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# It's Your Move!

East Geelong / Bellarine Youth Project

Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

**Implementation Report 11 – Getting Active**

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This report was produced for the **It's Your Move!** Project.

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## Objective

*To increase participation in organised sports and other active recreation.*

## Introduction

In 2005, over 3,000 adolescents across the Barwon-South Western region of Victoria completed a knowledge, attitude and behavioural survey. It contained questions about nutrition, physical activity and body image. Schools also completed a School Environmental Audit that assessed indicators of curriculum, policies, canteens, indoor and outdoor facilities, and staff perceptions of healthy eating and physical activity within their school. The baseline data (2005) relating to the getting active objective of the action plan showed:

- 17% of students were physically active on every day of the last five school days
- 50 % of students were active at least 3-4 days of their school week
- 41% of students said that their school strongly encouraged them to be involved in school sports activities
- 40% of students said that their teachers were 'ok' as role models for healthy eating and physical activity
- 70% of students said their school 'sometimes' tried to encourage them to be physically active at school
- two of the five intervention schools had a physical activity policy
- four of the five intervention schools allowed external clubs to utilise their facilities outside of school hours
- a majority of the Principals reported that their Health and Physical Education teachers attend the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Conference as their main Professional Development event.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the strategies used towards achieving the getting active objective of the action plan within the five intervention schools. Intervention activities are outlined in the project's action plan (see Implementation Report 2 – Action Plan) and were typically developed collaboratively between the Project Coordinator, School Project Officers, Ambassadors, staff and Principals. Baseline data helped to inform the interventions.





## **Summary of intervention strategies**

### ***1. Parent information***

Information about the importance and types of physical activity, programs and events were regularly placed in school newsletters and on noticeboards (see Implementation Report 4 - Social Marketing).

### ***2. School policies for drop-off zones***

This strategy is covered in Implementation Report 10 – Walking and Cycling.

### ***3. School policies on participation***

Two of the five intervention schools have formal policies on participation in sport and physical education. The other three have an expectation of their students which is documented in the school diaries as guidelines/expectations for participation in sport and physical education. How tightly these are enforced is dependent on the school.

### ***4. School rules and systems to support facility/equipment use***

This strategy was not required to be implemented because baseline data from the School Environmental Audit showed that all intervention schools had some sort of borrowing system for their sports equipment during lunchtime.

### ***5. Partnership programs with clubs and the Physical Education Teachers Professional Development Network***

In 2005, the current curriculum was in a state of transition between the Curriculum Standards Framework and the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards. In this period, each subject required new units of work to be developed that incorporated the revised teaching & learning and assessment requirements. The Project Coordinator identified the double handling of the development of these units of work and invited the Physical Education (PE) Coordinators to an after-school meeting to discuss whether the process could be refined. It was suggested one school could develop a unit of work on all of the ball sports for example whilst another school develop a unit of work in another area. Of the five PE Coordinators across the schools, only two attended this meeting. After school meetings are a challenge, but it was agreed that there was merit in linking up the five schools in some way.



A decision to create a Physical Education Teachers Professional Development Network was made and supported. A draft design of the network was developed whereby each school would host a Professional Development session each year for the other schools, paid from their own budget. Some sessions could be conducted during the teacher's allocated Professional Learning Teams time.

In February 2006, the Project Coordinator met with Leisure Networks to gauge their interest to further develop and coordinate this network. Leisure Networks decided that piloting the network corresponded with their core business and that the opportunity of working with secondary schools, in particular teachers and students was worth attempting.

Leisure Networks provided a letter and a list of available sport & physical activity sessions to the PE Coordinators, who then discussed the list with their PE staff (Appendix A). Each of the PE Coordinators was asked to rank their top 10 choices, out of a possible 25 sports that they would like to do. Of the sports on offer, the top 10 consisted of badminton, touch rugby, minor games, first aid, football, netball, soft lacrosse, gymnastics and hockey. Additionally, the possibility of conducting the Inclusive Coaching Workshop was raised.

Once choices were returned, Leisure Networks contacted each of the PE Coordinators to decide on the sport, date and time to host the session at their school. Once decided these details were then circulated among the PE teachers, Principals and School Project Officers.

Only three were conducted. Details are outlined below:

Geelong High School held touch rugby (28 attended)  
Newcomb Secondary College held minor games (33 attended)  
Saint Ignatius College held badminton (13 staff attended)

In 2008, there were a number of attempts to provide similar Professional Development sessions. Emails and phone calls were placed to the Physical Education Coordinators, with few responses. It was realised that this strategy required a driver to meet with the PE Coordinator and other PE teachers to organise the sessions, ensuring that it met their needs and could be conducted according to their time frame. Unfortunately, Leisure Networks did not have the capacity to coordinate and organise these sessions. Hence, in 2008 there were no sessions scheduled.

