

# Understanding barriers to sport participation

Final Report

*Insights for key VicHealth target segments*

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Shelley Maher, VicHealth

Shauna Santos, SportInfo

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15–31 Pelham Street  
Carlton 3053 Australia

T. +61 3 9667 1333  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

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## **Project background**

With the health and lifestyle benefits of participation in sport widely recognised there has been a focus in Australia, from both government and non-government organisations, on improving attitudes towards sporting involvement and increasing both the level of and the opportunities for participation in the community. While these efforts have largely been successful VicHealth has identified specific segments within the community where participation in sport remains problematic, including people with a disability, low income and new arrivals.

To encourage greater participation, VicHealth was looking to gain greater understanding of the barriers to participation and ongoing involvement in sport among these target groups. As a supporting partner of the Australian Masters Games (AMG) held in Geelong in February 2009 there was an opportunity for VicHealth to undertake some research among games participants to provide some insight into the participation issue. SportInfo were commissioned to undertake this research on behalf of both the AMG and VicHealth.

Given the nature of the information sought a qualitative research methodology was proposed, involving in depth interviews with participants in the 2009 AMG and the preparation of 'case studies' for each participant. The structure of the research program involved a two-stage design, with initial face-to-face in depth interviews conducted immediately following the AMG with follow-up telephone interviews to be conducted in July 2009. The initial interview looked at participants' current involvement in and attitudes towards sport and physical activity, the AMG experience, future intentions in relation to regular sporting participation and any potential barriers to involvement. The follow-up interview looked to identify changes in sporting behaviour, whether intentions to participate had come to fruition, and if not what had prevented involvement.

As noted above VicHealth had three target audiences for this research and the sample structure for the project was designed to provide coverage across each of these groups of interest. In total, eight case studies were prepared; details of the final sample structure outlined following:

Stage 1 initial interview	n = 8 face-to-face in depth interviews n = 3 interviews low income segment n = 3 interviews disability segment n = 2 interviews new arrivals segment
Stage 2 follow-up interview	n = 8 telephone in depth interviews n = 3 interviews low income segment n = 3 interviews disability segment n = 2 interviews new arrivals segment

Participants for the research were selected from participants in the 2009 AMG in Geelong. We note, however, that there was no way in which to identify new arrivals from the available AMG participant data. New arrivals were recruited independently and subsequently had not participated in the AMG. Research participants were also screened against a number of other criteria to determine that they were not currently involved in organised sport and, for the new arrival segment, that they had not been involved in organised sport since arrival in Australia but had an interest in doing so.

Please note that while eight initial interviews were conducted it was not possible to conduct follow-up interviews with all eight original participants. A total of six follow-up interviews were completed.

This report presents the findings from the initial Stage 1 face-to-face and Stage 2 follow-up interviews. The initial interviews were conducted following the 2009 AMG in Geelong between 17 March 2009 and 8 April 2009. The follow-up interviews were conducted between 30 July 2009 and 23 August 2009.

## Case studies – low income segment

### What have we learnt?

During this stage of the research one-on-one in depth interviews were conducted with people from the three identified segments. The first of these segments was the low income segment.

The key points to emerge from these discussions were:

- The majority of the people included in the low income segment, while not currently involved in formalised sport still retain a strong positive attitude towards sport and physical activity. Having been active sports people in their youth it was clear that their passion and interest in sport and physical activity remains.

It was clear that despite this interest in sport and physical activity, other areas of their lives, most notably family and work have assumed a greater priority and focus. While the interest in and recognition of what sport can deliver are still well understood, it has been re-prioritised below other more compelling aspects of people's lives. They understand and acknowledge the health and personal benefits of being physically active but they struggle with being able to put these into practice given the competing demands on their time. Clearly then, the arguments that support involvement in sport and physical activity are, for these people, insufficient to influence the time and commitment they make to sport.

Of some interest was the perspective from one participant that sport was primarily the domain of younger people. Although only aged 48 years, the view expressed clearly indicated that there was a 'career time' for sport and this was when people were young. Active sport was something that this participant did while they were younger but they didn't see it having a role in their life now. Their participation interests have moved on to less physically demanding activities (darts) and their involvement with their previous sport has changed to 'arm chair' spectator only.

This attitude is somewhat disappointing given the investment that has been made in educating the community in relation to the health benefits of physical activity for people of all ages. Should this belief be more widespread it suggests the communication strategy and messages may need to respond to this as an issue.

- In most research studies around barriers to participation and certainly again here, 'time constraints' was cited as the predominant factor in non-participation in organised sport. As noted above, family and work commitments assume priority on people's time. These issues were cited as reasons why people had stopped their involvement in sport as well as being the key barriers to recommencing an involvement in sport. However this is probably a somewhat simplistic summary of the underlying drivers.

Certainly in this study, the participants found an increasing difficulty in being involved in organised sport which is largely structured at set times on set days or nights. The inflexibility of most formal competitive sport has driven sport right up against work and family commitments and appears to have resulted in many people being challenged to choose between work or family commitments and organised sport. There is little doubt that the increasingly busy and cluttered lifestyles people lead create a number of tension and decision points where people need to choose between activities competing for the same time. Right now it appears sport may well be at a competitive disadvantage.

