

# factsandstats

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

Participation in sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of Australians. Individuals, the community and our society generally benefits.

Understanding why people take part in sport and physical activity may help to identify ways to encourage Australians to become more active.

The information in this fact sheet is from the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS).

The survey has been conducted each year since 2001 and collects information on the exercise, recreation and sporting activities of Australians aged 15 years and over.

### Participation in sport and physical activity<sup>1</sup>

The latest data shows that just over 13 million Australians and 1.3 million Western Australians aged 15 years and over participated in at least one physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport over the past twelve months.<sup>1</sup>

Between 2001 and 2004, participation in sport and physical activity increased. Throughout this period, the participation rate was higher in Western Australia than Australia.

### Western Australian and Australian rates of participation in sport and physical activity between 2001 and 2004

Year	Western Australia (%)	Australia (%)
2001	81	77.8
2002	81	77.8
2003	84.5	82.5
2004	84.8	82.8

- Participation rates in Australia increased as the level of education increased. With the exception of those still at secondary school (95.7 per cent), those with a university degree or higher had the highest rate of participation (91.3 per cent). This compares to 73.3 per cent of those who did not complete the highest level of school.<sup>3</sup>
- Australians who were employed had higher participation rates than those who were either unemployed or not in the labour force (86.1 per cent compared with 83.1 per cent and 76 per cent respectively).<sup>4</sup>
- Australians who were employed part time had a higher rate of participation than those who were employed full time (88.2 per cent compared with 85.1 per cent).<sup>5</sup>



## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Rates of participation by age<sup>2</sup>

In 2004, Australian rates of participation declined with age. This was also the case for Western Australia with the exception of the age groups 15 to 24 and 55 to 64 years.

Between 2001 and 2004, the older age groups had the largest increases in participation. In both Australia and Western Australia, the largest increase in participation rates was experienced by the age group 65 years and over, followed by those aged 55 to 64 years.

#### *Australian rates of participation by age in 2001 and 2004*

Age group (years)	2001 participation rate (%) <sup>6</sup>	2004 participation rate (%) <sup>7</sup>
15 to 24	88.8	91.7
25 to 34	85.3	85.4
35 to 44	80.6	84
45 to 54	75.4	81.9
55 to 64	70.2	79.1
65 and over	60.1	71.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.8</b>	<b>82.8</b>

#### *Western Australian rates of participation by age in 2001 and 2004*

Age group (years)	2001 participation rate (%) <sup>8</sup>	2004 participation rate (%) <sup>9</sup>
15 to 24	85.4	87.5
25 to 34	87.7	89.4
35 to 44	82.1	87.3
45 to 54	79.2	80.7
55 to 64	77.6	83.9
65 and over	68.6	77.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>84.8</b>

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Western Australian participation by age group in 2001 and 2004

Although participation increased for all age groups between 2001 and 2004, the older age groups experienced larger increases. From 2001 to 2004, increases in participation occurred in those aged 55 to 64 years (6.3 per cent increase), and those aged 65 years and over (nine per cent increase).

### Western Australian participation in sport and physical activity by age group in 2001 and 2004

Age group (years)	Number of participants in 2001 ('000) <sup>10</sup>	2001 participation rate (%) <sup>11</sup>	Number of participants in 2004 ('000) <sup>12</sup>	2004 participation rate (%) <sup>13</sup>
15 to 24	233.7	85.4	251.3	87.5
25 to 34	251	87.7	262.7	89.4
35 to 44	241.6	82.1	258.2	87.3
45 to 54	210.2	79.2	229.3	80.7
55 to 64	130.7	77.6	163.2	83.9
65 and over	131	68.6	158.1	77.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1198.1</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1322.9</b>	<b>84.8</b>

### Rates of participation by gender<sup>5</sup>

In Australia between 2001 and 2004 the participation rate of males in sport and physical activity was higher than females. This was also the case in Western Australia during the same period; however, the participation rate of females was higher than males in 2002 and 2003.

