

Active Launceston Pilot Project

Evaluation report



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Executive summary

Please note this report evaluates the Active Launceston **PILOT** project only.

The Active Launceston Pilot Project has created a model of how to engage a community in physical activity and well-being activities. Active Launceston has demonstrated how effective it is for Local State and Federal Governments, business, Universities, the media and the community sector to work together in a partnership to coordinate and promote physical activity programs within a locality base. The project has gained several awards during 2009 including the 2009 Active Tasmania Award by the Premier's Physical Activity Council.¹ Active Launceston adopts the integrated approach to sites and levels of intervention cited as best practice in documents such as Getting Australia Active produced by the National Public Health Partnership in 2002.

Key features of Active Launceston are its high profile branding, endorsement of pre-existing activities, tailoring of programs to meet the needs of particular groups, and concerted promotion of all available opportunities for community members to engage in physical activity through one 'portal'. Active Launceston has not just promoted what is available in the way of physical activity in Launceston – it has also been a provider which has used its resources to address gaps in the provision, particularly for those groups who experience barriers to participation.

Active Launceston has sought to make some strategic changes within the Launceston community:

- skilling up community members and building capacity
- developing resources that can be used by others wishing to establish programs at a local level
- influencing policy and planning in relation to provision of community infrastructure
- promoting public open space for active recreation (e.g. Active Parks programs).

Active Launceston has conducted some activities through its own resources but has frequently helped to promote a wide range of pre-existing programs through its website, electronic mediums,

¹ Active Launceston was also successful in the Healthy Weight Category of the Heart Foundation Local Government Awards, was awarded the UTAS Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Community Engagement and has also received a national commendation.

newspaper and other marketing. Many organisations have participated in some way in Active Launceston over the pilot period ranging from sports clubs to private businesses and non-government not for profit groups.

Specialist programs have been offered to groups who may experience barriers to engagement in physical activity including: people with disabilities, newly arrived refugees, young people who may be disengaged from the school system, people who live in low socio-economic areas and those with chronic or profound health issues. However, the majority of initiatives have been aimed at the broader community (e.g. Park and Walk Initiatives, Active Parks).

Active Launceston is making progress towards its goal of improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Launceston through increased engagement in physical activity.

There is evidence to suggest that participation in Active Launceston has assisted participants to increase their level of physical activity:

- 46.6% of those interviewed at the Expo in City Park in 2009 and 50% of those completing an online survey said that the program *had* assisted them to increase their level of physical activity.
- The results of an EMRS follow-up telephone survey indicate a 4% increase in respondents citing that they had engaged in moderate exercise in the last two weeks compared to the baseline results².
- 83.2% of online survey respondents indicated that they intended to continue to participate in physical activity to an increased level in the future.

Focus group and interview respondents described how they would now use the skills they had learnt to take part in physical activity at home as well.

Participants of Active Launceston describe a range of benefits including: providing affordable, alternative activities, greater

² Baseline survey conducted 16 months prior to the follow-up survey. *These results must however be interpreted with caution. The baseline sample and follow up survey do not necessarily involve interviewing the same people. There are many factors that can impact on the results and impact on the behavior of respondents. What the results do provide is an indication of general trends within the broader Launceston community.*

confidence to participate, companions to do the activity with and skill enhancement.

During the pilot phase of Active Launceston those who were already physically active were provided with new opportunities, different ways of being active and support to make physical activity a habit. Approximately 36% of participants describe themselves as thinking about change or doing some but not sufficient physical activity. For this group Active Launceston has provided the momentum for change. Active Launceston has included a diversity of activities which can appeal to many different types of people, thus addressing a lack of interest in formal sports on the part of many in the community and the trend towards a preference for more informal forms of physical engagement.

Targeted programs such as: Active Northern Parks (residents of Northern Suburbs), Activate Your Life (people with disabilities and chronic health issues), Active Swim (women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), Active and Alive (young people) and Sports Ability Hub (people with disabilities) have enabled participants to try out new activities, build confidence and learn specific skills. The fact that these programs have been offered at low or no cost, in local locations or with transport provided and in small groups has enabled many barriers to be overcome and, in turn, improved participation levels.

There have been flow-on effects beyond the immediate participants of Active Launceston with 40% of respondents to the online survey indicating that they have supported family and 49% having supported friends to become more physically active.

The social aspect of programs were also cited as important for 20% of respondents to the online survey and for young people who may be disengaged from school, people who work alone, new arrivals to the city and those who are socially isolated.

The feedback received during this evaluation indicates that Active Launceston has successfully brought together a wide variety of groups and activities under one 'brand' or umbrella. There is perceived to be a greater level of coordination and cooperation which has been fostered through holding joint events, project committee structures, the capacity to list endorsed activities on the Active Launceston website, the calendar of events promoted through the Examiner Newspaper and through Television advertisements on Southern Cross Television.

Those involved cite the benefits of this improved coordination as including: greater sharing of information, improved awareness of the roles of various organisations and programs, increased creativity/innovation and the building of relationships across sectors. Individuals within different organisations now also have greater capacity to cross-promote.

Active Launceston has created a brand that is known by approximately 51% of Launceston residents.³ The brand may have even greater uptake among health professionals and community agencies within Launceston.

Many stakeholders interviewed were proud of Active Launceston and what has been achieved during the 18 months of the pilot project. They are pleased that their local community promotes health and wellbeing. There have also been flow-on effects for some existing clubs and businesses in terms of establishing better networks with other organisations and increased capacity to recruit participants.

Active Launceston has produced resources such as the Active Parks Resource Manual which have made it possible for other communities to establish physical activity programs to suit their own communities.

A major benefit of Active Launceston is the energy and commitment which has been generated among local businesses, community groups and industry groups.

Active Launceston has been successful to date as it has:

- clear management structures
- a key driver (project manager) who can work collaboratively and is a good networker
- sought to build on what exists instead of replacing or duplicating other initiatives
- a focus which is ongoing and strategic
- high profile partners
- strong media presence and effort put into the brand
- a wide range of activities and events, including 'tasters'
- a range of sites/locations
- specific, targeted programs as well as general ones.

The limitations on Active Launceston over the first 18 months have been its limited administrative capacity and funding base. The challenge for the next three years is to continue to build the brand and engage with the non-active residents of the city to create a

³ See results of baseline and follow up survey conducted by EMRS cited later in the report.

series of sequential opportunities across the municipality which can lead people to ongoing participation in physical activity. The challenge will be to 'move' participants from being participants in Active Launceston activities to other opportunities available in their local community.

This will be achieved by continuing to offer personalised, targeted and outreach programs for specific groups who experience particular barriers while, at the same time, continuing to grow the Active Launceston brand and normalise participation in physical activity.

Active Launceston has secured ongoing funding for another three years on the basis of its achievements to date. The next phase of Active Launceston will provide greater evidence of how to facilitate involvement in physical activity within a defined population.

Section One: Background to the pilot project

1.1 Overall purpose and rationale

Active Launceston is a community driven project aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Launceston through increased participation in physical activity.

Active Launceston programs target the greater Launceston population of 99,675 people ⁴ which represents 20.9% of the total Tasmanian population. However, the website, resource kits and other information is available to all communities, individuals and health professionals across the state and country. Visitors to the city of Launceston also engage in Active Launceston initiatives.⁵

As the project management plan describes 'there is increasing concern expressed in Australian health reports that the burden of chronic disease will increase significantly over the next decade with major impacts on families, communities, the health care system and the economy.'⁶ Initiatives that can increase levels of physical activity among community members are desired given that this is one preventative strategy which can reduce obesity and other weight related disorders. In Tasmania 70% of the population are not physically active for 30 minutes per day and the State has the second lowest rate of participation in physical activities compared to other states.⁷

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census.

⁵ Active Launceston Project Management Plan, 11 December 2009.

⁶ Active Launceston Project Management Plan, University of Tasmania.1 December 2009-31 November 2012.

⁷ Tasmanian Physical Activity Plan, Premiers Physical Activity Council 2005-2010.

Initiatives undertaken through Active Launceston were designed to add value to existing successful local programs and events and to develop capacity within the community. The project was also developed to address an identified lack of coordination of physical activity programs within Launceston.

The values that underpin Active Launceston are participation, inclusion and acknowledgement.⁸

The University of Tasmania led the pilot project with support from their partners; Launceston City Council, Education Department, Examiner Newspaper and TAFISA (Trim and Fitness International Sport for All Association).

The Active Launceston pilot operated from the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Students and Education) of the University in Launceston. The University involvement in Active Launceston is part of its overall mission to 'provide leadership within its community, thereby contributing to the cultural, economic and social development of Tasmania'. Community engagement and partnerships are key cornerstones of the University strategic direction.⁹

Active Launceston was originally an 18 month pilot project which commenced in June 2008 and was to conclude in November 2009. However since this time the project has received further funding of \$630,000 for the next three years to ensure its sustainability through to 2012.

The purpose of this external evaluation is to evaluate the 18 month pilot project.

1.2 Objectives and strategies

The Active Launceston project has three objectives and eight strategies. The three objectives are to:

1. Identify and engage with relevant groups to coordinate, cooperate and commit to the goal of Active Launceston.
2. Enhance and increase the opportunities for the community's participation in physical activity.
3. Identify and develop resources that support and monitor increased participation.

⁸ Medibank Active Tasmania Awards 2009, Application by Active Launceston.

⁹ University of Tasmania Strategic Plan 08/10.

Table 1: Objectives and strategies, Active Launceston Pilot Project

Objectives	Strategies
1. Identify and engage with relevant groups to coordinate, cooperate and commit to the goal of Active Launceston	<p>Strategy 1.1 Formation of Active Launceston Committees</p> <p>Strategy 1.2: Capacity Building; Develop the capacity of the relevant community groups to deliver the goal of Active Launceston</p>
2. Enhance and increase the opportunities for the community's participation in physical activity.	<p>Strategy 2.1: Deliver and support events that relate to the goal of Active Launceston</p> <p>Strategy 2.2: Improving participation in and value adding to existing programs</p> <p>Strategy 2.3: New initiatives; introduce new initiatives to the community based on identified need.</p>
Identify and develop resources that support and monitor increased participation	<p>Strategy 3.1: Identify and build on existing resources and develop new resources where required.</p> <p>Strategy 3.2: Develop communication methods with the community and stakeholders</p> <p>Strategy 3.3: Measure and report the outcomes of the project.</p>

1.3. Funding

1.3.1 Pilot project

The Active Launceston 18 month pilot project was funded through a number of sources including the Australian Government, University of Tasmania, Local and State Governments and non-government organisations. In-kind sponsorship was provided by two key partners: The Examiner Newspaper and Southern Cross Television.