Our investigations do indicate, however, that the turn away from organised sport has, in many cases, been replaced with other less structured activities. With organised sport offering insufficient flexibility to allow people to participate when and how they want, traditional competitive sport appears to be replaced by other less structured activities. People interviewed in this research remained involved in activities where they can set their own agenda such as riding, running or walking. These types of non-structured activities allow for involvement at a time that suits the participant and allows them the flexibility to fit their activity within their schedule. With today's busy lifestyles and increasing time demands it would appear that the traditional participation times for sport (week nights and weekends for a set period) may no longer be appropriate for some people.

The challenge then for sport is to better accommodate people's changing lifestyles and needs by looking towards providing more flexibility in their participation opportunities.

- The social interactions and sense of community created through sport remains a powerful force. For each of the participants in this segment, the ability to not only play or participate with friends but also the opportunity to meet and make new friends was a major factor in their previous involvement in organised sport and a key attraction of future participation. The social aspect was clearly more important for these participants than the competitive aspect. Sports need to ensure that they are providing participation opportunities that are focused on social as well as the more traditional competitive involvement.
- While it cannot be ignored, we would note that the cost of involvement was rarely rated as a ‘top of mind’ barrier to participation in sport among the participants in the research. It is clear that increasing pressures on people and families in the current economic uncertainty and amidst prospects of increasing unemployment will likely escalate this as a more active factor in people’s decision making. Sensitivity to pricing may be more evident among this segment if economic conditions continue to tighten.

The details of the three case studies in this segment now follow.

## Key considerations for the future

Flexibility in participation opportunities	Changing lifestyles mean traditional participation times (week nights and weekends for a set period) may no longer be appropriate for some people. Sports need to be looking towards providing greater flexibility in participation opportunities.
Leveraging the social aspect of sport participation	The social opportunities afforded through sport can be at least as, if not more, important than the competitive aspect. Sports need to provide participation opportunities focused on social as well as competitive involvement.
Health message is understood but not compelling	While the health and personal benefits of physical activity are generally well understood, sport is being re-prioritised below other more compelling aspects of people’s lives (work/family). This message needs to be supported with additional arguments to encourage participation such as the social aspects, opportunities for family involvement and flexibility in participation opportunities.

## **Case study 1: 'Terrie'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Terrie
- Age: 32 years
- Marital status: married with two children aged nine and seven years old
- Employment: works part-time as a commercial cleaner (3am start)
- Lives: Corio (six years at current address, always lived in Geelong area)
- Household income: \$55,000.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

- Cycling for fitness – once a week on road and monthly mountain bike riding
- Administration of local BMX club of which husband and daughter are both members
- Walking for fitness – twice per week with group of friends.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Strong positive attitudes towards sport, physical activity and fitness but no longer interested in competitive sport. Competed at a high level when younger but now more interested in the fitness and social aspects of sport. Also encourages her children's participation in sport for both health and the social opportunities it presents.



Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	10
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	8
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	10
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	0
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	4
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	10

## Previous involvement in sport

Terrie was heavily involved in sport when she was at school and through her twenties. Her involvement in sport started at school and she played a wide range of sports including netball, gymnastics, athletics, Australian Rules football, basketball and swimming. Self-described as a 'tomboy', her sports of preference were football and basketball due to their contact/semi-contact nature. While she did participate in other sports, she disliked the 'girlie' non-contact nature of the other sports. With age restrictions meaning that she had to stop playing Australian Rules at the age of 12, basketball became her primary sport and she played at school and with a basketball club.

Terrie played competitive basketball into her late teens until undergoing a shoulder reconstruction. She returned to playing basketball after the operation but was not able to play at the same level she had previously and subsequently her passion for playing was not as strong. She became involved in BMX racing when she met her future husband and went on to join the local BMX club and compete. She stopped BMX racing when she became pregnant with her first child. She made a brief return to racing when her second child was around three. However, the concerns of her youngest child around injury and her own realisation that, with her family and work commitments, she could not afford to get hurt; she ceased her regular participation in BMX. This was approximately three years ago.

Since then, Terrie tried to get involved again in basketball 'to at least be doing something', playing in a local competition one night per week. She was unable to sustain this with her early morning work commitments. She also played one season of 'social' netball with other school mums but the competition in which they played had insufficient teams to continue.

## Major sporting involvement

### Basketball

- Played competitively at school and with a club, competed at regional and state levels
- Played from around age 10 to 19 years old, and one season at 29 years
- Attractions of basketball:
  - semi-contact sport – had an element of rough and tumble
  - basketball club had male and female teams with interaction and bonding between the teams
  - opportunity to travel with friends and meet new people
  - natural ability – able to quickly become a good player
  - competition – opportunity to test her abilities against others at a high level
- Reasons for stopping at age 20:
  - injury meant could no longer play at the high competitive level that she had done
  - no interest in playing basketball socially – playing was about competing and she could no longer do that to the best of her ability
- Reasons for stopping at age 29:
  - local competition played at night and late night games difficult with work commitments (commences work at 3am)
  - no interest in playing socially during the day – while not playing at her earlier level she wanted a ‘good quality’ game.

