

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
TASKFORCE**

**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

**2002 – 2011**

**Physical Activity Taskforce Communications Working Group  
February 2002**

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Appendix A: Timeframe for the Implementation of the Physical Activity Taskforce  
Communications Strategy

Appendix B: Outcomes arising from Getting Western Australians More Active a Strategic  
Direction Report from the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce.

## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) Communications Strategy has been developed as a comprehensive, long-term communications framework for the ten years of the PATF.

The aim of the communications strategy is to contribute to increasing physical activity by raising awareness of the type and frequency of physical activity necessary for a health benefit, to influence mediators of physical activity and to encourage use of both existing and emerging opportunities.

The Physical Activity Taskforce Communications Model (refer page 6) consists of three key elements: Public Communication, Professional Communication, and Workforce Development and Training. These form the basis of the communications strategy.

This document explains the three elements of the Communications Model, provides a rationale for strategy selection, estimates the costs of implementation and proposes a ten-year timeframe that prioritises key activities and target groups.

### **Recommendations**

The following issues have been identified as fundamental to the success of the communications strategy:

- A collective, cross-government (state and local) commitment to all aspects of the communications strategy.
- An ongoing funding commitment to the implementation of the communications strategy over the 10 years of the Physical Activity Strategy.
- A Physical Activity Taskforce Communications Manager to drive the implementation of the communications strategy. This senior position would work as part of a PATF Secretariat team, maintaining responsibility for coordinating the implementation of all tasks as outlined in this strategy document and reflected in the implementation framework (Appendix A).

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) Communications Strategy has been developed as a comprehensive, long-term plan for the 10 years of the PATF. The strategy is multi-faceted, recognising that behaviour change is a complex process and that behaviour change is most likely when implemented in a comprehensive context. This communications strategy is based on social marketing principles and models of behaviour change and is presented as one component of the comprehensive approach adopted by the Taskforce which includes:

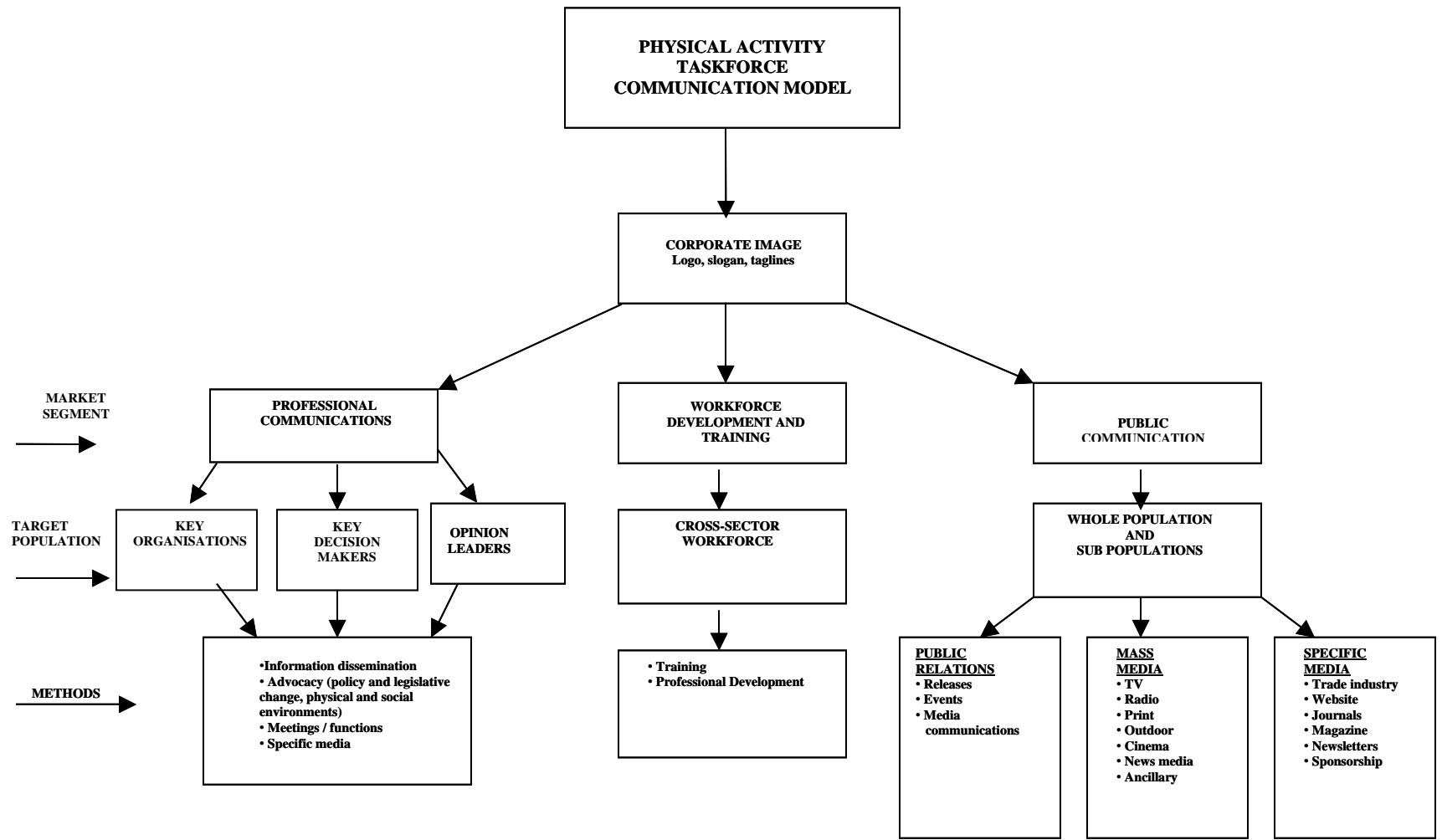
- Legislation and Regulation
- Building Community Capacity
- Programs and Services
- Government Leadership and Coordination
- Physical and Social Environments.