Table 2: funding sources for pilot project

Source of income	Total
Commonwealth Funding	\$200,000.00
UTAS funding	\$ 92,456.00
Launceston City Council	\$ 48,000.00
Sport and Recreation Tasmania	\$ 40,000.00
DHHS - Activate your life funding	\$ 2,000.00
DHHS – Health Promotion	\$ 3,000.00
Winifred Booth Charitable Trust	\$ 3,000.00
Women Sport and Recreation Tasr	\$ 1,090.91
Hawthorn Sponsorship	\$ 4,000.00
Total	\$393,546.91

As the pilot project had limited funding to conduct activities an endorsement process was adopted. This entailed Active Launceston endorsing physical activity events and initiatives which reflected the goal of the Active Launceston project. Endorsement meant that organisations could use the Active Launceston branding in the promotion of events and initiatives. It also allowed for promotion of these events through the Active Launceston website, email networks and newsletter. In order to attain endorsement organisations completed an expression of interest proposal.

1.4 Project Partners, Sponsors and Participants

1.4.1 Project Partners

The University of Tasmania led the pilot project with support from the project partners:

- Launceston City Council
- The Education Department
- Examiner Newspaper (promotional partner)
- Trim and Fitness International Sport for All Association (TAFISA).

1.4.2 Project Sponsors

Program sponsors included:

- Southern Cross Television (in-kind)
- The Examiner Newspaper (in-kind)
- Hawthorn Football Club (cash).

1.4.3 Participating Community Groups and Organisations

A diverse range of groups have supported and provided in-kind contributions to the Active Launceston events and activities including:

- Premiers Physical Activity Council
- General Practice North
- Department of Health and Human Services
- The Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Association for People with a disability
- Fit 'n' Kicking
- Launceston Chamber of Commerce
- UTAS Departments of Education, Human Life Science and Rural Health and the Divisions of Sport and Recreation and the Menzies Research Institute.
- Active After Schools Community Program
- Ravenswood Community Health Centre
- Northern Suburbs Community Centre
- Conservation Volunteers

- Launceston Bowls Club
- Scotch Oakburn College
- Heart Foundation
- Walker Designs and C9
- Events South.

1.5. Management of the project

The University of Tasmania manages the project, employs project staff and provides office and administrative structure for the Project Manager.

The Partner agencies each bring particular expertise and resources to the project including provision of key staff input, attendance at regular project meetings and support for Active Launceston initiatives. The Examiner Newspaper has provided editorial, advertising and regular project updates in the Examine Newspaper.

Launceston City Council has also provided funding towards the Consultants fee (excluding \$5000) and \$15,000 for post project evaluation. TAFSIA has assisted to promote and support the project on an international level.

Several structures were established to support and manage the Active Launceston pilot project. These reflect the multi-agency nature of the project. An Advisory Committee was made up of senior representatives of the partner agencies:

- University of Tasmania, Pro Vice Chancellor, Students and Education
- Launceston City Council
- Examiner Newspaper
- Department of Education
- Project Coordinator.¹⁰

In addition a 17 member Project Working Group was established to provide input to the project on operational planning. This working group was made up of representatives of:

- The University of Tasmania: Pro Vice Chancellor, Students and Education, the Department of Rural Health, Faculty of Education, the Menzies Research Institute and Human Life Science, Launceston Community College
- Learning Services North, Department of Education
- Sport and Recreation Tasmania / The Premiers Physical Activity Council
- Launceston Chamber of Commerce

¹⁰ Note that the title of this position has now been changed to Project Manager.

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Fit 'n' Kicking (a local business)
- Launceston City Council: Parks and Recreation, Recreation Officer
- GP North

Sub-committees are established to support each new Active Launceston initiative.

1.6 Promotion and marketing

A wide range of methods were used to promote the Active Launceston project and its activities within Launceston and the wider Tasmanian community. Promotion of physical activity was on the basis of time participated rather than body mass index measures. The promotion and marketing tools included those outlined below.

Articles and features in the Launceston Examiner

Newspaper: two local identities signed up to participate in numerous physical activities in the community. This initiative was called 'Active Attack'. Fitness levels of the two people were tested and progress monitored by University of Tasmania Exercise Science students. A story in the Sunday Examiner highlighted their progress and combined weight loss of 11 kg in six weeks.

Southern Cross Television advertisements: eight advertisements ran throughout the pilot project. Each advertisement featured one activity or event. These included images of local people participating in the activity.

Explore - Your Lifestyle Guide

Community members have been able to find out about opportunities for keeping active in their community by reading the Explore Lifestyle Guide which provides a weekly calendar of events and information on physical activity. Active Launceston and endorsed initiatives are included in this promotion. The Examiner Newspaper was a project partner in Active Launceston. This meant that newspaper promotion was ongoing rather than one-off.

Active Launceston website

The website provides information about events and programs as well as information on self-management of health and wellbeing. It enables visitors to the site to track their own physical activity progress. The website acts as a portal for community members, local businesses and organisations to participate in the project. This website was the first of its type in Australia.

During January 2010 there were 40,523 hits on the Active Launceston site and 1,467 visits to the website by 744 unique visitors. The majority of visitors over this month made one return visit to the site during January 2010 (78.9%). However, a smaller proportion (16.3%) made two to four return visits to the site over this period. Nearly half the visitors to the site are viewing one page (45.4%) and 27.4% are viewing two to seven pages on their visit.

The key information sought from the website by visitors appears to be in relation to groups, events and resources.

The numbers of visits to the site varies across the week with an average of 209 visits per day during January 2010 and the range across the week varying between 147 (Saturdays) and 287 (Fridays).¹¹

The Active Launceston website now has 408 people/groups registered with it.¹² The Active Launceston email and postal network has over 2000 community members listed. There are also 34 students involved in event management, leadership, research, instruction and fitness testing.

Posters, flyers

During the pilot project a number of resources were developed including posters, flyers and a postcard magnet which featured consistent Active Launceston branding. A template was developed to ensure this brand consistency in all initiatives within the project. Other forms of promotion included: speaking at clubs, associations, businesses, departments and events (e.g. Launceston General Hospital Physiotherapy Department) and direct phone calls to interested parties. Many stakeholders noted that word of mouth whereby a person brings a friend along to an activity was the most effective method of encouraging participation.

Walk Maps

As part of Active Launceston 1000 individual walking maps were developed and distributed to members of the Rocherlea community (a lower socio economic area of Launceston). In addition five large wall maps were installed in community centres across the suburb.

Promotion to GPs and Practice Nurses

In July 2009 a forum for General Practitioners and Practice Nurses was held. The forum had 28 participants drawn from across Launceston. The forum was organised in conjunction with GP North.

¹¹ This data is drawn from <http://stats.activelaunceston.com.au>

¹² Numbers accurate as of 20 January 2010.

Endorsed activities

Endorsement of events, programs and resources offered by other organisations also formed a strong part of the overall promotion and marketing approach for the pilot project. Endorsement offered organisations a chance to use the Active Launceston branding in promotion of their event or initiative. Endorsed physical activity events or initiatives reflect the goal and relate to the objectives of Active Launceston.

The type of endorsed activities including canoeing, football, bike events and programs, dance and seniors physical activity programs. *See the Active Launceston website for more information on endorsed activities.* At the time this evaluation report was prepared there were 31 endorsed activities listed on the site.

Organisations seeking endorsement completed an application form which set out the services offered, remuneration and other aspects of the activity or event.

1.7 Evaluation of the pilot project

The evaluation was conducted using a range of methods including:

- Four focus groups (31 participants) conducted by Kimbra White of Thorne Partners in conjunction with Community Focus
- Targeted stakeholder interviews (13)
- Future of Active Launceston workshop (June 2009 with 16 stakeholders represented)
- An on-line survey (115 responses)
- Informal interviews conducted at the 2009 Expo Event in City Park (34 surveys)
- A pre and post pilot project telephone survey conducted by EMRS of 900 Launceston residents
- Analysis of evaluation reports of individual program activities including: Active Northern Parks, Active Swim, Activate Your Life, Active Workplace Healthy Breakfast.

Focus groups

Four focus group meetings were held at different times of the day and in different locations to facilitate participation. There were 31 participants of the focus groups and the majority had been participants in the Active Launceston program. Other participants had been involved as organizers of events or particular activities.

Online survey

In total there were 115 responses to the online survey with the larger number being female (69%) compared to male (31%). This

most likely reflects the larger number of women compared to men involved in Active Launceston program activities.

Respondents were drawn from 17 suburbs across Launceston as well as other locations (outside of the city itself such as Legana, Hadspen and Perth. The largest number of respondents was from Newnham followed by Invermay, Newstead and West Launceston. Respondents ranged in age from 20-24 years to 75 years+. However, most respondents (95.6%) were aged between 25 and 64 years. The largest number of respondents was aged 35-44 years (31.3%). Respondents had participated in one or more of 15 Active Launceston activities with the largest number participating in the Expo in City Park (20%) followed by Walk to Work Day (18.3%) and Active Bike (17.4%). Many respondents had also participated in Active Launceston endorsed activities such as Active City Park, State Bike Week or Fit N Kicking programs as well.

The most common ways of finding out about Active Launceston activities were: poster/flyer/brochure and word of mouth (21.7%) followed by the website (15.6%).

Baseline and follow up survey

Enterprise Marketing and Research Services (EMRS) were contracted by Active Launceston to undertake a telephone baseline survey in June 2008 of 879 members of the general public of Launceston who were aged 15 years or over. A follow-up survey was undertaken in December 2009 with 900 respondents. The survey asked respondents about their participation in physical activities, other health related behaviours (e.g. smoking) and awareness of Active Launceston project and its activities.

Results from the baseline and follow-up surveys have been used to inform part of this evaluation and will also be used by the Active Launceston project in future planning.

