

# CITY OF KINGSTON



## Active Leisure Plan

A plan for increasing active leisure opportunities

March 2011

The Active Leisure Plan has been developed by the City of Kingston and Sykes Humphries Consulting for specialist community consultation assistance.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Executive Summary**

The City of Kingston is a unique part of Melbourne with natural features providing appealing opportunities to participate in active leisure. With 13km's of beaches, natural wetlands, a network of parks and gardens and world class golf courses, the City of Kingston is a great place to get active.

For the first time in 2008, the City of Kingston collected information from residents and visitors regarding participation in active leisure. From the results of the survey, Kingston residents have indicated that they prefer non organized activities such as walking, jogging, cycling and swimming. Our community also likes to play golf and tennis as well as dance and yoga.

The City of Kingston and its many partners and stakeholders have been working together to provide a variety of active leisure opportunities including services, programs and facilities for residents, workers and visitors.

Opportunities have been and will continue to be designed to cater for the needs of young people, senior citizens, people of all abilities, women, shift workers and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Recent reports indicate that only 49.3% of the adult Australian population participated in regular physical activity. Surprisingly, children spend on average per fortnight (outside of school hours), 17 hours watching television and 11 hours doing other screen based activities. This is compared to an average of 5 hours playing and training for sport, 5 hours riding bikes and 6 hours riding skateboards, roller blades or scooters.

Alarmingly, the proportion of the Victorian population deemed overweight or obese is increasing. Figures suggest that 45.5 % of the population was overweight or obese in 2002, which increased to 48.7% in 2007.

As a community, the City of Kingston is in a position to make a difference and help reverse these trends.

The Active Leisure Plan aims to provide opportunities for people to become more active, with successful outcomes providing physical, mental and social benefits to our community. It is hoped that as an outcome of this strategy, awareness will be raised of the many opportunities people have to become more active.

## Contents

Introduction .....	5
Context .....	5
About Kingston .....	6
Leisure in Kingston.....	6
Existing facilities .....	6
Privately owned/operated facilities.....	6
Existing programs and services .....	7
Definition of Active Leisure.....	7
Vision .....	7
Community Values .....	7
Consultation .....	8
Key Findings from the Consultation Process.....	9

## Introduction

Extensive research and consultation was undertaken to produce the *Active Leisure Plan*, including an audit of existing leisure facilities, programs and services, and a thorough review of numerous Council, State and National Government literature regarding participation in active leisure and recreation. Extensive consultation with Kingston residents and visitors was also undertaken.

More detailed outcomes of the research and consultation undertaken can be found in the *Active Leisure Research Report*.

The *Active Leisure Plan* will build on the successful foundations laid by documents and strategies including sporting needs, leisure provision in Melbourne 2030 Activity Centres, open space planning and provision, cycling and walking facility development, and sporting pavilion provision.

It is recognised that whilst the Active Leisure Plan is an important component of improving the health and wellbeing of the community, it is not the complete or only solution to physical inactivity.

The *Active Leisure Plan* will have a five year lifespan with clearly defined objectives and principles.

## Context

Physical inactivity is a major modifiable risk factor for a range of conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers, obesity and falls among the elderly.

The evidence suggests that health benefits accrue with increasing levels of physical activity and that this protective effect occurs even if adopted in middle and later life, which suggests physical activity is an obvious target for health promotion.

According to the Victorian Population Health Survey 2007<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of persons in Victoria undertaking adequate physical activity (measured in both sufficient time and sessions) was 62.7 per cent in 2007, an increase from 57.0 per cent in 2002.

In 2007, 4.8 per cent of persons in Victoria surveyed were sedentary (i.e. did not undertake any physical activity).

In relation to being overweight or obese, the proportion of persons in Victoria categorised as overweight or obese according to the body mass index has increased overtime from 45.5 per cent in 2002 to 48.7 per cent in 2007.

The Active Leisure Strategy aims to provide opportunities for people to become more active, with successful outcomes providing physical, mental and social benefits to our community.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Human Services

## **About Kingston**

Kingston was created in December 1994 following the amalgamation of all or parts of the former cities of Moorabbin, Mordialloc, Chelsea, Springvale and Oakleigh.

The City of Kingston is a vibrant, multicultural municipality that is home to residents from over 50 nationalities living in 21 suburbs.

Covering 91 square kilometres, Kingston combines substantial residential areas with significant industrial and commercial centres, non-urban and agricultural areas, major parks and gardens and significant conservation areas, including 13 kilometres of unbroken coastline - the largest of any municipality in metropolitan Melbourne.

Kingston has a diverse population of around 149,000 people, which is growing by about 0.5% per year. More than 26,000 residents are aged over 60 – significantly more than the Melbourne average.

This ageing trend is set to continue to 2031 with a marked increase in the age categories above 55 years.

