

### Physical Activity

While technological advances in the western world have resulted in many improvements to the Western Australian standard of living, an over-reliance on some technology has had a negative impact on mental and physical health. Cities that rely on motor vehicles as the primary transport mode result in a significant decrease in walking and cycling. Computers and television tend to draw children away from outdoor recreation and sport. These trends have major effects on human health, our sense of community and the state of the environment.

The Greens (WA) understand that adequate physical recreation and, for many, sporting activities, are necessary for the maintenance of good mental and physical health. Participation in sport through community-based sporting clubs and associations play an important role in our communities. Equitable access to affordable sport and physical recreation facilities and services must be maintained.

#### Aims

*The Greens (WA) want:*

- to ensure new housing subdivisions are designed to encourage walking and cycling to the nearest public transport nodes (see also The Greens (WA) [Sustainable Settlements](#) policy)
- equal access to opportunities for appropriate physical activity for all people, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender or physical and mental ability (see also The Greens (WA) [Disability](#), [Cultural Diversity](#) and [Women](#) policies)

#### Measures

*The Greens (WA) will initiate and support legislation and actions that:*

- implement the Greens Bike Vision 2029 for new education programs and infrastructure that provide safe routes to every school in Perth; and that safely connects people to train stations, shopping centres and employment hubs by bike (see also The Greens (WA) [Transport](#) policy)
- complete the Perth Bicycle Network
- ensure that schools are located so as to enable students to walk and ride to school and to participate in other initiatives such as Walking School Buses<sup>1</sup>
- revive the 'Travelsmart' program<sup>1</sup> and provide funding for other such behaviour change programs
- push for increased funding for sports facilities and community halls in lower socio-economic suburbs, rural areas and remote townships
- discourage the corporate sponsorship of physical activities and sports by companies whose aims and/or products are inconsistent with the goals of improved community and environmental health

- encourage relevant peak bodies such as the WA Sports Federation to have designated board positions for women, older people and people with disabilities
- support programs that encourage girls to continue sporting and other physical recreational pursuits beyond early secondary schooling (see also The Greens (WA) [Women](#) policy)
- encourage monitoring strategies for equal opportunity and anti-discrimination principles to be applied to the administration of all sporting organisations.

## **Background Information**

There is growing evidence that, in the Western world at least, people are becoming less and less physically active and that obesity is increasing. This is true in Western Australia, due to various factors including:

- increasing motor vehicle traffic, which reduces the use of public areas around our homes (including roads) for socialisation and recreation;
- increasing urban sprawl, which increases reliance on motor vehicles (a physically inactive form of transportation);
- increasing prevalence (especially for young people) of inactive recreation such as television, video games and the internet;
- smaller family groups and increasing numbers of single parents, which may result in less child to child and parent to child physical recreation;
- current affordability barrier that is preventing many people from lower socio-economic families from participating in sport and recreation;
- pressure on schools to reduce the emphasis on physical activity and sport;
- heightened concerns about safety in public spaces and on public transport; and an ageing population.
- This trend has a number of disturbing impacts, including:
  - an increasing prevalence of heart and lung diseases, and diabetes;
  - higher air and noise pollution;
  - more road injuries and fatalities;
  - a higher financial burden of transport for residents of the outer Perth suburbs; and
  - greater fear and alienation felt by groups such as young people, older people, women and people with disabilities.

The Heart Foundation of Australia strongly advocates that people of all ages should walk for at least 30 minutes each day to reduce the risk of heart diseases. People are concerned about their personal safety on streets but the way to make streets safe is to use them and for local government and transport authorities to give higher priority to walking, cycling, scooters and skateboards in urban areas. Footpaths should be wider and run along both sides of streets and subdivisions should be designed for maximum accessibility on foot.

(See also [the Australian Greens Sport and Physical Education](#) policy)

## **Glossary**

1. [Walking School Bus](#) – coordinated through the Department of Transport's TravelSmart Program, this is a supervised walking group of students who are escorted to school by parent volunteers, who pick them up along the route in the morning and return them in the afternoon.
2. [TravelSmart](#) - was the Department of Transport's urban transport demand management initiative that worked with local government to replace short car trips by promoting cycling, walking and public transport. It used "dialogue marketing" in people's homes to discuss travel choices and habits, and ways to change

**Physical Activity policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017**