



*FIELDS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY*

**Dowerin Physical Activity Plan  
2007-2010**

**Contents:**

1.0	Purpose of this Plan	2
2.0	Background	2
3.0	Strategic Framework	3
4.0	Why should the Shire of Dowerin be Involved in Physical Activity?	3
5.0	Why should People in Dowerin Participate in Physical Activity?	4
6.0	Current Trends for Wheatbelt Physical Activity?	4
7.0	Mission and Target Groups	
	7.1 Mission	5
	7.2 Primary Target Groups	5
	7.3 Secondary Target Groups	5
8.0	Key Success Factors	5
9.0	Facilities and Physical Activity	6
10.0	Difficulty in Undertaking Physical Activity in Dowerin	6
11.0	Major “Fields of Physical Activity” Goals, Objectives and Actions	7
12.0	Community Feedback Form	9

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## ***FIELDS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY***

### Dowerin Physical Activity Plan 2007-2010

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#### **1.0 Purpose of this Plan:**

The purpose of this plan is four fold:

- To identify the activities and services annually supported by the Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator in the Shire of Dowerin;
- To outline the strategic direction of *Fields of Physical Activity* over the next three years, in terms of its integration with other Shire of Dowerin initiatives;
- Promote increased physical activity through sport and leisure opportunities in the Shire of Dowerin; and
- To assist the Dowerin Shire Council, government agency staff, service providers, sporting clubs and others in further increasing physical activity in the community.

#### **2.0 Background:**

Originally initiated through the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC) the Avon Be Active Scheme is currently supported by the Shires of Dowerin, Goomalling and Toodyay and employs a full time Coordinator with administrative support provided by the Shire of Goomalling. Financial support for the Scheme has been forthcoming from all participating Shires and Healthway.

The Avon Be Active Scheme is set to enter its third triennial funding period and the participants are seeking to achieve a more strategic and integrated approach to initiatives at both an individual Shire and on an across Shire basis. This approach will assist the management committee in its assessment of progress and provide more precise performance measures for the Coordinator.

The messages promoted by "*Fields of Physical Activity*" are consistent with the outcomes sought by the Western Australian Government Physical Activity Taskforce and the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians' (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 1999).

### **3.0 Strategic Framework:**

The framework is to link the “*Fields for Physical Activity*” with the strategic direction of the Shire of Dowerin Strategic Plan. Of particular significance are the nominated directions:

- “Bring the community together through music, drama, theatre, sport and events”;
- “Develop opportunities for our young people and give them a voice and a role in the future direction of Dowerin”; and
- “Continue to enhance community facilities”.

The Shire of Dowerin has identified broad issues relating to the provision of leisure opportunities and physical activity in general. They are:

- Leisure is becoming and increasingly important component of people’s lives;
- There are major and continual demographic and social changes taking place in the Shire; and
- The nature of the agricultural industry and location influences the time and opportunities people have to be involved in physical activity.

These factors have lead the Dowerin community placing a greater value on the leisure time as well as an increased demand for leisure opportunities which are more appropriate, of higher quality and can accommodate for a growing diversity and complexity of leisure needs.

In Western Australia overall there has been some movement away from structured to unstructured activities and move towards individual participation and less vigorous leisure activity. However, sport in Dowerin remains a popular physical activity based primarily on volunteer input from players and administrators and provides important social and communication opportunities for individuals and families.

As a result of a community workshop Dowerin residents clearly identified the need for diversity in the provision of leisure opportunities within the Shire.

### **4.0 Why should the Shire of Dowerin be Involved in Physical Activity?**

As a result of legislation local government has a number of responsibilities which require it to plan and manage local services for the benefit of residents. As a consequence, how open space and local government recreation facilities are planned for, provided and used influences the environment in which people undertake physical activity.

Communities expect local governments to provide safe, stimulating and accessible facilities that encourage people to use them on a regular basis and be more physically active. Secondary benefits also flow to the community through the Shire supporting increased physical activity such as increasing facility economic viability, reduced crime, a sense of community spirit and a general increase in economic turnover in Dowerin.

Prudent planning by the Shire will include consideration of the best use of resources and can involve partnerships with other Councils, the private and non-government sectors to achieve their mutual physical activity objectives in a cost effective manner.

### **5.0 Why should People in Dowerin Participate in Physical Activity?**

Regular aerobic physical activity increases your fitness level and capacity for exercise. It also plays a role in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke and is linked to cardiovascular mortality.

Regular physical activity can help control blood abnormalities, diabetes, obesity and also help reduce blood pressure. Other secondary benefits include reduced health costs, the opportunity for socialisation, development of community pride and decreased isolation.