Section Two: Active Launceston pilot project outputs

2.1 Range of activities conducted

The Active Launceston Pilot Project encompasses those programs conducted by the project as well as endorsed activities. It includes events, programs and other health promotion activities. Initiatives conducted through Active Launceston are categorized under a settings based approach in line with the Premier's Physical Activity Council State Physical Activity Plan: "Live Life- Get Moving". Active Launceston has focused specifically on physical activity based interventions and has not included nutrition and healthy eating based interventions.¹³

Participation in most events and programs has been tracked. However it has been difficult to accurately measure participation in larger events or for particular initiatives where participants may not necessarily register (e.g. walk to Work Day event, the Expo in City Park)¹⁴. Thus, some of the figures below are estimations. Furthermore in some instances participation is measured in hours as one participant may regularly participate.

There have been thousands of participants in Active Launceston events and programs conducted during the pilot period with 1300 involved in the 2009 Expo in City Park alone. Furthermore there have been at least 2463 hours of programs delivered over this period. 1000 maps of walking and cycling trails around Launceston have been made available to community members as well as five large wall maps installed across community facilities.

Table 3: Activities conducted as part of the pilot program -2008-2009

Activity	Descriptor	Number of participants	Time frame
Events			
AL Walk to Work Day	Promotion of national walk to work day free organised walks healthy breakfasts	95 Participants	October 2008, 2009
Get Walking Week	Promotion of the state Get Walking Week	50 Participants	November 2008, 2009

¹³ Active Launceston Project Management Plan 11 December 2009.

¹⁴ The activities for which an estimate is provided are those in which participants did not sign an insurance waiver form.

Activity	Descriptor	Number of participants	Time frame
AL Ride to Work Day	Promotion of the National Ride to Work Day free organised rides healthy breakfasts	100 Participants	October 2008, 2009
Expo: <i>How Do You Do It?</i> 2009	A physical activity expo in City Park incorporating World Challenge Day.	1300 Participants 29 organisations participated in 2009. 44 organisations registered for the Expo in 2010.	May 2009
Giant Walk	Australia wide World Record attempt to have the most people walking simultaneously.	106 Participants	October 2009
Programs			
Active Swim	swimming education for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	120 hours	March 2009
AL Stride and Ride	Working with local primary schools to assist them to achieve their Stride and Ride criteria as part of the State Government Move Well Eat Well program.	210 participants 3 Launceston schools involved. Active Launceston helped to organise	Feb 2009 to November 2009
UTAS LIVE LIFE	UTAS funded workplace health and wellbeing project for staff	139 hours	Feb 2009- Nov 209
AL GOLD	Growing Older Living Dangerously – physical activities for older adults	78 hours	Oct 2008-Nov 2009
Active Garden	Gardening program for older adults in city parklands	32 hours	March 2009- Nov 2009
Active Northern Parks	Expansion of the city parks program to northern suburbs	449 hours	October 2008 – Nov 2009

Activity	Descriptor	Number of participants	Time frame
AL Sports Ability Hub	An Australian Sports Commission program designed to get people with disabilities involved in physical activity.	648 hours	July 2008- Nov 2009
AL Activate Your Life	A gentle exercise program for people who experience barriers to being physically active.	80 hours	Feb – March 2009
Active and Alive	A program for young people.	70 hours	August Sept 2009
Active Walk Run	Program to encourage community members to stay active through winter by running or walking in a group	296 hours	June, July, August 2009
Active Bike	Program to encourage and motivate community members to ride more often both on and off road.	551 hours	April/May – September/October 2009
Endorsed initiatives	Active Launceston endorses and promotes over 30 community initiatives to help encourage further community participation in physical activity.	Thousands	
Physical activity promotion			
AL suburban walking maps	Maps specific to Launceston city detailing walking routes for different fitness levels	1000 individual maps available to community members 5 large wall maps installed across community facilities.	Feb 2009

Activity	Descriptor	Number of participants	Time frame
Point of Decision marketing	Promotion aimed at encouraging the use of stairs rather than lifts in public buildings	39 signs installed across Launceston	March 2009
Inveresk Park and Walk	Free parking encouraging people to walk or ride into the city	Average 15 cars per day	August 2008- Nov 2009
Policy and strategic planning input	Working with Council and State Government to encourage planning which encourages physical activity	NA	full 18 months of the pilot
Active Launceston GP Forum	Information session for General Practitioners and Practice Nurses.	28 Participants	
Active Launceston Get Active Facilitator Training	Training program for the evidence based Get Active Program.	24 Participants	

Growing Old and Living Dangerously – Active Launceston G.O.L.D.

This program grew from an activity previously offered by Launceston City Council for three weeks during October. Active Launceston GOLD is a free community program of one session per month which offers a range of activities to senior community members including: Tai Chi, horse riding and rock climbing. Active Launceston involvement has enabled the program to be offered more frequently than was possible in the past.

GOLD offers participants the opportunity to try out different physical activities and companionship when participating. Many participants heard about GOLD through other community organisations and groups (e.g. computer club, word of mouth).

For some it is important as they live alone or have partners who are not able to be physically active to the same level. Others have used GOLD as a means to explore other ways of being physically active that would not otherwise have been available to them.

"I was pretty active anyway but GOLD gives me more choices ... the social part is important for me as well... I have got to know other ladies as well..."

Opportunities for participation were enhanced by Active Launceston through:

- Effective general promotion using regular newspaper and radio promotions
- Use of both group programs and personalized approaches (e.g. participants were able to track their own progress on the project website, individualized assessments of participants were offered in some programs such as Activate Your Life, programs were tailored for specific groups).
- Use of a range of communication tools (e.g. The Active Launceston website, posters, flyers, public events, use of high profile public spaces as sites for activities).
- Liaison with service providers and health practitioners who may be in contact with groups who may experience barriers to participation (e.g. low income groups, those with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse community members).
- High profile public events like the Expo in City Park and use of public spaces as activity venues (e.g. Active Northern Parks programs).

2.2 Resources developed through Active Launceston

A number of resources have been developed during the Active Launceston pilot phase including the Active Parks Resource Kit, walking maps and the Active Transport Kit.

These resources enable other groups to establish new programs in their own communities or individuals in the community to access walking trails.

The Active Parks Resource Kit was developed to assist community groups and local government authorities to develop and coordinate physical activity programs similar to the Active City Park program originally developed in 2006.

The resource kit describes how to establish an Active Parks program including community consultation, branding, how to recruit qualified trainers, how to record attendance at programs, insurance and health checks, marketing and promotion and evaluation.

The Active Parks Resource Kit is likely to have been used by a number of groups within Launceston and other parts of the State as it was available on the project website. However no register to record whom has downloaded it was in place during the pilot period so it is not possible to ascertain the extent of its use in the wider Tasmanian community.

The Active Transport Kit includes a trails brochure for walking trails in and around Launceston, bike rack maps and brochures about the Park and Walk initiative.

Suburban walk maps were developed to support those who were starting to walk or run with appropriate information and routes.

Active Launceston Inveresk Park and Walk

This project involved 192 free car parking spaces being provided at Inveresk on the outskirts of the Launceston CBD between 7am and 7pm each weekday. Participants are encouraged to park at Inveresk and then walk into the CBD thus gaining 30 minutes of exercise per day for the round trip.

2.3 Community needs identification activities

Active Launceston has been involved in a number of community needs identification activities including:

- Consultations conducted as part of the Launceston Community Plan development
- Consultations with General Practitioners and Allied Health professionals/ forums.

The project has harnessed the knowledge of the allied health and other community members engaged in the project working and advisory groups to develop responses to previously identified community needs. This approach was adopted to ensure that the available funds were used to initiate new programs and address previously identified gaps.

Section three: Outcomes

3.1 Achievement of the overall goal

The overall goal for Active Launceston was to: *'improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Launceston through increased participation in physical activity.'*

This is a long term goal which will require years of concerted effort to achieve and ongoing monitoring to measure. This pilot project evaluation provides an indication of progress towards this goal.

In summary the data indicates that participants of Active Launceston programs who participated in this evaluation provide evidence of increases in awareness of the importance of physical activity in maintaining health, greater opportunity to be physically active, greater motivation, social connection within their community and greater confidence to participate. Some of the data indicates increased engagement in physical activity (e.g. results of the online survey and follow-up telephone survey).

Key stakeholders cite a range of benefits from the initiative including some level of increased engagement in physical activity, particularly among groups who normally experience barriers to participation (e.g. low income people, people with disabilities). The results are outlined in more depth in the following pages.

3.2 How did participants find the programs offered?

3.2.1 Experience of programs

Participants of focus groups described their involvement in Active Launceston pilot programs as:

'Fun', 'enjoyable' and 'fantastic'.

Focus group participants noted that they enjoyed the range of activities.

Similarly the majority of respondents to the online survey were positive in their assessment of the programs.

"A fantastic fitness initiative for Lonnie."

"Active Launceston must continue- it's great!"

(88.2%) of respondents to the online survey thought that Active Launceston was well managed and facilitated and only 1.8% thought that it was not. The remainder of respondents 10% were undecided on this aspect of the program.

“Active Launceston is a fantastic initiative that is professionally run and caters to a range of people.” (online survey respondent)

Those who expressed concerns about the management or facilitation of the program seemed to be in relation to particular program facilitators and their attitudes or approach.

Feedback from participants of the Active Northern Parks program indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the program by those participants who responded. 100% rated this program as good or outstanding.

“There was no judgement, no limit on what I am capable of”

“100% supportive.”

3.2.2 Most valued aspects of the Active Launceston pilot program

When asked what they valued most about Active Launceston respondents to the online survey indicated that the opportunity to be physically active and finding out about other activity opportunities in Launceston were important. However, having a safe and supportive environment to take part in physical activity, the health benefits and being about to try out new activities were also important. The social aspects of being part of group programs were valued by 20% of the respondents.

Table 4: Most valued aspects of Active Launceston pilot program

Valued aspect	Number	Percentage of respondents¹⁵
opportunity to be physically active	53	46.1
finding out about activity opportunities	51	44.3
participating in a safe and supportive environment	38	33.0
improving my health	37	32.2
trying a new activity	33	28.7
becoming involved in the community	29	25.2

¹⁵ Note more than one response possible by respondents.