## **BMX riding**

- Raced competitively with BMX club from 20 to 23 years and 28 to 29 years
- Attractions of BMX:
  - husband was involved and after spectating decided to get involved
  - involved an element of 'rough and tumble'
  - fast sport
  - exciting with an element of danger
  - something different – not a sport that many people are involved in formally
  - sport for both males and females – while not competing against each other there is a lot of interaction and can train together
- Reasons for stopping at age 23:
  - became pregnant and had two children – too dangerous to ride while pregnant and could not do the amount of training required to be competitive when children were very young
- Reasons for stopping at age 29:
  - youngest daughter was afraid that her mother would be injured
  - acceptance that the sport is dangerous and she could not afford to get injured – would be unable to work and look after family
  - recognition that she would never be an elite competitor
  - remained involved in the sport in an administration role within the club, but no longer racing.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	BMX riding
Why she got involved	<p>The primary reason for involvement in the AMG was that the games were being held locally at her BMX club. Being involved with the club in an administration role she felt somewhat obligated to take part. With the 2009 World Titles coming up it meant that many riders would not be available as they needed to be in higher level competitions in preparation and she was concerned about the potential number of competitors for the AMG.</p> <p>While not competing any more she stills enjoys the chance to ride the track and the games provided her with the opportunity to do this. The games also represented an opportunity to meet up and ride with people that she used to compete against.</p> <p>As a participant she was able to watch the competition including her husband racing. If she was not participating it was likely she would be asked to be an official and this would have prevented her watching the races.</p>
Any reservations	<p>Not having ridden in races or competition for a number of years, Terrie was a little concerned that her skills would be a 'bit rusty' for competition and she could injure herself by pushing too hard and attempting to do things that she is no longer capable of. Her husband encouraged her to take part and just enjoy the chance to ride and not worry about competing.</p>
Preparation for AMG	<p>In the lead-up to the games Terrie planned and started to do some additional road riding to build up her fitness and intended to do some training with her husband to 'sharpen up' her skills. An accident before Christmas meant that she was not able to ride at all for a number of weeks and was only riding once a week on the road prior to the games.</p>
Response to AMG	<p>Taking part in the AMG has reignited Terrie's passion for riding BMX. While she does not want to return to training and riding competitively (she wants to support her husband and her daughter in sport and is not able to do this if she competes as well) she will look for opportunities to ride the track at BMX events in future where this will not impact on her husband's or daughter's racing.</p> <p>If the AMG were to be held locally again it is likely that she would participate again. She is unlikely to travel to games in other locations due to the cost of travel and accommodation. The current costs for her husband and daughter to travel and compete at BMX events is considerable and difficult for the family to manage. She is not likely to look at travelling for a 'fun' event over higher level competitions.</p>

## **Future sporting intentions**

Terrie is looking to increase the amount of physical activity she does in the future. In the next six months she definitely wants to increase the amount of riding she does on the road for fitness and enjoyment but is unlikely to join any sporting club or team.

Terrie does hope to be able to play social netball with the school mums but thinks it is unlikely that they will find a suitable competition in which to play. She would also like to go back to playing basketball but does not see this as possible while working in her current job.

## Organised sport

<p><b>BMX riding</b></p>	<p>Has no interest in rejoining the BMX club as a rider. Terrie is happy now to just ride for her own enjoyment and to catch-up with friends when the opportunity presents and is not interested in competing.</p> <p>There is no scope within her club to be a social rider, the focus is on competition. She does not see that there would be many people who would just want to ride for fun rather than compete. People she knows have stopped riding when they no longer want to compete.</p> <p>Her future involvement will be primarily around supporting both her daughter and husband in the sport as competitors. She will also continue to be involved in the local club in an administrative role.</p>
<p><b>Basketball</b></p>	<p>Would like to get involved in basketball again but sees this as unlikely as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she wants to play at a reasonable level and these competitions are played at night with games up to 11pm. Current work hours are from 3am so she cannot play the late games</li> <li>• she is aware that there are opportunities to play locally during day but this is at a more social level and does not hold any interest for her</li> <li>• she has not investigated opportunities to play on the weekend as this would clash with children’s weekend activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Netball</b></p>	<p>Would like to play netball in a weekly social competition with school mums as did last year. The main desire to be involved here is to do something fun outside of school activities with this group of friends and also to encourage other mothers in their attempts to improve their fitness. The ability to play in the next season is seen as unlikely due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wanting to play on a Tuesday which suits all the mums. The Tuesday competition was disbanded due to not having enough teams. The local recreation centre has been unable to get enough interest to restart the Tuesday competition</li> <li>• wanting to play in the local recreation centre competition as they have a flexible policy on uniforms which allows the wearing of track suit pants. A number of the mums involved are ‘large girls’ and do not feel comfortable in sport skirts which are required in other competitions</li> <li>• location of the local recreation centre is suitable to all the mums – no more than 20 minutes for anyone. No one involved wants to travel more than this to play</li> <li>• netball is a game with which all the mums are familiar so this is the only game that the group are interested in playing. While they are unable to play netball the group are walking a couple of times each week for fitness.</li> </ul>

## Physical activity

### Road riding

Terrie is planning to increase her road riding from one to two or three times per week.

Over the past few years, she has only been able to ride once per week due to work and family commitments, involvement in activities at the children's school and children's and husbands sport activities

Participating in the AMG highlighted to her that her fitness was not as good as she would like it to be and the need for her to be more active

She will be looking to 'prioritise a little more time for herself' to enable her to ride more often going forward.

## **Case study 1: 'Terrie' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Terrie?**

Terrie displayed strong positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity in the initial interview and it was clear that there has been no change in her attitudes over the past six months. She remains committed to remaining physically fit and active and to encouraging her children to be the same.

