

Move more, sit less



Australia needs a funded National Physical Activity Action Plan

On 11 September 2015, 100 leading policy experts and key stakeholders from across Australia met at Parliament House, Canberra, to determine the key elements needed to underpin a National Physical Activity Action Plan. A further 200 professionals participated online.

This *Canberra Communiqué* sets out the priorities agreed at the National Physical Activity Consensus Forum. It outlines a compelling case for a Federal Government National Physical Activity Action Plan. It details nine action areas and a cohesive set of approaches and policies that government and major political parties can easily and effectively adopt and implement.

A funded National Physical Activity Action Plan is the prescription Australia needs to halt a chronic disease epidemic, tackle obesity and boost productivity, liveability and prosperity.

Our vision is for Australia to reclaim its status as an active nation. Educating and enabling Australians to be active in their everyday lives will transform our nation by creating better places to live, work, learn and play.

A funded National Physical Activity Action Plan can implement simple and affordable policy initiatives that will:

- enable Australians to walk and cycle to school, work or for recreation
- support local governments to deliver better places and infrastructure for physical activity
- support children to engage in physical education, sport and recreation, and escape from the shackles of their screens and computers
- provide for the needs of rural communities, older Australians, people who are disadvantaged and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How do we get Australia to move more and sit less?

Achieving an active Australia requires a renewed political vision and a commitment to the actions outlined in this communiqué. Through leadership and action, we call upon the Federal Government and other interested parties to make a National Physical Activity Action Plan a reality for all Australians.

Leadership – Lead the National Physical Activity Action Plan by establishing a high-level, cross-sector group that is resourced and tasked to get Australia to 'Move more, sit less'.

Action – Develop, implement and monitor a National Physical Activity Action Plan with key actionable measures that educate, motivate and enable our nation to 'Move more, sit less'.

Investment – Allocate resources to support key actions.

Actions for an Active Australia

There is compelling evidence about what works in getting populations to move more and sit less. The Heart Foundation's *Blueprint for an Active Australia*, the World Health Organization's *Global Action Plan for Noncommunicable Diseases* and successful physical activity plans from many other countries outline this evidence in detail.

We propose the following actionable measures as the key to a funded National Physical Activity Action Plan, which we believe, implemented together, will deliver a healthier, more productive and active Australia in the 21st century.

Move more, sit less

2. Active seniors

Community and aged-care policies and programs to keep our seniors active, fit and well



Education and programs

- Support the delivery of accessible, affordable evidence-based physical activity programs, delivered by a range of community organisations and primary care providers to help seniors stay well and manage existing conditions.

Policies and environments

- Introduce policy mechanisms to mandate the delivery of physical activity programs in aged-care services and settings, and account for the mobility and functional capabilities of older Australians when designing spaces and places.

4. Active transport, walking & cycling

Transport systems that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport



Education and programs

- Support walking and cycling safely to school programs that help create safe journeys in partnership with local government and offer safe riding programs for children. This should be conducted similar to the Black Spot road safety program and supported through an allocation from the existing transport infrastructure funding pool.

Policies and environments

- Develop and fund a national walking and cycling strategy that embraces walking, cycling and public transport as congestion busters.
- Provide financial or tax incentives to encourage employees to walk, cycle or take public transport to work. In particular, a cycle to work scheme should be created similar to the successful UK and Irish ride to work models.
- Work with state, territory and local governments to enhance laws that protect vulnerable road users.

1. Active children

School and community-based policies and programs to get Australia's children moving



Education and programs

- Mandate delivery of high-quality physical education lessons in K–12 (totalling between 120–180 minutes per week) that focus on life-long engagement in physical activity and sport, mastery of fundamental movement and sport skills, and physical literacy.

Policies and environments

- Work with local government to enhance neighbourhood infrastructure funding to support children to play safely, and to walk and cycle.
- Work with early childhood groups and organisations and schools to deliver an active curriculum, reduce sitting in class and promote walking and cycling.