Creating an environment that underpins physical activity through the provision of facilities and support services will encourage individual community engagement and desirable increases in participation.

### **6.0 Current Trends for Wheatbelt Physical Activity?**

According to the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce only 58% of the population is undertaking sufficient physical activity to attract a health benefit. In addition four out of ten Western Australians do not undertake sufficient physical activity to impact on their general health at all.

A lower proportion of Wheatbelt males were sufficiently active (34.5%) and a higher proportion inactive (17.2%) compared to Western Australian males. A higher proportion of Wheatbelt females were sufficiently active (59.3%) and inactive (18.5%) compared to Western Australian females (Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce – Fact Sheet No. 18).

The Wheatbelt region is reported by the Taskforce to have a lower level of physical activity than the state average. Further, a higher proportion of the Wheatbelt population were overweight and a similar proportion obese compared to the overall Western Australian population.

## 7.0 Mission and Target Groups

### 7.1 Mission:

To increase the proportion of individuals who participate in sufficient physical activity to achieve health benefits (Adults: 30 minutes, Children: 60 minutes on most, preferably all, days).

### 7.2 Primary Target Groups:

- Adults who are currently inactive or involved at low levels of activity who reside within the Shire of Dowerin;
- Seniors who may have retired from the workforce; and
- Young people who may be at school or working.

### 7.3 Secondary Target Groups:

- Key support services that have contact with and provide resources and information to the primary target groups (e.g. physiotherapists, medical doctors, HAC coordinators, police); and
- Shire of Dowerin employees who can support and impact on the “Fields of Physical Activity” initiative.

## 8.0 Key Success Factors:

Factors that will influence the success of the Shire of Dowerin *Fields of Physical Activity* program are:

- Continued funding of the Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator position from the Shires of Dowerin, Goomalling and Toodyay;
- Ongoing integration of the *Fields of Physical Activity* into Shire of Dowerin initiatives;
- Links with government and non-government agencies involved with health promotion, physical activities and leisure;
- The continued establishment and maintenance of links between the Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator and the community;
- Flexibility within the *Fields of Physical Activity* to address a broad range of issues concerning participation;
- Availability of quality recreation facilities; and
- Community initiative and voluntary support programs.

## **9.0 Facilities and Physical Activity:**

Many of the Shire of Dowerin facilities are centralised in a large recreation reserve adjacent to Dowerin District High School. They include oval, hockey field, basketball stadium, tennis courts and swimming pool. This clustering of facilities is conducive to creating a habit among residents to travel to the same location for sport competition and physical activity. Further, the School has access to a greater array of sporting facilities than is usually the case.

A Shire of Dowerin facilities audit by GHD was undertaken in August 2004. A community workshop and individual focus groups conducted as part of developing this Plan supported many of the findings of the audit and gave priority to:

- Heating the swimming pool;
- Hydrotherapy pool;
- Establishing a gymnasium in town; and
- Multipurpose use of the Basketball Stadium.

Workshop attendees saw the availability and quality of facilities as being central to creating the positive environment necessary to encourage physical activity.

## **10.0 Difficulty in Undertaking Physical Activity in Dowerin:**

Many of the barriers nominated by workshop and focus group attendees relating to undertaking physical activity relate to seasonal work, travel distance from the town and depopulation (team viability).

Other physical barriers identified by the community included:

- Limited child care available;
- Diversity outside core sports; and
- Some facilities not seniors friendly.

Constant themes that were nominated as restraints for young people, adults or seniors undertaking physical activity were travel and lack of volunteers.

## 11.0 Major “Fields of Physical Activity” Goals, Objectives and Actions:

The *Fields of Physical Activity* initiative acknowledges the variety of factors which determine the uptake of health enhancing behaviours by individuals and communities. Information alone is not sufficient to achieve lifestyle changes, however, combined with creating the right environment and appropriate interventions encouraging changes in physical activity, behaviour change can be achieved.

The Goals of *Fields of Physical Activity* are as follows:

- Individual Capacity Building: To increase knowledge, attitude and personal skills for participation in regular moderate physical activity;
- Community Action: To promote strengthened community responsibility for the implementation of physical activity initiatives;
- Supportive Environments: To assist development of environments that are conducive to regular physical activity; and
- Active Partnerships: To consolidate and expand partnerships across other Shires and other government and non-government agencies to support the promotion of physical activity.

The following *Fields of Physical Activity Plan* recognises the Shire of Dowerin does not have unlimited resources and that many physical activity initiatives will depend on individual initiative. The provision of information, skilling and education of residents on physical activity and volunteerism is an empowerment strategy and develops social capital and community spirit.