Terrie has increased the amount of physical activity she is involved in over the past six months. As was her intention, she is now riding on the road at least twice a week for fitness (up from once) and she has also become involved in junior netball, coaching her daughter's team. Despite indicating that she had no interest in returning to competitive BMX she has re-commenced racing, though not at the level that she previously competed at.

While she would like to get back to playing social netball and basketball, the obstacles to doing this remain. For netball there are still insufficient teams for a competition on a Tuesday (the only day suitable for everyone in her mothers' group). For basketball her current work hours (3am start) prevent her playing in a night time competition and her children's (and now her own) weekend sporting commitments do not enable her to play on weekends. As previously noted, Terrie is not interested in playing social basketball during the day as she wants a reasonable level of competition.



## Organised sport

<b>BMX riding</b>	<p>Terrie has returned to BMX racing on alternate weekends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• found being an official at meets limited her ability to watch and support her husband and daughter. She came to the conclusion she is not cut out to be an official – doesn't enjoy it and much prefers to be a participant. She officiates meets at her own club but races when meets are away</li><li>• able to race at a level she is happy with - not looking to be highly competitive just enjoy the riding. The increased road riding she is doing has given her a reasonable level of fitness to feel confident to be racing regularly</li><li>• remains involved in her local club but is looking to cut back her commitment a little to enable her to do more riding herself (racing and training). Being able to do this will be dependent on finding new/additional volunteers to take on some of the work she is currently doing</li><li>• sees there is a strong family/social aspect to the sport of BMX. This is a sport that she can be involved in with her family. It also provides the opportunity to keep in touch with friends made through the sport who now have their own children participating if they no longer participate themselves</li><li>• while initially indicating that participating in the AMG had not encouraged her to return to racing, further out from the games she found that she did want to ride again. Further, she decided that while the focus of club riding is on competition, she could ride, as she did at the AMG, at her own level – ride for her own enjoyment and not with a focus on 'being the best' and pushing the limits as she did previously.</li></ul>
<b>Netball</b>	<p>Terrie has become involved in junior netball as coach of her daughter's team (two training sessions and one game per week):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provides another opportunity for her to participate in sport with her daughter</li><li>• likes the idea of encouraging and supporting children to be involved in sport/physical activity</li><li>• also provides her some opportunity to be active – she is not a 'stand on the sidelines and shout' style coach at training, she gets involved with her girls</li><li>• sees this as an opportunity to try and encourage some of the mothers from her team and other teams to get involved in playing, with a view to building sufficient numbers to enable a restart of the Tuesday social competition</li><li>• netball is a game with which all the mums are familiar so this is the only game that the group are interested in playing. While they are unable to play netball, the group are walking a couple of times each week for fitness.</li></ul>

## Physical activity

### Road riding

Now riding at least two times per week and three times when she can:

- since the AMG highlighted her fitness was not at the level she would like, Terrie has looked to prioritise more time for herself to enable her to ride. She achieved this by getting the children and her husband to take on some household chores. She reduced the amount of time that she spends helping out at school and focussed on getting through her 'daily jobs' (cleaning, shopping, preparing meals) more quickly and efficiently. She now leaves something partially done to ensure that she gets out for her ride
- about to start riding with one of the former netball mothers that she walks with. Terrie is hoping this will enable her to be riding three times a week or more in future – twice on her own and once with her friend.

## Case study 2: 'Steve'

### Profile

- Name: Steve
- Age: 48 years
- Marital status: lives with partner, no children
- Employment: Full-time – welder
- Lives: Corio (six months at current address, lived in Geelong area for 37 years, immigrated from England with family when 10 years old)
- Household income: \$48,000.

### Current involvement in sport and physical activity

Not currently involved in any sport or physical activity.

### Attitudes towards sport and physical activity

Moderate attitudes towards sport and physical activity. Does not think sport or physical activity is an important part of his life. Sees physical activity as being for younger people. His sporting interests are more sedate than when he was younger and more physically capable.

Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	7
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	4
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	4
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	4
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	1
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	10
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	6

## **Previous involvement in sport**

While not currently involved in sport or physical activity, Steve was an active participant in his younger years. He played soccer from childhood up until his early 30s. Being born in England and spending his early years there, soccer was the first sport he was involved in. He initially played at home with his father and brother and then at school, with friends and with a local club. He continued his involvement in soccer when he moved to Australia, again playing at school and with a soccer club. While he played other sports at school he never found any passion for or interest in playing anything other than soccer. He felt somewhat disadvantaged by his height in games such as basketball and Australian rules, and found that he had better skills with his feet than with his hands in any bat and ball sports. Steve continued to play club soccer once he left school and remained involved until his early 30s when he felt that he was no longer able to 'keep up with the game'.

Steve's other primary involvement in sport has been in playing darts. He started playing with a local darts club in his early 30s, just prior to ceasing his involvement in soccer. He played darts regularly (around twice a week) up until two years ago when his working hours changed.

## **Major sporting involvement**

### **Soccer**

- Played competitively at school and with a club
- Played from around five to 32 years old
- Attractions of soccer:
  - game everyone played in England – father, brother and friends
  - team sport provided an opportunity to play with friends
  - also provided an opportunity to meet new friends with a similar interest when moved to Australia
  - competitive aspect of the game – being a winner
  - could play with family/friends outside organised games – it just required a ball

- Reasons for stopping:
  - felt physically unable to play anymore – could not keep up with the pace of the game
  - no longer able to play at the same level as he had previously – not able to do things on the field as well as he could when he was younger
  - not interested in playing ‘social league’ soccer. Had always played soccer competitively and did not want to play if he was not really competing
  - not interested in playing with people who do not take the game ‘seriously’.