This comprehensive approach will contribute to the vision that:

**"... the individual and community benefits of physical activity will be recognised, valued and supported by community and government; and environmental and policy supports will allow a 5% increase in physical activity levels by 2011."**

The overall aim of the communications strategy is to contribute to increasing physical activity by increasing awareness of the type and frequency of physical activity necessary for a health benefit; to influence mediators of physical activity; and to encourage use of existing opportunities.

The communications strategy and implementation timeframe is based on the Physical Activity Taskforce Communications Model (as shown page 6). There are three key elements Public Communication, Professional Communication and Workforce Development and Training.



**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TASKFORCE COMMUNICATIONS MODEL**

This document explains the key elements of the communications model as well as outlining the communications strategy implementation timeframe which is shown graphically as Appendix A.

The first column of the implementation timeframe map (Appendix A) lists strategies and the second column identifies the target population for each strategy. Column three briefly describes activities involved within each strategy whereas column four links each strategy to specific outcomes as identified in the report *Getting Western Australians More Active: a Strategic Direction Report from the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce*.<sup>1</sup> These outcomes have been listed as Appendix B.

Most importantly, the map shows the proposed timeframe by season (summer, autumn, winter, spring) for the implementation of the plan's activities. The ten-year period is reflected.

The PATF secretariat has an important role in managing and implementing key overarching elements of the communications strategy. In addition the secretariat needs to ensure a high level of liaison and communication with key Government departments, agencies and other organisations. This will help ensure consistent and coordinated development and delivery of physical activity messages and other communication strategies funded and delivered by those Departments, agencies and organisations.

### **3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following principles guide the implementation of the PATF Communications Strategy:

- Coordination

Communication is a central overarching strategy of the PATF. It is essential that the communications strategy is coordinated and facilitated by the Taskforce and its Secretariat with appropriate and adequate infrastructure and budgetary support.

- Cooperation

Intervention strategies must be coherent and consistent. It is essential therefore to gain support of key decision makers and opinion leaders highlighting that a strong agenda setting effort and communication across sectors early in the project timeframe is warranted.

- Behaviour change takes time

Behaviour change does not happen quickly. Often a measured and concerted effort is required over several years. The PATF should start with groups where behaviour change is most likely. Objectives should be realistic and achievable. Groups where positive behaviours are exhibited should also have this behaviour reinforced.

- Use of Multiple Strategies

There is now clear evidence that a comprehensive approach to promoting physical activity is the most effective. Interventions that aim to directly influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are but one strategic tool. To maximize their effectiveness, such strategies need to be used within the context of a broader mix of policy, legislation, structural, environmental and intersectoral measures.

Mass media is an important strategy, however for maximum effectiveness it needs to be preceded with advocacy and workforce development. In this way mass media can be complemented with other strategies conveying one message, creating a communications synergy. Mass media also requires a range of strategies “on the ground” to support it.

- Evidence driven

Any work undertaken will be evidence driven. Mass media strategies will be based on identified psychological and sociological theories of behaviour change and rigorously evaluated (process, impact and outcome evaluation). Experience gathered from success in other areas of social policy, e.g. tobacco control, road safety, and from successful interventions in other states and countries will be applied. In groups where little is known about effective communication strategies

in physical activity, e.g. Indigenous populations and children, communication will be preceded by research and evaluation.

- **Adaptability**

An advantage of working over a ten-year timeframe is that strategies employed and the effect on community knowledge, attitudes and behaviours may be monitored. In this way strategic adjustments may be made in response to evaluation feedback.

- **Durability**

Planning will include self-perpetuating strategies so that outcomes are likely to endure.

#### **4.0 CORPORATE IMAGE**

The first strategy in the Communications Model is the development of a corporate image. The objective of branding is to form a coordinated, integrated image in which each strategic component undertakes its appropriate role. It allows messages to be conveyed in a clear and consistent manner, promoting a united and synchronised approach.

The content and tone of any image is critical. The most desirable means of communication is one which guarantees that whatever, whenever and from whomever the physical activity message comes it will reflect the same identity.

It is recommended that each activity undertaken under the auspices of the PATF carry a form of branding, whether this be a logo, slogan or tagline.