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Western Australian rates of participation between 2001 and 2004 by gender<sup>14</sup>

Year	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
2001	81.3	80.8	81
2002	80.3	81.6	81
2003	83	86	84.5
2004	86	83.7	84.8

- In Western Australia between 2001 and 2004, both male and female participation in physical activity increased, however the increase was greater for males. This is in contrast to the whole of Australia where females showed a larger increase in participation compared to males (in Australia, participation increased by 793 000 females compared to 549,800 males between 2001 and 2004).<sup>15</sup>

### Frequency of participation in sport and physical activity in 2004

In 2004, just over 11 million (70.5 per cent) Australians aged 15 years and over participated in sport or physical activity at least once a week. This represents an increase of 1.3 million people since 2001.<sup>16</sup>

### Australian frequency of participation in sport or physical activity in 2004

Frequency of participation	Participation rate (%)
None	17.2
Zero to less than once per week	12.4
Once or twice per week	23.3
Three or four times per week	19.7
Five or more times per week	27.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

- Between 2001 and 2004, the number of Australians who participated in exercise, recreation or sport at least three times per week increased by 1.8 million, from 37.2 per cent to 47.2 per cent of all Australians.<sup>18</sup>
- In Australia in 2004, females were more likely than males to participate in sport or physical activity three or more times per week (50.4 per cent compared with 43.9 per cent of males).<sup>19</sup>

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Most popular sports and physical activities<sup>7</sup>

Walking was by far the most popular physical activity for both males and females between 2001 and 2004.

In 2004, 6.2 million Australians and 646 700 Western Australians participated in walking as a physical activity.<sup>20</sup>

The ten most popular activities that Australians participated in at least once for exercise, recreation or sport were unchanged between 2001 and 2004.<sup>21</sup>

Of the top ten activities in Australia, walking enjoyed the largest increase, from 4.4 million Australians in 2001 to 6.2 million Australians in 2004 (41.7 per cent increase). Other top ten activities that reported large increases in this period were aerobics/fitness (37.6 per cent increase), running (21 per cent increase) and cycling (15.3 per cent increase).<sup>22</sup>

### Most popular sports and physical activities in Australia in 2004<sup>23</sup>

Activity	Participation rate (%)
Walking	39
Aerobics/fitness	17.1
Swimming	16.5
Cycling	10.5
Tennis	8.4
Running	8.3
Golf	7.9
Bushwalking	5.2
Soccer (outdoors)	4.2
Netball	3.6

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Most popular sports and physical activities in Western Australia in 2004

In 2004, the ten most popular sports or physical activities in Western Australia differed slightly from the national top ten. For example, the most popular sports and physical activities in Western Australia included Australian Rules football and basketball which were not in the national top ten. Conversely, both bushwalking and outdoor soccer were in the national top ten but just outside the Western Australian top ten activities (ranked 12 and equal 14 respectively).

#### *Most popular sports and physical activities in Western Australia in 2004<sup>24</sup>*

Activity	Participation rate (%)
Walking	41.5
Aerobics/fitness	18.1
Swimming	17.8
Cycling	13.8
Running	9.3
Golf	6.6
Tennis	5.5
Australian rules football	5.3
Netball	4.6
Basketball	4

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

### Participation in organised sport and physical activity

In 2004, 665 700 Western Australians and 6.7 million Australians participated in organised sport or physical activity that was conducted in full or part by a club, community group, recreation or fitness centre.<sup>25</sup>

In Australia between 2001 and 2004, participation in non-organised sport and physical activity increased by 1.34 million Australians (11.4 per cent), compared to an increase of 721,500 (12 per cent) for participation in organised sport and physical activity.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Australian rates of participation in organised and non-organised sport and physical activity between 2001 and 2004*

Year	Organised participation rate (%) <sup>27</sup>	Non-organised participation rate (%)
2001	39.9	63.4 <sup>28</sup>
2002	40.9	62.7 <sup>29</sup>
2003	42.8	68.1 <sup>30</sup>
2004	42.7	69.8 <sup>31</sup>

- Only 29.5 per cent of Australians participated in organised sport or physical activity more than once per week.<sup>32</sup>
- Almost a third of Australians (29.8 per cent) participated in an organised sport or physical activity at a sport or recreation club or association and 17.3 per cent participated at a fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre.<sup>33</sup>

# Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

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## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p3 & p9.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p11 and p47.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p10.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2002). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey: annual report 2001. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p6.
- <sup>7</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p11.
- <sup>8</sup> SCORS. (2002). op. cit. p6.
- <sup>9</sup> SCORS (2004). op. cit. p11.
- <sup>10</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2002). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey: annual report 2001. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p6.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p11.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. p47.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p9.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. p13.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid. p9.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid. p15.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid. p19 & p45.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid. p5.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p21.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. p45.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid. p48.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. p47 & p48.
- <sup>27</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport: annual report 2004. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p48.
- <sup>28</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2002). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey: annual report 2001. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p12.
- <sup>29</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2002). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey: annual report 2002. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p16.
- <sup>30</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2003). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey: annual report 2003. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p35.
- <sup>31</sup> SCORS op cit (2004). p29.
- <sup>32</sup> Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2004). Participation in exercise, recreation and sport survey 2004 annual report. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. p16.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. p34.