Diagnosis of Physical Activity in Western Australia

Commissioned by the WA Physical Activity Taskforce
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Executive Summary

Background and Purpose

The Physical Activity Taskforce (the Taskforce) has a strategic plan which runs until the end of 2011. When the Taskforce was reviewed in early 2009 and provided with a revised mandate of pure cross-Government policy coordination and collaboration, it became apparent that the strategic plan no longer reflected this mandate. Although the existing plan set out key directions and established focus areas for promoting physical activity in Western Australia, it was considered that this needed to evolve in order to reflect the changes in focus and direction, particularly regarding the policy context for physical activity and the mandate of the Taskforce.

The Taskforce Secretariat therefore embarked on a strategic directions project to review emerging trends and issues, analyse current policies and delivery frameworks and set a vision and strategic framework for physical activity in this state. The future work of the Taskforce will be guided by this strategic framework.

As part of this process, TNS was commissioned to conduct a Physical Activity Diagnosis to provide input into the Strategic Directions Project by developing an analysis of past and current policies, strategies, delivery models and interventions that support physical activity in WA.

The purpose of this Diagnosis is to:

- Analyse progress to date with respect to policies, services, delivery models and interventions in Western Australia aimed at providing opportunities for, and increasing participation in, physical activity;
- Identify the current status of policies, services, delivery models and interventions related to physical activity, with particular focus on the extent of integration and collaboration between parties and sectors;
- Identify gaps, limitations and opportunities that have the potential to impact on organisational and systemic change to support increased levels of physical activity in Western Australia
- Provide direction on the strategic priorities for physical activity in Western Australia

Methodology

The research utilised an iterative and collaborative research approach, and was conducted in five stages (the full methodology is detailed in Appendix One of the report Diagnosis of Physical Activity in Western Australia):-
• **Stage One: Physical Activity Program Summary (Program Summary)**
  TNS undertook a detailed review of 31 activity reports from various agencies collected by the Taskforce Secretariat covering a variety of initiatives and programs between 2005 and 2009 (See Appendix Three for the Program Summary).

• **Stage Two: Quantitative Survey of Senior Key Stakeholders**
  Two surveys were conducted as part of this stage – a short, high level survey sent to 20 CEO’s and Directors General (DG), and a more comprehensive survey sent to 185 senior policy stakeholders. In total there were 9 respondents (44%) for the CEO/DG survey and 44 respondents (24%) for the senior policy stakeholder survey.

• **Stage Three: Qualitative Consultation of Key Stakeholders**
  A total of 44 organisations were consulted during this stage of the research, through five focus groups and 22 in-depth interviews, with representatives from State, Local and Non-Government Organisations, Land Developers and Consultants.

• **Stage Four: Physical Activity Taskforce Advisory Committee Forum**
  TNS presented the preliminary findings from the research at the Physical Activity Taskforce Advisory Committee Forum held on Friday 24th June 2011. The Forum provided 55 key stakeholders with an opportunity to view and discuss the preliminary findings from the research and source feedback and further input which was incorporated into the final report.

• **Stage Five: Final Reporting**
  The final reporting stage of this research incorporated stages one through four to bring the different ‘strands’ of the research together in a complete document.

**Progress to date**
The Physical Activity Diagnosis clearly showed through the review and consultation process that, over the past ten years in Western Australia, there has been positive progress towards increasing and improving opportunities for physical activity. A wide range of initiatives and programs have been implemented by a variety of agencies.

In particular, progress has been made in four key areas:
1. **Policy and Practice** – with strong overarching bodies and some key policies, programs and facilities in place.
2. **Communications and Collaboration** - delivering effective inter-agency partnerships and communication strategies.
3. **Financial Commitment** - with funding for practical programs, facilities and investment in capacity building initiatives.
4. **Research** – delivering sound evidence-based research to inform policy and practice and maintaining investment in a WA research base.
However, it was noted that 40% of the adult population are still not active enough for good health\(^1\) and half of all school children do not meet the national guidelines for physical activity\(^2\). This suggested to most stakeholders that more needed to be done in order to change these behaviours. In addition, stakeholder perceptions of organisational commitment to physical activity also showed that all levels of government (Federal, State and Local) and Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) needed to increase their commitment to physical activity beyond current levels in order to deliver significant behaviour change.

**Enablers and Barriers to increasing Physical Activity**

A wide range of enablers and barriers to increasing and improving opportunities for physical activity in WA were identified through the consultation process. These were mapped to the four key elements which form the TNS Systems Mapping Framework – a systemic approach to understanding and addressing behaviour change.

The four inter-related elements of the Framework are:

- **Education** – providing information, making people aware, debunking myths and misconceptions.
- **Persuasion** – engaging people and motivating them to change their beliefs or attitudes.
- **Control** – measures which make behaviour compulsory e.g. through legislation, regulation and taxation.
- **Design** – the effect of the physical (and social and political) environment on behaviour.

The current enablers facilitating physical activity in WA tended to be spread between the four elements, with some bias towards the design element. For example; a conducive climate; the presence of both natural and built facilities; inter-agency partnerships; federal and state funding; social marketing campaigns and programs which encourage physical activity.

It was clear from the consultation that the majority of barriers inhibiting physical activity were inherent in control and design elements which exerted external influences on people’s behaviour. For example; geographical spread and high car usage; lack of workplace opportunities; funding restrictions and planning policies. Therefore it was widely believed that there should be an increased emphasis on strategies which leveraged the control and design components. Education and persuasion strategies should, however, still form a key part of the behaviour change strategy within this context as a focus on control and design strategies alone would not achieve the desired outcome.

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Key Conclusions

A number of key insights were identified through the research process and the key report conclusions are listed below (see the full report *Diagnosis of Physical Activity in Western Australia* for the entire list of conclusions):

- **Physical Activity Agenda** - Overarching bodies such as the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Physical Activity Taskforce are a key strength and enabler in progressing and elevating the physical activity agenda in Western Australia.

- **Physical Activity Definition** - The definition of physical activity should be widened and clearly defined to ensure a common denominator across agencies and, consequently, the scope of physical activity research and evaluation should to be broadened to accommodate this definition.

- **Barriers to Physical Activity** - The majority of the barriers identified related to control and design elements of the Systems Mapping Framework and these were seen to be key areas of future focus for strategies which could increase and improve opportunities for physical activity.

- **Partnerships** - Strong partnerships already exist between a number of agencies, particularly Taskforce members, and deliver change which could not be achieved by working individually. However, partnerships between organisations beyond Taskforce members were often felt to be relatively limited. Local Governments in particular were often seen to be an under-represented - yet key cog - in effecting behaviour change. Private companies were also seen as a relatively untapped opportunity for partnerships.

- **Research** - Evidence-based research should form a core part of delivering future physical activity strategy but many organisations currently feel they are unable to resource research effectively - either financially or with suitably skilled staff.

Future strategies and enablers

As a strategy to move forward and create change in the arena of physical activity, four key overarching themes emerged which encompassed all four of the Systems Mapping Framework elements of design, control, educate and persuade:

1. **Strengthen public policy** – As a key influencer of behaviour, and in particular, incidental activity, changes to key policy areas such as planning and education were seen to be key priorities. In addition, funding policies which enabled agencies to provide sufficient resources (financial and human) to execute change were identified as central to strengthening public policy and enabling all four strategies.
2. **Provision of appropriate environments and programs** – Delivering facilities, infrastructure and programs which cater to a demand in the target group and specifically addressing the barriers to participation.

3. **Increase public motivation and understanding** – Creating the motivation for individuals and communities to take action and make positive behaviour changes.

4. **Promote partnerships** – Developing more integrated relationships with existing partners and working with a broader network of organisations (public and private) to capitalise on opportunities which could not be realised by a single organisation or, would be greatly enhanced by taking a multi-organisation approach.

It is crucial that all four of these strategies (and particularly the first three) should be underpinned by strong evidence-based research which would enable each of the strategies to be successfully implemented and delivered. There was strong support throughout the consultation for an increased practical use of research to enable greater change.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Since 2001, the issue of physical activity in Western Australia has been an increasing government concern as a result of Western Australian research which reflected an international trend towards declining levels of physical activity and sedentary living habits (particularly in western societies)\(^3\).

While past research has pointed to a relationship between an active lifestyle, and physical, social and mental health and wellbeing, there is also increasing evidence of a relationship between physical inactivity and poor health. In particular, inactivity has been shown to be a known risk factor for a number of diseases including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, obesity and diabetes\(^3\).

Furthermore, studies have estimated the cost of health care in Australia would decrease by around $3.6 million per year, as a result of a one per cent increase in physical activity\(^3\).

As a result of these concerns with declining physical activity, the Physical Activity Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established in 2001 to provide a whole of Government, whole of community response to increasing levels of physical activity for Western Australia.

While positive progress towards increasing population levels of physical activity has been made since 2001, in 2009, the mandate of the Taskforce changed from focussing on public influence, to establishing and driving cross government collaboration and coordination. This aimed to further drive increases in physical activity levels by ensuring physical activity remained a government priority.

In order to assist the Taskforce to transition into this role and to reflect these changes in focus and direction, it was recognised that the Taskforce strategic plan needed to be revised.

1.2 Scope and Objectives

The Taskforce Secretariat set up a strategic directions project to review emerging trends and issues, and analyse current policies and delivery frameworks in order to inform the strategic plan, and set a vision and strategic framework for Physical Activity in WA. The resulting framework will guide increasing physical activity levels for the State for the next five years.

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As part of this project, the Taskforce commissioned TNS Social Research to undertake a Physical Activity Diagnosis to independently analyse past and current policies, strategies, delivery models and interventions which support physical activity in Western Australia.

The fundamental objective of this project was to:

- Develop a clear understanding, from a high level through to implementation level, of the current policies and programs impacting physical activity in WA in order to guide the strategic direction for physical activity in WA.

As part of this key objective, the following analysis was undertaken in order to provide direction on the strategic priorities for physical activity in Western Australia:

- Analysis of the current progress of Western Australian policies, services, delivery models and interventions, aimed at providing opportunities for and increasing participation in physical activity.
- Identification of the current status of policies, services, delivery models and interventions related to physical activity, with particular focus on the extent of integration and collaboration between parties and sectors.
- Identification of the gaps, limitations and opportunities that have the potential to impact on organisational and systemic change to support increased levels of physical activity in Western Australia.

This report details the findings from the Diagnosis and will guide the development of the strategic framework.
1.3 Methodological Approach

The research utilised an iterative and collaborative research approach, and was conducted in five stages as shown in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Overview of the Methodological Approach*

| Step one ... the starting point, collating 'what is known' | A critical and detailed review of existing information of the past 6 years (2005-2009), provided by the PAT6, was undertaken to highlight key findings, the extent of integration and collaboration and identify gaps. | Why? To summarise where the sector has 'come from' & where it is 'currently', to understand what has been successful. |
| Step two ... broadening the footprint, surveying senior stakeholders | Senior stakeholders were quantitatively surveyed to understand policies, strategies, delivery models and interventions, understand integration / collaboration, and identify organisational commitment. | Why? To identify common themes, areas of duplication, gaps in knowledge, as well as the enablers and barriers at an overarching / systems / policy level. |
| Step three ... refining, validating and contextualising with practitioners and policy participants | Qualitative input was sought from a broader range of stakeholders to discuss more specific issues that may pertain to implementation / practicalities / integration. | Why? To validate and extend the findings from steps one and two and provide a broader range of stakeholders 'a voice' and an opportunity to participate. |
| Step four ... consultation and presentation of draft findings at the Joint Sitting | Presentation on the key draft findings of the project at the Physical Activity Taskforce Joint Sitting. | Why? To finalise consultation and communicate the findings from previous stages. |
| Step five ... finalising reporting | Detailed reporting incorporating stages one through four to bring the 'strands' of the research together in a complete and concise reference document. | Why? To produce a living document that can be referred to on an ongoing basis and continually guide strategy. |

Full methodology details are available in Appendix One.
1.4 Report Limitations

In any research, there are methodological limitations that must be acknowledged in order to provide context to the reliability and context of the research and its findings. The consistency of findings throughout all stages of this project’s methodology suggests that the limitations noted below have not critically impeded this research. The noted methodological limitations to this research include:

- **The Physical Activity Program Summary** (Program Summary) (Appendix Three): While the Physical Activity Program Summary provided a useful summary of some of the current policies, delivery models and interventions which contribute to physical activity in Western Australia, there are a number of limitations to the Program summary which must be noted.