## **Darts**

- Played competitively with darts club from 32 to 46 years of age
- Attractions of darts:
  - his father and brother were playing with club and it represented an opportunity to spend time with them
  - social aspect of being part of the club – opportunity to meet new people/make new friends
  - opportunity to travel to different clubs/places to play
  - low cost of involvement – low cost membership (~\$60–\$70) and no expensive equipment required
  - something different – not a sport that many people are involved in formally
  - a sport for both males and females. While not often competing against each other there is a lot of interaction and can practise together
  - can practise/play at home
  - his partner also plays so they can practise together (but there is little opportunity to actually play together)

- Reasons for stopping:
  - work circumstances changed to nightshift so unable to play in league competitions or socially at the club. The club plays during the week at night
  - he had intended to go back to playing club darts when he stopped working nightshift however he is now undertaking renovations on their new home. Steve is doing all the renovations himself and is spending all his time outside of work on the renovations which does not leave any time at present for darts.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	Darts
Why he got involved	<p>Really enjoys playing darts and the AMG represented an opportunity to play when he had not been able to for nearly two years. His partner also plays darts and the AMG provided an opportunity for them to play in a competition together. There are not many opportunities in competition darts for men and women to play together.</p> <p>The AMG darts competition ran over a number of days and was not just a single day providing multiple opportunities to play. Both he and his partner took a week off work to enable them to participate in the AMG.</p> <p>Was being held locally so there were no additional costs (travel/accommodation) to take part. Opportunity to meet people from other places and make new friends.</p>
Any reservations	Steve had no hesitations about taking part in the AMG. He was confident that he could still play at a reasonable level and the AMG competition was being held at his local darts club.
Preparation for AMG	In the lead-up to the games Steve did some practice at home with his partner.
Response to AMG	<p>Steve really enjoyed participating in the AMG – playing in competition with his partner and meeting other players from around Victoria and Australia. He and his partner are now considering going to Adelaide for the next games but this will depend on the affordability of travel and accommodation costs. This is something that they would need to plan and save for.</p> <p>The experience also reminded him how much he enjoyed playing darts, being a member of the darts club and reinforced his desire to rejoin the club once he has the time available.</p>

## Future sporting intentions

Outside work and the home renovations he is undertaking, Steve is not interested in being more physically active and has no intention or interest in getting involved in any sport or physical activity in the future, aside from darts. As previously noted, his only other sporting interest has been soccer and in his own words he's 'not young anymore and doesn't want to be running around'. He is aware that there is a 'Master's League' in the local area for soccer but sees this as something that he could have done when he first stopped playing.

His understanding is that the majority of the players are under 40 and games would still be at a pace that he could not play at. He sees his playing days as over and his primary interest now is 'watching games on television rather than getting out on the park' himself.

He does, however, intend to rejoin the darts club and play regularly (twice per week). When he will rejoin the club is uncertain as he is currently undertaking renovations on their new home. He is doing all the renovations himself and is unsure how long this will take to complete. He is hoping that he will be finished in four to six months but expects that it is likely to be longer. Once the renovations are completed he will have time that he can devote to playing darts and will rejoin the club then.

## Organised sport

**Darts** Will definitely rejoin the darts club once his home renovations are completed. He is now, however, more interested in the social aspects of being part of the club than in the competitive aspect of the sport.

The key attractions for him in rejoining the club are:

- social aspect of being part of the club – able to play with and catch-up with friends and make new friends
- range of participation opportunities – league and inter-club competition as well as internal competition and social games
- catering for different ages and in particular has a 40+ category (which means 'he doesn't have to compete against the youngsters')
- some opportunities for 'mixed' play which enables him to play with partner
- family-oriented nature of the club – women and children are welcome
- low cost of membership (\$60-\$70).

## **Case study 2: 'Steve' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Steve?**

Not surprisingly given the attitudes and intentions towards sport and physical activity reported in the initial interview, Steve has not gotten involved in any physical activity in the past six months. He continues to see his days of playing active sport as being over. He sees this type of activity as being for younger people and is happy now to be an 'armchair' spectator of his previous sporting interest: soccer. He does not see that this will change in the future.

He does still intend to rejoin the darts club. He has not been able to do this yet as he is still undertaking home renovations. As he is undertaking the renovations himself and doing so in his free time outside of work, he does not have the time available to play darts. He hoped that he would have the renovations completed by the time we spoke to him again and that he would be back to playing darts but this has not eventuated. He has encountered a number of unforeseen problems with the renovations which have resulted in more work being required than originally expected. He is now anticipating that it will be at least another three months before the work is completed.

While he is not playing darts at the club he is trying to play at home with his partner (who remains a member of the darts club and continues to play), though to date they are only playing once or twice per month.

The key attraction in returning to playing darts remains the social aspect of being involved in a club, the ability to play and catch-up with friends and meet new friends, and the opportunity for mixed play which enables him to play with his partner.



