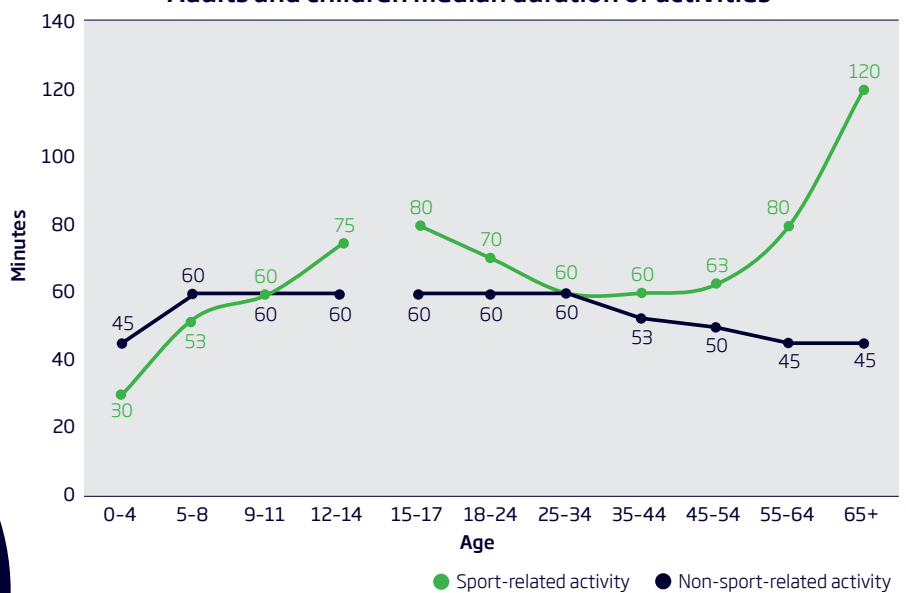


These findings highlight the critical role of sport and physical activity programs in schools to maintain satisfactory activity levels of Australian children.



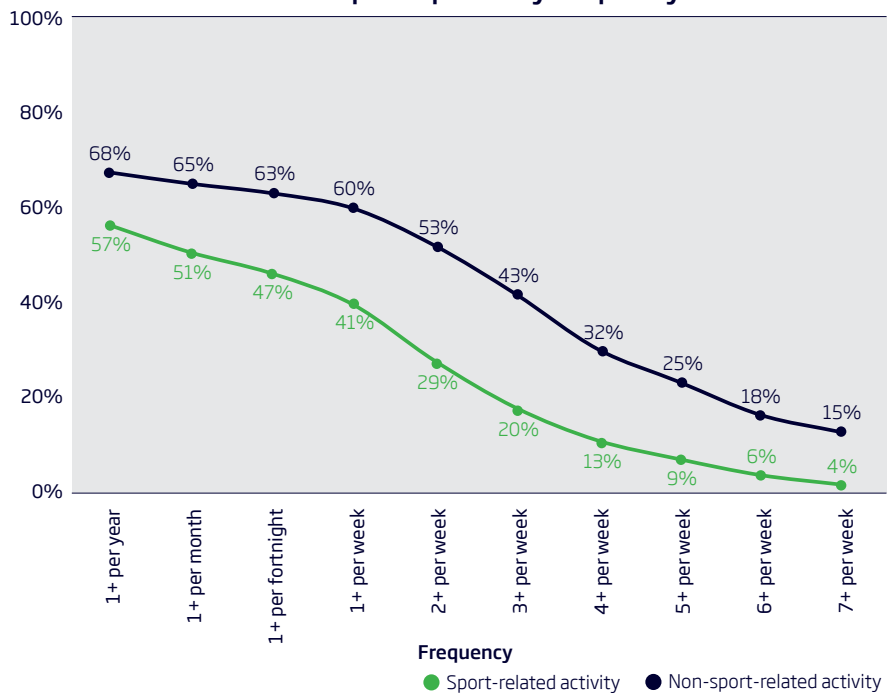


Adults and children median duration of activities



Australian adults tend to play sports for longer durations than non-sport related physical activities. However they participate in non-sport related physical activities more often than sport.