  - The Program Summary is limited to the organisations who responded to the Taskforce Physical Activity Monitoring Surveys and Annual Activity Reports (2005 – 2009). There may be other policies, delivery models and interventions which contribute to physical activity in WA which are not reflected in the Program Summary. For example, the Taskforce did not seek responses from local governments, but rather asked WALGA to submit an annual activity report on behalf of all local governments. This, in some cases may have resulted in local government programs or policies which were not represented in the activity reports.

  - The Taskforce Physical Activity Monitoring Surveys and Annual Activity Reports has a focus on ‘descriptive’ reporting of programs and policies, rather than evaluative reporting, making it difficult to draw conclusions about the successes and failures of programs and policies.

  - Due to the ‘self-complete’ methodology used in the Taskforce Physical Activity Monitoring Surveys and Annual Activity Reports, these reports may not provide an objective view of the successes and failures of policies and programs.

  - Finally, as a result of the implementation of the Taskforce Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011, the reporting template and time period for the Taskforce Annual Activity Reports was adjusted thereby reducing continuity in reporting programs and limiting the amount of information available and completeness of reports for the 2007 and 2008 time periods.

- **Limited Regional Consultation**: While online surveys were distributed to regional areas, regional consultation was only able to be conducted with stakeholders from the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder and the City of Bunbury, as a result of time and capacity restraints. It could be beneficial to broaden this research into additional regional areas, including smaller regional centres, in order to extend the findings of this research.
- **Limited Response Rate on Stakeholder Senior Policy Survey**: The senior stakeholder survey achieved a total response rate of 24 per cent. While this can be considered at the lower end of the scale, relatively good response rates were received from both State Government (38%) and Non-Government Organisations (53%). The relatively low response rate of the total survey, and in particular from Local Governments, is an interesting finding in itself as it suggests that a number of organisations still do not consider physical activity to be sufficiently important. It also suggests that some of these agencies may not appreciate the role they could/should play in the physical activity agenda.

- **Limited Community Input**: The scope of this research did not include undertaking research with the community, thereby limiting the input of community members into the research.
2 Analysis of Key Stakeholder Activity and Consultations

This section of the report analyses the information collected through the research to deliver an analysis of key stakeholder activity and the stakeholder consultations to give an overall understanding of the current situation within WA.

The fundamental objective of this diagnosis was to develop a clear understanding of the current policies and programs impacting physical activity in order to guide the strategic direction of physical activity in WA. In order to address this objective, data was collected in two key ways.

Stage one involved a review and synthesis of the Taskforce’s Annual Activity Reports. These reports are voluntary, self-complete reports, completed by key physical activity stakeholders, and provide a summary of the activity undertaken by each stakeholder, between 2005 and 2009. The reports were collected on an annual basis however, not all stakeholders submitted reports annually.

The activity reports were submitted via a standardised template which gathered information on each program or initiative undertaken by the stakeholder organisation. The information gathered included the agency or agencies delivering each activity, the target population, the setting it was delivered within, and a descriptive review of each activity.

A review of these reports identified over 250 activities undertaken by the 17 stakeholder organisations who submitted reports between 2005 and 2009. This data was synthesised and tagged by field, to create a 60 page document, which was segmented by target group. The complete Physical Activity Program Summary (Program Summary) document can be found in Appendix Three.

However, while the Program Summary synthesises all of the information from the Taskforce annual activity reports, there is a significant amount of information missing from this summary (see Section 1.4 Report Limitations for the limitations of the Program Summary). The activity reports provided a description of each activity taking place, but they did not reflect behavioural outcomes or provide other evaluative information about each activity in order to allow a program evaluation methodology to be utilised. This limits the type of analysis that can be done with the data collected from these reports, and means that it is impossible to determine the impact of these activities on physical activity in WA from this information. These gaps in the reporting template highlight the need for more comprehensive and improved reporting systems and processes in the future.

Despite this, the Program Summary provides useful insight into the volume of activity being undertaken in the physical activity arena by a broad number of organisations. This section will discuss some of the key activities and achievements by key stakeholder between 2005 and 2009.
This section will also report on the findings from stage two, the stakeholder consultations. As noted in the methodology section, TNS consulted with 88 organisations via a mixed methodology approach of quantitative surveys, focus groups and in depth interviews.

As part of these consultations, stakeholders were asked about the following topics:

- Physical activity in WA
- The Taskforce itself
- Barriers and enablers to physical activity from an organisational perspective (related to systems, policies or social, environmental, health or economic issues)
- The uses of, and gaps and barriers to utilising, physical activity research
- What stakeholders regard to be ‘best practice’ in physical activity
- A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis focussing on physical activity in WA.

This section will draw together the key findings from analysis of the Program Summary, as well as the Stakeholder consultations, to provide a broad overview of the policies and programs impacting physical activity in WA since 2005. It is important to note that the information provided in this section is drawn from the Program Summary and Stakeholder consultations only, and the limitations of this data (see Section 1.4) must be taken into account.

### 2.1 Key Stakeholder Achievements

Increasing and improving physical activity levels in Western Australia is a complex task impacted by many factors including social, economic, environmental and health issues. Due to the complexity of this task, a multifaceted approach is required to bring about significant change - no single agency or organisation will be able to increase physical activity levels on its own.

The role of the Taskforce, since 2001, has been to provide strategic leadership and direction, across government and the community, in relation to physical activity. The Taskforce brings together the expertise of a number of government departments, local government entities, leading academics and community representatives, including:

- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Planning
- Department of Transport
- Healthway
- WA Local Government Association (WALGA)
- Academics
- Non Government Representatives

In addition to being Taskforce members, the Program Summary shows that these stakeholders have been extremely proactive in funding and delivering physical activity programs and policies since 2005.

The following forms a summary of some of the key activities undertaken by Government departments, between 2005 and 2009. For more detailed information on the range of programs and policies implemented by stakeholders over this time period as well as the extent of partnerships and collaborations, refer to the Program Summary at Appendix Three.

2.1.1 Department of Health

As illustrated throughout the Program Summary, the Department of Health is one of the most significant stakeholders in physical activity and makes an extensive contribution to the physical activity agenda. The Department of Health is a key funding agency for a number of programs and campaigns delivered state-wide by Non-Government Organisations and Health Services including the Metropolitan Health Units (North Metropolitan Health Unit and South Metropolitan Health Unit), as well as WA Country Health Services (WACHS) and Child and Adolescent Community Health Services (CACHS).

Some of the key programs funded by the Department of Health since 2005 include:
- Heart Foundation National Walking Groups Program, funded by the Department of Health and delivered by the National Heart Foundation and the Department of Health Ageing.
- Lifestyle Triple P, funded by the Department of Health and delivered by the Child and Adolescent Community Health Services (CACHS).
- The WA School Breakfast Program, delivered in partnership with Foodbank WA and Diabetes WA.

These and many other programs funded by the Department of Health illustrate their commitment to increasing and improving physical activity levels in Western Australia, and to fostering partnerships and collaborations with other agencies and organisations to achieve this.

Another example of the extent of collaboration are the Department of Health’s partnerships with Local Governments to develop local government physical activity plans. These plans have been developed in a number of different regions including the South Metropolitan Area and Mid West Region, as well as the City of Cockburn and City of Belmont, among others.
In addition, the Department of Health has funded a number of communication campaigns including the:

- *Find Thirty* campaign
- *Unplug and Play* campaign

The development of state wide communication campaigns which aims to increase the awareness and motivation of the community to increase physical activity is a significant investment by the Department of Health. These communication campaigns, when run in conjunction with the delivery of policies and programs, play an important role in assisting behaviour change and increasing population levels of physical activity.

The Department of Health also contributes to the development of policy and strategy, particularly through the development of the WA Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2007-2011.

### 2.1.2 Department of Sport and Recreation

The Department of Sport and Recreation supports physical activity in the community by providing funding and grants for facilities and programs, as well as undertaking strategic policy and planning.

The Program Summary identifies some of the key funding / grants programs delivered by the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) since 2005, including:

- The *Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund* (CSRFF), funded and delivered by the Department of Sport and Recreation
- The *Community Sport and Recreation Grants Scheme* (CSRGS), funded through a partnership between the Department of Sport and Recreation, Sports Lottery Account (SLA), Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and SWA.
- The *Lotterywest Trails Grants Program*, funded by Lotterywest and delivered by Department of Sport and Recreation.

The DSR also delivers programs for a wide variety of community members. Some of the most notable programs include:

- *Active Smart* pilot programs (delivered in Rockingham and Geraldton) - funded by the Taskforce and delivered by the Department of Sport and Recreation
- CALD inclusion program, funded by SWA and delivered by the Department of Sport and Recreation
- *Healthy Active Workplaces Program* funded and delivered by the Department of Sport and Recreation in partnership with the National Heart Foundation.
2.1.3 Department of Transport

Another key physical activity stakeholder, is the Department of Transport (DoT). The DoT provides a variety of infrastructure and programs to support active transport and leisure-time walking and cycling activities.

Some of the key programs provided by the Department of Transport include:

- **TravelSmart** Programs, including Walking School Buses. The Travel Smart suite of programs are funded by the Department of Transport and delivered through partnerships with the Department of Health (Health Services), Department of Education, National Heart Foundation and Local Governments.
- The ‘Make Tracks to School’ Challenge is funded through the Department of Transport, with partnerships with the Department of Health, Department of Education and the National Heart Foundation.
- The ‘Cycle Instead’ Program is targeted at the broader community state wide, and is funded and delivered by the Department of Transport.

2.1.4 Department of Education

The Department of Education (DoE) supports physical activity in the school environment by implementing their Physical Activity Strategy and School Design Policies. The DoE Physical Activity Policy was commonly used as an example of supportive physical activity policy in Western Australia, by many stakeholders during the consultation period, as is discussed in further detail in section 2.2.2.1.

The Department of Education also assists with the delivery of a number of programs aimed at youth - particularly the TravelSmart Walking School Bus and ‘Make Tracks to School’ Challenge programs described above - as well as a number of other sports and physical activity related programs – see the Program Summary in Appendix Three for further information.

2.1.5 Department of Planning

While the Department of Planning does not focus on the delivery of physical activity programs, they play an important role in providing policy that guides the development of environments supportive of physical activity. One key example of this is the ‘Liveable Neighbourhoods’ policy. This policy was also identified as a key policy within Western Australia in terms of providing support and guidelines for development, and is discussed in greater detail in section 2.2.2.1.
This overview of key stakeholder achievements highlights into the extensive nature of partnerships and collaborations between agencies and organisations in the physical activity arena. As noted earlier, this level of integration is essential in tackling such a complex issue as increasing and improving physical activity levels in Western Australia, and is discussed further in section 2.2.2.

2.2 What progress has been made in Western Australia?

As a result of these key stakeholder achievements, as well as other activity in physical activity, stakeholders consulted as part of this research agreed that Western Australia has made positive progress towards addressing declining levels of physical activity, particularly through the development of:

1. Effective policy and practice
2. Strong communication and collaboration channels
3. A financial commitment to physical activity
4. A strong evidence base to inform policy and practice

This section will discuss each of these key areas, and the contribution they have made to increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in Western Australia.

2.2.1 Effective Policy and Practice

Stakeholders consider WA to be proactive in implementing effective policy and practice to support physical activity within Western Australia. This sentiment is supported by the Program Summary, which identifies over 250 physical activity activities being delivered since 2005, by just 17 key stakeholders (albeit supported by a number other stakeholders).

The following five areas provide some key examples, identified from the stakeholder consultations, of how Western Australia’s policy and practice has contributed to increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in WA.

2.2.2 Overarching Bodies

A key part of the stakeholder consultations was a SWOT analysis on physical activity in Western Australia. As part of this analysis, a significant number of stakeholders identified Western Australia’s overarching bodies as one of WA’s key strengths in progressing the physical activity agenda - “the
stronger DSR is, the more capacity there is to reinforce the need and improve the outcomes for physical activity” (stakeholder in-depth interview).

The existence of overarching bodies such as the Taskforce was seen to help drive the physical activity agenda, by both ensuring the priority of the physical activity agenda across government, as well as facilitating wider government collaborative planning and an integrated approach to policy across different portfolios.

