

Men's health and wellbeing Consultation

Response Form

Published by Policy & Coordination Branch, Victorian Government Department of Health

© Department of Health, Victoria 2010

This work is copyright. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*; any process without written permission may reproduce no part.

Authorised by the State Government of Victoria, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

Introduction

The issues and framework outlined in the background paper form a starting point for the development of the Victorian Men's health and wellbeing strategy.

Please use this response form to provide us with feedback that will assist in developing the strategy. You can answer as many or as few questions as you like and use additional space as required.

- **Part A** provides you with information about how to provide your submission
- **Part B** asks you to supply information about yourself/or the organisation on whose behalf you are responding
- **Part C** presents a set of questions about which we are seeking your comment

Part A: How to send in a submission to the Men's health and wellbeing consultation

This template is provided to assist you to respond to the Men's health and wellbeing background paper.

Submissions close 5 pm Monday 31 May 2010.

Submissions can be emailed to: diversity@health.vic.gov.au

or sent by post to:

Jennifer Phan
20/50 Lonsdale Street
Policy Communication and Projects Branch
Department of Health
MELBOURNE VICTORIA 3000

Please include an electronic version of the submission on CD in MS Word format if submitting by post.

Part B: Information to help us understand your response

- If you are providing an individual response fill in section **A** below
- If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group, fill in section **B** below

So that we can better understand the information we collect, we would like to know a little about you, your interest in men's health and where you live. This latter information will help us understand if there are differences in different areas of Victoria.

None of the information we are collecting will be used to identify you and everything you tell us will be treated confidentially unless you indicate that you want your submission treated as a public document.

A. Individual responses

Cross the 'Yes' or 'No' box to indicate if you agree to your submission being treated as a public document.

Yes No

Cross the 'Yes' or 'No' box to indicate if you agree to the information you provide being cited in the Men's health and wellbeing strategy:

Yes No

What is your postcode?

If you would like to be acknowledged as a contributor to the Men's health and wellbeing strategy, please provide details below.

Name: _____

Address
(optional): _____

Please indicate which of the following best describes you (place an X in relevant box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of the public
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health professional
<input type="checkbox"/>	Researcher/academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community services worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Men's health advocate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

B. For organisational or group responses

Are you providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group?

Yes No

If yes, please provide details below.

Men's Health & Wellbeing Consultation – Response Form

Contact name: Anthony Bowd

Organisation name: vicsport

Address: Level 3, Sports House

375 Albert Postcode: 3205
Road

Email: anthonyb@vicsport.asn.au

Cross the 'Yes' or 'No' box to indicate if you agree to your submission being treated as a public document.

Yes

No

Cross the 'Yes' or 'No' box to indicate if you agree to the information you provide being cited in the Men's health and wellbeing strategy:

Yes

No

Part C: Key areas for comment

1. Service delivery and orientation

- a. In what ways can health services ensure that they better understand and meet the health needs of men? This may include areas such as:
- flexible service delivery and outreach
 - marketing of services to men
 - provision of health information directed towards men
 - staff training and development.

Your comments:

According to the World Health Organisation, participating regularly in physical activity has been shown to benefit an individual's health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity is important in reducing the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and stroke, obesity, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, preferably every day of the week, to obtain health benefits. Participation in sports and physical recreation also provides important leisure and social activities for many people.

In 2005–06, 10.5 million Australians aged 15 years and over (66%) took part in sports and physical recreation. These included 29% of the population (or 4.7 million) who regularly participated more than twice a week and 36% (or 5.8 million) who participated up to twice a week. The remainder, approximately 5.5 million people (34%), reported that they did not participate in any such activity in the 12 months. (ABS)

Despite the large number of people participating in sport and recreation and the well known health benefits that accrue from it, anecdotal evidence suggests that many people are unaware of the National Physical Activity Guidelines. An awareness campaign designed to alert people of the 30 minutes per day exercise requirement would help deliver significant health and cost benefits to society.

In Victoria there are approx 16,000 registered sporting clubs and associations providing an ideal avenue to outreach, deliver and market health services to all members of the community (including males). There are a number of successful examples which demonstrate how this can occur including the Sun Smart and Quit campaigns which have seen major health benefits delivered through sporting groups. The GoodSports campaign has also helped to introduce responsible use of alcohol practices within sporting clubs. Despite these benefits it can be argued that sporting clubs are under utilised in the delivery of health messages and services to males. Greater consultation with all stakeholders is required to assess how the delivery avenue of sporting clubs can be greater utilised.