Valued aspect	Number	Percentage of respondents ¹⁶
socialising	23	20.0
meeting new friends	20	17.4
learning a new skill	13	11.3
other aspects valued	6	5.2
Total respondents	115	-

"I found the free morning city park fitness session with X fantastic. I am a Mother of 5 children and find it hard to find time and space to exercise regularly but this group really met my needs I would love to see two sessions offered a week. Thank you- being active and fit really improves one's well being." (online respondent)

"I've never really been one to be a part of a group exercise initiative, hate aerobics classes etc but I found the bike active mob were great with experienced riders helping out without being disparaging to beginners. The instructor was great and managed to instil me with a belief that I could push myself further each session." (online respondent)

Comments about other aspects valued from online respondents included:

"Thought the "Tester Day" was a great way to introduce new possibilities. Was able to promote it among clients."

"Promotion of own program."

"Helping others to enjoy exercise too."

"Free!"

"Networking with organisations"

For some it is the flexible way the programs that are organised that makes it possible to participate:

"The walk/run program works because you don't have to commit to turn up but you know that it is always on..." (focus group participant)

¹⁶ Note more than one response possible by respondents.

Participants of the **Active Northern Parks program** valued the opportunity to try something new, the fact that the program was affordable and local and they enjoyed meeting new people and socialising. Other valued aspects included:

"Being able to exercise and feel great"

"The variety of exercises"

"The quality instructor"

"Being out in the fresh air"

"No stress, non-threatening activities"

"Having the exercises modified for me to do – in my scooter or in a chair"

Primary school students who attended the 2009 Expo called: 'How Do You Do It' from East Launceston Primary School described the activities they enjoyed on the day and provided feedback on aspects of the day they did not like (e.g. having to queue for some activities).

Table 5: Feedback from East Launceston Primary school about the 2009 Expo

Plus	Minus	Interesting
sumo wrestling	the line for the rock climbing wall	belly dancing
footy activities	vertigo harness hurt the 'crown jewels'	Sumo suits
Boot Camp	jumping castle was not bouncy	seeing how healthy you are
Tai Chi	we didn't get to do roller skating	the number of people there
Rock climbing wall	the line was too long for 'Vertigo'	tap dancing
orienteering	there were heaps of people	Orienteering
finding your blood pressure	the wet grass	Basketball
running races	we didn't get enough time	the heart pressure thing
free fridge magnets		the pulse machine
being with friends		tance dancers started with their left foot
getting stickers		rowing machine
belly dancing		a lot of people enjoying it
lots of things to do		the trampoline
everything was fun		seeing 'Hawka' from the Hawks

3.3 Meeting specific project objectives

Objective 1: Identifying and engaging key groups to improve coordination

The Active Launceston project has engaged a wide variety of groups in the Launceston community including industry, schools, University, Local Government, community and business groups. To the evaluators knowledge this is the first time that all of these groups have been successfully engaged in a project in Tasmania to enhance physical activity in such a consistent and ongoing manner.

The partners have committed a wealth of resources to the project including: funding, personnel and expertise, media coverage and equipment. The regional focus and the variety of project partners and sponsors have made this level of collaboration possible. Improved coordination has been gained through:

- the dialogue that has taken place at meetings of project committees between key organisations who are partners in the project
- the calendar of events produced as part of Active Launceston and promoted through the Examiner newspaper 'Explore Your Lifestyle Guide'
- the Active Launceston website
- the concept of endorsed activities
- holding jointly run events like the Expo in City Park called 'How Do You Do It?'

Some stakeholders have noted the improved coordination arising from Active Launceston:

"It has connected it all up."

This one event held in City Park in Launceston in May 2009 involved 29 organisations as stall holders and an estimated attendance of 1300 people.

As more than one stakeholder has noted the success of Active Launceston is due to the fact that partners have '*left their egos at the door*'. There has been a concerted effort to coordinate more effectively.

The benefits of improved collaboration and coordination

The benefits of this improved collaboration and coordination have been highlighted by key stakeholder groups and include:

- greater sharing of information
- it has enabled creative thinking and innovation in relation to developing programs and activities
- a brand has been created that is easily recognised
- relationships have been built across sectors which did not previously exist
- value had been added to existing programs through improved promotion and in some cases the addition of extra resources
- some stakeholders think that there is now a greater capacity to attract funding for specific programs and activities
- there is evidence of skills and capacity building (e.g. through training programs conducted, kits and other resources, different groups working together on projects).

Improved information sharing

A number of stakeholders have noted that Active Launceston has provided an opportunity for organisations with an interest in health and physical activity to get to know what each other are doing.

"We had the benefit of going to workshops with other people working in the community in physical activity when Active Launceston was being established... though this we learnt what other groups are doing.. it also fosters the principle that we share clients ..." (service provider, fitness industry)

For the general community it provides a one stop point to find out what is going on:

"A clear contact point to find out all the options in one place"

"It can be difficult to easily find out what is available..."

Fitness providers have found the promotional opportunities available through Active Launceston to be beneficial to their business:

"I can promote our activities at a local level through the Active Launceston program and its website..."

"We put up the flyers that are sent out from Active Launceston on our notice boards and I know some of our clients go along to various activities..."

"It was a good way for us to be out in the community and be seen..."

"It created some job opportunities for us... we got involved in some programs that we would not otherwise be involved in..."

There are also opportunities for effective cross promotion:

"As an instructor I am able to give information about other activities they can do at other times during the week- what's out there. People get motivated to do more activities for the rest of the week."

While those industry stakeholders who have engaged with the project express great support for the Project there was feedback from one person via the online survey who expressed concerns about loss of income by private enterprise due to 'competition' from Active Launceston. This person also expressed a view that not all organisations included on the Active Launceston website may know they were listed on this site. ¹⁷

Greater capacity for innovation and creativity

Some stakeholders have noted that Active Launceston has created an opportunity for innovation and the *'joining up good ideas.'* ¹⁸

Some of those consulted for this evaluation also noted that bringing the key groups together through Active Launceston has enabled more creativity to occur.

Creation of a brand that can be easily promoted

One of the benefits cited by a number of stakeholders is that Active Launceston has created a brand that brings activities and groups together and which has become recognisable within the greater Launceston community.

When the follow up survey was undertaken in late 2009 a total of 51% of residents **were** aware of Active Launceston representing an increase of 19% over 18 months.

The brand has also enabled greater promotion of initiatives undertaken by partner agencies, for example:

"The Active Launceston Project Officer has helped to promote new bike paths on the roads and this is really appreciated..." (local government stakeholder)

¹⁷ Organisations apply in writing to Active Launceston to be listed on the website.

¹⁸ Participants in stakeholder forum, June 2009.

"The Expo in City Park was a good day for creating some exposure for our programs...it was good to see how many people were there..." (community organisation stakeholder)

Building relationships across sectors

One of the most significant benefits of the increased collaboration and coordination has been the relationships that have developed between individuals and organisations. For example, the Women's Health team within The Department of Health and Human Services have more often worked with health related organisations and professional groups than they have with fitness industry in the past. Participation in Active Launceston has enabled these new links to be forged. Similarly physical activity programs do not always connect directly with health or disability workers to promote programs or recruit participants. The relationships between workers across sectors have enabled a broader reach for promotion and recruitment than would otherwise have been possible.

Adding value to existing programs

One of the key features of Active Launceston is that it has enabled each group to continue to offer their own activities but through the 'endorsed activities' process they are able to also join up and become part of Active Launceston. Active Launceston has not set out to become the 'new broom' that replaces activity which was already occurring in relation to physical activity in and around Launceston. Instead it has built upon the base of existing activities, programs and capacity. While the feedback to the online survey suggests that there are some in the community who may perceive Active Launceston as a threat to their business interests the majority of the feedback suggests positive collaboration between existing providers (private and community) and Active Launceston.

"We advertise one of our programs on the Active Launceston website and we have had quite a few enquiries from this ... in fact we will be running an information session later this month for new people who have heard about the program from the AL website.. so given that we are a community organisation without a lot of money to advertise this has been very useful..."

Greater capacity to attract funding

Some stakeholders noted that the multi-faceted nature of Active Launceston has made applying for funding easier. Some noted that it has also created more work for instructors:

"They get to tender for programs, they get the flow on private groups following an Active Launceston activity and it's a great way to network and promote in the community."

Building skills and capacity

Groups of individuals working together to organise events and to co-facilitate programs has led to skill development. For example, the two co-facilitators of the Activate Your Life Program (one the Active Launceston Project Coordinator and one a Women's Health Coordinator) were able to share knowledge and information during this program.

Participants of the Community Leadership Program also indicated that it was a positive experience:

"I have more contacts and I learned what other community groups are doing.."

<h3>Objective 2: Enhancing opportunities for participation in physical activity</h3>

Addressing this objective involves a number of components of work:

- making the community aware of Active Launceston and what was available through the project
- increasing awareness of the importance of physical activity in maintaining health and wellbeing
- increasing awareness of the options available for being physically active in Launceston
- encouraging people to take up these options and participate in physical activity at the recommended level.

Knowledge and awareness of Active Launceston

The level of awareness of Active Launceston as a program within the broader Launceston community was assessed via:

- Interviews with participants at the Expo in City Park in May 2009
- The survey conducted by EMRS in late 2009.

The survey undertaken in late 2009 indicated that a total of 51% of residents **were** aware of Active Launceston. There is still some work to do in ensuring that all residents of Launceston are aware of the initiative with 44% of respondents indicating that they were not aware of Active Launceston in December 2009. Female respondents were more likely to be aware of Active Launceston than males.

Table 6: Awareness of Active Launceston initiative

Level of awareness	2009 survey results
Yes aware of Active Launceston	51%
No not aware of Active Launceston	44%
Unsure	4%

Interviews conducted at the Expo in City Park, May 2009.

Out of the 34 people interviewed on the day 30 or 88.2% had heard of Active Launceston *before* they attended this event. A small number were in attendance as they had walked past and noticed it was on, heard about it on the radio or driven past and decided to come in for a look. The respondents were drawn from a range of age groups from 0-15 years to 65-74 years. The majority of respondents were female (80%) with a smaller proportion of males (20%).

Just under half the people interviewed (15 or 44.1%) had participated in Active Launceston activities previously and 19 or 55.8% had not previously participated. Those who had participated in Active Launceston activities had been involved in: Active Parks programs, Walk to Work Day, GOLD or Active Bike.

Awareness of importance of physical activity

There have been increases in awareness of the importance of physical activity for participants of Active Launceston. 58.1% of respondents to the online survey thought that being involved in Active Launceston had taught them more about the importance of physical activity, 27.6% were undecided and 14.3% thought that it had not done so.