Since its inception in 2001 the Taskforce was felt to have become a unique example of partnerships in practice and had been successful in engaging different agencies, influencing and acting as a catalyst for change. However, it was accepted that it was not possible to measure its success in numbers or against specific targets due to the nature of its role as a facilitator rather than a ‘doer’.

“The Taskforce is a leading organisation in cross-government collaboration, it’s unique...but it’s not possible to say ‘the Taskforce has achieved this, or that’ and it will never be possible”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

The re-organisation of the Taskforce, and its refined focus with a greater advocacy and influencing role, was felt to have allowed the Taskforce to become more effective and efficient, concentrating on facilitating change with other organisations rather than “trying to do everything” (In-depth Interview Respondent). This was reflected in the levels of engagement with other agencies and the translation of physical activity into policy.

“(The Taskforce) ...have the capacity, the vision and the willingness to deal with the real policy makers - “they take the deals to the big players, like justice, health, planning, finance ...”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Stakeholders also considered the Department of Sport and Recreation to be unique to Western Australia, in that it is the only state to have a dedicated Department and Minister. It was thought this indicated that the role and importance of these overarching bodies was being acknowledged by government.

One area of concern, noted by a number of stakeholders, was a perception that awareness of the role and activities of the Taskforce seemed to have gradually decreased since its inception in 2001. Further, it is anticipated that with the changing mandate in 2008 and the end of the strategic plan in 2011, there will be a greater focus on cross government collaboration and coordination, and less of a focus on public influence, this awareness may decrease further. Therefore, it was considered important to ensure an appropriate level of communication is maintained with all key stakeholders.
2.2.3 Supportive Policies

Another of Western Australia’s core strengths in progressing the physical activity agenda was believed to be the development of a number of physical activity policies aimed at addressing / improving participation in physical activity. The following outlines some of the most commonly cited physical activity policies by stakeholders throughout the consultation period.

**Walk WA: A Walking Strategy for Western Australia 2007 - 2020**

The Walk WA Strategy was developed in response to evidence that encouraging more people to walk may be the best way to increase population physical activity levels. The strategy is designed as a “whole of government, whole of community strategy and is envisioned to enable a coordinated approach to encourage all Western Australian’s to walk, and to develop environments in which the decision to walk is easier” (Taskforce, 2007).

The strategy, developed in collaboration with the Department of Transport, and key stakeholders from State and Local Government, and Non-Government Organisations, provides a vision for 2020, and five key objectives to reach this vision. Stakeholders indicated that the Walk WA strategy provided a good overview and context of the strategy for WA and provides a good base document to build upon in their individual organisations.

**The Department of Communities Active Ageing Strategy**

The ageing population in Western Australia gives rise to the need to implement policies to prepare for an increasing proportion of the population over the age of 45. The Active Ageing strategy was developed by the Department for Communities (Office of Seniors Interests), in conjunction with the Department of Sport and Recreation in 2008. The key aim of the strategy is to manage the health, safety and productivity of an ageing workforce, with particular reference to the WA Seniors Active Ageing Benchmark Indicators.

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As with the Walk WA strategy, this and similar state government strategies were felt by stakeholders to be supportive policies, in terms of setting guidelines and expectations, as well as providing context and information to set their own policies and agendas, especially for local government and non-government organisations.

**The Department of Education Physical Activity Policy**

Since 2005 it has been mandatory for all students in years 1 through 10 to be provided with opportunities to maximise the achievement of skills for physical activity outcomes. In 2007, the Department specified that students in years 1 through 10 must participate in at least two hours of physical activity per week, as part of curriculum time. Schools are also encouraged to provide physical activity opportunities during breaks and before / after school, as part of the Department Physical Activity Strategy 2008 – 2011 (and its predecessor the Physical Activity Strategy 2004 – 2007). While stakeholders identified some definitional problems (Physical Activity versus Physical Education) with the implementation of this strategy, stakeholders saw the strategy as favourable, particularly in its role in educating young people about the importance of physical activity, as well as exposing them to a variety of different physical activity opportunities.

"... (the Department's Physical Activity strategy) is a good start. With political support it has the capacity to make changes".

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

However, while it was felt that this policy is a good starting point, stakeholders highlighted a number of concerns including lack of qualified / competent physical education teachers (particularly in primary schools) who are able to deliver an activity based lesson. This results in a lack of quality physical activity time. There was also some debate about the amount of time dedicated to physical activity, and whether two hours per week was adequate. Stakeholders indicated that a clearer physical activity policy, with a guideline of what 120 minutes of physical activity should look like would be beneficial.

**The WA Planning Commission’s (WAPC) Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy.**

The Western Australian Planning Commission Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy is an operational policy to be followed in the design and approval of urban development. A number of stakeholders indicated that this state government policy presented guidelines about design features that can support physical activity opportunities for the community, thereby assisting in improving participation in physical activity. This policy is currently under review by the WA Planning Commission.

These and other Western Australian physical activity policies were felt to highlight the cross collaboration between government departments, showing that the importance of the physical activity
agenda is being acknowledged by a number of government departments, outside the sport and recreation area.

2.2.4 ‘Best Practice’ Delivery Models and Interventions

As part of the consultations, stakeholders were asked to share examples of programs they considered to be ‘best practice’, locally, nationally and / or internationally. Stakeholders strongly indicated that they believed that Western Australia often looked to ‘best practice’ delivery models and interventions nationally and internationally, when designing and implementing many physical activity programs and policies.

The following examples are some of the most commonly cited ‘best practice’ delivery models and interventions, currently operating in Western Australia, as highlighted through the consultation process.

It is important to note, however, that the following programs are based on stakeholder perceptions of best practice only, as there are currently no internationally agreed guidelines to what constitutes best practice in physical activity delivery models and interventions. Despite this, there was a general consensus among stakeholders, within this research, that ‘best practice’ delivery models and interventions include:

- Cross government collaboration and partnerships.
- Effective communication between all partners.
- The development of holistic programs which take into account not only supply, but also demand, availability and other relevant considerations
- Effective research and evaluation of programs to measure impact (and justify funding).
- Development of sustainable funding models to decrease reliance on government funding.
- Nature Play WA – modelled on a program in the US, which aims to decrease ‘screen time’ and re-engage young people in the outdoors.
- Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) program utilises some elements of the New Zealand ‘Push Play’ Initiative which increases awareness of physical activity by modelling incidental / everyday activities that can be undertaken to increase physical activity. The FMS program in WA focuses on movement patterns than involve different body parts. They are foundation movements or precursor patterns to the more specialised, complex skills used in play,
games, sports, dance, gymnastics, outdoor education and physical recreation.

- **Active After Schools Communities program** – a national initiative with Federal Government funding to provide access to physical activity programs after school.

Stakeholders also identified some of Western Australia’s own physical activity programs and policies as ‘best practice’, including the:

- **TravelSmart program** - first developed by the Government of Western Australia in the 1990’s, the TravelSmart methodology is now being replicated in various forms both nationally and internationally and has earned support from the Australian government.

The program aims to encourage people to use cars less and to choose alternative transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport. The program is considered best practice due to its inclusive approach – it has sub-programs targeted at schools, community and workplaces. The program is also considered extremely effective in terms of program reach. For example, the TravelSmart Household program was delivered to 63,000 residents in four project areas in 2005/06. In 2006/07, the program was expanded and delivered to 245,000 residents in eleven project areas.

- **ActiveSmart program** – The ActiveSmart program, developed in 2009, was based on the success of the TravelSmart program. It is described as a ‘world first behaviour change program which uses tailored information, resources and personal contact to motivate and encourage people to increase physical activity and community connectedness’. The program was piloted in Rockingham, where it saw 12 per cent of the target population increase their physical activity levels from insufficient to sufficient. A regional pilot is currently being implemented in Geraldton.

The program is considered ‘best practice’ by stakeholders who participated in this research due to the relative success of the program in the pilot region, as well as the extensive number of partnerships and the collaborative approach undertaken to deliver the program.

There was a general consensus that Western Australia’s current Walk and Cycle initiatives and campaigns were also considered best practice for their ability to increase and improve physical activity opportunities in the community. Some of these programs include:

- **Walk There Today Walk Week** - a week-long event held annually in November and supported by a number of partnerships between the National Heart Foundation, Department of Sport and Recreation, Department of Transport, Main Roads WA, Department of Education, and

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Department of Health. In 2009, more than 300 walk week events were held across WA, along with the distribution of more than 35,000 guides.

- **Cycle Instead Campaign** – the Cycle Instead program is run by the Department of Transport and provided funding for projects to encourage cycling as a viable means of transport, as well as a recreational activity. The Cycle Instead programs incorporates other programs such as the *Make Tracks 2 School Challenge* – a four week cycle and walk challenge for students in year 5 – 7, in which 53 schools participated in 2009. It also incorporates the Bike to Work Breakfast, which had over 2,500 attendees, and Cycle to School day which had 11,687 participants (75 metropolitan schools and 38 regional schools) in 2006 / 07.

While there are a number of sources and networks set up to share best practice, these are seen to be more accessible in larger organisations and metropolitan areas due to increased access to resources, such as time and staff, in these areas. Improvement of access to best practice in smaller organisations and regional areas may lead to increased delivery of best practice, resulting in increased and improved physical activity opportunities in these areas.

"Sharing (of best practice) is not hard; it is the sourcing of what works that is difficult*  
*(In-depth Interview Respondent)
2.2.5 Broad Community Focus

Another area, identified through the consultations, as contributing to effective policy and practice was the relatively broad focus and inclusive nature of WA’s physical activity programs and policies, which enable wide reach to many areas of the community.

The broad focus of WA’s policies and programs is highlighted in the Program Summary, which segments WA’s physical activity delivery models and interventions by target group. This shows that physical activity programs cater not only to mainstream community members such as adults and families, but that they also focus specifically on Youth (children and young people), Workplaces and other diverse populations and settings.

The Program Summary indicated that between 2005 – 2009 there were:
- 60 mainstream community programs.
- 25 youth programs.
- 24 priority group programs.
- 18 workplace programs.

Stakeholders indicated the importance of ensuring inclusivity in physical activity programs for various target groups. For example, it was felt that children and young people need to be taught the importance and value of physical activity from an early age, particularly with the increasing amount of screen time young people participate in.

In addition, stakeholders indicated that due to increasing working hours and the time poor nature of many families (many with two working parents), commitment by a workplace to encourage physical activity / provide physical activity programs / infrastructure will increasingly play an important role in ensuring individuals reach their daily physical activity requirements.

Employers were also seen to be increasingly recognising the benefits of encouraging a more active workforce, particularly in terms of reducing job related stress, work place injuries, and absenteeism among their workforce. Health promotion in the workforce can also increase worker productivity, workplace morale and workplace culture and result in improved staff retention.

Programs targeting specific target markets (i.e. Indigenous, seniors) were also considered essential, as these markets are the ones most traditionally not exposed to, or involved in, physical activity. However, these target markets are often most at risk of disease and injury due to a number of complex factors, to which a lack of physical activity potentially contributes.

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These are programs reported to Taskforce via the Taskforce Physical Activity Monitoring Surveys and Annual Activity Report (2005 – 2009) only and do not include additional programs / interventions that may exist.
However, while there can be seen to be a broad focus on a number of different groups, some stakeholders do acknowledge that there is still a lot more to be done, particularly in the provision of a greater number of physical activity programs for priority groups.

### 2.2.6 Supply of Infrastructure / Facilities

In ensuring Western Australia has effective programs to increase and improve physical activity opportunities in the community, it was seen to be essential that community members have access to places that encourage physical activity.

Facilities and Infrastructure refer to both the facilities available for organised sport i.e. club rooms, sporting complexes and gyms, as well as infrastructure such as public open space, parks, paths, trails and skate parks. WA is seen by stakeholders to have a relatively good supply of facilities and infrastructure aimed at encouraging physical activity, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area, as well as larger regional centres.

In contrast however, smaller regional areas were seen to lack key facilities and infrastructure resulting in a need for significant travel to access these opportunities.

For those participating in organised sport, WA is seen to have a well-established club structure in terms of availability and accessibility of clubs in both the Perth metropolitan area, and major regional areas, to facilitate these opportunities. However, despite this well-established structure, stakeholders have expressed concern that as a result of the ‘western lifestyle’ there has been an increasing lack of value placed on joining clubs, particularly as people feel they are too time poor to commit. Equally, stakeholders felt that clubs were not successfully engaging with technologies such as social media to engage new members, resulting in falling club memberships in some clubs.