#### **5.0 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

A great deal is already known about the messages most appropriate to communicate to the population about physical activity. This is derived from population surveys, behavioural

and environmental research, program evaluations and theories from psychology, sociology and social marketing.

Understandings derived from these disciplines are important in framing innovative communication strategies for physical activity.

## **5.1 WHAT DO WE SAY?**

### **5.1.1 What are the key physical activity messages for the population?**

There are two key documents that provide guidance in this area.

#### **5.1.1.1 National Physical Activity Guidelines**

The National Physical Activity Guidelines aim to offer guidance and options for physical activity which are both achievable and sustainable across all age, gender, socioeconomic and occupational groups.

The guidelines refer to the minimum levels of physical activity required for good health. They were not intended for high-level fitness. The guidelines were not designed as media or communication messages (nevertheless are important as communication messages for intermediaries) but provide guidance for the creation of appropriate mass communication messages to different populations groups. The intention is that members of the community try to carry out all guidelines. Therefore it may be appropriate for them to be carried out serially.

**The guidelines<sup>2</sup> are:**

#### **1. Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.**

Where any form of movement of the body is seen as an opportunity for improving health, not as a time wasting inconvenience.

#### **2. Be active every day in as many ways as you can.**

Make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car, or do things yourself instead of using labour-saving machines.

**3. Put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.**

Moderate-intensity activity includes such things as a brisk walk or cycling. Combine short sessions of different activities of around 10-15 minutes duration each to a total of 30 minutes or more. The 30 minutes total need not be continuous.

**4. If you can, also enjoy some regular, vigorous exercise for extra health and fitness.**

Vigorous exercise makes you ‘huff and puff’. For best results this should be added to the above guidelines on 3-4 days a week for 20 minutes or more each time.

These guidelines provide the key information for generating population messages about physical activity.

**5.1.1.2 Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 1999**

This population survey was conducted in December 1999. It provides information and insights that inform potential communication strategies. Some of the key information is summarised below:

Participation in different types of activities

Information about the most common/popular activities may be useful in communicating to a larger proportion of the population. It may also be possible to normalise a behaviour through mass media, i.e. create the attitude that everyone is walking.

- Walking for recreation was the most popular physical activity (60%) overall, undertaken by 50% of men and 69% of women. Vigorous gardening was the second most popular activity ((37%) for males and (38%) females). Being active through walking for transport (25%) was the third most frequently reported activity overall. Swimming was the most frequently reported activity undertaken in formal values (12%), followed by aerobics (11%), and team sports (9%). Overall running and cycling for recreation were reported by 9% each.<sup>3</sup>

### Facilities being used for popular activities

This information may be useful in choosing the images for mass communication, not just the types of activity but the most popular locations for physical activity. In addition this information may be useful in advocacy for improved community facilities for walking, cycling and other physical activities.

- The survey found that the majority of walking for recreation was undertaken using the streets or footpaths (52%) compared with public parks (12%).<sup>3</sup>

### Barriers to Physical Activity

The most common reasons for not being (more) active, reported in the WA Physical Activity Survey 1999 included lack of free time (51%), just over one-quarter of respondents (28%) indicated that they considered they were already active enough. Other constraints included lack of motivation (14%), poor health (10%), child responsibilities (6%) and being too old.<sup>3</sup>

These barriers can provide clues to communication messages. For example to overcome a perception of lack of time, communication may focus on planning, goal setting or reinforcing that the opportunities to be active are in the everyday environment.

### Sub-populations

This survey contained limited/no data on sub-groups within the population such as children, adolescents, indigenous people, or CALD people which indicates the need for these groups to be a priority for further research to support a comprehensive PATF strategy.

## **5.1.2 Sources of information about physical activity**

The communications strategy needs to ensure that target groups have access to accurate information on physical activity. The WA Physical Activity Survey 1999 reported that the most frequently used sources of information on physical activity were family and friends (41%), magazines and newspapers (32%), gym or sports centre (31%) and general

practitioners (19%).<sup>3</sup> While ensuring these sources have appropriate and accurate information on physical activity, the communications strategy should also ensure other sources are explored.

### **5.1.3 Cognitive, behavioural skills and psychology and physical activity**

Self-efficacy, or the confidence to participate in physical activity, is an important predictor of physical activity. Communication should focus on the ease of participation at a level that can benefit health.

Other predictors of participation are cognitive and behavioural skills. Corti found the level of social support for physical activity and skills for planning and maintaining activity were important predictors.<sup>4</sup> These skills were applied to communication strategies in the *Walk-it Bunbury* program where the following messages were used:

- Goal setting - *Set yourself goals*
- Planning - *Make it part of your day*
- Social support - *Go with a friend*

The WA Physical Activity Survey 1999 collected information on readiness to be physically active, knowledge of health benefits, motivators to be active and barriers to participation in physical activity. All of these survey questions provide insights to inform communication messages. In summary the survey found that:

- Knowledge about physical activity is high, at least in as much as the community accepts that physical activity has benefits. A total of 93% agreed with the basic guideline that 30 minutes walking on most days will benefit health. However two thirds of the community still believed that vigorous exercise was required to improve health.<sup>3</sup>