Adult participation by frequency



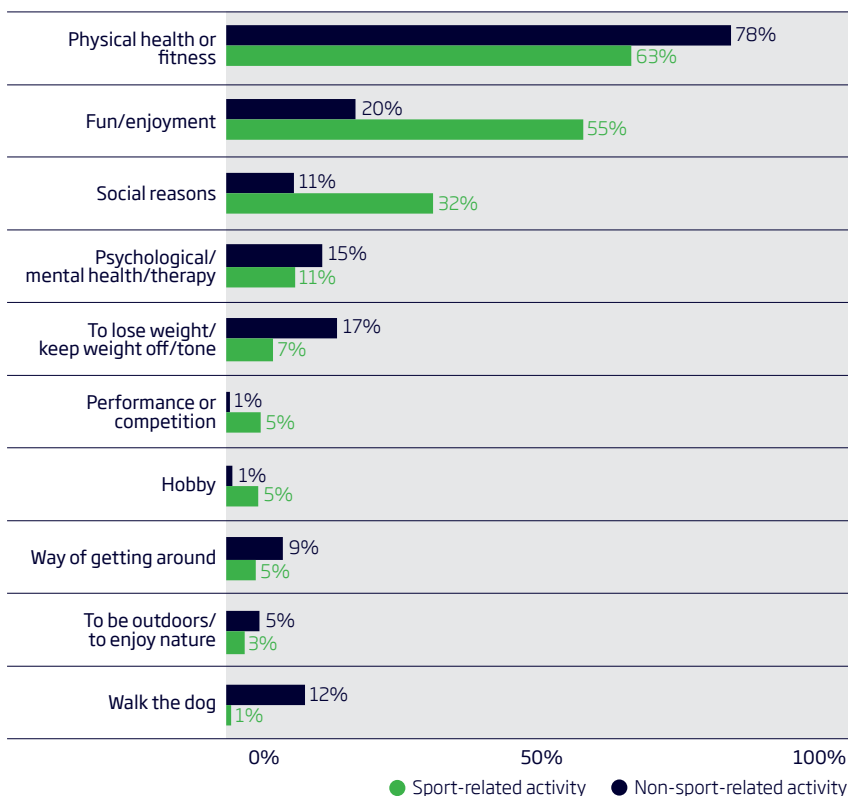
# WHAT DRIVES AUSTRALIANS TO BE ACTIVE?

Australians identify a wider range of motivations for playing sports compared to non-sport related physical activities.

Physical health or fitness is the strongest motivation for non-sport related physical activity.

And whilst this is also the lead motivation for playing sport, people are significantly more likely to also play sport for the fun/enjoyment and social aspects.

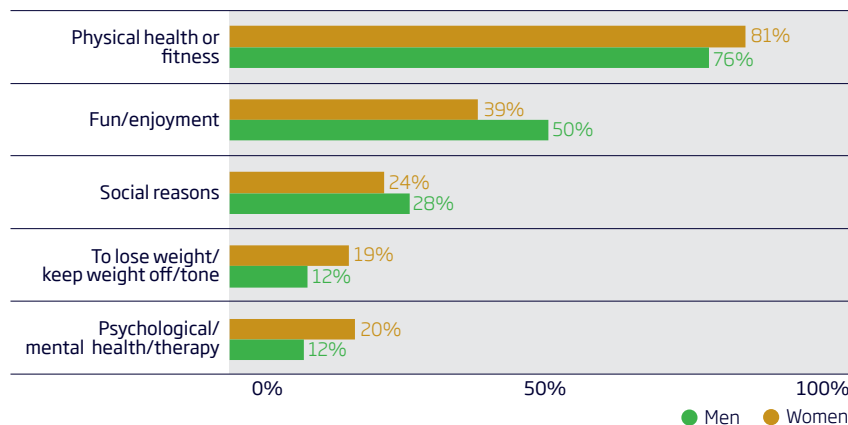
## Adult top 10 motivations for participation



Women are more likely to participate in sport or physical activity for physical and mental health reasons and to lose or maintain weight than men.

Men are more motivated by fun/enjoyment and social reasons than women.

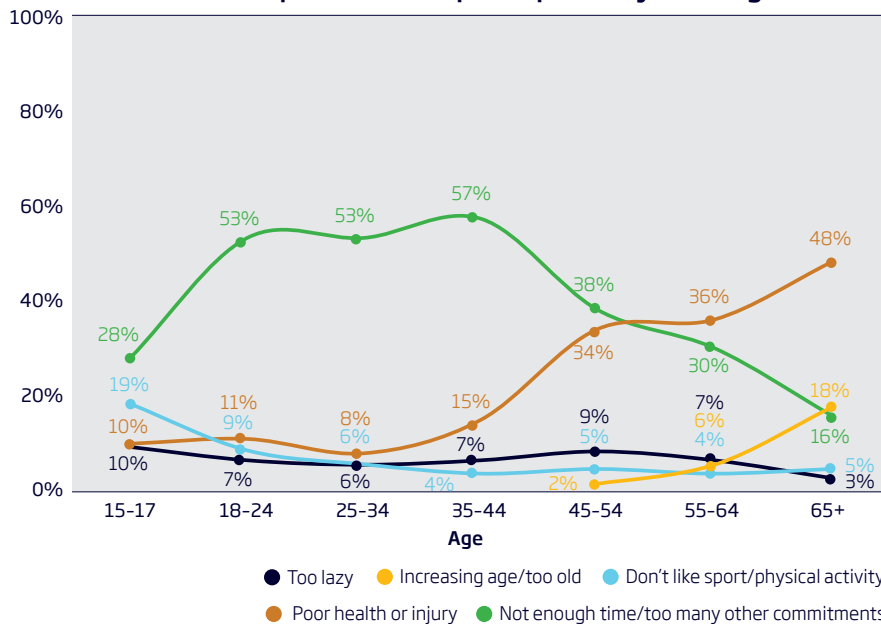
## Adult top 5 motivations for participation by gender