### 2.2.7 Strong Communication and Collaboration Channels

A second area where WA is seen, by stakeholders, to have made positive progress in terms of increasing and improving physical activity opportunities is in communication and collaboration channels. These channels relate not only to the partnerships and collaborations between agencies to develop effective policy and practice, but also in the Department of Health’s communication campaigns which assist in increasing public motivation and demand for physical activity programs.
2.2.8 Partnerships and Collaborations

Due to the complex nature of the physical activity issue, ensuring effective partnerships and collaborations, was highlighted by stakeholders as essential to increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in WA. These partnerships should encompass all levels of government (Federal, State and Local), as well as including external stakeholders, such as Non-Government Organisations, and private enterprise.

Partnerships and collaborations between stakeholders allow the development of ‘enabling strategies’ to assist the community to participate in physical activity. Partnerships were also felt to make programs / interventions more robust, particularly where separate departments have commonalities and work towards mutually beneficial goals. For example, the Department of Transport and the Department of Education have supported the physical activity agenda by developing and implementing active transport programs such as the TravelSmart Walking School Bus program. This program is coordinated through the Department of Transport’s TravelSmart program, with the assistance of the Department of Education and local schools.

Stakeholders also identified the Best Trails website (a collaboration between TWA / DSR / Munda Biddi / Bibbulmun Track groups) as a good example of effective partnerships between government and non-government organisations.

“(Partnerships) ... are essential in ensuring sustainability and ongoing continuity (of programs) ... by simply facilitating linkages between parties”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Positively, it was felt that Western Australia supported the development of these partnerships and collaborations, particularly due of the size of the Perth metropolitan area and the corresponding ease of making contacts. Additionally, regional stakeholders felt that partnerships and collaborations were essential to overcome time and staffing constraints and to prevent the duplication of resources between departments.
2.2.9 Communication

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of mass communication campaigns in communicating the importance and benefits of physical activity to the public. Effective communication was felt to be achieved when a simple, consistent message was delivered to the public.

The Department of Health’s Find Thirty Everyday campaign was identified by a number of stakeholders as an effective campaign with a consistent message which was re-iterated through supporting strategies. The campaign also highlighted the importance of informal / incidental exercise, which was felt to be essential in relating physical activity to the mainstream population.

Alternatively, campaigns such as the Federal Government’s ‘Measure Up’ and ‘Swap it’ campaigns were felt to be less effective due to limited Federal Government consultation at a state level, resulting in limited strategies to support these campaigns. Lack of Federal and State government collaboration were also felt to result in the delivery of confusing messages to the marketplace.

However, while stakeholders identified that mass communication campaigns have a key role in communicating about the importance of physical activity to the public, it was also noted that communication campaigns, such as Find Thirty Everyday, should be viewed as one element of the overall strategy to increase and improve physical activity opportunities in WA. This is supported by research (Bull, 2003) which indicates that mass media / communication campaigns, while effective in creating awareness about physical activity interventions, were not effective in bringing about behavioural change, if used alone.

From a policy / organisational perspective, stakeholders also identified WA’s information dissemination channels as a key strength, with communication channels including the National Heart Foundation’s AusPAnet and Department of Health’s WAPAN (WA Physical Activity Network), email updates and e-newsletters such as the Physical Activity Taskforce updates, and information sharing through informal networks.

2.2.10 Financial Commitment

A number of stakeholders indicated that they believe the 2011 state budget reflects the current government’s commitment to increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in Western Australia. In particular, the Sport for All funding aims to increase physical activity levels through its funding of the Nature Play program. The Nature Play program encourages parents of primary school aged children to increase their child’s contact with nature and outdoor activities. Another key

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component of the Sport for All funding is the provision of subsidies to increase participation of priority groups, and to attract and retain volunteers.

There is however some concern among Stakeholders that there seemed to be a greater commitment to funding sport and recreation facilities compared to the commitment of funding for physical activity infrastructure, such as cycling and walking infrastructure.

Stakeholders also pointed to the provision of funding to build the capacity of communities so they are able to provide opportunities for community members to participate in physical activity as evidence of the current government’s financial commitment to the physical activity agenda. For example, the Community Sport and Recreation Grant Scheme provided funding to local governments to increase participation or develop industry personnel to deliver interventions.

Additionally, the Club Development Scheme provided funding and assistance to enable club development, in the form of the provision of seminars, resources and information as well as funding for the implementation of Club Development Officers to assist club development. This program was considered particularly valuable by stakeholders in regional areas as it raised the profile of the sport and recreation industry, and put physical activity on the agenda with local governments.

2.2.11 Research

Research was considered by many stakeholders, to be a vital stage in the development of physical activity policy and practice as it provides an evidence base from which to inform policy and encourage best practice. Research was also felt to be valuable in assisting decision makers make funding decisions.

Research is an enabler for physical activity as it shows where the population is and what it is doing – you can map the strategies with that information ... you know what they are thinking”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Stakeholders indicated that WA has a relatively strong evidence base to inform policy and practice as well as a strong network of ‘world class’ researchers. It is also felt that there was significant investment in maintaining this research base, thereby ensuring evidence continues to be available to inform policy and encourage best practice.)
Key examples of physical activity research that contribute to informing policy and practice include Taskforce commissioned surveys including the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS), and the Physical Activity Levels of WA Adults Survey. Other research includes the Department of Health WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System Surveys and the Australian Sports Commission Exercise, Recreation and Sports Survey (ERASS).

Despite this strong evidence base however, there were a number of barriers identified to conducting and accessing research, particularly in regional areas, including lack of resources (such as time and capacity / relevant expertise to analyse and interpret research), high cost of undertaking research and lack of coordination / support from key partners. In many instances, it was felt that research was not a core requirement but an expendable extra. There was also felt to be a disconnect between the research undertaken and the effective translation of this research into policy and practice.

While stakeholders identified the importance of research, the barriers identified indicated the need to change some government and organisational mindsets from research / evaluation being seen as an ‘optional extra’ to research / evaluation being seen as an integral part of implementing a new program or policy.

2.3 Why should we continue to focus on Physical Activity?

Throughout the consultations conducted as part of this research, stakeholders were relatively positive about the progress being made at an organisational, policy and government level towards increasing and improving physical activity opportunities for Western Australians.

These sentiments were reinforced by the Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults Survey (2009) which shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of sufficiently active adults between 1999 and 2009, as shown in Figure 2.
This research also indicates that over this same time period there has been:

- an increase in the number of people undertaking exercise for under 10 minutes (which is an indication of people undertaking incidental exercise).
- an increase in the use of walking and cycle trails from 7 per cent in 1999 to 31 per cent in 2009.

However, stakeholders were aware that despite this progress, there was considerable cause for concern as research also highlighted that there has been a significant increase in the proportion of people who were overweight and obese between 1999 and 2009 (See Figure 3).
This research also shows that there has been a decline in the average number of steps people are taking per day (46% achieving 10,000 steps in 2002; 32% 2009) (Rosenberg et al, 2009). These results indicate that physical activity is still a vital issue in Western Australia than needs to continue to be addressed.

Of even greater concern for stakeholders is that the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (2008) shows that the majority of children do not meet the 60 minutes of physical activity everyday guidelines as shown in Figure 4 (Physical Activity Taskforce, 2010). Furthermore, three out of four children do not meet the screen based recreation national guidelines (Figure 5) (Physical Activity Taskforce, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 4: Proportion of Students Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines</th>
<th>Figure 5: Proportion of Students meeting Screen Time Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary boys</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>73% in Do not meet guidelines 71% in Meet guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary girls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>62% in Do not meet guidelines 38% in Meet guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary boys</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>90% in Do not meet guidelines 10% in Meet guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary girls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>83% in Do not meet guidelines 17% in Meet guidelines</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Falling physical activity levels among children is a significant concern for many stakeholders as it was felt that physical activity habits needed to be established from an early age to ensure they were maintained throughout life.

In addition, obesity rates among children will have a dramatic impact on the nation’s standard of living in years to come, resulting in health, social, economic and environmental consequences, causing many stakeholders to express concern with a perceived lack of investment in programs, interventions, and communication campaigns targeting children, to date.
2.4 Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment at the Government (Federal and State levels) and Non-Government Organisation level can be seen to be a pre-requisite for increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in the community. This research, conducted into stakeholder perceptions of the level of organisational commitment of governments departments and organisations in Western Australia, indicated that it was felt most organisations lacked optimal commitment to physical activity.

2.4.1 Perceived Organisational Commitment

Perceived organisational commitment was collected as part of the senior stakeholder survey and measured by rating the level of commitment stakeholders perceived government departments and organisations currently had, and compared it to the level of commitment stakeholders perceived governments departments and organisations should have, towards physical activity.

As shown in Figure 6 stakeholders indicated that all organisations should have a high level of commitment to physical activity, with State Governments and Local Governments indicating that stakeholders value physical activity as an important objective for organisations.

However, when rating the level of commitment each organisation currently had to physical activity, stakeholders felt that most governments and organisations had a considerably lower level than they should, with each organisation having a mean score of between 5 and 6 out of 10 (Figure 6) thereby indicating that respondents felt organisations should be demonstrating a greater commitment to the physical activity agenda.
5.3  6.2  5.9  5.5

8.1  8.7  8.4  7.5


Currently Has  Should Have

Figure 6: Perceived Commitment to Physical Activity, by Organisation

Mean Scores on a scale of 0-10

Q2a. Please rate, on a scale of 0 to 10, the level of commitment you feel the following currently have and should have to increasing and improving physical activity opportunities in the community, where 0 is “no commitment” and 10 is “very high commitment”

Source: Survey Senior Policy Survey

2.4.2 Actual Organisational Commitment

This finding was reinforced when stakeholders rated the actual level of commitment organisations were seen to have to physical activity. Actual commitment was measured by the presence and execution of physical activity objectives embedded into the goals and plans of an organisation and ensuring these objectives are effectively communicated, and formally evaluated.

Figure 7 shows the actual commitment of Governments and organisations in terms of these four areas. It can be seen that stakeholders perceive the State Government to have a greater level of actual commitment to physical activity than the Federal Government, with mean scores of between 6.5 and 6.9 out of 10.
These results demonstrate that the Federal Government still has a way to go in order to be able to compare to State Government. They also highlight that there is room for improvement in the level of commitment the State Government has to physical activity⁹.

In general there was a consistent opinion among many stakeholders that, while physical activity was relatively high on the agenda for a number of departments and agencies, it was not considered as important as a number of other issues such as water usage or climate change.

"We have made positive progress, but we need to step it up a notch ... we need to make the Physical Activity agenda as important as the water shortage and climate change agendas"  
(In-depth Interview Respondent)

### 2.5 How should physical activity be defined?

Although it was not an objective of this project and was therefore not explored fully, it became apparent through the research that the term ‘physical activity’ was often interpreted differently by different people and that there was a need for a common definition. In the past physical activity had often been restricted as a definition to “huffing and puffing activities” (In-depth Interview Respondent)

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⁹ However, it is important to note that the data is skewed towards state government agencies. Therefore, these results are primarily based on respondents perceptions of actual commitment outside of their organisation and are likely be influenced by limited knowledge about levels of Federal Government commitment.
but now the term was moving towards a much broader definition including a wide range of general activities and incidental activity.

The definition of physical activity was the subject of some discussion among stakeholders. It was felt that the ways people engaged in physical activity had changed and that there was an increased focus on more general behaviours being encouraged as physical activity (e.g. walking up stairs, housework, gardening etc.). It was therefore considered appropriate that in the future the definition of physical activity should be much broader; encompassing incidental activity, arts, culture and non-traditional activities in addition to the current inclusions.

The implication of this shift reinforces the importance of a strategy which strongly influences incidental activity. Research and evaluation of physical activity also needs to broaden and change its scope in order to be comprehensive and reflect reality.

2.6 A systematic approach to behaviour change

There are four primary tools available to effect behaviour change – Educate, Persuade, Design and Control (see Figure 9). Taking a systematic approach to behaviour change which covers all four areas typically involves a combination of policy interventions, service initiatives and communication campaigns. This approach is more likely to deliver the desired behaviour change among the target audience, and also tends to bring together the different organisations and departments responsible for the different elements of policy intervention, service initiatives and communication, enabling them to work more closely with each other.