- Large numbers of people indicated a readiness to become more active. Just over one quarter (29%) of all Western Australian adults were insufficiently active but intending to do more activity in the next month or next six months.<sup>3</sup>
- Nevertheless, 19.1% of males and 28% of females were either not confident at all or only somewhat confident that they could participate in physical activity on 5-7 days per week. Self-efficacy is highly correlated with participation in physical activity.<sup>3</sup>
- Only 26% of males and 36% of females set a goal for being physically active; only 53% of males and 59.1% females planned set times for being physically active and 50.6% of males and 51.6% of females arranged a time to meet someone.<sup>3</sup>
- Commonly cited motivators to becoming more active are a desire to improve fitness and health, enjoyment (fun or social contact) and weight control. In the Western Australian 1999 survey the most commonly cited reasons to become more active were to improve fitness (37%) and enjoyment (23%). The most commonly cited barriers were lack of time (51%), a feeling that 'I am already active enough' (28%), lack of motivation (14%) and poor health (10%).<sup>3</sup>
- 32.8% of males and 37.6% of females indicated that they supported having interest from friends/family as a strategy for increasing physical activity.<sup>3</sup>

#### **5.1.4 Environment and physical activity**

Supportive environments and environmental cues are important for physical activity participation. Studies repeatedly show that people who have positive perceptions of the neighbourhood (e.g. the convenience of facilities, access to footpaths, an aesthetically pleasing environment) are more likely to be physically active.<sup>5</sup>

Media messages may alert people to make use of the opportunities in their local neighbourhood, with a focus on highlighting the environments and facilities shown by

research to be most popular. A communication message could be constructed to encourage making use of the physical activity opportunities that are all around us in our neighbourhoods, streetscapes, community facilities, transport choices and recreation. In addition, there is evidence that people who own dogs are more likely to be physically active, however many dog owners do insufficient walking to benefit their health. Dogs form an important part of the social environment and could be another motivator to get people more active.

## **5.2 WHOM DO WE SAY IT TO?**

### **5.2.1 Market segments and targeted messages**

All of the above information is relevant at the population level. In addition, the PATF should target different age groups and sub-populations with physical activity messages. The construction of such messages would need to be informed by formative research and evidence.

Sheth and Frazier propose a segmentation model that divides the population in terms of their attitude to becoming more active. In the physical activity context this means dividing the population who are not active at recommended levels to improve their health by whether their attitude is positive or negative. Corti used this segmentation method and found a large proportion (32%) of people who exercised below recommended levels but with 'positive' attitudes.<sup>4</sup> It is suggested that this is the most promising segment to target initially for a physical activity campaign.

Messages may also be directed at different demographic population groups. These will vary in accordance with different needs, motivations, barriers and enablers to physical activity participation. In response to evidence different messages may be considered for:

- Seniors
- Adolescents
- Children
- Indigenous people
- Men
- Women
- Parents
- CALD populations

These sub-groups may be targeted separately and serially, over time. Moreover, featuring images of people in remote and rural locations is recommended.

### **5.2.2 Targeting the Active**

The initial campaign focus should be on the inactive and especially those who are ready to change.

However, physical activity is a behaviour that adults cycle in and out of and an active adult may need reinforcement of their active behaviour to maintain that behaviour. Congratulatory or 'pat on the back' messages are useful in preventing relapse and relapse prevention can contribute to increasing the prevalence of physical activity in the community over time.

## **5.3 HOW DO WE SAY IT?**

### **5.3.1 Mass media**

Mass media will be central to PATF communications forming the umbrella under which a range of ongoing strategies will be implemented. Mass media provides broad reach to the population and have been proven effective in increasing awareness of relevant issues amongst a given target group.

From a review of the literature, the following principles apply to the use of media strategies by PATF:

- Mass media campaigns will be used as part of a comprehensive multi-faceted approach. It is recognised that the communication of knowledge or simplistic behavioural instruction through the mass media alone is unlikely to influence complex human behaviours.<sup>6</sup> Mass media will therefore be complemented with other strategies targeting physical activity behaviour and a broader mix of structural, environmental and intersectoral messages.
- Mass media campaigns will be grounded in relevant health promotion, behavioural and social marketing theories.<sup>7</sup>
- Mass media campaigns need to reflect the attributes of the target group and to have appeal and relevance to that group.<sup>8</sup> This requires the conduct of formative research (including research with the target group), careful targeting of messages for target group segments, and pre-testing of media concepts.

The timeframe (Appendix A) indicates that mass media campaigns will be used repeatedly throughout the ten-year timeframe. Experience has shown the most effective scheduling strategy involves short but intensive and periodic bursts of advertising. For example in a particular year, two (autumn and spring), 6 to 10 week campaigns may be used. Subject to feedback from evaluation mechanisms, it is envisaged that the same campaign would be used over a two-year period. This would allow for reinforcement of the campaign message without risking negative message take-out from over-exposure. All media campaigns will be rigorously evaluated.