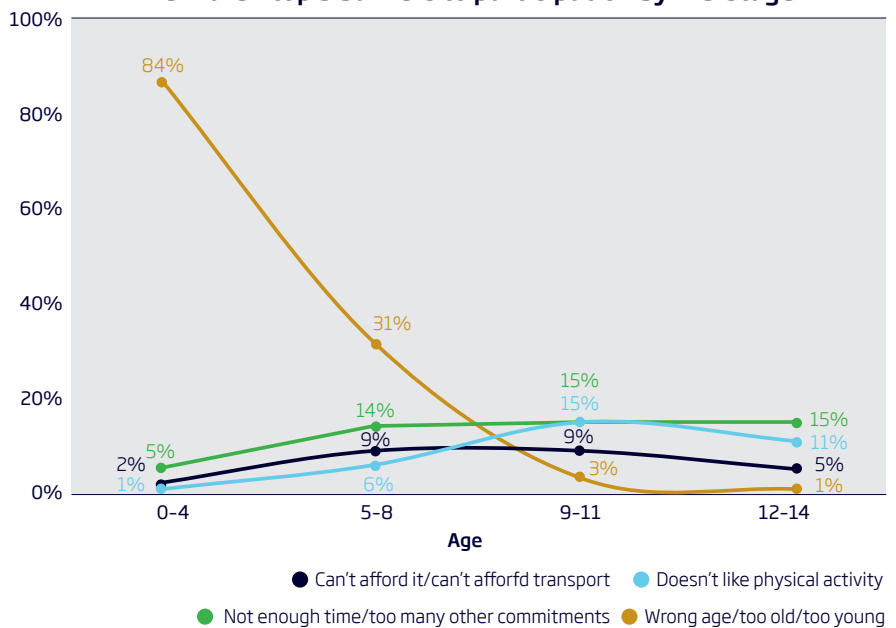
### Adult top 5 barriers to participation by life-stage



For adults up to middle-age, time pressure is by far the main barrier to participating in sport or physical activity. Poor health or injury then also becomes a main factor.

The main barrier to young children's participation in organised out of school hours sport or physical activity is their parents' perception that they are too young to start playing.

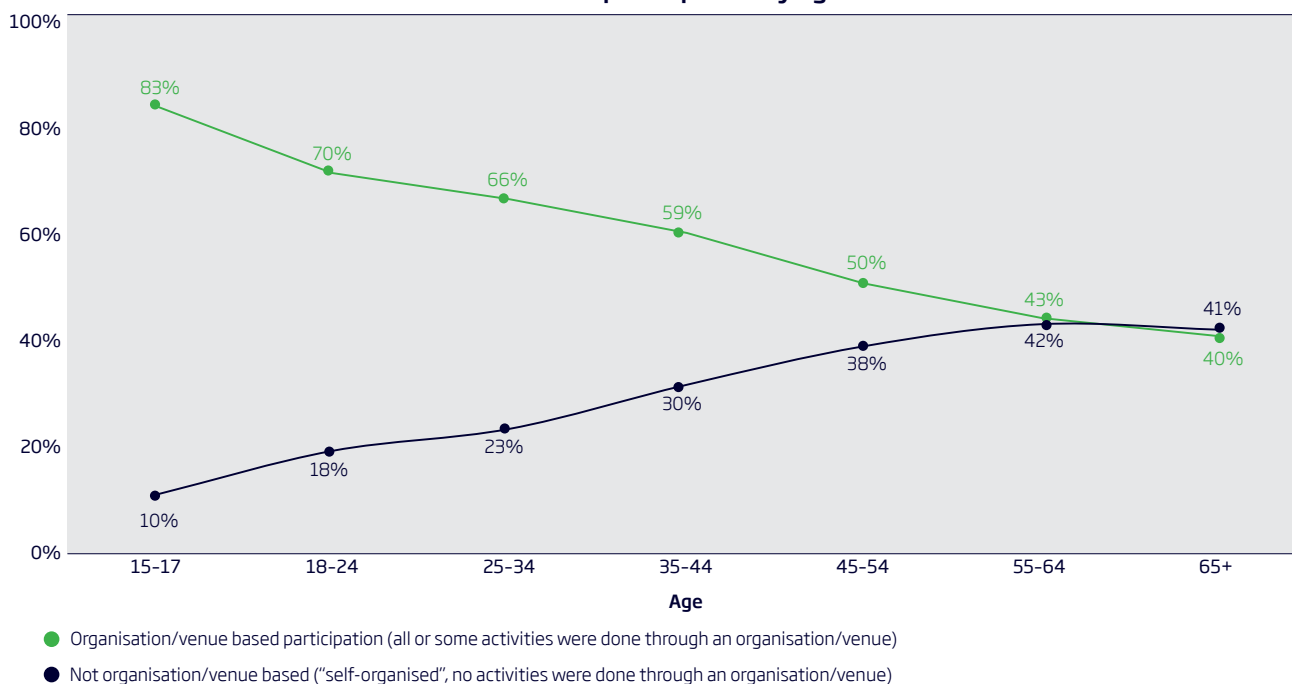
### Children top 5 barriers to participation by life-stage



