

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

**ENGAGING PHYSICALLY
INACTIVE COMMUNITIES
KEY INSIGHTS FROM
MOVE IT AUS GRANT
PROGRAMS**



SPORTAUS

INSIGHTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Move It AUS Participation Grant Program



FOCUS

Promote physical activity opportunities for all life stages specifically targeting population groups most at risk of being inactive, including women and girls and individuals living in low socio-economic areas.



DELIVERY

62 diverse projects funded, 35 projects completed and 27 extensions granted due to COVID-19.



REACH

Successfully engaged physically inactive communities. Further work to identify and overcome specific barriers for target groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse, regional and remote, is recommended.



IMPACT

Increased physical activity levels evidenced by increased proportion of participants who met the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines¹.

'Collectively, funded projects were successful in reaching physically inactive communities, particularly disadvantaged communities who demonstrated some of the largest increases in physical activity levels; however clear inequities persist across socio-economic quartiles for sport and physical activity behaviour



3,843 individuals participated in the survey



26 qualitative interviews with project leads



5 project case studies



Weekly minutes of **physical activity increased** after participating in a funded project, from an average of 447.5mins per week to **534.7mins per week** (7.5 hours to 8.9 hours)



43% of participants reported **increases in their physical activity behaviours**. Only 25% of participants were meeting the physical activity guidelines prior to participation in a funded project.

"This funding has... given us a platform to say, we don't have to do things the same way that it has been done... and it's challenged the norm."

Move It AUS Better Ageing Grant Program



FOCUS

Support physically inactive individuals aged over 65 years, to engage in physical activity opportunities.



DELIVERY

26 diverse projects funded, with 21 completed and 5 extensions granted.



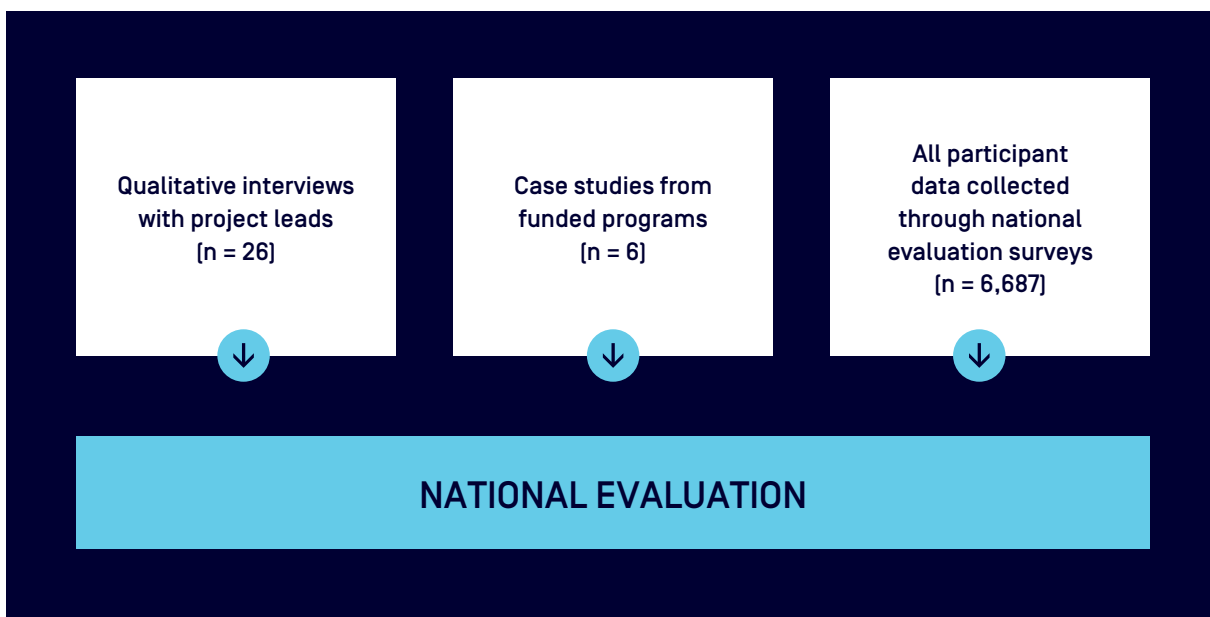
REACH

Successfully engaged physically inactive older adults, but recommend targeted work to engage culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and disadvantaged communities in future.



IMPACT

Increases in participation in organised sport and physical activity, with the largest improvements reported by individuals living in the most disadvantaged communities. Improvements in balance and enjoyment building social connections.



The needs of over 65 years olds are wide ranging reinforcing the importance of tailoring delivery for multiple abilities.



Older adults were motivated to engage in funded physical opportunities for fitness and fun.



Social opportunities within the physical activities were essential for long term engagement.

'We saw an 81% increase or improvement in their sit-to-stand test scores [after 8-weeks of participation in the funded activity], so their mobility, which is huge. And then we saw a 68% increase in their grip strength. Which doesn't sound like much but for seniors can be really important.'

INSIGHTS FROM THE SPORT AND COMMUNITY SECTOR



Clarity of 'Who': Understanding key target groups

When the **target audience was clearly described** and understood within the funded sport sector and community organisation, a **strategic focus and unified approach** could be employed. This clarity guided all aspects of program delivery, helped identify key partners and stakeholders and informed communication strategies.



Partnerships

The funding opportunity **encouraged the development of new, or the formalisation of existing, partnerships** that enabled **collaboration** in program design and delivery. This improved credibility and trust within identified target groups and enhanced the knowledge and capabilities of the funded organisations to new target groups.



Communication: Shifting the conversation

To recruit new target groups, **new communication strategies were required**. External communications reinforced the inclusive and fun aspects of programs which **aimed to change preconceived notions of 'sport for sporty people'**. Internally, positive communications were used as an advocacy tool to empower all staff within the organisation to support the recruitment of new audiences.



Program delivery: Flexibility and resources

Delivering multi-component, social and flexible projects with a variety of options for different skill levels, abilities and interests, appeared vital in promoting uptake and sustained engagement. The **development of training materials** for program deliverers to continue to improve program delivery and **retain specialist and skilled deliverers** was also highlighted.



Environmental impacts

The impact of the 2019/2020 bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic meant funded sport sector and community organisations were required to pivot to provide online resources. Many organisations **improved the reach of program delivery** by taking time to strategically plan and enhance delivery models, while recognising that **online products could not replace the impact of face-to-face delivery**. Significant learnings included the importance of social connections between participants and program deliverers, as well as maintaining engagement with key stakeholders to ensure a swift return once lockdowns eased.



Governance: Sport Australia

Commonly, funded sporting and community organisations recognised that the Move It AUS funding was essential to give them the **ability to provide new, or scale-up existing, pilot programs**. The clear aims of the funding allowed programs to allocate resources and prioritise something new in sport delivery.



Physical inactivity is a priority across the sport ecosystem

There was a call for a systems-wide commitment to reduce physical inactivity. There was also overwhelming **recognition that sport and the entire sport ecosystem are an important vehicle for promoting physical activity across the lifespan**. While new participation strategies to reduce physical inactivity were of high importance to all funded sport and community organisations, they had to contend with competing priorities for funding and opportunities.

FURTHER READING

- Sport Australia Move It AUS Participation Grant: A National Evaluation Report, [DOI](#).
- Sport and Community Sector Insights: Engaging physically inactive communities through the Move It AUS Grant Programs, DOI.
- Evaluation of Move It AUS — Better Ageing Grant Program, DOI.
- [Sport Australia Participation Toolkit](#).

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This evaluation report was prepared by the SPRINTER team.

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