## **Case study 3: 'Sharon'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Sharon
- Age: 37 years
- Marital status: married with two children aged 10 and six years old
- Employment: full-time as store manager at a service station
- Lives: Corio (six years at current address, always lived in Geelong area)
- Household income: \$65,000.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Currently doing little physical activity. Tries to run two or three times a week but does not achieve this every week.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Strong positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity but was not 'living up to it' since her children were born. Currently tries to run a couple of times a week but acknowledges she needs to do more physical activity and cites the AMG as the spur to return to sport.

Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	10
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	10
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	5
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	8
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	10

## Previous involvement in sport

Sharon played hockey from the time she was six years old up until she became pregnant with her first child when she was 27. She became involved in hockey when the local club came to her primary school to demonstrate the sport and to tell the students about their club. She 'loved' hockey from the first day she went down to the club to see what it was like and this became her primary sport. During school she tried other sports like netball, basketball and volleyball but found that her hand-eye coordination was better suited to hockey and never played any other sport outside of school.

After leaving school, her sporting focus remained on playing hockey competitively in both the local Geelong and Melbourne leagues. She ceased playing when she became pregnant with her first child. It was originally her intention to return to playing after her child was born but she found the demands on her time of motherhood and work made this too difficult. A number of her friends also stopped playing around the same time due to starting families. Since she ceased playing hockey she has not been involved in playing any other sport but has tried to keep up her fitness with running.

## Major sporting involvement

### Hockey

- Played competitively with a club
- Played from six to 27 years old
- Attractions of hockey at six years of age:
  - game looked fast and exciting with the sticks when local club demonstrated at school
  - found the skills relatively easy to learn
  - team sport – met new friends at hockey
  - sister started to play because she was involved – could play together at home
- As she got older:
  - found her skills were more suited to hockey than other sports
  - hockey is different to other sports – stick and ball not just ball
  - opportunity to play with and spend time with friends
  - good for fitness
  - playing competitively – competing against/trying to beat other teams
  - challenge of improving her skills and abilities
- Reasons for stopping:
  - stopped playing when pregnant with her first child as too dangerous to continue
  - number of friends who were having children stopped playing around the same time.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	Hockey
Why she got involved	<p>Contacted by friends with whom she used to play hockey and asked to play with them at the AMG.</p> <p>Other women who were no longer playing were also asked so taking part offered the opportunity of a 'reunion' with a number of her old team mates and the opportunity to play together again as a team.</p> <p>Opportunity to play hockey again.</p> <p>The AMG were being held locally so there were no travel or additional costs involved in participating, other than the games fee.</p> <p>Wanted to see if she was still capable of 'doing it' after having been out of the game for such a long period (over 10 years).</p> <p>Children wanted to see their mum play.</p>
Any reservations	<p>Concerned that her current fitness level would not be up to what was required for playing hockey.</p> <p>Also concerned that her skills would be rusty and that she might 'make a bit of a fool' of herself.</p> <p>Possibility of getting injured as not having played for so many years.</p>
Overcoming reservations	<p>Were a number of other women in a similar situation who had not played for many years – would not be the only one who would be 'struggling' on the field.</p> <p>Desire to catch-up and play with her old team mates.</p> <p>The women who were still playing organised a couple of 'skills sessions' to help 'brush up'.</p>
Preparation for AMG	<p>In the lead-up to the games, Sharon got together with the other women in her team for four 'skills sessions'. She also tried to ensure that she was running at least twice a week in the month before the games.</p>
Response to AMG	<p>Sharon loved being 'on the field' playing hockey again at the AMG. She did find it physically challenging but really enjoyed herself.</p> <p>The women that she played with have discussed going to Adelaide and/or looking for other similar events that they could attend and play at.</p> <p>A couple of the team members including Sharon are considering getting involved in playing hockey again on a regular basis.</p>

## Future sporting intentions

Following on from the AMG, Sharon is looking to start playing hockey again and wants to get involved in playing competitively and rejoin the club she originally played with. While she still has some reservations about how she will be able to manage training and playing with looking after her children, she has been encouraged by some of the women she used to play with who organise and help each other out with babysitting and picking up and dropping off children. Her ideal would be to play in the 'more serious' winter season but is aware that there is also a 'fun or social' competition that is played over summer. This may be where she has to start if she cannot fit playing in winter into the family schedule for this year.

## Organised sport

### Hockey

Sharon is investigating options for getting involved in hockey again. There are a range of options available through her old club including weekend competition and a veterans' competition run on weeknights. There is also a summer competition that offers a more 'social' involvement.

The key attractions for her in playing again are:

- playing again with her old friends and team mates
- improving her fitness
- doing something for herself – since they were born her focus has been on the children and their needs and activities and her husband's sporting activities
- social events associated with being in the hockey club

Consideration for getting involved in hockey again. While she is keen to get back into hockey there are a number of issues with which Sharon is contending:

- children – organising child minding and pick-ups and drop-offs to allow her to attend training and matches
- the cost involved – club fees thought to be around \$350 and will also probably need to spend around another \$200 on uniform and equipment. Currently this is not too much of a concern but she is not sure what the future will hold given the current economic conditions.

### **Case study 3: 'Sharon' – follow-up interview**

#### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Sharon?**

Sharon was considering returning to playing hockey when we initially spoke to her. She was hoping to be able to get involved in playing in the more competitive winter season but indicated that she might need to start initially in the social summer competition. There were two potential concerns or barriers for Sharon, these being child minding and the costs associated with playing.