### Goal 1 – Individual Capacity Building

To increase knowledge, attitude and personal skills for participation in regular moderate intensity physical activity

Objective Action	1.1	Increase the awareness of physical activity opportunities within the community
	1.1.1	Organise and arrange printing of an across Shires newsletter with information about physical activity, latest research findings and community programs
	1.1.2	Ensure publicity stories, editorial and photographs which promote local facilities and health benefits gained from regular participation and physical activity appear in the <i>Dowerin Despatch</i> and <i>Avon Advocate</i>
Objective Action	1.2	Develop and support programs that encourage physical activity participation
	1.2.1	Organise special events which promote moderate intensity physical activity (e.g. Garden Seminar as part of the Dowerin Field Day; Swim to Rotto program).
	1.2.2	Establish or promote walk/activity groups to the wider community (e.g. use Heart Foundation Walk Week)
Objective Action	1.3	Improve delivery structures that support physical activity
	1.3.1	Assist prepare submissions for grants from State and Federal Governments and identified funding bodies for equipment and projects that promote the uptake of physical activity
	1.3.2	Encourage continuation of Dowerin District High School sport and physical education classes
	1.3.3	Assists establishment of: <i>Active After School</i> program at Dowerin District High School
	1.3.4	Work with sport groups to encourage participation in community sporting clubs
Objective Action	1.4	Improve the knowledge, skills, and ability of key personal involved in physical activity
	1.4.1	Training needs of Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator are identified and provided as needed e.g. attendance at health promotion conferences
	1.4.2	Training needs of community sport and recreation providers are identified and provided as needed e.g. coach education courses

## Goal 2 – Community Action

To promote strengthened community responsibility for the implementation of physical activity initiatives

Objective Action	2.1	Encourage community ownership of physical activity planning in the Shire
	2.1.1	Maintain community input on the <i>Fields of Physical Activity</i> program through annual consultations
Objective Action	2.2	Identify community deliverers for physical activity initiatives
	2.2.1	Assess and maintain a list of across Shires local human resources available to support physical activity initiatives
Objective Action	2.3	Increase community group uptake of external support opportunities
	2.3.1	Continue to provide information to sporting clubs on external physical activities opportunities

## Goal 3 – Supportive Environments

To assist the development of environments that are conducive to regular moderate physical activity

Objective Action	3.1	Maintain sport and other community infrastructure which supports the engagement in physical activity
	3.1.1	Ensure physical activity considerations are included within the Council's capital works and disability plan – such as stair hand rails and pathways / footpaths
	3.1.2	Maintain walk trails as a safe and enjoyable low key physical activity opportunity (e.g. Tin Dog Creek walk trail)
Objective Action	3.2	Pursue opportunities to develop the physical activity environment/ infrastructure
	3.2.1	Identify and act on funding opportunities from available sources to support the development of environmental /infrastructure conducive to the uptake of physical activity in the Shire of Dowerin (e.g. maps, toilet availability, drinking fountains footpaths)
	3.2.2	Investigate use of the courthouse for recreation activity involving physical activity
	3.2.3	Develop discussion papers on the potential to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat the swimming pool</li> <li>• Install a hydrotherapy pool</li> <li>• Establish a gymnasium</li> </ul>
Objective Action	3.3	Include physical activity considerations within Shire planning and policy processes
	3.3.1	Involve the BASRC with relevant leisure and health planning issues
	3.3.2	Ensure information on <i>Fields of Physical Activity</i> is included within Shire policy documents

## Goal 4 – Active Partnerships

To consolidate and expand partnerships across other Shires and other government and non-government agencies to support the promotion of physical activity

Objective Action	4.1	Continuance of paid staff member providing lead role in overseeing delivery of <i>Fields of Physical Activity</i> Physical Activity Plan.
	4.1.1	Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator continues to be jointly funded between the State and Local Governments
	4.1.2	Shire of Dowerin continues to be involved in planning and management of the Be Active Sport and Recreation Coordinator activities
Objective Action	4.2	Support program providers in enhancing physical activity opportunities for the community
	4.2.1	Continue to work with the WA Country Health Service and other health professionals to plan and promote physical activity e.g. Local Health Advisory Council membership continuation and Keeping Weight Down Pedometer Challenge.
	4.2.2	To link with other identified partners (e.g. Cycle Instead, Heart Foundation, Department for Sport and Recreation) as opportunities arise to support initiatives which promote the uptake of physical activity
Objective Action	4.3	Promote the Shire of Dowerin as an organisation actively supporting physical activity
	4.3.1	Information about the <i>Fields of Physical Activity</i> program is included on the Shire of Dowerin web page
	4.3.2	Shire of Dowerin promoted as an attractive sport and recreation destination (e.g. pre-season camps, regional carnivals)