## **6. Lunchtime activities**

All of the intervention schools at some stage conducted a series of lunchtime activities over a school term. These were made available for interested students at no cost. The activities included yoga, dance, martial arts, tug-of-war games, tabloid sports, castles/bombardment competitions, volleyball,



netball, soccer and basketball tournaments. Like the healthy eating activities, these started with a high level of interest and enthusiasm from the students, but soon tapered off as the weeks went on.

Activities such as yoga, saw an average of 15 – 20 students in the initial weeks, but by the end of term numbers diminished to 10 -12 students. The larger tournaments were usually conducted for a specific year level i.e. a Year 7 indoor soccer tournament was coordinated by the Ambassador at one school. Most of these tournaments ended with the top team getting to play against the staff in the overall grand final.

### Case Study 1 Newcomb Secondary College

At Newcomb Secondary College, the School Project Officer was contacted by the Courthouse Theatre Company to offer lunchtime dance sessions (funded by the 'Go for your life' – Body Image/Office for Youth \$5,000 Grant Scheme). The aim of this program known as *SWERVE: Dance and physical theatre for young people* project, provided access to training in dance, movement and physical theatre for young people from diverse communities within the Geelong region. SWERVE aimed to empower young people to express their cultural and social diversity and collectively address issues of isolation and disengagement from physical activity and the community through collaborative performances. The project incorporated a series of small public performances, leading to a major performance at the conclusion of the two year project.

From Newcomb Secondary College, about 12 girls continued their involvement over the two the years, with one going on to join the senior dance company run by the Courthouse.

Conducting this program relied on a number of factors: a teacher giving up their lunchtime for required supervision; availability of the venue; lag time promoting/organising students; and having someone to provide the continual motivation and encouragement for students to keep being involved. On the whole, these activities are not sustainable yet provided short term activities for students to be involved with. They did play a role in large scale project such as *It's Your Move!* but they need to lead on to more permanent activities such as joining local sporting and activity clubs.

## **7. 'Go for your life' Bus**

In 2007, the Victorian Government, through the 'Go for your life' initiative launched a mobile education centre that visited primary and secondary schools to promote the healthy eating and physical activity. Of the five intervention schools, four had the mobile unit (bus) visit their school once during the project. A total of 30 classes (with an average of 25 students) participated in a one hour session. Activities included skipping and minor games. Additionally students could listen to information about sweet drinks and being healthy everyday.



These visits required a high level of organisation as the session did not always correspond with the students Physical Education teaching times. They required notification to all of the staff about the level of disruption to the daily timetable for that day.

## **8. Youth Membership for Swim, Sport and Leisure Centres**

Throughout the project there were a number of ideas put to local government (City of Greater Geelong). The idea of a developing up a youth membership program emerged as a potential strategy as links already existed with the Manager of one Swim, Sport and Leisure Centre and of other centres near the intervention schools. The proposed program was to develop school visits (for orientation) and 10 visit passes and at a low enough cost so that they could go on to a direct debit membership

In July 2007, the Project Coordinator met with the Manager of Swim, Sport and Leisure at Council to discuss the potential to pilot this youth membership program at one centre located within walking distance to one of the intervention schools. The Manager showed interest in the program and agreed to discuss it with Centre Management at the proposed pilot venue.

The Project Coordinator then met with the two Centre Managers to discuss the proposal further. For the orientation component, it was agreed that students would attend a four visit program which would include participating in a class from the Les Mills program e.g. Body Combat/Pump, Crank/Spin (bike) class, time in the gym and either a session in the pool/or repeat another session. If students were interested after the orientation, then they would be offered the opportunity of buying a 10 visit pass. If they chose to take up this option, there would be an additional cost for a weight training program/assessment and their membership would only entitle them to attend certain aerobics/revolution classes. For the gym, it was also discussed that if there were a number of students interested in taking up weights/fitness programs then a 'special youth time' from 4-5pm would be implemented. This would allow instructors to provide guidance on technique and etiquette in the gym and potentially encourage more girls into this space. NB: students would have to show their student card to be entitled to such an offer. Once the 10 visit pass was up, then a staff member would follow up with the student to encourage them to take up the direct debit option.

Of the five schools, a Physical Education teacher from one school took two Year 9 classes during one term to the Centre. One was a 'No Gear, No Sweat' class and a 'Men in Sport Class'. Over 30 boys attended three sessions (Body Combat, Body Pump and Crank Classes) at the Centre. Instead each of the students having to pay the Centre for the orientation program, the teacher was provided with a set rate (\$) for each session. This was somewhat problematic as some students did not attend or pay for all of the sessions. For the boys, they particularly enjoyed the Body Combat and Crank classes, whereas the Body Pump class required more assistance in



technique and coordination. For this group of boys, it is not known whether any of them took up the options of buying a 10 visit pass or direct debit membership.

The City of Greater Geelong has now implemented a youth membership option for all centres in which members can sign onto a monthly direct debit membership.