In the six months since we spoke to her, Sharon has not been able to play hockey again. At the time of the initial interview she was uncertain about what the future would hold given the prevailing economic conditions and things have become more difficult for Sharon. While she is still working, her husband was retrenched in May and had not found a new job at the time of the interview. This placed some pressure on the family budget and Sharon had to place her desire to get back to playing hockey on the backburner for the time being.

Sharon has increased the running she does for fitness and is now running regularly, at least three times per week and sometimes four. She indicated that this has made her feel better physically. After participating in the AMG and finding this physically challenging, Sharon really felt she needed to improve her general fitness. She also indicated that she was finding the regular exercise a good way to relax and clear her mind as her husband's unemployment situation and family finances were becoming stressful.

Overall Sharon remains optimistic about the future and playing hockey again. She is confident that her husband's employment situation will be short- rather than long-term and she will be able to play hockey in winter 2010. She also believes that she will be better placed to start playing again in 2010 as her fitness will be at a much higher level than it was when she participated in the 2009 AMG.

## Case studies – disability segment

### What have we learnt?

Three interviews were undertaken with participants in the disability segment for this research. The participants were selected from AMG participant lists of those taking part in sports for people with a disability. Some key insights from the initial discussions included the following:

- The participants spoken to within the scope of this research included people with both intellectual and physical disabilities. What became obvious are the differences in experience, motivations and aspirations across people with different disabilities. Their previous and current involvement in sport differed markedly as did their intentions in relation to future participation. It will be important that sporting bodies acknowledge the range of expectations and capacities that exist across the disability segment. There is no 'one size fits all' solution for this segment of the population.
- Perhaps not surprisingly, physical limitations are a major impediment for those with a physical disability. For the people involved in the research, this related specifically to access and mobility capabilities. Access to grounds, facilities, training, transport and even areas where participants socialised created potential barriers. There were further indications that special or modified equipment required for this segment to be involved actively in sports creates yet a further hurdle to participation.

In contrast, issues raised by people with intellectual disabilities pointed to the structure of the activities as a significant hurdle. Creating activities (based on the sport framework) that accommodated people with intellectual disabilities (alternate forms of the game, other participatory variants) was seen to be of fundamental importance for this segment. While these may well exist, our research participant reported a genuine concern that these services were unlikely to be available (in the Geelong area). This has, in our view, created a primary disincentive for the participants to seek and explore opportunities that in reality may well exist. Revisiting what and how we communicate with this segment may well be warranted. Sports investing in creating opportunities for people with disabilities may be disadvantaged by perceptions that sport simply doesn't provide these opportunities.

- Once again, as was evident among the low income segment, the social dimensions and opportunities presented through sport were cited as a key attraction. Sport is seen to provide opportunities to both participate with friends and meet and establish new friendships. Without overstating the importance of this experience dimension, sport needs to better leverage this differentiating opportunity.
- What also clearly emerged from the interviews was the effectiveness of the Masters Games platform. The games provided participants with a 'menu' of (in this case) some 50+ sports. People entering the games were able to select not only their sport of choice, but take the opportunity to 'sample' other activities that they may have some latent interest in or simply wanted to trial. The games platform at a minimum provided people with the vehicle to see and experience other sports and activities. This was especially relevant for this segment.
- Traditionally anchored to their sport of choice the Masters Games exposed and introduced these research participants to many other sport and activity opportunities. In the case of one, he was made aware of a sport he could participate in from the range of sports that were on offer and is now looking to pursue an involvement. For another, while he participated in one sport, his interest in a different sport was ignited by the spectator opportunity the games provided. This suggests that there may be opportunities to develop 'multiple sport' introduction days. While customarily 'come and try' days have been sport specific, providing opportunities where people can experience or sample a variety of sports may work to attract people who are looking for a sporting opportunity but haven't decided what they want to do or don't know what options are available to them.
- Also evident with two of the research participants, and consistent with indications from the low income segment, was strong interest in sport creating more flexible participation opportunities. In many cases, usual day-to-day activities take longer to complete. They are no less pressured with busy lifestyles, work and family commitments. Creating participation opportunities which enabled them to participate and for a time that would suit them rather than having to commit to a rigid schedule is of significant importance.

The details of the three case studies in this segment now follow.



## Key considerations for the future

No 'one size fits all' solution for the disability segment	Experience, motivation and aspirations will differ across people with different disabilities. Sports need to acknowledge the range of expectations and capacities that exist across the disability segment. Sports should be cognisant of not only access issues and equipment issues, for those with a physical disability, but also the requirement for alternate or modified game variants for people with an intellectual disability.
Leveraging the social aspect of sport participation	The social opportunities afforded through sport are also a great attraction for the disability segment. Again sports need to provide participation opportunities that are focussed on the social as well as competition aspects.
Promoting the opportunities available	Lack of awareness of alternate forms of the games or other participatory variants for people with a disability is a primary disincentive to seeking and exploring opportunities that in reality may well exist. Sports investing in creating opportunities for people with disabilities may well be disadvantaged by perceptions that sport simply doesn't provide these opportunities. Sports need to review how they are communicating with this segment to ensure awareness of the opportunities available.
Multiple sport 'come and try' opportunities	Reactions to the Masters Games indicate opportunities for 'multi-sport' introduction days as opposed to the traditional sport-specific offerings. This would provide opportunities for people to sample a variety of sports and provide an introduction to those looking for a sporting opportunity but haven't decided what they want to do or don't know what options are available to them. Sports (and clubs) should look for opportunities to come together to provide multiple sport 'come and try' or introduction days, which offer potential participants a range of possibilities.