ABS data suggests there are 627,800 males involved in organised sport in Victoria, this number includes players and those in non-playing roles such as coach, referee's, committee members, timekeeper's, medical support staff etc.

Males in Victoria

Age group (years)	TOTAL PERSONS INVOLVED (000'S)
15–24	164.3
25–34	118.7
35–44	119.1
45–54	107.5
55–64	57.0
65 and over	61.2
TOTAL	627.8

The sport and the recreation sector has the capacity to provide flexible service delivery, reach and influence to the health needs of men across all age groups. **vicsport** would welcome the opportunity to discuss and further consult with DHS regarding the role sport and active recreation can have in assisting Men's Health and wellbeing issues.

Thank you

1. Service delivery and orientation (cont)

- b. How can the Department of Health encourage the use of a gender perspective and gender analysis in the delivery of health services?

Thank you

2. Supporting healthy living

- a. What approaches are most effective in supporting healthy lifestyle behaviours among men, particularly in relation to tobacco, obesity, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity and alcohol consumption?

Your comments:

Sport and its clubs have not been studied from the point of setting base health promotion, and are a now a potential new setting (Kokko, 2007), research is required to ascertain the full benefits that can be derived from their utilisation. Establishing health promotion initiatives will assist in reaching more people and exposing them to a holistic approach to their personal health, meeting shared active objectives of both health and sport & active recreation in increasing participation and physical activity while delivering cost benefits to Governments at all levels.

Offering sport in an organised setting is a proven and effective approach in responding to health issues faced by young and indigenous men. Sport takes place in local community settings which provides a sense of belonging and mateship, and has a positive and lasting effect in promoting positive health skills and behaviours which is then applied and carried throughout life.

Long-term experience and widely available scientific evidence shows undertaking regular and appropriate physical activity through sport and active recreation pursuits provides people of all ages, ethnicities and physical abilities, with wide range of physical, social, and mental health benefits. Sport and active recreation interacts positively with strategies to improve diet, to discourage use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, to help reduce violence, to enhance functional capacity and to promote social interaction and integration (World Health Organisation, 2003). For the individual, physical activity promotes personal health and helps prevent lifestyle related diseases. For the nation, sport and active recreation offers us a cost effective means of improving public health across the population.

2. Supporting healthy living (cont)

- b. What approaches to working with boys to develop positive health behaviours among future men are most effective?

Your comments:

National data from the ABS shows that the 15 to 24 year age group had the highest participation rate (40.9%), with rates declining consistently with age (16.8% for those aged 65 years and over).

Here in Victoria male participating in organised sport are as follows

Males in Victoria

	TOTAL PERSONS INVOLVED (000'S)
Age group (years)	
15–24	164.3
25–34	118.7
35–44	119.1
45–54	107.5
55–64	57.0
65 and over	61.2
TOTAL	627.8

Participation rates for the younger age group 15-24 remains strong in Victoria, while the state participation rates represent a similar trend to the National data.

The sport and active recreation sector has the proven ability attracting the demographic of young boys, and it is widely understood that behaviours developed at an earlier age are more likely to carry through into adult life. Health promotion assistance through sporting clubs could provide an ideal setting to develop positive health behaviours among future men.

vicsport would welcome the opportunity to discuss and further consult with DHS regarding the role sport and active recreation can have in assisting Men's' Health and wellbeing issues.

Thank you

3. Men's health efficacy

- a. In what ways can men best be supported to:
- increase their connections with primary care services
 - undertake regular check-ups with a GP
 - build their knowledge and awareness of health issues
 - participate in screening programs such as the National bowel cancer screening program
 - align positive health behaviours with common notions of masculinity?

Your comments:

Thank you

4. Supporting men's economic and social participation

- a. How can stronger connections be developed between health services and employment services?

Your comments:

4. Supporting men's economic and social participation (cont)

- b. How can community, club and social groups have the greatest effect in supporting positive health outcomes among men?

Your comments:

In Victoria there is 16,000 registered sporting clubs and associations, who can provide a potential environment for the delivery of health outcomes. Health, sport and active recreation are inseparably linked. Despite these concepts often being mentioned in the same sentence, rarely do the health, sport and active recreation sectors deliberately work or plan together. Working together to strengthen connections between health, sport and active recreation creates an excellent opportunity to promote a 'holistic health through sport' approach to a broad sector of the community.