2.6.1 The TNS Systems Mapping Framework

The four elements of the TNS Systems Mapping Framework are all highly linked and inter-related, as demonstrated in Figure; but have a distinct purpose in the pursuit of behaviour change.
**Education** – providing information; making people aware; debunking myths and misconceptions.

**Persuasion** – engaging people and motivating them to change their beliefs or attitudes; persuading people that an issue is worth caring about (i.e. getting it on ‘the social agenda’).

**Control** – measures which make behaviour change compulsory such as legislation, regulation, enforcement and taxation.

**Design** – the effect of the physical (and social/political) environment on behaviour and the ways in which reconfiguring the environment can have a significant effect on people’s behaviour (an element often neglected in traditional behaviour change models which tended to focus on personal and social factors such as beliefs, motivations, values etc.).

The Educate and Persuade components tend to be linked more closely with people’s *internal* barriers and enablers, and addressed with communications and marketing strategies. The Control and Design components tend to be more closely linked with people’s *external* barriers and enablers, and are likely to be most successfully tackled through policy intervention, legislation, service provision and facilities (see Figure 9).
The level of focus on each of the four elements differs considerably depending on the issue, and also tends to change over time as a behaviour change strategy/campaign develops and matures. It became clear through the research process that the majority of enablers and barriers at play in the issue of Physical Activity in Western Australian were related to Control and Design factors rather than Education and Persuasion. These enablers and barriers are discussed in detail below. The Educate and Persuade factors are combined in the rest of this diagnosis as the degree of overlap was deemed too high to make it practical to separate the two.
2.7 Current Enablers to Physical Activity

Stakeholders discussed a range of factors which acted as enablers to physical activity within WA as shown in Figure 10.

![Figure 10: Current Enablers facilitating physical activity opportunities](image)

2.7.1 Design Enablers

A number of key factors were considered to be present in the physical and legislative environment which facilitated physical activity in WA:

**Climate** – WA’s climate was cited as a significant enabling factor and particularly conducive to outdoor activity compared to other countries and also other Australian states. However, this was caveated by a potentially negative effect when the weather was too hot and sunny (particularly in northern WA) when people were known to employ tactics which avoided the outdoors, and could consequently lead to more sedentary behaviour.

**Facilities** – The natural open space, such as beaches and parks, was seen to be a strength for WA, providing significant space for sport and general recreation. Built facilities such as leisure centres, pools, ovals etc. and infrastructure such as recreational cycle paths were also felt to be of a high quality and relatively numerous – particularly in Perth and key regional centres, although in regional and remote areas it was recognised that facilities were necessarily more limited and widely spaced. The cost of maintaining existing facilities was acknowledged to be a problem in some areas and a
key consideration to be factored into the provision and nature of new facilities i.e. facilities with low ongoing maintenance costs.

**Partnerships** – A wide range of existing partnerships were identified which worked towards enabling physical activity, particularly those within the Taskforce. For example:

- Department of Health.
- Department of Education.
- Department of Planning.
- Department of Transport.
- Department of Sport and Recreation.
- Non-government Organisations (NGOs) e.g. Cancer Council, Heart Foundation.
- Healthway.

It was the view of stakeholders that these organisations were delivering changes and initiatives which would not be achieved by working individually.

**Physical Activity Taskforce (Taskforce)** – The existence and achievements of the Taskforce as a government body which drove awareness and influenced actions at an organisational level were recognised as facilitating physical activity and creating change at executive and management level which was a critical factor in the bigger picture.

### 2.7.2 Control Enablers

Two key enablers were identified which delivered legislative and regulatory control. Both of these enablers generated a significant amount of discussion and debate, especially during focus group sessions, and stakeholders often had differing opinions of them as enablers or barriers. These enablers are therefore also discussed further in section 2.75 as barriers to physical activity.

**Existing Policy** – Many areas of current planning policy were seen to directly facilitate opportunities for Physical Activity. Specific examples included:

- **Liveable Neighbourhood policy** – generally seen as having set the right direction and identified the correct aims (although some stakeholders considered that there was significant room for improvement).
- **Developer Contributions policy** – seen to provide accessible spaces for the majority of the community.
- **Public Transport policies** – providing increased options for active transport aimed at reducing car dependency.

It should be noted that these policies tended to be discussed in the context of the greater Perth metropolitan area rather than remote or regional areas.
The WA Department of Education policy mandating two hours of physical activity per week for all children up to year 10 was viewed as a positive move in the right direction – particularly in the context of some other states in Australia removing the mandate for physical activity in schools.

**Existing Funding** – It was generally acknowledged that there had been a significant level of investment in a number of key areas which aided the provision of physical activity opportunities. Federal government funding in the form of capital works and, more recently, increased funding for preventative measures was well-received, including the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnerships Agreement. Levels of state government funding were also viewed positively - particularly the Royalties for Regions investment which was seen to help redress an imbalance in regional and remote areas.

### 2.7.3 Educate & Persuade Enablers

**Culture of Sport Participation** – Within WA it was considered that was a culture of high sport participation and therefore physical activity was encouraged among children from an early age, laying down good foundations for future habits.

**Social Marketing Campaigns** – Existing social media campaigns focussing on physical activity messages were considered to have been effective in raising the awareness (although not necessarily motivation) within the general community of the importance of physical activity and knowledge of the target guidelines. However, inconsistencies were observed between different campaigns, such as the state’s ‘Find 30’ and the federal government’s ‘Measure Up’, which fragmented and diluted the message, potentially confusing the target audience. In addition this was not seen as an effective use of monies with a greater investment behind a single campaign preferred by stakeholders (a move which is already taking place).

**Existing Programs** – A number of specific programs running in WA were cited as good examples of promoting opportunities for physical activity. These included:

- **TravelSmart** – viewed by many as a best practice initiative operating in a practical way to drive active transport choices in a range of community settings (work/school/leisure).
- **Active After Schools Communities** – seen to address several issues in one program by both encouraging children and young people to participate in physical activity, and to overcome the issue of working parents who were unable to take children to after school activities.
- **Walking & Cycling Initiatives** – e.g. Trails West, Get on Track Challenge, Bibbulman track. There were many initiatives mentioned which encouraged activity on a practical and local level, suiting many different target groups.
2.8 Current Barriers to Physical Activity

The overarching reasons for lower levels of physical activity in the community in general are complex (e.g. changes in society, patterns of work, the spread of metropolitan areas, leisure choices etc.). It is not the intention of this report to cover these areas in any detail, but rather to reflect the more specific barriers to physical activity in WA identified through the consultation process – barriers which impede physical activity at a community, state or government level rather than those at a personal or individual level.

It was clear through the research process that the barriers described were weighted towards the external Design and Control factors (see Figure 11 below). There was a general consensus that additional focus was needed on these external factors - although these might still be addressed through education and persuasion strategies.

**Figure 11: Barriers to Physical Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Geographical spread</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High car usage over active transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to electronic entertainment</td>
<td>Screen time vs PA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Perception of unsafe streets and parks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Media influence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of widespread infrastructure for PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>Lack of PA &amp; changing facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of opp for incidental activity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occ. Health &amp; Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships/ Common Goal</td>
<td>Some Local Councils/ Govt dept not aiming for PA increase</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partnerships restricted to key organisations and staff rather than widespread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Funding Methods</td>
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<td>Short term funding</td>
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<td>Insufficient funding</td>
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<td>Time consuming application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Disincentives</td>
<td>Benefits of company cars/ tax breaks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No incentives for public transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Policy</td>
<td>Inconsistency between LGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enforcement/ interpretation can vary</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Policy</td>
<td>Variable commitment/ prioritisation by school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2hr legislation interpreted differently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educate &amp; Persuade</td>
<td>Lack of individual motivation/ prioritisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal cost-benefit equation not sufficiently motivating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work/Life balance</td>
<td>Time constraints</td>
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<td>Longer working hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Working parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FIFO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture/ Norms</td>
<td>Society norms, e.g. young girls &amp; sport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance of behaviours e.g. cycling clothes at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Modelling</td>
<td>Lack of accessible/ visible role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. young adults/ teens, peers, teachers</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Parental behaviour</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.8.1 Design Barriers

**Geographical Spread** – Both Perth and WA in general were acknowledged to be highly geographically dispersed with the large distances involved, even travelling within the metropolitan area, making walking/cycling out of the question and car usage a virtual necessity for many journeys. The geographical spread also made it difficult to provide effective public transport in many areas, further exacerbating the high levels of car usage seen in the state. This issue was seen to be particularly dominant in newer suburbs on the metropolitan fringe, and in regional and remote areas.
It was also a particular issue for lower SES communities where people often did not have a car and were often therefore limited in their ability to access facilities.

"Perth is huge from end to end; it’s impractical for people to do anything other than drive."

(Focus Group Participant)

**Safety** – Two key issues around safety were identified:

- **Infrastructure** – It was thought that there was insufficient walking and cycling infrastructure with limited pavements for walking in many areas and a lack of cycling lanes on roads in the Perth area and therefore safety (e.g. in the traffic) was often a barrier for people. While recreational paths and cycle ways were noted as strengths, the lack of functional infrastructure to facilitate more general incidental activity such as walking to the shops or cycling to work was viewed as a planning omission.

- **Unsafe perceptions** – It was observed that there was a general community perception in many areas that streets and parks were unsafe to walk around, particularly at night, therefore deterring people from both recreational activity and incidental activity. Part of this was felt to be largely unwarranted and, to a large extent, fuelled by exaggerated/ negative reports in the media. Another element was the lack of street lighting, facilities such as local shops or restaurants and therefore an absence of people in the area which led to the feeling of being unsafe. Mount Lawley was cited as an example of a suburb which had changed considerably and now encouraged incidental activity because it had a community feel with cafes, restaurants and shops open in the evening and attracting people.

"Look at Mount Lawley now – it’s busy and bustling in the evenings, people are out walking their dogs, going to cafes. It wasn’t like that 10 years ago."

(Focus Group Participant)

Daylight saving was also discussed as an enabler for physical activity because it made it easier for people to be outside and feel safer in the evenings, while the darker evenings were felt to have an opposite effect.

**Workplaces** – In general most workplaces were seen to lack fundamental facilities which would enable employees to participate in physical activity such as showers, changing rooms, lockers to store clothes etc. For many people this would be an insurmountable issue in either using active transport to commute to work, or take part in physical activity at lunchtimes etc.
It was also identified that there was often a lack of opportunity for physical activity within the working day with many jobs involving high levels of sedentary activities and little provision for e.g. standing up to work instead of at a desk. In addition, strict Occupational Health & Safety regulations tended to strongly limit physical activity opportunities in the workplace with a high focus on risk aversion.

In regional areas, the increase in Fly-In Fly-Out workers and the introduction of 12 hour shifts was believed to have impacted negatively on organised sport in local communities with fewer families living in the community and a subsequent reduction in club membership and support.

**Access to Electronic Entertainment** – ‘Screen time’ was seen to be one of the biggest competitors for physical activity time, particularly for young adults and teenagers. With increasingly convenient access to hand-held devices such as smartphones and tablets in terms of both portability and accessible prices, this was viewed as a key barrier both now and increasingly so in the future.

**High Sport Emphasis** – It was observed that within WA (and Australia in general) there was a high emphasis on commercial, elite and competitive sports which were not necessarily attractive or appealing to many parts of the community. In fact, it was acknowledged that young people and children whose activity levels were below the recommended levels were often those who were often alienated by traditional competitive sports and needed alternative options for physical activity. There was seen to be little investment and support in areas which could engage the ‘difficult to reach’ groups e.g. women’s sports, or activities such as circus arts and dance. In addition, the high emphasis on sport left little room to focus on lower level activities more accessible to the mainstream population such as walking.

**Lack of Volunteers** – it was considered that it was becoming more difficult to recruit and retain volunteers for both sport clubs, and as ‘soft’ volunteers for more unstructured activities therefore making it difficult to develop and maintain opportunities for physical activity. Working parents, a lack of time and a general lack of community connectedness were attributed to this effect. However, it was felt by some stakeholders that among young adults there was a growing sense of ‘contributing back’ to the community with increasing numbers of young people volunteering, and that this could be harnessed to improve and increase opportunities for physical activity.