# HOW DO AUSTRALIANS GET ACTIVE?

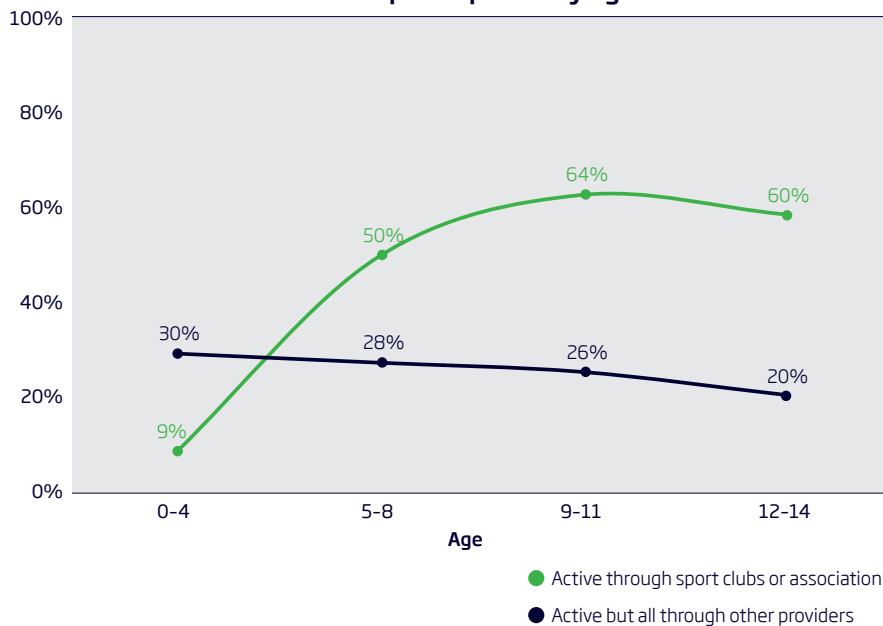
Adult participation through an organisation/venue is important across all life stages although decreases with age. Self-organised based participation becomes more important as we get older.

Adult participation by age



Sport clubs are the primary avenue for children to be active (except for children aged 0-4, who are more likely to be active through other organisations).