New campaigns will be developed in every third year to maintain currency and effectiveness with the target group. The year between campaigns would allow for interpretation of evaluation results, new concept development and pre-testing of media concepts. Each new campaign will add to the momentum of the project, taking the population forward, carefully incorporating feedback from campaign evaluation.

The budget required to concept-test, develop, run and evaluate mass media campaigns is undisputedly significant but on a ‘per person reached’ basis it is relatively cost effective as the outlay is minimal compared to a lifetime of sedentary behaviour.

The majority of published mass media interventions use more than one type of media to reach a target group. Secondary forms of media including radio, newspapers, billboards, bus-backs and magazines will be used at different stages to target niche segments of the population. For example, research has indicated that magazines and newspapers are a frequently used source of information on physical activity for Western Australian adults.<sup>3</sup> In addition ambient media, including signs on steps, lifts, boom gates in car parks and on couriers, will be used.

As previously mentioned, research has also illustrated the need to target different demographic population groups, in particular seniors, children, adolescents, CALD groups and Indigenous people.<sup>9</sup> While budget constraints restrict the ability of the PATF to develop full media campaigns to target these sub-groups, it is proposed that complementary media and/or different types of communication be used to reach these groups and to support other initiatives that will occur over time.

Proposed timelines have been included in the timeframe. The rationale for the proposed timing of campaigns or other strategies targeting these sub-groups includes:

- Seniors will be targeted in the cooler months and after advocacy and training initiatives have occurred with GPs, primary health care workers and allied health workers.
- Adolescents will be targeted in the summer months, specifically including the end of the school year, the long holiday period and the commencement of the new school year. The aim will be to increase the proportion who maintain levels of childhood physical activity throughout adolescence and early adulthood. This campaign will be complemented by strategies addressing teachers, sport and leisure clubs, local government, etc.

- Children and their caregivers. There is a need to integrate physical activity into family life, social life and community life. Children and caregivers will be targeted once the ‘Active Communities’ initiative has commenced to encourage full participation and involvement in the local community.
- CALD groups will be targeted at the same time as the adult campaign, with the three year time lag allowing the opportunity for the CALD communities to be recruited, take ownership and tailor resources to their own needs.
- The Indigenous community will be targeted only after full and complete consultation and involvement of the relevant Indigenous leaders and interested community members. It is envisaged that interventions that make use of traditional music and theatre may be appropriate ways to target Indigenous communities.

It is essential however, that further research is carried out before commencing any targeting of these sub-populations.

### **5.3.2 Public relations**

Unpaid media publicity and coverage will be sought throughout the ten-year period. Unpaid publicity plays an important role in raising public debate and pressure for other essential policy, fiscal and environmental measures needed to support interventions.

Public relations activities include a structured program of media launches, media releases, release of research and evaluation results, organisation of special events, ongoing media liaison, writing of brochures and supporting documentation. All these activities will be used to strengthen paid media campaigns. Public relations activities will also be used to build supportive relationships to promote synergy and widely sell the physical activity message. This is discussed further in Professional Communications (see page 22).

The use of education entertainment (edutainment) media to promote physical activity will also be explored. This may include the inclusion of physical activity themes and favorable images in television and cinema.

Ultimately the PATF will be known in the community as the authority on physical activity issues. Publicity will be obtained on both a proactive and reactive basis, addressing issues of local, national and international concern. It is recommended that a media consultant be engaged to ensure maximum publicity is attained on a regular basis.

### **5.3.3 Specific media**

#### **5.3.3.1 Publications and merchandise**

Publications and merchandise specifically designed to support and reinforce media messages and campaign activities will be produced with the purpose of extending the campaign into the context of people's social lives.

Publications facilitate knowledge and information transfer and will be used to support strategies outlined under Professional Communications.

The use of merchandise has been advocated in social marketing programs as a means of developing a 'tangible product' that can reinforce the less tangible messages promoted.<sup>10</sup>

Publications and merchandise will be used to support the mass media campaigns and will therefore be widely distributed.

#### **5.3.3.2 Sponsorship and grants**

Sponsorship is a proven strategy for increasing awareness, understanding and acceptance of a message, as well as providing the opportunity for instituting structural change to support the desired behaviour.<sup>11</sup> The Healthway sponsorship program will enable the PATF message to be promoted through sport, art and racing sponsorships throughout Western Australia.

Sponsorships together with grants distributed through the Department of Sport and Recreation have the potential to support workforce development initiatives. Funding may be conditional upon attendance at a training/professional development session. The existing networks also support the use of train-the-trainer techniques.

Other organisations providing grants will be encouraged to examine the potential to incorporate supportive initiatives into their grant conditions.

Sponsorship and grants will be used throughout the ten-year period.

#### **5.3.3.3 Newsletter**

It is proposed a biannual newsletter be developed to provide an up-date of campaign developments, profile initiatives and report on achievements. This would be distributed widely through the existing networks and channels of key organisations.

#### **5.3.3.4 Website**

With the advent of the internet and substantial penetration of computers into Western Australian homes, schools and other organisational settings, interactive technology-based strategies are a logical and relatively cost effective extension of programs.