3. Active workplaces

Workplace policies and programs to drive productivity through physical activity and reduced sitting



Education and programs

- Provide targeted education and programs for workplaces to promote physical activity and reduce sitting to boost worker health and productivity.

Policies and environments

- Support businesses to invest in policies and programs through small grants and recognition schemes.
- Provide fringe benefits tax (FBT) exemption for workplace packaging of sporting and health club memberships, bicycle purchases and public transport use.

5. Active cities and neighbourhoods

Urban design guidance and regulation to create liveable and active cities and neighbourhoods



Education and programs

- Conduct public education to raise awareness of local facilities and parks and the importance of walkable neighbourhoods for health and economic prosperity.

Policies and environments

- Implement national urban design policies that enable active living for all ages and abilities.
- Support local government infrastructure funding that boosts active living.
- Create a walking and cycling infrastructure program to support local government similar to the Roads to Recovery program. This should be created out of the existing transport infrastructure funding pool.
- Assist local government to create and expand regional rail trails, cycle routes and walking/hiking tracks to promote tourism and recreation.

6. Active healthcare

Physical activity prescription integrated into primary care



Education and programs

- Fund evidence-based physical activity and lifestyle-modification programs for people with, or at risk of, chronic disease.

Policies and environments

- Establish referral pathways and subsidies for general practitioners (GPs) and allied health professionals (e.g. accredited exercise physiologists) to educate and refer patients into evidence-based physical activity and lifestyle-modification programs.

8. Active clubs and sport

Sport and recreation services to boost participation



Education and programs

- Deliver the 'Move more, sit less' message through coaches, volunteers, sporting associations and teams to participating children, families and spectators.
- Promote equitable participation in sport and active recreation among at-risk groups across all age groups and demographics.

Policies and environments

- Provide assistance to sport and recreation clubs and associations to engage more people and make better use of existing infrastructure and programs.
- Provide increased scope for tax deductibility for sport and recreation participation.

7. Active public education

An integrated national media and social marketing campaign to reinvigorate an active culture and motivate Australians to 'Move more, sit less' under a common brand and call to action



Education and programs

- Fund national education programs to encourage active families, active workers and active seniors.

Policies and environments

- Commit to a long-term campaign including mass media and social marketing strategies to provide an umbrella for 'Move more, sit less' initiatives, boost awareness of the benefits of active living and reinforce a physically active culture in Australia.

9. Active communities

Community-based environments and programs that involve multiple settings and engage communities



Education and programs

- Support a national network of accessible community physical activity initiatives across all age groups and demographics such as walking, cycling and swimming groups with a particular focus on reducing inequality.

Policies and environments

- Provide additional funding to enable local governments and communities to support local initiatives and infrastructure through grant funding and partnerships.

A funded National Physical Activity Action Plan is the prescription that can help halt our nation's chronic disease epidemic.

Move more, sit less



Key facts

- Physical inactivity causes an estimated **14,000 deaths** each year.
- Physical inactivity contributes to almost **one-quarter** of the cardiovascular burden of disease in Australia and is a significant contributing factor to cancer, type 2 diabetes and mental illness.
- **Fifty-seven per cent** of Australian adults do not meet physical activity guidelines; rates are higher among certain groups like those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Eight out of ten** children do not meet national physical activity guidelines.
- Physical inactivity costs the health budget an estimated **\$1.5 billion** each year.
- **One in three Australian workers** spend at least three-quarters of their time sitting.

Our nation faces a chronic disease cocktail with far reaching health, economic, environmental and social impacts. While approximately 30 countries around the world have a national physical activity plan, Australia does not.

A National Physical Activity Action Plan will deliver:

- **significant savings** to the health budget over time, by reducing the burden of chronic disease
- **better health** across all age groups and demographics by reducing cardiovascular disease deaths by up to 35%, cancers by 20–30%, type 2 diabetes by 40% and depression by 30%
- **important economic benefits** such as healthier, happier workers with lower rates of absenteeism and higher rates of productivity in the workplace
- **a reduction in the crippling traffic congestion** that is choking our roads, our economy and our health.

Corporate supporter



The following organisations proudly endorse this communiqué