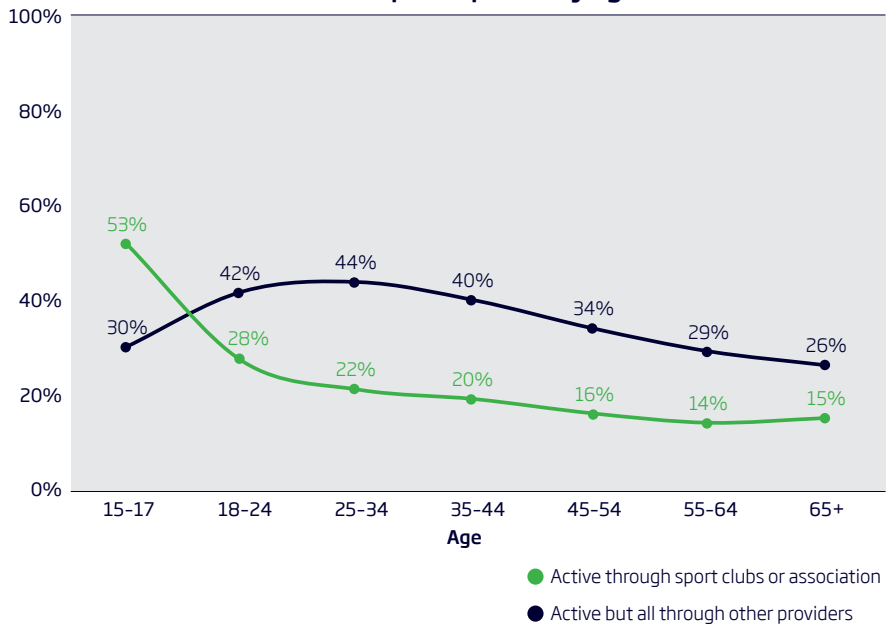
Child participation by age





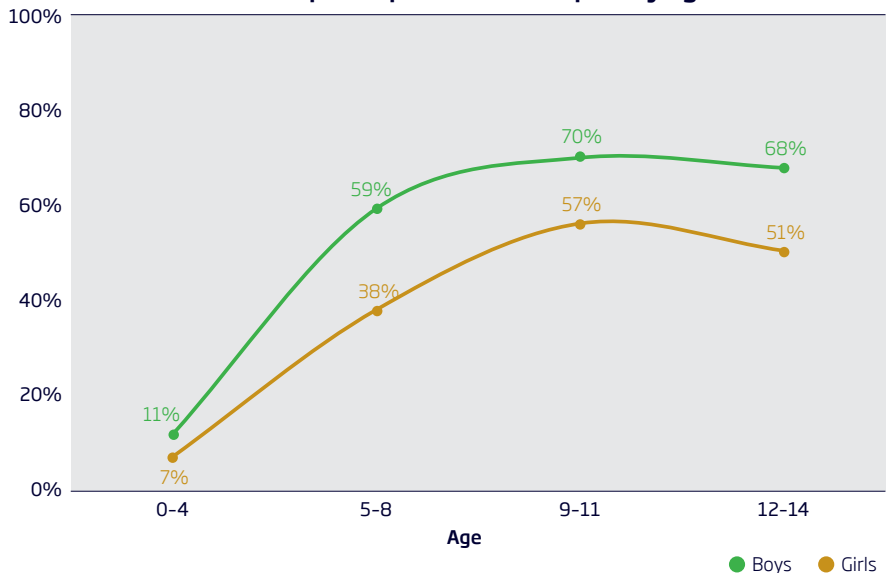
Sport clubs are not the main choice for participation in sport or physical activity in Australia for adults aged 18 years and over.

**Adult participation by age**



While sport clubs are the main avenue for both girls and boys, throughout childhood boys (50%) are more likely to be active through club sport than girls (33%).

**Child participation in club sport by age**



## HOW MUCH MONEY IS SPENT ON BEING ACTIVE?

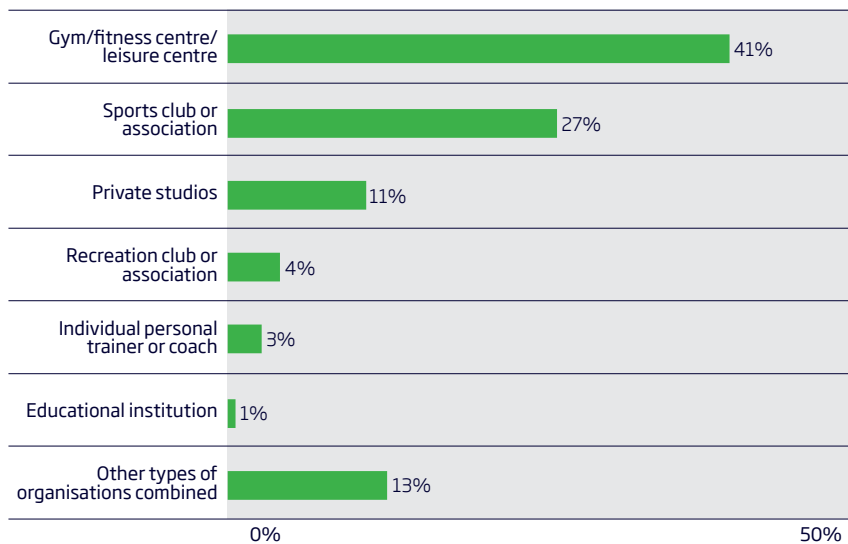
More than **\$10.7 billion** was spent by Australians on fees for participation in sport or physical activity over the past year.