Websites have proven to be an important way of reaching large numbers of the target group. It is planned that the PATF will have its own website with links to key organisations' already developed sites. Although to maintain its relevance and appeal the site should have some uniformity and, in a rapidly changing industry, the site will have to be continually updated and modified.

#### **5.3.3.5 Journals, trade industry communications and magazines**

These forms of media will be used on an opportunistic basis to target specific niche markets. Initially wide distribution will be sought to promote the commencement of PATF's work and advocate for support. Subsequently these media will be used to inform, and gain support for various initiatives.

Public Communication is an essential element of an intervention that directly targets the attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours of the population. As well as being part of a broader comprehensive approach, public communication programs need to be internally comprehensive and multifaceted.

## **6.0 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

There is now compelling evidence for an increased focus on physical activity, however this is not yet reflected in comprehensive and well-funded programs.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, advocacy remains a priority strategy.

### **6.1 WHAT DO WE SAY?**

Physical activity advocacy messages for decision makers, opinion leaders and for public relations with the media will differ from those targeting behaviour change in the community.

Research evidence regarding the impacts and benefits of physical activity has grown markedly in the recent past. There exists an increasing gap between the evidence and commitment to action.

Desired actions from advocacy and information provision to decision makers may include:

- Increased awareness and recognition of cross-sector benefits of physical activity;
- Elevation of physical activity in organisational priorities;
- Increased resource allocation to physical activity; and
- Understanding of the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

### 6.1.1 Key Messages

- Physical inactivity is an important population risk factor, comparable to tobacco use and poor diet in terms of the risk it poses to ill health. It is the leading cause of burden of disease in women;
- The burden of disease is high: annual direct health costs attributed to physical inactivity alone is \$377 million per year;
- Almost one half of adults do insufficient physical activity to benefit their health;
- Recently there has been an increase in the proportion of Australians who were sedentary and a decrease in those who were sufficiently active;
- The prevalence of overweight and obesity is increasing and it is now recognised that there is a Western epidemic of these conditions in adults and children;
- More than one half of Australians are overweight (more men than women). Physical activity is a principal strategy for altering this problem;
- Participation in physical activity is protective against other national health priority areas including injury prevention (e.g. falls in the elderly) and mental health;
- Road traffic is a major contributor to air pollution;
- Physical activity participation delivers transport and environmental benefits and links to sustainability objectives;
- The potential contribution of physical activity to connecting people in neighbourhoods and building trust and cohesion is largely unexplored. Nevertheless this social policy dimension of physical activity has significant potential; and
- Employment – an increase in physical activity increases the employment opportunities in the sport and leisure sector.

#### **Cost savings associated with increasing physical activity**

- Direct health care costs due to physical inactivity have been estimated at \$377 million;<sup>13</sup>
- It has been estimated nationally that for every 1% increase in the proportion of people who are sufficiently active, a saving of \$3.6 million per annum in health care costs is generated;<sup>14</sup>

- In 1997, the Australian Sports Commission estimated that if an additional 10% of the population became active, the potential gains would include a net benefit of \$590.2 million, potential cost savings associated with reducing heart disease of \$103.75 million, cost savings associated with reducing absenteeism from work (1.5 days per worker per year) of \$84.8 million and a 4% improvement in productivity in 50% of the workforce would produce a potential saving of \$414 million annually.<sup>15</sup>

## **6.2 WHOM DO WE SAY IT TO, AND HOW?**

### **6.2.1 Key decision makers**

There is a strong need to educate community decision-makers about new evidence in physical activity and to advocate for an increased flow of resources and greater assignment of priority to physical activity programs.<sup>12</sup>

Key decision makers such as Members of Parliament and their advisers need to be targeted early. Decision makers like to be informed by credible experts hence prominent academics and researchers supported by non-government organisations have an important role in leading the advocacy work of PATF.

The timeframe reflects the targeting of key decision makers immediately and then on an ongoing basis. What cannot be shown graphically however, is the importance and priority that should be attached to this task.

### **6.2.2 Key organisations**

Central to the task of creating social and physical environments that support physical activity is the forming of alliances and the strengthening of effective partnerships with key stakeholders across government and the community. There is a number of key organisations from whom in-principle support and a firm commitment to action needs to be obtained.

PATF will be advocating for member organisations to:

- Develop systems for demonstrating the department/organisation's commitment to leadership in physical activity;
- Develop strategic plans which include a focus on physical activity;
- Develop policies to incorporate physical activity into the core business of the organisation;
- Develop policies for the allocation of a percentage of budgets to be targeted for physical activity initiatives;
- Establish responsibility for physical activity within executive structures;
- Incorporate physical activity action into performance agreements and job descriptions at all levels of the department/organisation; and
- Incorporate measurements of success into reporting requirements, e.g. annual reports.

The timeframe indicates that personalised meetings will be arranged with the Directors General/Chief Executive Officers and responsible managers of key organisations at least once per year. They will also receive ongoing updates through mailings and newsletter distribution. The initial meetings are essential and should be assigned a high priority.