Sporting clubs offer an environment where males can be contacted in a non-threatening and supportive manner. General health promotion messages within a club have the capacity to be supported by medical staff, coaches, administrators and committee members.

Identifying health benefits sport and active recreation provides and marrying these where possible with specific health promotion objectives could create the foundations for a comprehensive men's health promotion initiative.

5. Health-promoting society

- a. What approaches are most effective for encouraging health promoting notions of masculinity in schools, sporting clubs, and other social and cultural environments?

Your comments:

It is difficult to state what approaches would be successful for delivering health based initiatives for the first time. In the past broad based promotion for Sunsmart and QUIT have been effective and could be utilized in the future however more intervention and consultative measures such as training medical and support staff could be beneficial.

A full scoping study involving all stakeholders would be required to ascertain what approaches could be utilized for encouraging health promotion activities.

5. Health-promoting society (cont)

- b. Are there regulatory, fiscal or planning policies that are particularly relevant for supporting men's health?

Your comments:

There are 16,000 registered sporting clubs and associations in Victoria, all of which relies heavily on volunteers for their ongoing support and viability. The large majority of sporting groups are self funded however Government support where required has traditionally been funded through Sport and Recreation Victoria-a portfolio of the Department of Planning and Community Development.

However, by implementing and delivering health initiatives to men through the sport and active recreation sector, DHS has the capacity to provide funding and community support to Victoria's largest non for profit sector.

It is largely understood and that the sport and recreation sector must work closer with the Department of Health to deliver positive outcomes for the community however limited funding to support such notions have transpired. Any form of health initiative throughout the sector will require ongoing fiscal support, planning, training and resources for successful uptake.

Consideration should also be given to prevent single 'ad hoc' men's health promotion activities, and to develop an organisational structure within the sport and active recreation sector, with the possibility of incorporating external health promotion providers, to sustain the support of men's health promotion efforts of all concerned stakeholders. The intention would be to not take away from the sectors main focus of providing sport and recreational opportunities and replacing it with health promotion, but to help establish an improved environment setting where men's health promotion projects and objectives are fully integrated.

5. Health-promoting society (cont)

- c. How can the creation of men's health modules within health and allied health courses be encouraged?

Your comments:

5. Health-promoting society (cont)

d. What are the greatest knowledge or research gaps relating to men's health?

Your comments:

From a sport and recreation perspective wider research and consultation is required to establish the full range of health promotion activities that could be delivered through community sporting groups. We know that there are enough venues for this to occur (16,000 registered sporting clubs) and enough participants to engage through these channels (627,000) however the correct messages and effective delivery messages must be established.

Greater research and knowledge in this area is required.

6. Conditions and sub-groups of men

- e. What factors are most important for the Department of Health to focus on in improving men's outcomes across the following areas?
- Ischaemic heart disease
 - Cancer
 - Mental health problems
 - Suicide
 - Accidents and injuries

Your comments:

Health, sport and active recreation are inseparably linked. Despite these concepts often being mentioned in the same sentence, rarely do the health, sport and active recreation sectors deliberately work or plan together. Working together to strengthen connections between health, sport and active recreation creates an excellent opportunity to promote a 'holistic health through sport' approach to a broad sector of the community. Identifying health benefits sport and active recreation provides and marrying these where possible with specific health promotion objectives could possibly create the foundations for a comprehensive men's health promotion initiative.

The significant contribution the sport and active recreation sector makes to the general health of the community are well recognised. The physical and mental health benefits of sport and active recreation are well researched and documented. We know physical activity promotes the development of basic motor skills that are essential for healthy active living, and improves cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and cardio respiratory health. Recent research also indicates physical activity is an essential part of promoting improved mental health, in particular for those with depression. Physical activity is also a critical component in helping older aged persons maintain healthy, independent lifestyles (World Health Organisation, 2006).

On the broader scale, involvement in organised and structured sporting and active recreation pursuits plays a key role in community building and social identity. Sport and active recreation activities provide valuable opportunities for people of all ages to become part of a community-focused organisation. Not only is the involvement of individual's in clubs and organisations integral to the survival of grass-roots sport and active recreation, engaging at this level provides individuals with the opportunity to socialise, to contribute to development of the community, and to develop their own skills and abilities at a personal level. Engaging in sport and active recreation activities provides individuals with the opportunity to develop a range of personal skills, such as communication, teamwork skills, coaching, officiating or administrative knowledge, whilst at the same time making a contribution to their local community.