**\$2.3 billion** for children and **\$8.4 billion** for adults.

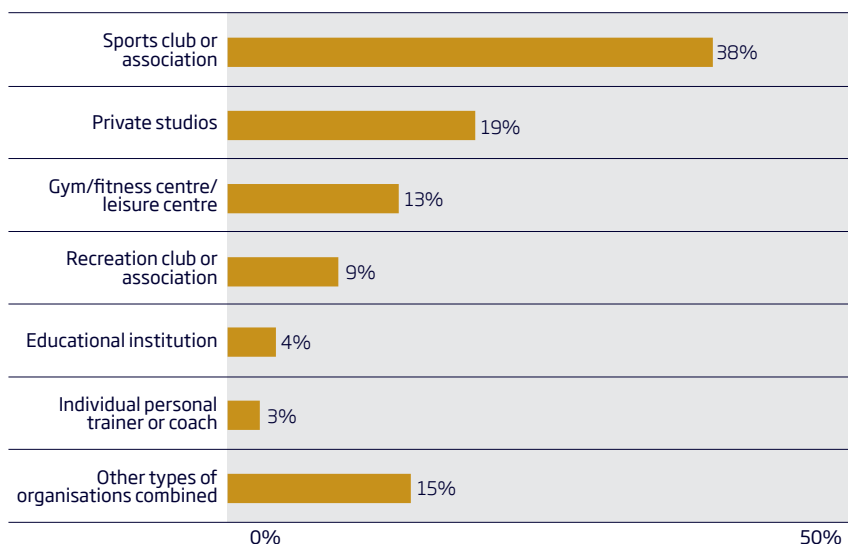
56% of adult 'players' and 95% of children 'players' have paid for participation in sport or physical activity in the last 12 months. This amounts to a total of 9.6 million adults and 3 million children paying for participation.

### So where is this money being spent?

#### Adults expenditure by organisation



#### Children expenditure by organisation





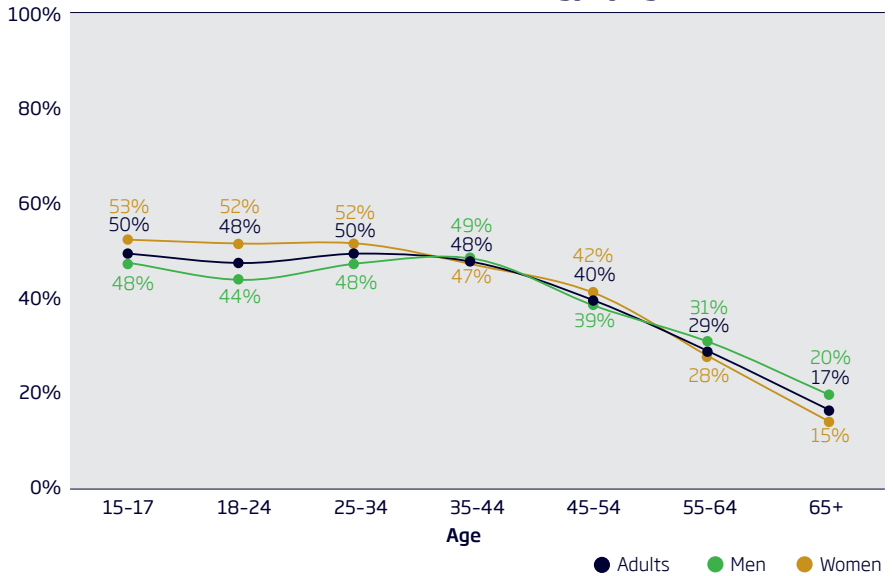
# TECHNOLOGIES ARE BEING USED TO KEEP ACTIVE

The use of technology for sport or physical activity is popular with 39% of the Australian adult 'playing' population.

