

ACTIVE MORELAND FACT SHEET: YOUNG PEOPLE



This Fact Sheet provides some background information and suggestions to support clubs and activity providers to successfully reach young people. Encouraging young people to change physical activity participation behaviours requires approaches that address existing and perceived barriers and motivators and a clear understanding of how to reach young people and what messages work best.

How to reach young people:

- Internet; young people are high users of the internet, with access to social media such as facebook, twitter and youtube
- Young people are attracted to messages that are simple, clear, factual and fun
- Young people tend to care about things such as their looks, immediate social benefits, whether it is cool and on facebook, how it feels and what things cost
- Young people are often looking for an opportunity to socialise, test themselves, try new things, but in a non-threatening way
- Involve other young people in the planning and implementation of programs and activities
- Be positive and encouraging and share with them what the benefits are
- Be prepared to be spontaneous; be open to what young people say they want

Key motivating factors for participation:

- Casual participation opportunities, informal activities, non-routine commitments (being able to casually use an indoor basketball court or short term programs – opt in, opt out)
- Activities/places that have minimal adult supervision or involvement. Skate parks are an example of this
- Young people like to have their own space, but they also like to feel part of the community through activities being provided for them in conjunction with activities for other groups
- Girl only activities. Provide programs specially for young women or times for ‘girls only’
- Low cost or free activities appeal to young people ie. Discounted or free passes to leisure centres
- Having a friend to ‘go’ with or participate with as well as the potential opportunity to make new friends
- Advertise fun, relaxed nature of programs i.e. “no skills necessary”

Young people

Young people as a population group generally refers to people who are aged 12 to 25 years. This group commonly includes students, unemployed people, as well as new entrants to the workforce. Young people may have a disability, be disadvantaged or come from single parent families. They may also have a varied cultural background and come from a low-income family. There are around 24,699 young people living in the City of Moreland. This represents 16% of the total Moreland population.² Of these young people:

- It is likely a language other than English will be spoken at home³
- The gender split is 51% male and 49% female, with the gender proportions expected to remain stable over the next 20 years

Age Group	2011	2021	2031	Change 2011 to 2031
12 to 17 yrs	8,752	9,395	9,722	970
18 to 24 yrs	15,917	18,194	18,073	2,156

Table 1: Youth age structure, City of Moreland (2011-2031)⁴

Young people in Australia are increasingly at risk of developing lifestyle related illness and injury like heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

The low level of physical activity participation amongst young people when combined with other risk factors such as, psychosocial, behavioural and physiological conditions, presents an immediate and long-term challenge for communities.



Moreland Population – Young People Vs Others²

Victorian State Government, Office for Youth

² Moreland City Council Population Forecasts, .id Consulting, 2011

³ Moreland City Council, Oxygen Project, 2010, p. 5

⁴ Moreland City Council Population Forecasts, .id Consulting, 2011

“Participation in physical activity provides fundamental health benefits for young people”



There is strong evidence to support the conclusion that participation in physical activity provides fundamental health benefits for young people. It contributes to the development of healthy bones, muscles and joints; heart and lungs; coordination and movement control and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits because it assists with control over symptoms of anxiety and depression, assisting with social development through self-expression and building self-confidence.

Mental health is a priority health issue in Moreland and a major health issue for young people nationally.⁷ Young people who feel connected and have a sense of belonging are more likely to experience positive health outcomes.

Sport is recognised for its protective factors for young people. Physical benefits are achieved through participation in moderate to vigorous levels of physical activity. As sports participation increases, the odds of suffering from depression also reduce by as much as 25%. Sport can protect against depression by boosting self-esteem and increasing social support.⁸

Likely barriers faced by young people

There are a number of likely participation barriers faced by young people. Whilst barriers vary for different people, some common barriers reported are:

- Lack of suitable youth programs, supportive environments or associated amenities
- Negative body image
- Cultural expectations about the involvement of young women in physical activity
- Lack of motivation or interest
- Fears of standing out in the crowd / being different
- Time constraints due to study, family and / or work commitments
- Lack of information about existing physical activity opportunities
- Lack of friends or someone to go with
- Lack of support from family or peers
- Cost constraints

While young people may experience barriers, it is important to understand that when different demographic influences collide that severe disadvantage is likely to be experienced. For instance, if they are a young person, as well as part of a family with low income, born overseas from non-English speaking countries, and if they have a disability etc. then they are likely to experience greater barriers to participation

What you can do...

- Young people often seek spontaneous activities. Use technology that supports spontaneity and think about offering activities that are based on spontaneous responses like ‘flash mob soccer’
- Utilise techno-savvy young people to develop media messages such as youtube clips that can be linked to websites of Council, clubs and youth organisations. Position the ‘product’ where it will reach the target audience
- Adults and organisers need to be ready to respond to young people when they seek information and need to be accurate the first time young people enquire
- Young people can also be quite passionate about activities and issues and like to feel they make a difference; engage young people in the decision making and get them to recruit their friends and classmates

Active Moreland

Active Moreland is an initiative aimed at ‘making it easy for more people to be more active more often’.

Active Moreland is a multi-pronged approach to increasing levels by targeting people, opportunities, places and partnerships to provide welcoming and inclusive services and programs that will contribute to making Moreland a more active community.

⁵ AIHW 2011. Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011. Cat. no. PHE 140. Canberra: AIHW

⁶ AIHW 2011. Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011. Cat. no. PHE 140. Canberra: AIHW

⁷ Moreland City Council, Moreland Health and Wellbeing Plan 2010-14, p.2

⁸ Babiss, L.A Gangwisch JE, Sports participation as a protective factor against depression and suicidal ideation in adolescents as mediated by self-esteem and social support. J Dev Behav Pediatr, 2009 Oct; 30(5):376-84