Overall, 66% of Kingston residents were born in Australia, which is higher than the Melbourne average. However, in the northern suburbs of Clayton South, Clarinda and Oakleigh there are large Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian communities.

A significant 'older' population coupled with a high proportion of migrants makes Kingston's active leisure requirements more unique than most.

The Active Leisure Plan will continue to be guided by Council's ongoing analysis of demographic information about our community. Future Infrastructure and programs provided by Council or its partners will identify specific communities to produce targeted and effective outcomes.

## **Leisure in Kingston**

### **Existing facilities**

The City of Kingston has over 300 open space locations, including parks, gardens, sports reserves, trails, playgrounds and picnic areas.

The municipality offers a range of active leisure facilities for its residents and visitors. These include the foreshore, major reserves, golf courses, leisure centres, indoor centres, open spaces areas, swimming pools and a shared path network for cycling and walking.

There are also a number of informal sporting facilities available such as public access tennis courts, basketball and netball rings, rebound walls, skate facilities and exercise equipment.

A detailed outline of the existing active leisure facilities available within Kingston is on page 14 of the *Active Leisure Plan*, including information about the key facilities by suburb.

### **Privately owned/operated facilities**

The City of Kingston comprises a number of sports centres and fitness facilities which are either privately owned and/or operated.

However, under the definition of active leisure used for the purposes of the *Active Leisure Plan* they are not considered public access facilities, which people can make use of at little to no cost either as an individual or as a member of a community group. However, these facilities do provide additional participation choices to Kingston residents.

### **Existing programs and services**

Partnerships are often formed with external agencies that assist Council to facilitate an active leisure outcome for the community that it otherwise would not be able to deliver.

Opportunities are also provided to the community by a diverse range of community based clubs and organisations such as Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, recreation clubs and informal groups such as walking and cycling groups.

As well as these not-for-profit service providers there are other commercially based groups such as indoor play centres, indoor recreation centres, indoor bowling centres and rock climbing clubs.

Each of these providers plays a role in the supply and availability of active leisure choices for people living in Kingston. In some instances private providers offer services which Council is not resourced to provide.

### **Definition of Active Leisure**

Active leisure is a broad term used to describe a lifestyle inclusive of adequate amounts of physical activity for health, social and emotional wellbeing. The Active Leisure Plan focuses on deliberate physical activity such as cycling, walking, swimming, fitness activities, jogging and organised sport.

Physical activity can be divided into two types of activities, both of which are considered under the Active Leisure Plan:

1. Recreational Activities - a non competitive activity undertaken in ones leisure time including walking the dog, swimming, jogging, fitness activities, cycling, dance etc.
2. Organised Sport – a competitive activity undertaken in accordance with rules, is structured and requires specific facilities, venues or equipment. Participation in organised sport could include playing football, netball, cricket, golf, tennis, basketball etc.

### **Vision**

Opportunities will be available to residents of and visitors to the City of Kingston to participate in physical activity in either competitive or non competitive activities with the aim of contributing to positive physical, mental and social health outcomes to the community.

### **Community Values**

The following community values with regard to active leisure were identified:

- Maintain and upgrade existing active leisure facilities over building new ones.

- Council's role should be to provide good quality active leisure facilities for all residents.
- Provision of information about active leisure groups and opportunities that exist in the municipality.
- Where a need is identified, new active leisure activities should be encouraged.
- A balance between provision of opportunities to participate in active leisure, non-active leisure (such as: theatre, music, galleries) and sport should be achieved.
- Underused facilities should be rationalised and the financial savings put into other active leisure priorities.
- Access to active leisure facilities in each suburb and better use of school facilities for active leisure purposes.

## **Consultation**

In conjunction with specialist leisure planning firm, Sykes Humphries Consulting, extensive research and consultation was carried out with community organisations and individuals. The results of this work have helped inform the plan.

A range of community engagement and consultation methods were used to gather information about the Kingston community's active leisure participation habits, needs and values with respect to active leisure opportunities and facilities. The methods used included:

- Household Survey  
*The survey was distributed to 4,000 residents through a proportional distribution process. Almost 650 surveys were returned. The surveys provided an opportunity for random sampling of residents across the municipality.*
- Stakeholder Survey  
*This survey was distributed to 32 registered stakeholders and provided an opportunity for these interested individuals and organisations to provide input about their experiences about active leisure.*
- Kingston Village Committee Survey  
*This survey gave each of the 10 Village Committees in Kingston the opportunity to share their knowledge about local active leisure needs and issues. Two Village Committees responded.*
- Child Centred Consultation  
*This method targeted children through teachers and carers whom they have regular contact with. It boosted child participation in the community consultation process. Contact was made with 10 local schools.*
- Key Stakeholder Interviews  
*These were conducted to collect qualitative information from a range of stakeholders. Interviews were held with 19 agencies.*

- Focus Groups  
*Focus Groups were used to test the assumptions of the findings arising from the consultation processes. These targeted four different groups within the community; Older Adults, Young People and Youth, People with a Disability and Women.*
- Intercept Surveying  
*In addition to the four Focus Groups, Visitors and Tourists were targeted through a series of 'in-field, intercept' discussions held at key locations along the Kingston Foreshore.*

## Key Findings from the Consultation Process

Below is a summary of the key findings which were drawn from the entire community consultation process.