Awareness of opportunities to be physically active

89.9% of respondents to the online survey thought that being involved in Active Launceston **had** taught them more about the opportunities available to be physically active and only 4.6% did not think that it had done so.

Participants of both the online survey and focus groups noted that they had received 'one to one help' as part of the program. For some participants it meant that they were confident with a new skill by the end of the program:

"I couldn't swim but he gave one to one help and I felt I could swim at the end. It felt very good." (online survey respondent)

For some participants Active Launceston offered variety in activities and a chance to try out some new things but not necessarily a great increase in their level of physical activity.

"I heard about GOLD from someone in the computing group I go to...I love the physical side of the program. I particularly like trying new and different things like kayaking and abseiling. I am not sure that it had made a difference to my level of physical activity but I enjoy this opportunity to try out different things.....it is good that Active Launceston is trying to get different types of people out and about and involved in physical activity."

Increases in the level of physical activity for participants of Active Launceston programs

There is evidence that participation in Active Launceston activities has led to an increase in the level of physical activity for over half the respondents to online surveys, some focus group participants and respondents to evaluations of other targeted programs.

80% of respondents to the online survey described themselves as regularly physically active (30 minutes per day at least 5 days per week).

Almost half (45.6%) described themselves as being at stage 5 state of change in relation to physical activity levels – that is they are in the process of making physical activity a habit (maintenance stage). 12.3% thought that they were doing enough physical activity but it was not yet a habit. 27.2% were doing some physical activity (in preparation stage) and 9.6% were thinking about change (contemplation). Only six people or 5.3% were *not* thinking about change in relation to physical activity levels.

Table 7: State of change of respondents in regard to physical activity participation

Stage	State of change	Number of respondents	% of respondents (n=114)
Stage 1	not thinking about change (precontemplation)	6	5.3%
Stage 2	Thinking about change (contemplation)	11	9.6%
Stage 3	Doing some physical activity (preparation)	31	27.2%
Stage 4	Doing enough physical activity (action)	14	12.3%
Stage 5	Making physical activity a habit (maintenance)	52	45.6%
Total		114	100%

The majority of respondents (66%) thought that Active Launceston **had** encouraged them to participate in community based physical activity events and programs. Of these 21.4% strongly agreed with this statement and another 44.6% agreed. Only 12 respondents or 10.8% did not think that Active Launceston had encouraged them to participate in community based physical activity events and programs.

Table 8: has Active Launceston encouraged participation in physical activity?

Response	Number of respondents	% of total respondents (n=112)
strongly agree	24	21.4%
agree	50	44.6%
undecided	26	23.2%
disagree	10	8.9%
strongly disagree	2	1.9%
Total	112	100%

When asked if Active Launceston had contributed to an increased level of physical activity for them 50% said that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. 27.7% were undecided and 22.3% thought that Active Launceston had *not* contributed to increased physical activity levels for them.

Table 9: has Active Launceston contributed to an increased level of physical activity for online survey respondents?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents
strongly agree	11	9.8%
agree	45	40.2%
undecided	31	27.7%
disagree	20	17.8%
strongly disagree	5	4.5%
Total	112	100%

The majority of online survey respondents (83.2%) indicated that they intended to continue to participate in physical activity to this increased level and only 6.2% said that they were unlikely to do so in the future.

One participant suggested that they had made regular physical activity a habit years ago so there was no need for further change on their part.

“Frankly, they have had no impact on my level of physical activity - which includes a daily average of 8 km brisk walking per day.”

Focus groups

For most participants of the focus groups the Active Launceston activities provided an 'add on' rather than being their only form of physical activity. The program has increased the options available for these participants (e.g. range of activities, confidence levels, skills, company to engage).

Active Northern Parks Participant survey

All of the respondents to the Active Northern Parks participant survey (18 respondents) indicated that the program had encouraged them to increase their physical activity.

"Yes as it has introduced me to this relaxing and new physically extending exercise".

"Yes as I would not normally have done Pilates at home once a week. I also do a little at home now."

All of the respondents to this survey also indicated that they will continue this level of physical activity in the future.

Results from the interviews conducted at the Expo in City Park, May 2009

Seven out of 15 or 46.6% of those who had participated in Active Launceston activities said that participation in the program had assisted them to increase their level of physical activity.

"Yes, it made a big difference- it helped me to find time to exercise, before work was good.."

"Yes, Yoga was a new activity for me and created another opportunity for physical activity."

"I wasn't confident to ride a bike and now am riding more often.."

For others it was an additional activity but they were already quite physically active prior to Active Launceston.

"I normally walk so I just participated in the Walk to Work Day."

Some found it a good way to exercise with friends:

"No, it did not increase my level of physical activity but it was fun to be part of a group and I took my friends along..."

For some the Active Launceston program was good but they have not been able to sustain the level of activity since the program ceased:

"Yes but I was sad when Northern Suburbs Active Parks finished... not active since it finished.."

Five participants suggested that there had been other benefits for them from being part of Active Launceston including:

- meeting other people (5)
- joining a community group (1)
- feeling fitter/healthier (1)
- finding out about other activities available (2)
- becoming more confident in physical activities (2)
- assistance to their community group(1).

Some participants reported changes in confidence levels as a result of their participation in Active Launceston activities:

"I was not confident riding on the road. My husband and I have now bought a bike and we like the off road bike paths..." (focus group participant)

"I felt I was achieving- I can do it" (Active Northern Parks participant)

For other participants there were health and well being benefits:

"I am doing more, working with different muscle groups". (focus group participant).

Overcoming barriers to participation

Active Launceston has worked with older adults, young people people with mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse background, people with a disability, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, sedentary adults and those who have a chronic condition. ¹⁹

For some participants the programs have provided opportunities to engage that they would not otherwise have had:

"For me it has meant being able to do running by myself or in the dark..." (focus group participant)

¹⁹ Medibank Active Tasmania awards application by Active Launceston 2009.

"You can't garden in winter so it gives you somewhere to get activity and use energy" (focus group participant)

Active Northern Parks

This program was initiated through the Northern Suburbs Community Centres who approached the Active Launceston project to help them address an identified community need. Community consultation conducted by the Community Centres had indicated an interest in physical activity programs within the local community. The Community Centre had already started using Council owned 'green spaces' for programs. Community Centre staff wanted to make physical activity programs accessible for people of Northern suburbs communities who may not be able to travel to the City Park program.

Active Northern Parks commenced with three sites in 2008: Mowbray, Invermay and Ravenswood. The programs are accessible to local residents as they are within walking distance or on a bus route. Programs have offered Tai Chi, Gentle Movement and Pilates. The Active Northern Parks programs complement what the Community Centre offers (e.g. walking groups).

There have been some noticeable benefits for some participants according to those involved in the programs. One woman who uses a scooter to move around has been able to participate and has felt part of the group.

Staff at the Community Centres note that there has been a flow-on to other programs offered at the Centre with participants starting with Active Northern Parks and then going onto enrol in a computer course or joining social groups.

Another benefit has been that people who live outside of the Northern Suburbs have been travelling into this community to attend programs thus helping to overcome stigma and stereotypes associated with lower income communities.

Participants report that the program provides another option and some company with whom they can engage in physical activity:

"I find it difficult to afford classes at gyms and I get bored just walking or exercising at home." (Active Northern Parks participant)

The tutor has adapted the program to meet the needs of participants so that they can participate at their own level and pace:

"Lovely people who tailor the program to suit individual needs." (Active Northern Parks participant)

The outcomes for participants of the targeted programs appear to be more substantial in that Active Launceston has been the catalyst to enable them to start to participate:

"This is mostly a new opportunity for the young people– some may have had a sporadic opportunity to play sport but most not. Some may have done roller-blading but mostly they have missed out on sports activities during their schooling. It is new and cost would have prohibited them..." (Polytechnic Young People's Program)

“Active Launceston and the LUNG program has been a big increase for us- we were not doing any exercise and needing to do the exercise for emphysema. I was never interested in sport...”

The Active Swim program

This ten week program was offered to 21 women who were newly arrived humanitarian entrants from Bhutan, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Afghanistan. Participants ranged in age from 20-50 years with the largest group being young women aged 25-35 years. Most of the program participants are described as poor to fair swimmers.

The participants were provided with instruction in swimming skills, water safety and physical activity options in the local community. The program was held at the Launceston Church Grammar School swimming centre. The program was structured to ensure that it was conducted in a culturally appropriate manner. Olympic Swimming Legend Shane Gould was the program instructor with assistance from Launceston Church Grammar schools staff.

Following the program changes in attitudes to physical activity were noted by the evaluator of this program Martin Harris from the University of Tasmania Department of Rural Health²⁰:

“The participant group indicated some consolidation of their activity levels as a result of the program.

While those that indicated ‘not very active’ and ‘very active’ remained the same, the group indicating ‘somewhat active’ was reduced but absorbed into the ‘moderately active’ group. This improvement builds on the “readiness profile” of the group and their preparedness for increased activity.

The participant group were generous in their praise of the program with ratings of ‘good’ and above for all aspects of the program. In comments the participants added:

“I think this kind of class gives us a chance to learn very fast.”

“The Active Swim program was a successful venture and achieved significant outcome across all of the Objectives. Clearly there were improvements to swimming skills and water safety. Similarly there were clear indications from participants about knowledge of physical activity options within the community. This small community showed evidence of increased community connectedness; and a measurable increase in self-confidence and motivation”.

The program has provided a thoughtful and balanced program and provides a solid platform for similar programs in the future.”

²⁰ Evaluation Report, Active Swim for Active Launceston, Martin Harris, July 2009, University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania.

Increased motivation

For other participants involvement in Active Launceston was motivating:

"It was motivating and I was able to set goals... many people were surprised they could do it and tried even harder..." (focus group participant)

"I've found that being able to log on and record my daily activity and see my progress has helped me stay motivated. It makes me feel accountable for my physical fitness when I am actually seeing what I have and haven't done." (Online respondent)

"It has made me do more cycling- so more opportunities. It is good for meeting friends and getting one's own friends committed to exercise." (focus group participant)

"Being in a group is important – my doctor suggested that I could exercise by myself but there is no incentive to do this..." (focus group participant)

"The group notices if you are not there- you don't get this at the gym- it leads to motivation to turn up." (focus group participant)

"I did a lot of sport when I was working.... But now I have retired this has come up and this has allowed me to maintain my fitness. It fits with spending time with my grandchildren and a gym is too expensive". (focus group participant)

"There are a lot more people out walking in Launceston than when I first started. I think Active Launceston is creating a safer environment." (focus group participant)

Activate Your Life program

This seven week program was developed to encourage people who were living on a low income and who may face significant barriers to being physically active to participate (e.g. those with poor health, disabilities, a lack of transport or who experience social isolation).