Additionally, as outlined on the timeframe, there is a number of other government agencies in which it would be highly advantageous to gain their support. Due to resource constraints, it is proposed that communication occurs with these agencies through direct mail and also newsletter distribution.

It is essential that communication occurs with directly-involved staff (e.g. relevant program directors) on a more frequent basis. This is to ensure personnel representing PATF have the relevant information regarding issues, policies and activities of the PATF to make certain there is consistency in the information being given to stakeholders and the general public. The timeframe indicates that these people should be communicating at least once a quarter.

It is proposed that local government plays a lead role in implementing many of the initiatives of PATF, especially the ‘Active Communities’. It is essential therefore to gain the support and commitment of key individuals mayors, elected members, chief executive officers and relevant program officers in local government.

Outside of government, there is a number of key organisations which will be vital in spreading campaign messages, building community capacity and ‘active’ public policy. The timeframe lists a range of these organisations/agencies within the sectors of Health, Education, Sport and Recreation, Transport and Planning and Infrastructure. In addition influential organisations/agencies specific to identified target groups have been included e.g. Healthway.

Many initiatives will be used to build supportive relationships. Meetings, direct mailings, newsletter and other publication distribution, speaking opportunities will be sought and complemented by other public relations activities.

### **6.2.3 Opinion leaders**

It is highly desirable to target influential persons (opinion leaders) early in dissemination efforts so that those persons who are perceived by the social networks as authoritative and credible sources of information can reinforce the adoption of new attitudes and behaviours. The theoretical roots of the importance of opinion leaders can be traced to Clarke’s Diffusion of Innovations theory.<sup>16</sup>

Specific opinion leaders from the media, business and unions need to be identified. In addition it is felt that sporting personalities are quite influential within the Western Australian community, although from experience these would need to be carefully selected and may not reflect the types of physical activity message we are trying to promote.

The timeframe indicates that after a concentrated effort in the first year, annual communication will be maintained. This would be the bare minimum required to sustain an ongoing, productive relationship.

## 7.0 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The physical activity workforce is potentially very broad. Health professionals, local government planners, sport and recreation professionals, general practitioners, allied health professionals and volunteers could all have an influence on population levels of physical activity.

As outlined by Shilton, “Workforce development and capacity building is an important component of a comprehensive approach to raising population levels of physical activity. Strategies to ensure that professionals have access to accurate information and are enabled to pass this information to patients and clients include:

- Ensuring key individuals who influence physical activity policy, programs and environments are provided with the most up-to-date information on physical activity and its relationship to health, community well-being and the environment. This needs to occur as part of their initial training and as part of continuing education.
- Encouraging primary health care professionals to provide advice to patients about physical activity. General practitioners see approximately 83% of the Australian adult population each year. This, combined with public perception of the credibility and authority of medical practitioners, forms a powerful rationale for engaging them in physical activity promotion.
- Raising awareness among community groups, employers and local government authorities of their important role in providing information, implementing programs and providing supportive, safe environments for physical activity.”<sup>12</sup>

In addition:

- Providing advice and accurate information to allied health professionals and those in the fitness industry to ensure that high quality and appropriate physical activity opportunities are offered to patients/clients.

Ideally workforce development should be linked with emerging opportunities giving the opportunity for new skills and knowledge to be applied in the workplace. It is also advantageous if they are competency-based.

The timeframe lists by sector and then target group, relevant organisations and professional bodies which may be used to reach the physical activity workforce.

Continuing education/ professional development opportunities may include:

- Conferences, workshops, seminars, in-service programs, core skills courses;
- On the job training – secondments, mentoring, traineeships;
- Professional support and supervision, either individual or group, internal or external;
- Peer support/buddy systems and/or networks for people working on similar physical activity issues; and
- Performance management systems – incorporating physical activity work into regular performance appraisal management systems.<sup>17</sup>

In addition universities need to incorporate physical activity skill development in relevant undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

The list of those requiring training is substantial. It will take significant time and resources to develop effective workforce training programs, however the importance and potential long-term cost effectiveness of this investment cannot be underestimated.

## 8.0 EVALUATION

A long-term evaluation and monitoring strategy has been developed for the campaign incorporating process, impact and outcome measures (see Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group Recommendations). This reflects the key principle that communication strategies should be research driven. The evaluation model is based upon the following:

**Program evaluation** involves monitoring and evaluation of campaign strategies, including the Department of Health's physical activity mass media (advertising) campaign. Information and data will be collected from:

- Formative evaluation which will be undertaken to assist in the development of the campaign (e.g. including ad testing and focus groups as appropriate);
- Pre campaign survey, late February 2002 (awareness of, reaction to and message take-out of each of the elements of the campaign); and
- Post campaign survey, early May 2002 (awareness of, reaction to and message take-out of each of the elements of the campaign).

It is proposed that the steps outlined above be repeated for any future campaigns funded by the Taskforce.

**Impact evaluation** involves monitoring the medium term outcomes of a campaign's performance and includes:

- Medium term changes in mediators of behaviour including knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, self-efficacy and behavioural skills. These data could be collected as part of the pre- and post-test campaign monitoring as noted above, as well as any outcome evaluation monitoring.