## Key Learnings and Recommendations

A number of students participated in lunchtime activities offered throughout *It's Your Move!* The success and overall participation in these activities often depended on the duration and intensity of the promotion (usually by the Ambassadors) and organisation and supervision by the School Project Officer and other staff. For the students who chose not to get involved (mostly the senior females) the response was often due to the social opportunities that recess and lunchtime offered. As 67% of students at baseline already physically active more than three days of the week, it was always going to be a challenge to get them involved in additional activities or link them with other clubs and organisations.

At a school level, 40% of students said that physical education teachers strongly encouraged them to get involved with a number of in physical activities such as borrowing equipment; school/ interschool sport; lunchtime activities and physical education classes. In terms of the policy, two schools had a written policy, but the other three had an unwritten expectation of their students for participation in activities. At one school, students were expected to participate in greater than 80% of their physical education classes, attend the swimming and athletic sports and take part in at least two interschool sports a year. Whether or not this is enforced with consequences is unknown. Further work is required in terms of the policy to ensure that the school continues to provide the required time for physical education, keeps students physically active and re-engage those students who opt out of physical education.

40% of students said that their teachers were 'ok' role models for healthy eating and physical activity. Further investigation of this perception found that the students often thought about teacher other than Health and Physical Education teachers when answering this question. Hence, in terms of improving this perception, potential activities such as teacher versus student games and getting involved in other games certainly elevated positive role modelling among the students.

In relation to professional development, the physical education teachers welcomed the opportunity to have such sessions conducted at their school for their staff. The challenges identified with having such a network included the number of phone and email contacts to confirm the session/facilitator/other schools; venue; weather/seasonality; ensuring that it linked with their curriculum; clashes with other meetings/report writing or other commitments



after school. Overcoming these issues usually required continual communication between the Project Coordinator, Leisure Networks and the School Project Officer to ensure that the sessions were well promoted and attended.

## **Conclusion**

For this objective it is evident that building links with Physical Education teachers are critical to the integration of resources, creating networks and organising lunchtime activities within a school. Having them support the project and its objectives has ensured that a number of interventions have had an influence on the wider school population.





## Appendix A: Letter to Physical Education Teachers



Dear Physical Education Coordinator,

'It's Your Move!' is a project that promotes healthy eating patterns, regular physical activity and healthy bodies amongst youth. The project has been conducted in your child's school as well as four other schools in the East Geelong/Bellarine District over the past year and a half and will continue until the end of 2008. The schools involved include Bellarine Secondary College, Catholic Regional College, Christian College Bellarine, Geelong High School and Newcomb Secondary College. The project is also part of an international collaboration with similar programs in Auckland, Fiji and Tonga.

'It's Your Move!' encourages teenagers to take ownership, control and suggest the best ways forward to address healthy eating healthy bodies and physical activity. Already the students attending these schools have been instrumental in getting the project off the ground by conducting various activities and programs.

'It's Your Move!' is now able to offer staff the opportunity to get involved. A partnership has been developed between Leisure Networks and IYM allowing us to offer a variety of Professional Development Sessions at your school, at your preferred time, at a very low cost.

It is hoped that each school is able to identify two sports (list attached) that would be of benefit to their staff PD Program eg. netball or hockey. School's then nominate the dates and times suitable to host the session. A qualified facilitator will then come and conduct the session, provide a practical experience and leave handouts of the relevant skills or drills (where affordable) and contacts for local clubs etc.

The PD sessions selected by the other participating IYM schools will be open for your PE staff to attend (if the time suits). Simply, your school hosts and pays for two sessions, but could attend a further eight sessions at other IYM schools.

Attached is a list of sports / activities that we able to offer in partnership with Leisure Networks. Please complete the required information and preferences in order of one to ten. A list of PD sessions at each of the participating schools, with dates, times and venues will then be developed and forwarded to you.

These PD sessions will also allow an opportunity to network with other PE teachers and to also engage trained coaches into potentially supporting inter - school sporting competition.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Brooke Williams from Leisure Networks (5224 9925) or myself on 0439 952562.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Mathews & Brooke Williams





School: \_\_\_\_\_

PE Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

School Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Staff attending: \_\_\_\_\_

### List of Sports / Activities available:

Please number preferences 1 to 10 (1 being most preferred activity)

- |                                     |                                    |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Netball    | <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football   | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball  | <input type="checkbox"/> Badminton   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis     | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics | <input type="checkbox"/> Archery     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby     | <input type="checkbox"/> Touch Rugby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gridiron   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bocce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handball   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacrosse  | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball  |

Other sessions include:

- ☐ CPR Update      ☐ Inclusive Coaching Workshop

List the time and dates that suit your staff:

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List the Sports / Activities that you would be prepared to host:

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Please return your form to your 'It's Your Move' School Project Officer in your school or to Louise Mathews c/o Newcomb Secondary College, Bellarine Highway, Newcomb, 3219 by the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 2007, to allow a timeline to be distributed in line with each schools requests.