“Because they are the only ones doing it, the volunteers tend to get burnt out after a year and a half, and then [the organisation] have to start all over again.”

*(In-depth Interview Respondent)*
Underdeveloped Partnerships – It was recognised that there were well-developed partnerships among key organisations (in particular those sitting on the Taskforce). However, it was considered that this could be more widespread to a broader network within these organisations (often it was limited to a few individuals, or one team), and also between other organisations for whom physical activity was still very relevant, but not necessarily a core objective (e.g. Disability Services Commission, Department of Culture and the Arts).

"It's always the same people around the table, the same people engaged with physical activity – we need to get other people within our organisations, and in other organisations, involved too."

(Focus Group Participant)

It was also identified that although some Local Governments were engaged and active in driving physical activity opportunities, many did not perceive it as part of their role to help promote physical activity in their communities. This was upheld by the fact that out of the 143 Local Governments invited to respond to the senior policy survey for this research, only 16 per cent responded – the lowest per cent response rate of all organisations contacted. Local Governments were in fact deemed to be a key cog in the ability to enable physical activity opportunities at 'ground level' and this was an important network of partnerships to build up and engage.

"It was hard work to get our Planning team to invite our Leisure team to get involved with planning the new cycle and walking paths – they were just concerned about the thickness of the concrete; not if anyone wanted to use them!"

(Focus Group Participant)

In addition it was thought that it would be beneficial to build partnerships with the Commonwealth – particularly those staff based in Perth – in order to become more aligned with the Commonwealth agenda. Currently very few links were perceived between the Commonwealth and the state government.

2.8.2 Control Barriers

Funding Methods – Funding was identified as a key barrier which limited the provision of physical activity opportunities, particularly in the provision of programs. It was considered by many stakeholders that there was insufficient funding considering the magnitude of the issue. Concerns were expressed about the short term nature of many funding sources, when most programs needed to be consistent and long term in order to gain
momentum and create on-going positive habits in people’s physical activity behaviour and create a more permanent impact. The application process for funding and grants was also considered to be very time-consuming, taking time away from implementation and delivery.

From an individual’s perspective it was felt that, particularly for lower SES families, the cost of membership to clubs or attendance at organised sessions/events etc. was often prohibitive and limited the physical activity opportunities available to them. It was believed that this could be overcome with the provision of subsidies for certain groups or free events.

Financial Disincentives – A number of monetary disincentives were identified which discouraged physical activity among individuals. For example; the provision of company cars by many organisations, but with no corresponding public transport allowance; relatively cheap fuel prices encouraging car use (although this was felt to be a driver for active transport in the future as fuel prices increased); cheap/free parking in many suburbs and favourable tax breaks on company cars. It was considered by some stakeholders that there was a key opportunity to make car use more expensive, and active transport cheaper in order to effect behaviour change through financial drivers.

"we could have public transport tax breaks for business use; we need to think about this differently."
(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Planning Policy – The stakeholder opinions around planning policy and its implementation were varied. It was observed that there was a considerable degree of inconsistency between local governments with the enforcement of planning regulations varying significantly. In addition, some local governments were unwilling or unable to bear the cost of maintaining some facilities which land developers proposed such as swimming pools or recreation centres.

Local government stakeholders and land developer stakeholders alike agreed that many of the regulations were open to interpretation and lacked clear guidelines on what was required. Several land developers felt that development companies tended to be “tarred with the same brush” (Focus Group Participant) whereas, in reality, the majority of companies were committed to the provision of quality infrastructure and facilities for physical activity. There were, however, a smaller number of operators who managed to circumvent some of the planning regulations e.g. on the provision of pavements, connected footpaths, public open space proportions.

"There are some [developers] who cut corners and get around the regulations, but the majority of us are socially responsible and trying to do the right thing."
(Focus Group Participant)

School Policy – Stakeholders believed that the current Department of Education policy for two hours of physical activity per week had two key issues. Firstly, the levels of commitment varied between
different schools with some schools seen to give it low prioritisation and not provide the full two hours. This was felt to be exacerbated by the fact that many staff required professional development in physical activity and its benefits for children and young people. Secondly, it was believed that the two hour policy was open to interpretation and that in many schools (particularly high schools) it was subsumed into Physical Education classes and therefore increased competition between knowledge and skills development and actual physical activity.

"Physical activity should be 120 minutes of huffing and puffing, whereas Physical Education covers all sorts of knowledge and skills development."

*(In-depth Interview Respondent)*

### 2.8.3 Educate & Persuade Barriers

**Lack of Individual Motivation/Prioritisation** – One of the key barriers on an individual level was seen to be a lack of personal motivation with many people aware of the levels of physical activity they *should* be doing, but not taking action to do so. The messages and the personal cost-benefit equation were not considered to be sufficiently motivating for people to facilitate action.

"We have to make sure we don’t just target the ‘worried well’, it’s got to be motivating for those who don’t currently do enough physical activity."

*(In-depth Interview Respondent)*

**Work/Life Balance** – Many social issues were seen to impact on the time people had available for physical activity e.g. longer working hours, working parents and Fly-In Fly-Out patterns. These all increased time pressures and were seen as reasons for lower levels of physical activity. However it was also argued that this was more of a prioritisation issue as discussed above where physical activity was not high enough on people’s agendas and therefore was one of the first things to drop off.

**Culture & Norms** – There were felt to be many cultural barriers to physical activity – particularly within certain demographic groups e.g. adolescent girls where “getting sweaty is just a no-no” *(In-depth Interview Participant)* and were therefore discouraged by their peers from participating in physical activity. In this instance other ways of promoting physical activity needed to be identified such as popular TV shows or the latest craze.

"The Glee craze has prompted some schools to take on dance programs to attract young girls in physical activity – a niche activity that’s building on interests the kids already have."

*(In-depth Interview Respondent)*
Societal norms which deterred physical activity were also evident in the broader population, for example, a lack of acceptance of arriving at work in cycling gear.

**Role Modelling** – There was deemed to be a lack of accessible role models demonstrating the right types of physical activity behaviour both for children and adults in general e.g. friends, siblings, peers. In addition, some of the most influential adults in children’s lives such as parents and teachers were often not modelling the right behaviours and consequently children were forming the wrong types of habits early on. Elite role models such as athletes were seen to be beneficial – but often too far removed to make an impact on most people’s day-to-day activities.
3 Future Enablers and Strategies for Change

This section focuses on looking forward – understanding the enablers identified by stakeholders as key to changing physical activity levels, and the strategies to deliver the desired behaviour change.

3.1 Future Enablers

It was recognised by stakeholders that the single biggest strategic enabler of physical activity opportunities currently was the provision of environments and programs which facilitated physical activity (55%), followed closely by policy (48%) and education/awareness (43%) (see Figure 12).

![Figure 12: Current Key Enablers of Physical Activity](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of stakeholders spontaneously mentioning (n=44)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Opportunities (i.e. Environments &amp; Progs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education / Awareness of Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Resources (i.e. Funding, Staff etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships / Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Factors (i.e. Oil Prices, Community Trends)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Activity Research</td>
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</table>

Q6a. Thinking now beyond your organisation, what do you believe are the three key strategic factors which are most likely to enable increased and improved physical activity opportunities in WA - now?

Source: Senior Policy Survey

When asked about future enablers of physical activity, stakeholders placed policy as the number one strategic influence on physical activity (see Figure13) making it clear that stakeholders believe policy change will be even more important going forward (52%).

“initiate policy changes and strategies to tackle the built environment issues at state and local government level...and transform motor vehicle dependence by substituting public transport options.”

(Survey Respondent)
The provision of environments (46%) and programs and education/awareness (41%) were also identified as continued strategic enablers of physical activity in the future, along with availability of resources and research (although at lower levels of 25% and 9% respectively).

**Figure 13: Future Key Enablers of Physical Activity – next five years.**

% of stakeholders spontaneously mentioning (n=44)

- Physical Activity Policies: 52%
- Provision of Opportunities (i.e. Environments & Progs): 46%
- Education / Awareness of community: 41%
- External Factors (i.e. Oil Prices, Commuity Trends): 36%
- Partnerships / Collaboration: 30%
- Availability of Resources (i.e. Funding, Staff etc.): 25%
- Physical Activity Research: 9%

- Significant increase vs. current enablers

Q6a. Thinking now beyond your organisation, what do you believe are the three key strategic factors which are most likely to enable increased and improved physical activity opportunities in WA, in the next five years?

Source: Senior Policy Survey

Interestingly, the availability of resources (funding, staff etc.) was seen by stakeholders as a factor which would become less important (although not statistically significant) in the future as an enabler of physical activity than it is now. This does not necessarily indicate that stakeholders believe it will not be important – rather that there are other factors which will have a bigger enabling impact in the future.

External factors, such as population trends and oil prices, were believed to be the enabler which would change the most in the future, rising significantly from 11% of stakeholders mentioning it as a current enabler compared to 36% as a future enabler. These factors are clearly out of the control of
the Taskforce, but can be harnessed as triggers or hooks for individual and community motivation, activation and persuasion and integrated into the delivery of policy, programs and education.

"...with increased oil prices, motorised forms of transport could become less viable with active transport becoming a more attractive alternative."

(Survey Respondent)
3.2 Strategies for Change

As already discussed in Section 2.6 the strategies for change identified through the research should take a holistic approach to behaviour change by addressing all four areas of the System Map (shown previously in Figure 9), with an increased focus on Design and Control strategies.

Through the research four key areas of strategic focus were identified to enable future behaviour change for physical activity in WA:
1. Strengthen public policy (including funding resources).
2. Provision appropriate environments and programs.
3. Increase public motivation and understanding.
4. Promote partnerships.

It is important to note that evidence-based research was clearly identified as a crucial element in successfully delivering all of the above areas of strategic foci, and particularly the first three. Stakeholders strongly believed that the appropriate types of research should play a much bigger role in the policy formation, implementation and review stages. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.5.

This section discusses each of the four key areas.

3.2.1 Strengthen public policy

Strengthening public policy was seen to be absolutely integral to any future strategic plan to influence physical activity behaviour. Without a high degree of policy change most stakeholders could not foresee a significant change in physical activity behaviours. It was considered that current policies often did not go far enough and physical activity needed to be completely embedded in policy across virtually all government agencies in order to leverage appropriate Design and Control strategies which could achieve the necessary wholesale changes needed and ensure policy and program longevity regardless of future political or governmental changes.

"South Australia is a good example – health is integrated into ALL their policies."

*(Focus Group Participant)*

The importance of stronger public policy was seen to influence many aspects of physical activity delivery e.g. planning, education, research and, not least, the crucial subject of funding. Financial support, and how that could be provided through policy change, was a subject discussed at length by

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10 Participant opinion referencing the South Australian *Health in All Policies* approach.
many stakeholders. Existing funding (some of which was short term in nature) needed to be maintained in the first instance, and increased in areas deemed to be of focus e.g. for children and young people, high-risk groups and those currently less likely to participate in physical activity. In particular, local government was identified by many as an area which required greater support and funding in order to deliver approaches which were tailored towards individual communities.

Stakeholders also agreed that policies which *built capacity* in other organisations to deliver physical activity opportunities were important. In particular, longer-term funding arrangements, simplified reporting processes and staff professional development.

### 3.2.1.1 Planning policy

Stakeholders agreed that planning policies need to be strengthened to reinforce the significant impact that urban design has on physical activity outcomes and enable people to participate in incidental activity e.g. walking to the shops, cycling to work, outdoor play for children. As discussed in section 2.8.1, the geographical spread of greater Perth and other areas of WA, and the car-orientated infrastructure has in many instances discouraged incidental physical activity. Opinion differed, however, on the most appropriate type of urban design which would enable physical activity.

**Increasing Urban Density** – greater urban density was seen to provide a number of benefits to the population including:

- Lower car usage.
- More comprehensive public transport networks.
- Increased numbers of facilities within close reach e.g. recreation centres, swimming pools, playgrounds etc.
- Greater community base and focus.

These factors were all considered to be conducive of greater levels of physical activity through increased active transport, greater ease of access to facilities and a stronger sense of community which facilitated a focus for events and activities.