The nine participants were referred to the program by General Practitioners and Community Nurses. The program was based on the 'Get Active' Program running across Tasmania and was modified to meet the needs of this particular group. It was held at the Launceston Bowls Club. The program was run as a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services, Women's Health North and Active Launceston.

A health coaching approach was taken so that participants could receive individual support to address any issues that might be hindering their successful participation. Participants underwent a fitness assessment before and after the program.

During the program participants made some significant changes to their lives including:

- 6 out of 7 participants increased their physical activity levels so they were doing 30 minutes per day by the end of the course
- 3 participants reported improved wellbeing
- 3 participants had made positive changes to their eating habits

- 3 participants reported increased mobility
- 6 participants reported increased social connection
- 4 participants reported that they had gained more confidence to 'get out and about' and join other groups

3 group members also experienced positive improvements in their physical fitness levels as shown by pre and post program testing.²¹

Gaining information

Gaining information was important for a number of participants:

"Most people don't know who to call or the cost of programs so Active Launceston had led to more opportunities for people – they get this from the advertising and marketing and once they are there the instructors encourage them to do more..." (focus group participant)

"I have learnt new ways to exercise that I can do at home as well."
(Active Northern Parks participant)

"Active Bike was a great alternative for me and has encouraged me to explore local trails with my 10 year old daughter....." (online survey respondent)

²¹ Activate Your Life Program Evaluation Report, Community Focus June 2009.

Get Moving at Work

This activity was run as a partnership between the Premiers Physical Activity Council and Safe Work Tasmania Week. A free healthy breakfast was provided and an information session about the importance of physical activity in the workplace. It was held in October 2008 and 2009. In 2009 it was attended by 30 participants. Feedback from participants indicated that:

- 94% thought the sessions were well prepared
- 100% thought the presenters were knowledgeable about the topic
- 89% thought that the content was about right for the audience
- 100% thought that the length of the presentation was suitable
- 94% said that the session met their learning needs
- 89% said that information from the session would be taken back to the workplace.

One participant indicated that the breakfast session had provided:

"a few more innovative ideas for the workplace."

One respondent suggested that it could have included some movement as well as eating and listening to speakers.

Changes in physical activity participation in the broader Launceston community

These results must be interpreted with caution. The baseline sample and follow up survey do not necessarily involve interviewing the same people. There are many factors that can impact on the results and impact on the behavior of respondents. What the results do provide is an indication of general trends within the broader Launceston community.

As part of the Active Launceston project baseline and follow-up surveys were undertaken of members of the Launceston general public aged 15 years and over.²² Respondents were asked questions about physical activity participation and awareness of the Active Launceston initiative. The following data is drawn from the Enterprise Marketing and Research Services Reports July 2008 and December 2009. When the baseline survey was conducted over half of all activities (54%) participated in were 'organised' (e.g. team sports or club based recreational activities) while 46% were 'non-organised'. The results of the follow-up survey demonstrated that only one third (35%) of all activities participated in were 'organised' in 2009 indicating a trend towards involvement in more individual or flexible physical activities (e.g. kayaking, skate boarding, cycling, fishing).

²² The baseline survey had 879 respondents and the follow up survey 900 respondents.

Residents were asked in the survey if the amount of time they spent participating in exercise, recreation or sport had increased, decreased or remained the same. 21% of respondents in 2009 thought that the time spent had increased, 61% thought it had stayed the same and 17% thought that the time had decreased.

Participation in moderate exercise

At the baseline survey period 449 respondents (just over half of the respondents or 51.1%) said that they *had* participated in moderate exercise in the last two weeks. 35% had participated in 300 plus minutes of moderate exercise in the last two weeks, thus meeting the minimum required level of daily physical activity to maintain fitness and wellbeing.²³

Follow-up survey results indicated that in 2009 a total of 55.1% of the residents surveyed had participated in moderate exercise in the last two weeks which represents an increase of 4% on previous results. However, there had been a decrease in the number participating for 300 minutes or more in the last two weeks (a 4% decrease).

Table 10: Participation in moderate exercise in the last two weeks

<i>Level of participation</i>	<i>Baseline survey results July 2008</i>	<i>Follow-up survey results December 2009</i>	<i>Increase or decrease</i>
<i>Had participated in moderate exercise in last 2 weeks</i>	51.1%	55.1%	+4%
<i>1-60 minutes</i>	13%	14%	+1%
<i>60-120 minutes</i>	19%	16%	-3%
<i>120-180 minutes</i>	11%	16%	+5%
<i>180-240 minutes</i>	12%	13%	+1%
<i>240-300 minutes</i>	11%	11%	0%
<i>300 or more minutes</i>	35%	31%	-4%

Participation in vigorous exercise

At the time of the baseline survey a total of 154 respondents (17.5% of the total respondents) had participated in exercise that caused increases in their heart rate or breathing. 30% had undertaken 300 or more minutes of vigorous exercise in the last two weeks.

²³ Note 30 minutes of physical activity per day for two weeks would be between 300 minutes (5 days per week- 10 days x 30 mins per day) and 420 (every day- 14 days x 30 mins per day). As the Getting Australia Active report (2002) indicates there is some consensus that 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week is the minimum requirement.

Follow-up survey results indicate that in late 2009 a total of 235 participants or 26.1% had participated in vigorous exercise in the last two weeks which is an increase from 2008 results. However, there was a decrease in the percentage participating in vigorous exercise for 300 minutes or more in the last two weeks.

Table 11: participation in vigorous exercise in the last two weeks

Level of participation	Baseline survey results (2008)	Follow-up survey results (2009)	Increase or decrease
Had participated in vigorous exercise in the last 2 weeks	17.5%	26.1%	+8.6%
1-60 minutes	25%	19%	-6%
60-120 minutes	33%	19%	-14%
120-180 minutes	29%	17%	-12%
180-240 minutes	13%	10%	-3%
240-300 minutes	9%	8%	-1%
300 or more minutes	30%	27%	-3%

Participation in walking

538 respondents of the baseline survey or 61.2% said that they had walked for sport, recreation or fitness in the last two weeks. Of this group 36% had walked for 300 or more minutes in the last two weeks and 65% had walked less than 300 minutes.

511 or 56.7% of respondents to the 2009 follow-up survey said that had walked for sport, recreation or fitness in the last 2 weeks. This represents a decrease on the baseline figures. Similarly there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting that they walked for 300 or more minutes in the last two weeks with 33% saying that they had done so compared to 36% in 2008.

Objective 3: Identifying and developing resources that support and monitor increased participation

Active Launceston has created an online tool for individuals to log their own physical activity levels over time. This supports individuals to set goals, engage in physical activity and measure their progress.

In addition through the project tools like the Active Parks Resource Kit has been developed to support groups to develop their own programs in response to local need.

Within the project itself there is research occurring to monitor changes in levels of participation. For example the baseline and follow up surveys conducted by EMRS for the project provide valuable data to enable monitoring of impacts.

3.4. Other flow-on effects from the project

Connection to the community – social benefits

Stakeholders have reported community engagement occurring with the particular groups involved in the program:

“A couple of the young people (in the Polytechnic Program) have gone to follow-up sessions like judo and kick boxing in regular classes. This is a positive connection to the community. They are being given positive risk taking opportunities (e.g. caving) rather than negative ones. One young person is doing work experience with a gym instructor and will be doing more caving...” (stakeholder comment in focus group)

The social aspect of the physical activity was important for some participants, particularly those who live or work alone:

“I work from home and am alone all day. I like being in the group with people for exercise, its fun and enjoyable”. (focus group participant)

“I live and work by myself so Active City Park has been great.... It is something different to my usual walking..”(focus group participant)

“I like the social aspect of early morning Tai Chi- all my other activities are solitary..” (focus group participant)

“I have collected 10 new regular croquet players from the Expo in City Park” (chairman of the Royal Park croquet club)

For the University of Tasmania the Active Launceston program has provided a very tangible means to connect and engage with their local community.

Pride in the Launceston community

For some of the residents interviewed for this evaluation or contributing to the online survey Active Launceston was symbolic of a community where a proactive, positive approach to health and well being is being adopted. Many were very aware of the role of Launceston City Council in this project. There may be some confusion about which initiatives are run by the Council and which are run by Active Launceston. The role of the University in Active Launceston may not be as well recognised as that of Council.

"It contributes to my positive view of choosing to live in Launceston. It is great to have free things and have a Council that encourages you to be fit..."

"It has made the community more aware of health in general I think... good for Launceston City Council to be seen to be promoting health... in the long term if it is a healthy and active community there will be less sick days etc..."

Supporting viability of existing community clubs and groups

There have been flow-on effects for clubs and community groups participating in Active Launceston including better networks and increased capacity to recruit:

"We now have 10 new regular players" (sports club official)!!!!

"The support of Active Launceston has helped to make our event successful... it has been easier to get media interest .. it's been fantastic"

"Ours was a new sport in Tasmania ... the help we gained from Active Launceston with media releases and information placed on their website has helped us to grow...we now have enough people for a couple of teams. The growth we have experienced would not have happened at the same pace without this help as we did not have the experience in marketing ..."

Active Launceston has also helped in the promotion of initiatives like State Bike Week which have similar aims. While there are many factors that may contribute to rising numbers of participants in Bike Week events it is likely that the work of Active Launceston would have made a positive contribution to the increase in numbers involved in State Bike Week events from 2008 to 2009.

While there has *not* been a noticeable benefit to all endorsed initiatives from the promotion conducted by Active Launceston there are examples where this flow-on effect has occurred.

As noted earlier some industry stakeholders view Active Launceston as an opportunity and of positive benefit to their business while others see it as a potential competitor and threat. Some stakeholders noted that there will always be some issues about the potential for free programs to draw clients away from fitness industry businesses unless care is taken to link/move participants onto existing programs in the longer term.

At least one contractor commented on the fact that they have experienced a flow on effect from Active Launceston programs...