By working within the sport and active recreation sector setting, DHS could focus health promotion programs delivering solutions in addressing multiple men's health issues.

vicsport would welcome the opportunity to discuss and further consult with DHS regarding the role sport and active recreation can have in assisting Men's' Health and wellbeing issues.

6. Conditions and sub-groups of men (cont)

- b. What approaches are most effective for responding to the health issues faced by the following sub-groups of men?
- Young men
 - Indigenous men

Your comments:

The inseparable links between health and education, and health and sport are well acknowledged. Sport and active recreation is at the forefront of the fight against lifestyle related disease. The extensive community sport and active recreation sector is the only sector broad enough and extensive enough to deliver the widespread benefits required to promote improved health outcomes such as:

- Reduced risk of obesity
- Increased cardiovascular fitness
- Mental health benefits
- Improved co-ordination and balance
- Improved resilience against the stresses of modern living

Long-term experience and widely available scientific evidence shows undertaking regular and appropriate physical activity through sport and active recreation pursuits provides people of all ages, ethnicities and physical abilities, with wide range of physical, social, and mental health benefits. Sport and active recreation interacts positively with strategies to improve diet, to discourage use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, to help reduce violence, to enhance functional capacity and to promote social interaction and integration (World Health Organisation, 2003). In Australia the strong link between sport, recreation and indigenous communities is widely known however the health disadvantages that indigenous communities face is disproportionate to their identification with sport in this country. Greater emphasis must be placed on the importance of sport and recreation to deliver greater health outcomes in indigenous communities. Offering sport in an organised setting is a proven and effective approach in responding to health issues faced by young and indigenous men. Sport takes place in local community settings which provides a sense of belonging and mateship, and has a positive and lasting effect in promoting positive health skills and behaviours which is then applied and carried throughout life.

The sport and active recreation sector has the proven ability attracting the demographic of young boys, and it is widely understood that behaviours developed at an earlier age are more likely to carry through into adult life. Health promotion assistance through sporting clubs could provide an ideal setting to develop positive health behaviours among future men.

These benefits are the active pursuits and objectives of health promotion worldwide. Conservative estimates indicate Australia would save \$8 million annually for every 1% increase in the proportion of Australians achieving a sufficient level of physical activity (Begg, S. et al 2007)

Examples of noteworthy or good practice

Would you like to bring to our attention noteworthy initiatives or practice examples? (If appropriate, please attach or send in any relevant materials or include relevant weblinks.)

Your comments:

vicsport is the peak body representing Victoria's sport and active recreation sector. Our Mission is to lead the sport, active recreation and associated health agendas into the future. As an independent member based organisation, **vicsport** represents the needs and concerns of over 170 member groups including State Sporting Associations (SSA), Regional Sport Assemblies (RSA), Local Government Authorities (LGA), active recreation organisations, University, TAFE and school sport groups, as well as organisations representing specific sub-groups of the sector such as the Victorian Council on the Ageing, ACHPER Victoria, Aquatics and Recreation Victoria and the Australian Drug Foundation. Through our extensive network **vicsport** supports over 20,000 clubs and associations, and over 1.8 million participants, workers and volunteers in the sport and active recreation sector across Victoria. The activities these organisations offer play a vital role in promoting better physical and mental health outcomes for Victorians, as well as creating vital capacity within metropolitan and regional communities.

The sport and active recreation setting has previously been a leader in health promotion initiatives. Initiatives by VicHealth and the Transport and Accident Commission (TAC) has seen the ongoing and successful health promotion campaigns such as, 'QUIT' (smoking), 'Slip, Slop, Slap', 'SunSmart', and the 'Drink drive, you're a bloody idiot' campaign which have been implemented in the sport setting and been well received from the general public in addressing poor health promotion behaviours.

Through further consultation with DHS, **vicsport** is confident the sector can play a vital part in assisting health promotion initiatives and encouraging positive health promotion behaviours. **vicsport** would welcome the opportunity to consult with DHS to further explore opportunities that vicsport, in consultation with its members in the sport and active recreation sector, can provide in addressing men's health initiatives.