**Open Space** – an urban design model which provided significant amounts of open space was cited as providing a range of benefits in enabling physical activity including:

- More natural recreation areas e.g. parks, bushland, beaches.
- Greater spaces for facilities and infrastructure such as recreations centres, cycle paths and walking trails.
- Individual gardens.
- Greater choice of outdoor activities.

These spaces provided opportunities for both incidental activity (e.g. outdoor play, gardening) and recreational activity (e.g. sport and outdoor activities such as cycling, bushwalking, surfing etc.).
There was no consensus on the best option for urban design and it remains an ongoing debate which has significant implications in the area of physical activity.

### 3.2.1.2 Education policy

Education policy change was seen as a high priority to help tackle the issue of physical inactivity among children and young people, and create good habits for future generations. The current policy was not seen to go far enough in helping to attain this goal and many schools (especially primary schools) were not believed to be equipped with the correct skills to deliver against the aim (see section 2.8.2.).

Stakeholders put forward a number of changes to improve the provision of physical activity within schools.

2. Provision of a greater choice of activities to interest and suit individuals, rather than a focus on competitive sports. This was seen to be an ideal opportunity to introduce children and young people to alternative activities which they enjoyed and could engage them in physical activity, especially if they did not engage with competitive sports.
3. Provide training and skills development for teachers, particularly within primary schools where there was often a skills gap, to enable them to engage children in physical activity.

Although some stakeholders were ardent in their views that education policy should change, no one discussed any ways in which the provision of physical activity over physical education should be monitored going forward.

A number of other policy changes were also discussed by stakeholders, some more controversial in nature. For example, changes in policy for workplaces to enforce the provision of facilities such as changing rooms/showers and areas to stand while working instead of sitting, or tax incentives for workplaces which provide facilities/ engage staff in physical activity. Local governments were also considered to have a part to play by enforcing strict conditions around parking spaces and availability and potentially increasing the cost of car parking. It was highlighted that this would necessarily have to be coupled with greater provision of public transport or incentives such as free public transport in order to be effective.
3.2.2 Provision of appropriate environments and programs

The Supply and Demand Equation
The importance of providing the right types of facilities and programs for the target community and/or demographic groups was emphasised as crucial to the success of any initiative. Stakeholders cited a number of examples where good programs or facilities had been put in place, but had not worked because there was a lack of demand for them.

"We had a case where the local government put on a great set of programs for the community – but they were all in the day time so we got a really poor turnout. They needed to be after people finished work in the evenings." (Focus Group Participant)

Balancing this supply and demand equation required a comprehensive community consultation and research process in order to understand the needs of the community in advance including:

- an audit of the types and condition of current facilities.
- an evaluation of the likely availability of future resources needed to maintain facilities and programs.
- a thorough understanding of the population and lifestyle structure, and likely impacts in the future.
- a consultation at community level to objectively identify needs.

Ultimately this process was believed to be able to deliver against true gaps in provision for the community and provide appropriate and accessible facilities and services.

It was identified that the Taskforce could play a key role in facilitating this by collating and sharing the learnings from successful and less successful projects, so that organisations could learn from each other thus increasing efficiencies and minimising mistakes.

Conducive Environments
Several factors were identified which contributed to the development of environments which were conducive to physical activity and a crucial key to making a difference on a broad scale and changing the statistics at a whole population level.

- **Built Environment** – the physical environment was identified as a vital factor affecting many areas of physical activity. It was considered there were a number of key areas for change in the future which would increase and improve opportunities for physical activity such as ensuring physical activity was a core objective in all stages of urban and suburban planning and design, reflected for example in walking paths, cycle paths, and community facilities.
• **Facilities** – enabling or enforcing the provision of facilities which would improve and increase opportunities for physical activity, helping to overcome some of the design barriers hindering physical activity participation. For example:
  - Developing measures to encourage and/or compel (e.g. tax breaks or penalties) workplaces to provide facilities for staff which actively encourage physical activity e.g. changing facilities, active transport programs, areas to stand/ move while working.
  - Longer and more flexible opening hours for facilities such as recreation centres, gyms, swimming pools.
  - Allowing and encouraging wider community use of existing facilities e.g. school facilities after school hours and at weekends.

• **Active Transport** – one of the key factors in driving incidental activity was seen to be the proactive encouragement of by all relevant parties e.g. Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority, Main Roads, employers etc. This includes:
  - Provision of more frequent and well-connected public transport links, both rail and bus, in order to enable and improve active transport options.
  - Improving public transport connectivity e.g. bus connections, cycle and footpath links to train stations – this was seen as a particular issue in Perth because of the positioning of the train line along the freeway which meant that access by foot or bicycle was often more restricted.
  - Increasing the cost of car usage over the cost of public transport by charging for, or making station parking more expensive, and/or by reducing the cost of public transport in order to encourage active transport.
  - Improving the community’s awareness and knowledge of public transport and active transport options and benefits and promoting programs via workplaces and community groups which encouraged positive behaviours e.g. cycling/walking to work, park and ride schemes.

• **Safety** – One of the key barriers already discussed (see section 2.8.1) is people’s safety and perceptions of safety. A number of key areas were identified for change in order to encourage physical activity including:
  - Rationalising the negative media influence on perceptions of safety and creating improved perceptions through more positive media news stories and reporting.
  - Addressing specific barriers by providing suitable programs at a local level e.g. providing school crossing patrols for busy roads, facilitating walking or exercise groups in areas where people expressed safety concerns.
  - Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists with pavements, cycle lanes, better lighting and adequate crossing facilities.

• **Social Norms** – it was believed that a cultural shift was needed in several areas to facilitate behaviours and attitudes conducive to physical activity, likened to the cultural shift in attitudes
towards smoking which played a key role in reducing the incidence of smoking. In particular stakeholders identified the need for:

- An increase in the acceptance of active transport as a valid option and a corresponding decline in the acceptability of driving – particularly for short journeys.
- Workplaces to endorse and actively encourage active transport to work.
- Schools to develop a greater focus on non-traditional and non-competitive physical activities with the potential to engage children and young people.

These changes were recognised as long term strategies with many outcomes not realised for many years, but it was important that changes began to be implemented early on in order to begin the process of change.

**Appropriate Programs**

The provision of conducive environments and appropriate programs were seen to be inextricably linked. Outcomes were considered to be significantly improved if both elements were in place and tailored for the target community. For example (discussed in one of the focus groups), linking cycle paths with local workplaces which run ‘Cycle to Work’ incentivised programs and cut down on their parking requirements. In this case the usage of the cycle path would be greatly increased with the provision of the appropriate program, which would in turn be less viable without the provision of the cycle paths.

### 3.2.3 Drive Public Motivation and Understanding

A lack of public motivation was seen as one of the biggest challenges in increasing physical activity levels. While it was felt that the general benefits of sufficient physical activity were largely understood (if not the more specific benefits), there was often insufficient motivation to take action and carry out the change in behaviour which people knew they ought to implement.

**Beyond Awareness - Motivation**

Public awareness of the need to participate in physical activity (and the guideline recommendations) was understood to be relatively high in the general population. However, there was still a big barrier for individuals when it came to motivation and taking action as discussed in section 2.8.3. There were many influences acting as barriers to the motivation, not least the marketing from many commercial companies such as software companies and fast food companies (in the wider health arena).

“We’re pushing against a big wall... incredible amounts of marketing from fast food.”  
(In-depth Interview Respondent)

There were two key areas where it was considered motivation should increase:
1. **Community Level** – leveraging the mutual goals and benefits to engage organisations and communities, for example:
   - Economic benefits (e.g. lower health care costs)
   - Increased productivity (particularly for workplaces – fewer sick days etc.)
   - Greater levels of environmental sustainability/ reduced carbon emissions
   - Development of tourism
   - Greater community capital and connectedness
   - Ability to engage with ‘difficult to access’ groups (e.g. using sport or physical activity as the ‘hook’ to engage teenage boys)
   - Improved physical and mental health of the population

2. **Individual level** – elevating the priority placed on physical activity through education and persuasion strategies to effectively communicate:
   - A personal cost-benefit equation where the benefits of physical activity clearly outweigh the costs to the individual.
   - Short term and immediate benefits to health and well-being versus the longer term less definitive benefits such as avoidance of chronic disease.
   - The positive messages of better physical and mental health, well-being and longer life compared to the negative messages of obesity and other chronic diseases.
   - The inclusion of incidental activity as part of daily physical activities and a broader definition of what may be counted e.g. walking to the station, housework, gardening etc.

**The online opportunity**

‘Screentime’ and online practices in general were discussed as key barriers to physical activity (see section 2.8.1). However, online activity was also identified as a potential enabler of physical activity opportunities. Online activity was felt to have the ability to deliver a level of accessibility, community connectedness, engagement and motivation which many organisations found it extremely difficult to deliver against in the ‘real’ world.

Currently most government websites were considered to be no more than a tool to deliver information at best – or at worst a place to “dump all the information they need to cover their backs” (Focus Group Participant). Several examples were cited which were seen as best practice in engaging and motivating their target audience including

- **City to Surf website**\(^{11}\) and Facebook page\(^{12}\) - where participants can get advice, training programs, post discussion threads with other runners and generally engage and get motivated for the event.

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\(^{11}\) [http://www.citytosurf.activ.asn.au/](http://www.citytosurf.activ.asn.au/)
- **School Leavers campaign**\(^{13}\) - with a website giving practical advice tailored to leavers, parents and schools and laid out clear expectations for the events. This was also cited as a good example of government organisations working in partnership to deliver against a common goal.

The online opportunity was believed to be under-exploited by government agencies in general with the potential for a range of different uses to increase and improve opportunities for physical activity including sports and activity clubs recruiting for members, real time event monitoring, connecting community groups and consulting with the community.

### 3.2.4 Promote Partnerships

The task of increasing levels of physical activity was widely acknowledged as being too great an undertaking for any one agency or organisation to achieve on its own. The only way to achieve the desired goal was therefore for organisations to work in partnership to multiply their effect and maximise outcomes. The Taskforce was identified as proof in itself of the active partnerships which already exist between relevant organisations but there were further opportunities for partnerships which would improve opportunities for physical activity.

> "We need a fully co-ordinated approach to increasing physical activity – existing and emerging partners."  
> *(Survey Respondent)*

#### Existing Partnerships

It was identified that there were a number of existing partnerships which would benefit from developing closer and more synergistic links including:

- Federal and state government agencies
- Between state government agencies – beyond those who were already Taskforce members e.g. Disability Services Commission, Department for Communities, Department of Culture and the Arts
- State and local governments – particularly those who were less engaged with the physical activity agenda.
- State government and non-government organisations (NGOs) and between NGOs
- State government and academia
- Local government and community and volunteer groups

#### New Partnerships

In addition to those listed above stakeholders considered that the private sector was largely unexplored in the potential for partnerships which could be successful in driving physical activity. It was recognised that there were some risks within this (e.g. advertising of inappropriate products) but

that interested and relevant companies could present a key opportunity. Stakeholders identified a number of companies where there would be mutual benefits if the state government were to engage in partnerships including:

- **Employers** – particularly the larger companies and resources industry who had the means to proactively engage their employees and, in many instances the broader community, in physical activity and would benefit from increased productivity of staff.
- **Businesses** – through sponsorship of events or local level promotional activity which engaged their customers both with their business and with physical activity.
- **Manufacturers** – especially of sports clothing and fitness equipment who could actively promote and support programs and events and benefit from the publicity and exposure of their brands.
- **Health Providers** – who were in a good position to engage their customers, and potential customers with advice on physical activity and fitness and encourage increased physical activity through concessions on premiums etc.
- **Fitness Providers** – who already engaged active members in physical activity programs but had an opportunity to drive physical activity with inactive members by running promotions, providing new programs, trialling different events etc.

### 3.2.5 Research

In addition to the components of the four key areas of foci discussed above, it was clear that research should form a core element of each, and particularly the first three – strengthening public policy, providing of appropriate environment and programs and increasing public motivation. Stakeholders believed strongly that good, evidence-based research should:

a) direct policy change and ensure that policy was effective and impactful in achieving its aim;
b) be instrumental in delivering the right types of environments and programs, and;
c) guide and shape practices to increase public motivation and understanding.

There was a general consensus among stakeholders that there was a large volume of research on the area of physical activity – so large that it was often difficult and very time consuming to identify the most relevant or appropriate research.