"people who participate in programs in the parks come to us and pay when the outdoor programs go into winter recess..."

Connections between sectors

There is evidence to suggest that Active Launceston has led to greater connection between some parts of the sports/fitness industry and other parts of the community that did not previously exist (e.g. relationships between fitness industry business proprietors and disability organisations, health providers).

Flow-on benefits in participation in physical activity for family, friends and work colleagues

Respondents also indicated that there had been benefits for family, friends and work colleagues from their own participation in Active Launceston. 40% of respondents to the online survey said that because of their involvement in Active Launceston they have supported family members to become more physically active and 49.6% had supported friends to do so. 34.8% had supported work colleagues to become more physically active and 11.3% had supported patients or clients to do so.

"I have mainly utilised information for participants in rehab programs, to help to motivate them to be active."

Economic benefits

Stakeholders involved in the project report economic benefits to contractors (e.g. being able to tender to run programs). The Active Launceston pilot project has brought significant resources into the Launceston community over the 18 months (i.e. it has now attracted over \$900,000 in funding).

Skill development for students

Students from the University of Tasmania were involved in Active Launceston in a number of ways including providing volunteering support at events like the Expo and those who had completed their studies have been running fun and fitness classes. The experience of Active Launceston has assisted students to improve their skills and the career directions of some maybe influenced by their experience within Active Launceston.

"I had to come up with new programs and continue to improve my skills..."

"We all want to do what the manager of Active Launceston does when we finish our studies...we can see how important engaging the community is....."

"Two students now have work with one of the fitness industry partners involved in the program.."

Section Four: Lessons Learnt and Future Directions

4.1 Features of the program that have contributed to success

Clear roles and management structures

"Management structures were established early in the project and roles of the key players were clarified". (stakeholder participating in forum about the future of Active Launceston)

"Very organised and structured..." (participant of Active Northern Parks programs)

Peak body role

Key stakeholders have also indicated that in some ways Active Launceston has acted as a 'peak' body to bring those with an interest in physical activity and wellbeing together within the greater Launceston area. The website has offered a 'one stop shop' for people in Launceston to find out about physical activity options within their local community.

Multi-faceted approach

The limited resources of the project were used effectively to 'seed' new activities and to add value to existing events and activities. Rather than taking a 'grants program' focus Active Launceston has trained, supported and guided local facilitators to run programs, created resources that assist groups to set up their own activities. The provision of introductory level support for new participants (e.g. new bicycle riders) means that:

"people have some knowledge, they feel more comfortable on their bike and they know where to ride".

Industry linkages

One of the positive features of Active Launceston has been the active and open communication it has maintained with many fitness and health industry stakeholders.

Ongoing and strategic approach

The approach adopted by Active Launceston has been to plan for an ongoing program rather than a short term, one-off program. The strategic approach has led to work with programs, facilities, infrastructure and skills development. The project had a focus on influencing policy and planning rather than just running events.

The project has focused on *'driving more activity in communities and changing attitudes. An example of this is that bike lanes are*

now included in roads now' (participant at Future of Active Launceston workshop June 2009).

Much of the available research about the relationship between physical environments and physical activity shows that 'people are more likely to be active if they live near to, or can access, conducive or facilitatory environments'.²⁴

High public profile and community engagement

The partnerships with media organisations like the Examiner Newspaper and Southern Cross Television have enabled effective promotion to occur in an ongoing manner (e.g. The Events Calendar becoming part of the weekly newspaper). The high public profile of Active Launceston has been a major factor in its success to date. Many stakeholders note that that Active Launceston brand is now visible and well recognised. Word of mouth promotion has been important in the project. Many examples were cited of individuals bringing a friend for family member along to activities.

Community forums and events have also been well used to promote the project.

The linkages with the Community Houses have been particularly important in engaging northern suburbs communities in the project and addressing barriers to participation.

However, feedback from key stakeholders suggests that there is always room for more promotion:

"it could be more in your face I think than it is but this is a matter of funding... if there was money to do TV advertising I think this would be useful....there are still lots of people who do not know about it yet.."

Many target groups

The project focused on the general community as well as those groups who may experience barriers to participation in physical activities (e.g. women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, people with disabilities, residents of suburbs with generally low incomes). Specific activities were conducted to attempt to engage these particular groups.

The engagement of schools was also very important and there is considerable demand for the Expo to become an annual event.

²⁴ Sallis et al, 1997 quoted in Getting Australia Active, Towards better practice for the promotion of physical activity, Bauman A, Bellew B, Vita P, Brown W and Owen N, National Public Health Partnership, 2002.

"I can't remember when I took the kids on a more rewarding excursion. If you do it again next year count us in! The kids had a ball and I think some of them got to experience things they might otherwise never get to do" (Grade 5/6 teacher)

Support provided to participants

Much of the feedback highlights that it has been the support provided to participants as well as the fact that activities are offered that has made the difference to participation levels. For participants who were new to a particular activity this made it much more possible to participate.

"They explain everything very well" (participant Active Northern Parks)

"Instructors easy to talk to and give good advice" (participant Active Northern Parks).

Adding value to existing activities

As has been noted in other parts of this report Active Launceston has sought to add value to other initiatives within Launceston and assisted many groups to promote their activities to the community.

Addressing gaps and barriers to participation

The use of Active Launceston resources to address specific gaps and provide support to overcome barriers to participation was a key feature of the program. Only one program – Sports Ability Hub has a fee for participants.

"The money that goes with some of the programs is good- it allows them to be offered at reduced cost or free..."

Key role played by the University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania has been important in enabling the project to harness the skills of professionals with extensive knowledge of physical activity science. The fact that the project has been run through the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Students and Education) at the University of Tasmania provided significant leverage in engaging students as volunteers for events and within programs. The University auspice has also provided a credible 'neutral' body to bring other players together within the project. The University continues to support the project financially into the future and recognizes the value of the Active Launceston project in regard to their engagement with the local community.

Another flow-on effect from the involvement of the University as a major player has been that students have had an opportunity to experience working in community settings and running 'community capacity building' programs. Some students interviewed noted that this had made them much more interested in working in similar programs in the future.

Provision of 'taster' activities

Activities were developed to provide 'tasters' that may encourage participants to go on and get involved in physical activity programs conducted by other groups in the Launceston community. Events like the Expo event in City Park enabled people to try many forms of physical activity in an informal and non-threatening setting.

Wide range of activities offered

The range of activities offered as part of Active Launceston has been a key feature of its success. The project did not just focus on traditional sports and in fact the words 'sport, fitness and exercise' were not used within the promotion of the project. It provided a smorgasbord of activity ranging from cycling, to dance and Tai Chi. The range of activities has enabled Active Launceston to address the trend towards unstructured activities and has encouraged participants to build physical activity into their normal everyday lifestyle (e.g. ride to work, park and walk to work programs).

Range of sites and locations

Active Launceston has been able to offer activities in many different settings²⁵ including: parks and squares, swimming pools, Bowls Club, Community Centres. One of the benefits of using sites like local parks for physical activity is that these are seen as 'neutral' spaces and participants do not need to join a club to participate. The other advantage is that they are very visible sites to anyone passing. They contribute to the idea that 'anyone can come along'. Some sites have been specifically selected to encourage those who may experience economic or transport barriers to participation to get involved. An example of this is the extension of the 'Active Parks' program to Ravenswood.

Focus on time spent in physical activity rather than obesity

The fact that the project has promoted physical activity as part of a healthy daily lifestyle rather than a weight loss tool has been a significant feature. As noted earlier the words fitness and exercise have been avoided in promotional materials.

²⁵ This includes both those activities specifically organised by Active Launceston as well as the endorsed activities.

Capitalising on current concern about chronic illness and obesity

In some ways the timing has been right for a program like 'Active Launceston'. The project was able to capitalise on the current level of government and community interest in primary health and wellbeing due to the prevalence of chronic illness and obesity.

4.2 Barriers and issues encountered

Personnel to manage and do the hands on work associated with the project.

Active Launceston has, until recently, had only one full-time employee - the Project Manager. This has meant that this one person has had to do all the coordination, promotion and liaison work as well as running some programs herself. There is considerable administrative work involved in maintaining the website information and keeping those with an interest in the program informed. This may have limited the capacity for further growth within the program over the pilot period. This issue has now been addressed by the addition of an 18 hour per week support position to the program funded by the University of Tasmania.

Demand to support other communities to establish similar programs.

There has been a high level of interest in the Active Launceston concept from across Tasmania as well as from other states and countries. While those involved in running the program have been clear that the action 'on the ground' has been the priority there has been considerable work associated with responding to this level of interest from other communities.

Difficulties in engaging the 'non-active' in the broader community.

While Active Launceston has had some success in engaging those within the community who were not previously physically active there is more work to be done in this area. All programs that seek to engage the 'non-active' experience this difficulty. The Active Launceston project has used targeted programs teamed with a highly personalized support process to engage some groups and this has proven to be successful (e.g. Activate Your Life). The other techniques used have been to influence community attitudes via the media and high profile 'celebrities' to make physical activity the 'norm'.

Some stakeholders have commented that one difficulty faced by projects like Active Launceston is that programs tend to attract those who are already active rather than those who are new to the activity. This may mean that newcomers to the activity may not feel that they 'belong' unless care is taken to integrate them into the existing group. Another potential issue is that participants who are inexperienced in the activity may feel intimidated by a group operating at a higher level or may not see the program as being for a 'beginner'. Due to these issues, Active Launceston has worked hard to ensure that all programs are inclusive and that program instructors provide a variety of levels of participation for each activity or movement and these matters will be considered in the ongoing planning of the project.

"Need to work on spreading the word to those who are not already active as opposed to those who are already involved in a million things and are using Active Launceston to add even more.."

"Some people have been coming to the activity for a long time- perhaps they should give up their places to other new people....."

Strategies to deal with this issue may be required in the future (e.g. splitting groups of experienced and less experienced participants, marketing activities as being specifically for 'beginners', use of mentoring, putting a cap on numbers). It must be noted however that Active Launceston seeks to engage people in ongoing, regular physical activity so participation is valued rather than just numbers attending programs.

Lack of contribution of financial resources by some State Government partners

Some stakeholders were disappointed that not all State Government agencies with an interest in health and wellbeing were financial contributors to the pilot project. In some instances administrative hurdles to gaining support were faced by the project in relation to these agencies. However, the next phase of the project will include the State Government agency, Sport and Recreation Tasmania, as a partner.