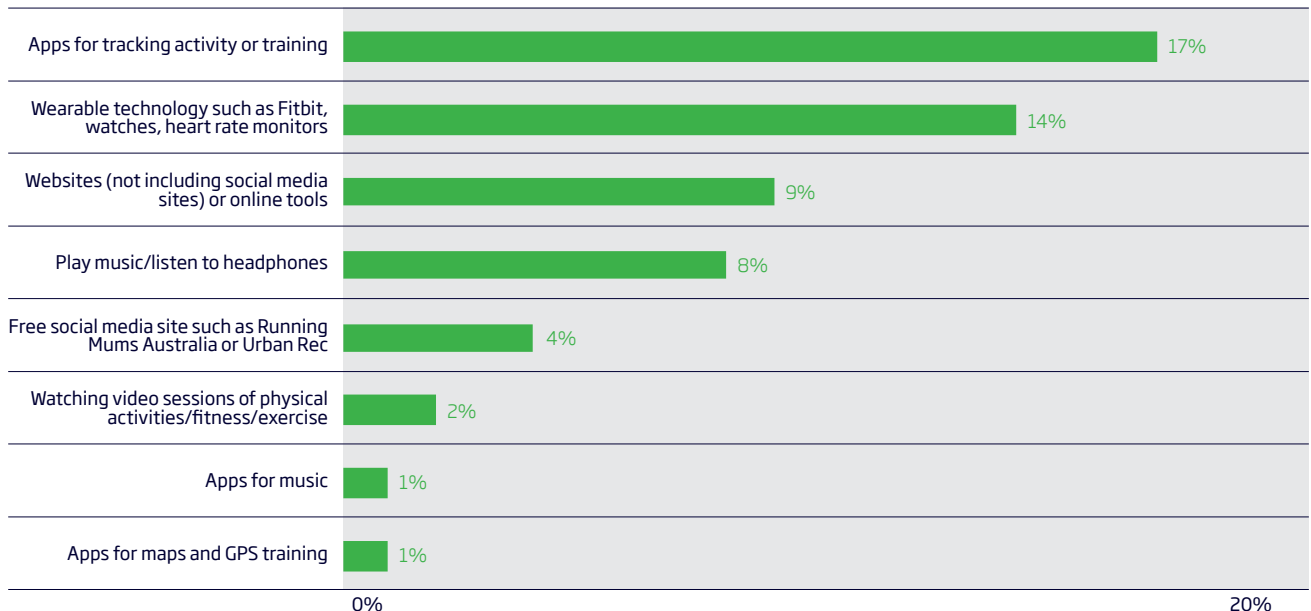
Its popularity is highest amongst younger adults, particularly younger women.

Apps for tracking activity and wearable technology are the most common types of technology used by participants.

Adults use of technology by age



Types of technology used



## MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES FOR AUSTRALIANS

These tables show the top activities (at least once a year) for different groups of the population (adults, children, gender) and various criteria (through an organisation/venue, club sport).

Adults Top 20 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Walking (recreational)	8,397,408	42.6%
Fitness/gym	6,317,614	32.1%
Athletics, track and field*	3,115,027	15.8%
Swimming	2,852,924	14.5%
Cycling	2,302,614	11.7%
Football	1,141,027	5.8%
Bush walking	1,058,061	5.4%
Golf	1,022,127	5.2%
Tennis	946,790	4.8%
Yoga	866,679	4.4%
Basketball	667,006	3.4%
Cricket	643,919	3.3%
Netball	630,638	3.2%
Surfing	528,058	2.7%
Australian football	496,829	2.5%
Pilates	489,731	2.5%
Fishing (recreational)	412,049	2.1%
Touch football	402,756	2.0%
Canoeing/kayaking	312,664	1.6%
Dancing (recreational)	269,798	1.4%

Adults through organisation/venue Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Fitness/gym	5,045,386	25.6%
Swimming	1,593,531	8.1%
Golf	888,794	4.5%
Football	825,866	4.2%
Yoga	654,830	3.3%
Tennis	611,815	3.1%
Netball	583,736	3.0%
Athletics, track and field	537,454	2.7%
Cricket	463,042	2.3%
Basketball	461,233	2.3%

Adult men Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Walking (recreational)	3,189,754	32.8%
Fitness/gym	2,785,040	28.6%
Athletics, track and field*	1,728,674	17.8%
Cycling	1,387,756	14.3%
Swimming	1,261,924	13.0%
Football	884,972	9.1%
Golf	836,606	8.6%
Cricket	571,010	5.9%
Tennis	537,917	5.5%
Bush walking	520,642	5.3%

Adult women Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Walking (recreational)	5,207,654	52.3%
Fitness/gym	3,532,574	35.4%
Swimming	1,591,001	16.0%
Athletics, track and field*	1,386,353	13.9%
Cycling	914,858	9.2%
Yoga	742,136	7.4%
Netball	562,698	5.6%
Bush walking	537,419	5.4%
Pilates	441,642	4.4%
Tennis	408,873	4.1%

Recreational walking is the most popular physical activity for Australians overall followed by fitness/gym activities.

However, fitness/gym activity is by far the most preferred activity involving some type of organisation or with access to a venue.