"There is a heap of research about physical activity but it's often difficult to find stuff amongst all that which is really useful."

*(Focus Group Participant)*

Most organisations surveyed did conduct some sort of physical activity research or evaluation with program evaluation the most frequently carried out as shown in Figure 14.
A general lack of resources – both monetary and time - to conduct robust research and evaluation was perceived to be a key barrier in achieving effective research. A suggested solution to this issue was to integrate more data sources and combine budgets to become more efficient and facilitate greater synergy between the research produced by different organisations. Many stakeholders (particularly local governments) also considered that their organisations lacked the skilled staff and knowledge needed to conduct anything beyond a basic piece of research and felt unable to measure programs and initiatives which had broader aims.

"You can measure the number of people who show up to an event - but how do you measure the things you are really trying to achieve like community connectedness and social capital?"

(Focus Group Participant)

There was common and specific request from local government stakeholders for research which was specific to their geographic area to understand the behaviours of their own communities and therefore target funding and programs towards the right areas and demographic groups. Many local government stakeholders wanted justification to support the level of investment in facilities as part of
‘Activ Living Communities’ and quantify the benefits and understand the outcomes, but were unable to undertake research themselves due to resource issues.

“We're hanging on for the DSR western suburbs research on active open spaces – then I can go and say ‘we are underfunded here’ and get more funding.”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

The research already conducted by the Taskforce such as the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Surveys (CAPANS) were generally well-regarded and perceived to be useful. The Taskforce was seen to be the ideal body to conduct and/or coordinate research on physical activity, and to take on a research advisory role for other organisations in the arena of physical activity.

3.3 The future role of the Taskforce

Although not within the scope of the initial brief for this Physical Activity Diagnosis, a significant amount of discussion about the Taskforce itself and its future role was generated during the course of the research.

There was a feeling from a number of stakeholders that the Taskforce could take a more assertive and forceful role in driving physical activity opportunities, stretching the discussion outside current comfort zones and moving to more radical ideas and debate.

“Have we gone far enough beyond to fundamentally change things – beyond altering, changing, modifying – the bigger ideas...stimulate debate?”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Increasing the independence of the Taskforce was seen by a number of stakeholders to be a crucial factor in enabling the Taskforce to change its role in this way. The fact that the Taskforce sat within the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) was viewed by some stakeholders as a restriction and an issue which curtailed their independence and influence. In order to be more influential and effect greater change some key changes were deemed to be necessary such as independent chair and secretariat.

“They should have a strong independent chair, like the Road Safety Council, and an independent secretariat”

(In-depth Interview Respondent)

Some stakeholders questioned the focus of the taskforce on physical activity alone rather than the wider issue of healthy lifestyle, including healthy nutrition and healthy weight. It was felt on one hand
that this would give a more holistic view and approach to a national issue and be more aligned with the public’s view of the issue and therefore potentially be more effective in the longer term.

On the other hand, many stakeholders felt that this approach would mean that the Taskforce had the potential to lose the dedicated focus on physical activity which was particularly crucial because physical activity already tended to receive less attention and be a lower priority for the public than healthy eating e.g. gaining less media attention and lower public saliency. It was also believed that physical activity could become a secondary message with the focus overtaken by obesity/overweight issues, losing the messages of the extensive benefits to the wider population of being sufficiently active.

Therefore, on balance, the majority of stakeholders felt that the Taskforce should maintain its singular focus on physical activity – although always within the context of the broader issue of healthy lifestyles.

A number of stakeholders also favoured a definitive target for the Taskforce to aim at and be measured against, for example, a specific increase in the % of adults and children meeting the recommendations for physical activity. However, other stakeholders considered that the Taskforce had rightly moved away from this approach because its role had changed and, rather than act as a direct influence with measurable outcomes, its current role as a facilitator and influencer meant that an absolute target against physical activity levels was not appropriate.

Overall, the future role of the Taskforce was felt to be best focussed on high level influential activity, broadening its reach and acting as a change agent within all levels of government and other organisations to deliver increased and improved opportunities for physical activity.

In addition, this means that the Taskforce will need to broaden its reach and impact on more organisations.
4 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This final section pulls together the key findings and conclusions from the research.

4.1 Summary of Findings

A number of key findings emerged as part of the research process, which have been discussed throughout this report, and have been summarised below.

Physical Activity Agenda
- Overarching bodies such as the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Physical Activity Taskforce are a key strength and enabler in progressing and elevating the physical activity agenda in Western Australia.
- Levels of organisational commitment across Federal, State, and Local Government, and Non-Government organisations were seen to be lower than they should be in order to drive changes in the physical activity agenda.
- Local Governments are a key cog in driving the physical activity agenda but currently there is a large degree of variation in the extent to which individual Local Governments drive and activate physical activity opportunities and the role they see for themselves.

The Physical Activity Taskforce
- The wider awareness within stakeholder organisations of the role and activities of the Taskforce was seen to have decreased since its inception in 2001, with less clarity and understanding of the Taskforce’s undertakings.
- The future role of the Taskforce was believed to be best focussed on achieving high level influence in a larger number of organisations and acting as an agent for change in order to deliver against its mandate.

Barriers to Physical Activity
- The majority of the barriers identified related to control and design elements of the Systems Mapping Framework and these are key areas of future focus for strategies which could increase and improve opportunities for physical activity.

Policy
- A number of existing policies, for example, planning and education policies, were felt to allow a high degree of ambiguity in their interpretation, thereby allowing a high degree of variation in their implementation with the intended result not always achieved.
- Strengthening public policy was identified as the single biggest enabler of physical activity in the future and should therefore form a key element of future strategic focus.
Programs and Facilities

- WA already has a number of ‘best practice’ programs but learnings are shared irregularly and often not widely enough among organisations making it difficult (particularly for smaller and more regional organisations) to access and utilise best practice learnings.

- A number of programs aimed at specific ‘at risk’ groups such as seniors and Indigenous people already exist, however these groups were seen as a priority because of their higher risk of disease and / or injury and should therefore be the focus of a greater number of physical activity programs.

- An insufficiency of facilities and infrastructure often exists in smaller regional areas presenting a significant barrier to increasing physical activity opportunities due to the extended travel required to access these facilities.

Public motivation

- Communication to the public should deliver a simple and consistent message and call to action, avoiding fragmented or even conflicting messages and aiming to motivate the target audience to action.

- New technologies such as social media are infrequently used by organisations in an effective manner to engage the public / participants/ members with physical activity and there is an opportunity for much broader applications within the physical activity agenda.

Partnerships

- Strong partnerships already exist between a number of agencies, particularly Taskforce members, and deliver change which could not be achieved by working individually.

- However, partnerships between organisations beyond Taskforce members were often felt to be relatively limited. Local Governments in particular were often seen to be an under-represented - yet key cog - in effecting behaviour change. Private companies were also felt to be a relatively untapped opportunity for partnerships.

Funding

- Current levels of both federal and state funding were felt to reflect a relatively high level of commitment to the physical activity agenda – however funding was felt to often be directed towards specific sport and recreation facilities, rather than infrastructure, which would enable more incidental physical activity such as walking and cycling.

- Funding is a vital consideration for all future strategies – without sufficient funding allocated to the right areas, the desired changes in physical activity behaviour cannot be achieved.

Physical Activity Definition

- The definition of physical activity should be widened and clearly defined to ensure a common denominator across agencies and, consequently, the scope of physical activity research and evaluation should to be broadened to accommodate this definition.
Research

- Evidence-based research should form a core part of delivering future physical activity strategy but many organisations currently feel they are unable to resource research effectively - either financially or with suitably skilled staff.
- A high volume of research is already conducted and available in the physical activity arena – but research and analysis should be extended in order to better inform policy changes/ new policy.
- Research such as the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Surveys (CAPANS) are useful, and there is a demand (particularly from local governments) for more geographically-based local research.
- The Taskforce's understanding of physical activity programs and activities across WA could be greatly improved if the method of data collection for the annual activity reporting process was streamlined, and evaluation measures collected as part of the process.

4.2 Conclusions

Under the TNS Systems Mapping Framework a successful strategy for behaviour change would contain elements of several, and ideally all four areas – design, control, educate and persuade. There were four key areas of foci which emerged from the research:

1. Strengthen public policy (including funding resources).
2. Provision appropriate environments and programs.
3. Increase public motivation and understanding.
4. Promote partnerships.

Together these four foci include all four of the elements in the Systems Map. Figure 15 demonstrates how the strategies for change which emerged from this research relate to each of the areas included in the System Map and these are discussed in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4 under each of the elements. It is worth noting that the individual strategies are not always clearly defined as 'control' or 'design' strategies but overlap and utilise several levers in order to achieve the desired outcome.

As discussed in Section 3.2.5, research must also play a key role in delivering against the focus areas (particularly the first three) and should form a core part of the strategies going forward.
4.2.1 Strengthen Public Policy

Strengthening public policy primarily leverages design and control strategies and will have broad effects across a range of different areas.

Design strategies

- **Funding** – supporting existing funding and increasing funding in priority areas e.g. young people, high-risk groups.
- **Building organisational capacity** – enabling organisations to improve and increase opportunities with longer-term funding, simpler reporting processes and professional development for staff.
- **Strengthen planning policy** – to ensure consistent implementation and encourage incidental and planned physical activity, and active transport.
Control strategies

- **Strengthen education policy** – providing clear guidelines on physical activity vs. physical education, providing greater choices of physical activity and providing professional development in physical activity for teachers.
- **Workplace legislation** – enforcing or incentivising the provision of facilities to improve physical activity opportunities such as the provision of changing rooms / showers in workplaces.
- **Transport options** – introducing stricter controls around parking conditions and / or increasing the cost of parking to encourage active transport choices. However, this would need to be coupled with either increased provision of public transport or greater incentive to use it, such as the provision of free public transport, before it would be effective.

4.2.2 Provide appropriate Environments and Programs

All four levers should be utilised to provide appropriate environments and programs and deliver the necessary changes to contribute to behaviour change.

Design & Control strategies

- **Balancing supply and demand** – getting the provision right by auditing current facilities, evaluating likely resources needed for future maintenance, understanding the local population and lifestyle structure and consulting with the community to identify needs.
- **Built Environment** – ensuring physical activity is incorporated as a core objective into urban and suburban planning to deliver appropriate infrastructure and community facilities.
- **Existing Facilities** – delivering greater utilisation of existing facilities by increasing opening hours and enabling wider community use e.g. use of school facilities outside school hours.
- **Providing Active Transport** – improving transport options through more frequent and better-connected public transport links.
- **Improve Safety** – providing infrastructure such as cycle lanes on busy roads, improved street lighting and road crossing facilities.

Educate & Persuade strategies

- **Promoting Active Transport** – linking active transport options with programs which promote and encourage positive behaviours such as cycling to work, park and ride etc.
- **Address Perceptions of Safety** – working to rationalise negative media influences with positive media news stories which reassure the community on safety issues.
- **Social Norms** – including increasing the acceptance of active transport as a valid option and the ‘unacceptability’ of always driving (particularly for short or one-person trips), and developing greater options within schools for non-traditional physical activities which engage greater proportions of young people.
4.2.3 Increase Public Motivation and Understanding

Moving from public understanding to increasing motivation will require strong educate and persuade strategies.

Educate & Persuade strategies

- **Increase Motivation** – driving a greater understanding of both the individual and community benefits of physical activity in order to elevate the priority placed on it and drive motivation. At an individual level, for example, demonstrating the personal cost-benefit equation, short term and immediate benefits and communicating positive messages around improved physical and mental health. At a community level, this could include demonstrating the economic benefits, increased workplace productivity, greater environmental sustainability and opportunities for tourism.

- **Utilise online opportunities** – develop online activity as an enabler of physical activity by utilising it, for example, to recruit new sports club members, connect with community groups or consult with the community.

4.2.4 Promote Partnerships

Promoting partnerships will rely partly on design strategies in terms of the government networks, but also on educate and persuade strategies.

Design strategies

- **Develop existing partnerships** – further develop partnerships to drive closer links and enable greater levels of synergy, for example between Federal and State government agencies, non-Taskforce agencies, State and Local government and between NGOs.

Educate & Persuade

- **Build new partnerships** – create new partnerships with relevant private sector companies who could contribute to driving behaviour change in physical activity such as employers, local and national businesses, manufacturers, health providers and fitness providers.