4.3 Lessons learnt

This evaluation points to some clear learning from the pilot phase:

- Clear structures need to be in place to ensure that effective collaboration between partner agencies can occur.
- Collaboration is worth the effort – this pilot reinforces the idea that you get greater value from a relatively small investment when commitment is harnessed from multiple agencies.
- Time spent building the brand is a valuable investment – Active Launceston appears to be a very positive brand for many stakeholder groups.
- Transparent and fair contracting processes are essential to maintaining ongoing industry support for Active Launceston.
- Promoting the concept of public space/open space as being appropriate venues for physical activity has been useful for encouraging participation.
- The idea of taking activities to where people are rather than expecting them to travel to a centrally run activity has promoted participation, particularly within low income communities.
- The strategy of linking physical activity to transport and commuting has also been useful (e.g. park and walk to the city).
- Promoting physical activity rather than fitness and weight loss has been seen as a positive approach.
- Large public events like the Expo appear to be useful for building the profile and attracting new participants.
- Care needs to be taken to manage large numbers at events, to schedule 'family friendly' times and ensure that both children and adults can participate.
- Projects need to promote the importance of adopting a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. This includes the provision of healthy snacks at events.

4.4 Opportunities for the future

The consultation undertaken for this evaluation provided a number of suggestions for growth and improvement of the program in the future. These covered a number of areas including:

Relationship building and coordination

While those involved in the pilot project have put considerable energy into building relationships there is always more work that can be done to strengthen these connections and improve coordination.

"There is further potential to develop relationships and further strengthen partnerships...."

"Continue to fine tune the coordination between groups offering similar activities"

"Talk to other groups so activities don't clash (e.g. Wednesday walks organised by 7LA and the Heart Foundation)."

"Link in with programs run out of community health centres/hospitals and assist in creating network of active programs available"

"Let sport/bike/outdoors shops know what is happening with Active Launceston, as I work in a bike shop and it would be great to inform"

"It is vitally important that the connection to the Community Houses and the local 'brand' is maintained if programs are to be successfully offered in low income communities.."

The Active Launceston Brand and promotion

A number of stakeholders were keen to see that the Active Launceston brand was 'secured' for the future.

"Secure the brand Active Launceston..."

"Continue to showcase the success of the program – present papers at conferences etc"

Others were interested in developing further ways to engage the non-participatory community members:

"Promote the success of the program to residents – make people aware of how good it is"

"Continue to build promotional strategies to increase public awareness of Active Launceston and endorsed activities (e.g. sending out information with Council rates notices, target marketing)".

Improvements to the Active Launceston website

While most feedback indicated that the website was seen as very useful there were a couple of comments about its ease of use:

"Nowhere on the website "<http://www.activelaunceston.com.au>" could I find information on what activities are available in the area. Perhaps a site map or search engine for the site might be a good idea."

"A site map and search capacity on the website to locate activities near you in Launceston."

"I found the website difficult when registering an activity."

"The function of creating groups is not that easy to use ... for social networking we find it better to use other tools...."

Focus on other aspects of health and wellbeing such as diet

Two respondents wanted Active Launceston to have more of a focus on diet.

"I do feel that Active Launceston does not give enough help about a Healthy Diet apart from links to diet sites."

"Active Launceston should be giving direct information about dieting on their site..."

"More focus on nutrition and healthy eating as well as physical activity."

However, while the project website does contain some information on healthy diet a strategic decision has been made to focus specifically on promoting physical activity within this project due to the lack of resources.

Addressing barriers to participation

A number of those providing feedback emphasised the importance of continuing to address barriers to participation. The key issues highlighted were the need to adopt a holistic approach, the importance of low cost or free programs and access to car parking.

"Ensure a whole body approach to health and wellbeing... continue to work from a broad perspective that links into health agencies and

to address barriers to participation in physical activity for some groups in the community”.

“Further increase capacity to engage the ‘non-engaged’ and to work at the grass roots level.”

“Provision of free parking at venues.”

“Keep free or low cost events and activities.”

Length, type and timing of programs

There were a range of comments about the length and timing of programs. Many of these were about continuing the courses for a full year or offering programs at several levels to cater to different experience and skills levels. There were a number of comments suggesting the need to create greater capacity for ‘movement’ through programs, to create pathways and sequential skill development opportunities and to ensure that programs encourage participants to set and achieve goals in relation to physical activity.

Length of courses

“Where possible offer programs for a full year”.

“Keep Pilates going thru winter!!!! not too sure where though..”

“Change the programming for some activities (e.g. Polytechnic young people’s program could be run monthly and then teachers could work with students to ‘embed’ new activities in the intervening weeks)”.

Timing

“Every activity I’ve wanted to do clashed with work. e.g. I work till 6.00pm Tuesdays. Those I’m not interested in are on at times when I can do them!”

“More afternoon activities 3 - 5ish?”

“Maybe have a few more things on weekends...”

“More activities provided after business hours please.”

“Offering evening programs and weekends so mums and working people can attend.”

Sequential opportunities and goal orientation

“Foster more opportunities that can link to fun runs and offer sequential programs to provide goal pathways for participants”

"Increase the opportunities for programs at several levels (e.g. cycling for beginners and experienced cyclists)..."

"Continue to build the links between specific events and time limited programs like Active Walk/Run and ongoing community run groups like walking groups Important to build sustainability into it.."

"Strengthening the links to the endorsed activities."

New events and programs

"Continue to experiment with new events/programs"

"I would love to do some swimming stroke improvement – I can swim but would like to swim better..."

Programs for particular groups

"Providing specific activities for teenagers (e.g. break dancing, rock climbing)"

"More info required for elderly, should be greater representation for the over 50."

"It does seem to be difficult to gain ongoing consistent participation by older people..."

"I think as much outreach in the more socio-economically disadvantaged areas would be good..."

"The blokes are harder to get engaged- yoga classes for the ladies have gone well. The blokes activities have been slower...."

"Target workplaces to be able to offer specific workplace Active Programs (e.g. run a corporate challenge event)".

"Reach out to more areas of the city (e.g. each local area to have an Active Park program?)" Expanding activities to other suburbs

"Holding more school based activities"

There was considerable feedback about the success of the Expo in 2009 and interest in it becoming an annual event. Some suggestions included holding a separate schools day to deal with the congestion that occurred at some activities or spreading it over two days, with one day being a weekend day so that more working people and families could attend.

"The Active Launceston Day was a perfect way to get the community moving and active. The activities were safe but still very fun and the stalls had lots of information. I would like you to consider running the day over two days next year – a Friday for school groups and Saturday for families and adults so more people can enjoy the services."

Individual rather than group programs

"Promote solo physical activity is a valid option - it doesn't have to be group-based as most of your activities are. I have a major hearing impairment, and therefore find group activities difficult."

*"Providing dance activities where you can go without a partner
In summer having activities in the park each day."*

Providing more support to existing participants

"At times they seem more interested in getting more people to join the group than helping people already signed up."

Choice of facilitators and facilitator feedback

Some suggestions were made about choice of facilitators. Most feedback was very positive in regard to facilitators. However, several participants suggested that care should be taken in choosing future facilitators as they had less than positive experiences citing *"a macho approach"* and *"inappropriate jokes"* as issues for them.

Other suggestions were that as a matter of course all feedback about programs be collated and provided back to the facilitators in summary form so they know how their programs are being received by participants. Ensuring that the contracting process for all programs is transparent and open was also seen as important in maintaining industry support for the project.

Community consultation and evaluation

"Find ways of communicating with residents of Launceston about what they want from Active Launceston."

"Continue to evaluate the impact on participants, particularly the impact on those who were not previously physically active (e.g. longitudinal studies of a small group of people)."

Expansion to other communities

"Build capacity for other communities to run Active Launceston style programs"

"Expanding Active Launceston to other Local Government Areas"

"More resources into the project so it can be broadened to umbrella the whole of Tasmania."

"Involve surrounding rural communities"

"Extend to rural areas. I could not participate due to not living in Launceston but found the website informative and a good way to publicise what's available as there is quite a bit out there but people need to know where to access, cost etc."

However some people wanted those who do not live in Launceston removed from the email list.

"Review the email list, to remove people who live far from L'ton!"

Working on infrastructure and safety

"Improving safety on Coronation Park Boardwalk (dogs hassling walkers and cyclists)"

"Encouraging people to stop parking on footpaths"

"Building more cycle paths"

"Providing bicycle storage for those who live out of town and want to cycle into work but cannot transport bikes daily"

"Physical activity shouldn't be an 'add on' but part of everyday life. To do that in Launceston, need to improve footpaths, ban wood heaters, police unrestrained dogs in parks, fine drivers who park on footpaths, so people can exercise in a CLEAN, SAFE environment. How safe is it to exercise if lungs are filled with toxic wood smoke?"

Succession planning

"Much of the expertise gained in the project resides with the project manager. ... need to do some succession planning.."

4.5 Recommendations

It is recommended that Active Launceston focus on the following areas for further development over the next three years:

Continue to be a provider as well as a promoter: continue to be a provider which addresses gaps in opportunities and targets those experiencing specific barriers to participation.

Research: researching what works in promoting engagement in physical activity, particularly by those who were previously uninvolved. Develop tools to measure the impact of strategies such as 'Park and Ride/Walk' initiatives.

Student involvement: continue to engage students from the University of Tasmania in as many Active Launceston initiatives as possible.

Variety of programs and sites: continue to build the variety of programs and settings provided through Active Launceston over time to enable as many opportunities for participation as possible. It will be important to focus on the facilitation of opportunities to engage in 'non-organised' activities and those that do not require a partner to participate as the preference for these activities continues to grow.

Transparency with fitness industry: ensure that relationships continue to be built with the industry by providing feedback to all facilitators about responses to their programs and an open, fair process for selection of facilitators.

Recognition of project partners: it will be important to build the profile of the University in the Active Launceston project over time without diminishing the roles of other key partner agencies. Maintaining strong connection to 'grass roots' community organisations like Community Houses will be very important for the project to continue to experience success 'on the ground'.

Public awareness: continuing to build the level of public awareness of Active Launceston and the importance of participation in physical activity will be a prime role for the project over the coming three years. Innovation in promotion will be essential as is the capacity to harness the 'word of mouth' networks.