\*Athletics, track and field includes jogging and running



Children organised out of school hours Top 20 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Swimming	1,378,967	30.0%
Football	674,094	14.7%
Australian football	366,462	8.0%
Gymnastics	341,200	7.4%
Netball	332,018	7.2%
Dancing (recreational)	329,003	7.2%
Basketball	300,622	6.5%
Tennis	280,239	6.1%
Cricket	256,930	5.6%
Athletics, track and field	203,873	4.4%
Rugby league	126,754	2.8%
Karate	121,877	2.6%
Dance Sport	106,901	2.3%
Hockey	76,922	1.7%
Touch football	76,039	1.7%
Lifesaving surf	65,986	1.4%
Fitness/gym	59,282	1.3%
Rugby union	57,429	1.2%
Taekwondo	49,261	1.1%
Martial arts	47,279	1.0%

Children organised out of school hours - Boys Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Swimming	668,045	28.3%
Football	538,304	22.8%
Australian football	320,650	13.6%
Cricket	236,465	10.0%
Basketball	189,627	8.0%
Tennis	172,395	7.3%
Rugby league	121,387	5.1%
Karate	97,422	4.1%
Athletics, track and field	91,927	3.9%
Gymnastics	77,386	3.3%

Children organised out of school hours - Girls Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population
Swimming	710,922	31.7%
Netball	324,177	14.5%
Dancing (recreational)	308,082	13.8%
Gymnastics	263,813	11.8%
Football	135,790	6.1%
Athletics, track and field	111,946	5.0%
Basketball	110,995	5.0%
Tennis	107,844	4.8%
Dance Sport	86,222	3.8%
Australian football	45,812	2.0%

Swimming is the activity of choice for a large proportion of Australian children, ahead of football in second.



Club sport (Adults and Children combined) Top activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population	Per cent of club sport population
Football	1,086,986	4.5%	18.8%
Golf	685,732	2.8%	11.9%
Australian football	635,627	2.6%	11.0%
Netball	625,721	2.6%	10.8%
Tennis	585,751	2.4%	10.1%
Cricket	562,669	2.3%	9.7%
Basketball	532,311	2.2%	9.2%
Touch football	271,628	1.1%	4.7%
Swimming	267,890	1.1%	4.6%
Rugby league	247,883	1.0%	4.3%
Athletics, track and field	238,084	1.0%	4.1%

For sports played in sport clubs however, football is the top sport among adults and children combined.





Club sport (Adults) Top activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population	Per cent of club sport population
Golf	666,349	3.4%	17.3%
Football	535,075	2.7%	13.9%
Tennis	394,713	2.0%	10.2%
Cricket	359,501	1.8%	9.3%
Netball	354,161	1.8%	9.2%
Australian football	307,087	1.6%	8.0%
Basketball	280,728	1.4%	7.3%
Touch football	208,708	1.1%	5.4%
Bowls	195,479	1.0%	5.1%
Rugby league	131,934	0.7%	3.4%
Hockey	117,537	0.6%	3.0%

Club sport (Children) Top 10 activities	Population estimate	Per cent of population	Per cent of club sport population
Football	551,911	12.0%	28.8%
Australian football	328,540	7.1%	17.2%
Netball	271,559	5.9%	14.2%
Basketball	251,583	5.5%	13.1%
Cricket	203,168	4.4%	10.6%
Tennis	192,167	4.2%	10.0%
Swimming	191,038	4.2%	10.0%
Athletics, track and field	124,541	2.7%	6.5%
Rugby league	115,949	2.5%	6.1%
Gymnastics	109,802	2.4%	5.7%

Golf's high ranking in club sport overall is underpinned by a very high proportion of adult participation.

Football takes the biggest slice of overall club participation due to its popularity among both adults and children.

Swimming and to a lesser extent athletics rank highly in club sports thanks to club participation of children.



## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

More information about AusPlay can be accessed via the ASC's website [ausport.gov.au](http://ausport.gov.au)

Starting in 2017, the ASC will release six-monthly updates of AusPlay trend data:

- > in April every year, using data from the previous calendar year January to December
- > in October every year, using data from the previous financial year July to June.

### What else does the ASC plan to do with the data and findings from the AusPlay survey?

The ASC will work with the following groups to leverage the data generated through AusPlay and other current and past research:

- > national sporting organisations
- > state departments of sport and recreation
- > other areas of government that have an interest in data and findings from AusPlay.

Sport participation data from AusPlay will also feed directly into the ASC's annual participation investment model.



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Further questions about AusPlay can be directed to ASC's Sport Market Insights via email [AusPlay@ausport.gov.au](mailto:AusPlay@ausport.gov.au) or visiting [ausport.gov.au](http://ausport.gov.au).



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