Issue	Discussion Points
<b>Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking is identified as the most common activity undertaken among all age groups with 62% of the total population participating.</li> <li>• Cycling (24%) and swimming (pool) (22%) are the second most common activities.</li> <li>• People mostly participate in active leisure activities within their suburb (33%) or within the City of Kingston (33%).</li> <li>• People mainly participate during weekday evenings and mid morning and afternoons during the weekend.</li> <li>• Older adults prefer to participate within an environment that is social and relaxed.</li> <li>• People with a disability travel further to access quality facilities and services.</li> <li>• Key stakeholders prioritised accessible and available opportunities to meet the community's needs as an important factor to increase participation.</li> <li>• Key stakeholders encourage active communities, with the added aims of reducing social isolation and increasing community engagement.</li> <li>• Visitors and tourists access Kingston foreshore for a range of recreational activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers to participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time is an identified barrier that stops people from participating.</li> <li>• Cost of participation was identified as another barrier.</li> <li>• A lack of awareness as to the opportunities and lack of available information was noted as a barrier.</li> <li>• People with a disability generally encounter more barriers to participation, such as accessibility and limited options available.</li> <li>• Participation barriers for specific activities were noted as:</li> </ul>

Issue	Discussion Points
	<p>swimming (pool) lack of facilities (29%) and cycling lack of safety (23%).</p>
<p><b>Information and promotion of active leisure opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community agrees (80%) that more information is needed about active leisure groups and opportunities that exist in the municipality.</li> <li>• A council approach to streamlined promotions of opportunities within the City of Kingston, plus the ability to work in partnership and network with other leisure providers in the area, was noted as a need by key stakeholders and supported by community members.</li> <li>• A range of promotional methods need to be utilised to communicate opportunities to the community, while noting accessibility requirements for people with a disability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilities and open space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of school facilities with community is encouraged by the Office of Government School Education and supported by community members: 'better use should be made of school facilities for active leisure purposes' (67%).</li> <li>• Multi use facilities providing a range of services, opportunities and accessibility for all users was noted as important by older adults, children, people with disabilities and a range of key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Demand for an indoor public heated pool was recorded as high through the Household Survey. This was supported by the need for a hydrotherapy pool at Waves Leisure Centre.</li> <li>• Children and young people want more open space to play and get together, catering for a range of age groups and not limited to young children.</li> <li>• Community members prioritise maintaining and upgrading existing current facilities over building new ones (64%).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues relating to active leisure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members noted that priority should be given to the following groups in relation to active leisure provision: teenagers, people with low incomes, people who have limited social/family contacts and children.</li> <li>• A lack of awareness and community understanding of active leisure facilities, services and programs was an ongoing theme during the consultation process, impacting participation, organisations, promotion and community engagement.</li> <li>• A need was expressed for quality (accessible, available and resourced) active leisure opportunities for people with a disability and those with health issues within the City of Kingston.</li> <li>• Requirement for safe and useable facilities (including roads, streets and pathways, whether shared or single use) was suggested for effective promotion of cycling and walking within the City of Kingston.</li> </ul>

Issue	Discussion Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was demand for funding, resourcing and promotion of active leisure providers.</li> <li>• There are limited opportunities for the lower socio-economic groups, taking into consideration individual circumstances of health, family requirements, public transport and motivation factors.</li> <li>• Cleanliness and maintenance of public areas and facilities was noted by a range of people as a requirement for participation (children, visitors and tourists, supported by a key stakeholder).</li> </ul>
<b>Trends identified</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends indicate an increasing number of people riding bikes, whether recreationally or as a mode of transport.</li> <li>• Key stakeholders are utilising the process of community engagement to plan and deliver community focused active leisure opportunities.</li> <li>• In response to the increasing incidence of childhood obesity, there is a need to raise awareness of active leisure as a way to stay healthy, while having fun and spending time with friends and family.</li> <li>• The ageing population influences types of programs offered, programming times, higher needs of some older participants and the resources required to deliver active leisure opportunities to older adults.</li> <li>• “Come and try” days and family activities were noted as a way to increase participation. This also supports participation of women, as family circumstances shape how and when women participate.</li> <li>• Young people enjoy participating in leisure activities with family and friends and it is acknowledged that this has a range of social and health benefits.</li> <li>• A whole of community approach is required for the planning, delivery and development of leisure opportunities.</li> </ul>