**Outcome evaluation** involves monitoring changes to the Taskforce goals that might be attributed to the Taskforce's Communication Strategies. This includes:

- Changes in mediators of behaviour, e.g. self-efficacy, behavioural skills, knowledge;
- Change in Stages of Change (i.e. intention to be physically active);
- Changes in Behaviour (i.e. increased physical activity) awareness levels; and

- Changes in structural, environmental, legislative and social systems that support an increase in physical activity, e.g.. increased resources towards physical activity, changes in community attitudes.

## **9.0 BUDGET**

Funding is requested for a PATF Communications Manager to drive the implementation of the communications strategy. This senior position would work as part of a PATF Secretariat team, maintaining responsibility for coordinating the implementation of all tasks as outlined in this strategy document and reflected in the implementation framework.

The Manager would also liaise with key Government departments and other partners to ensure consistent and coordinated delivery of physical activity communication strategies funded by those departments, agencies and organisations.

Funding is also requested to implement the strategies as outlined in this document under the three key areas of Public Communication, Professional Communication and Workforce Development and Training. An evaluation budget is also required.

The year one budget has been outlined below, along with an identified (or not) funding source. An estimate of costings over the ten-year period is also provided.

<b>Item</b>	<b>\$ Cost Year 1</b>	<b>Yr 1 Source or unfunded</b>	<b>Est. \$ cost over 10 years</b>
Project Officer	90,000	unfunded	930,000
Public Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production (once per year)</li> <li>• Scheduling (twice per year)</li> <li>• Public relations</li> <li>• Specific Media</li> </ul>	100,000 500,000 60,000 40,000	½ DoH, bal TBC ½ DoH, bal TBC unfunded unfunded	400,000 2,200,000 600,000 400,000
Professional Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Meetings/functions</li> <li>• Specific media</li> <li>• Information dissemination</li> </ul>	5,000 5,000 10,000 40,000	unfunded unfunded unfunded unfunded	50,000 100,000 300,000 1,500,000
Workforce Development and Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>	50,000 50,000	unfunded unfunded	2,000,000 1,500,000
Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative research</li> <li>• Pre- and post- campaign surveys</li> <li>• Tracking</li> </ul>	25,000 45,000 20,000	unfunded DoH unfunded	140,000 190,000 120,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,040,000		10,430,000

## 10.0 CONCLUSION

The inauguration of PATF is an exciting, and much needed step towards increasing physical activity levels in Western Australia by 2011.

The PATF Communications Strategy supports this vision by implementing strategies to contribute towards increasing physical activity through increasing awareness and helping to build capacity across existing and new settings for sustained impact. It is planned to

develop a coordinated and cooperative strategic intelligence capability that drives current activity and ensures a timely response to emerging issues.

The PATF Communications Strategy will use principles of best practice to invest in a varied portfolio of interventions selected to balance known benefit with potential gain, wide application with particular need and immediate reward with long-term strengthening.

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## **APPENDIX A - TIMEFRAME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TASKFORCE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

### **APPENDIX B**

#### ***Outcomes arising from *Getting Western Australians More Active: A Strategic Direction Report from the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce****

##### Outcome 1.1

State Government agencies will incorporate policies and planning into their business strategies, and re-orient structures and services to improve physical activity outcomes.

##### Outcome 1.2

A long-term communications strategy to raise the public's appreciation of the need for physical activity will be put in place.

##### Outcome 1.3

A research and evaluation capability strategy will be established to monitor physical activity levels, particularly in relation to low participation and special needs groups.

##### Outcome 2.1

Local "Active Communities" will be established and supported to take responsibility for developing, coordinating, advocating for, strengthening and building a base for physical activity.

##### Outcome 2.2

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Local government will increasingly embrace and develop opportunities for physical activity in their communities and will be encouraged to support “Active Communities” at neighbourhood and community levels.

Outcome 3.1

The planning, provision and management of facilities to enhance physical activity will be coordinated Statewide.

Outcome 3.2

Services will be re-orientated and access to additional resources will be provided to promote physical activity planning and neighbourhood physical environments.

Outcome 3.3

Social environments where physical activity participation is perceived as safe, worthwhile and contributes to community connectedness will be developed and promoted.

Outcome 4.1

School curriculum policy and learning environments will promote and provide enhanced physical activity opportunities for teachers, learners and the community.

Outcome 4.2

Employers and employees will be encouraged to develop work practices, facilities, education and programs to support improved physical activity outcomes.

Outcome 4.3

Professional development and training in physical activity will be provided for key disciplines.

Outcome 4.4

Health professionals will advocate, support and prescribe informed physical activity messages.

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Outcome 4.5

A Statewide, community-based walking movement will be established.

Outcome 4.6

State Government agencies will develop economic incentives to achieve improved physical activity outcomes

Outcome 5.1

New legislation and regulation should demonstrate how they support improved physical activity outcomes

Outcome 5.2

Existing legislation that presents significant barriers to physical activity will be reviewed.

Outcome 5.3

The State Government will liaise with and lobby the Federal Government to address any perceived legislative barriers to physical activity in Western Australia.