## **Case study 4: 'Matilda'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Matilda
- Age: 48 years
- Disability: intellectual disability and some physical coordination difficulties (similar to Down syndrome)
- Household structure: lives with mother (unable to live alone)
- Lives: St Albans Park (10 years at current address, always lived in Geelong area)
- Household income: approximately \$30,000 (pensions).

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Matilda is currently not involved in any sport. Up until early in 2008 she was involved in ten pin bowling (weekly league), but during that year she had a number of illnesses, spent time in hospital and was unable to bowl. She recovered and rejoined the bowling league. For exercise, her mother takes her walking three or four times a week for around an hour. She also occasionally goes rock 'n' roll dancing with her sister and brother-in-law.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Matilda enjoys bowling with her friends and walking with her mother but has little interest in sport more generally. She doesn't like ball games because they are too hard and she doesn't like running around because it makes her 'all hot and sticky and tired'. She does like going dancing with her sister but 'not too much because it makes her very tired'.

Matilda herself does not understand the importance of sport or physical activity for health.

Matilda's mother takes responsibility for ensuring that Matilda does some exercise each week.

## **Previous involvement in sport**

When she was younger, her mother indicated that Matilda played a range of different sports at school including softball, basketball and netball. While she seemed to enjoy herself as she was playing, Matilda never showed any interest in playing sport outside of school. Matilda's mother also noted that Matilda had poor coordination and some difficulty in understanding and remembering rules and that this probably contributed to her lack of interest.

At home, she would 'have a go' at whatever her brothers and sisters were doing but was more interested in doing these things with her siblings rather than in the actual activities themselves. Her mother indicated that she has never tried to stop Matilda from having a go at anything she wanted to try but she was reluctant to push her into doing anything 'sporty' given her lack of interest.

Matilda's primary interest has always been in music and she has played a number of musical instruments (organ, drums, triangle and other percussion) since she was in her teens and been a member of a band for disabled people for over 20 years. Matilda's mother has not actively looked for suitable sporting activities (specifically for people with a disability) in the local area for Matilda.

That said, Matilda has been involved in two sports since she left school. She participated in riding for the disabled for approximately two years (her mother thinks around 10 or 12 years ago) and was involved in the local disabled bowling league for around 10 years before her illness in 2008. Her participation in these activities centred more on the fact that they were done with friends rather than a desire to be involved in a sport.

## **Major sporting involvement**

### **Riding for the disabled**

- Rode for two years (in her 30s)
- Rode once per month
- Attractions of riding:
  - her best friend from school was taking part in the program (this friend had recently moved back to the area and was involved in a riding program interstate. The friend's mother suggested Matilda might enjoy going with her when she found a program in the Geelong area)
  - riding was something that she had not done before
  - involved horses – Matilda likes animals
  - riding was something Matilda could do that her brothers and sister couldn't
  - meeting new friends
- Reasons for stopping:
  - riding for the disabled program was closed down as due to lack of funding
  - her mother reports that Matilda was not particularly disappointed when the riding program stopped. Matilda and her friend were still seeing each other every week due to their involvement in a band and the main attraction of riding was going with her friend.

## **Ten pin bowling**

- Bowled in the local disabled league and travelled around Victoria to bowl against other disabled leagues
- Bowled from approximately 37 years to 47 years
- Attractions of bowling for Matilda:
  - bowling with and spending time with friends
  - meeting new friends
  - opportunity to go on trips to bowl against other teams
  - wining pins (for achieving a particular score) and trophies
  - the noise made when pins were knocked down
  - helping other bowlers (collecting balls and ramps for bowlers in wheelchairs or with limited mobility)
- Attractions of bowling for Matilda's mother:
  - local – not far to travel
  - low cost of involvement – no fees just pay for games (\$10) and for the bus (approximately \$15) to travel to other bowling lanes
  - well-organised – ran on time, sufficient 'helpers' each week, provided a schedule for day trips (allowing for planning)
- Reasons for stopping:
  - Matilda had a fairly severe illness in early 2008, was in hospital for a number of weeks and then recuperating at home for a couple of months. Following this she contracted glandular fever and again was 'pretty much out of action for a few more months'. As her health improved Matilda's first priority was to go back to the band and her mother felt that band activities once or twice per week was enough for her at that time and returning to bowling would have to wait. The intention was for Matilda to start bowling again sometime in 2009 – once every couple of weeks initially and to build up to weekly again.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	Ten pin bowling
Why she got involved	<p>Really enjoyed bowling with her friends and the girls she bowled with wanted to put in a team for the games and asked Matilda to be part of this team.</p> <p>Was a 'special' competition and there was an opportunity to win medals (trophies and medals are a big attraction for Matilda and she was very proud to show off the medal she won at the AMG and also her other bowling pins and trophies).</p> <p>Was an opportunity to go to bowling as she had not been able to do it for a long time due to her health problems.</p>
Any reservations	<p>Matilda's mother had no reservations about her participating in the AMG. The bowling competition was being conducted at the local bowling lanes where Matilda had been bowling for many years.</p> <p>Thus it was in an environment with which both she and Matilda were familiar and one in which Matilda felt comfortable and confident.</p> <p>The management of the local bowling lanes were also familiar with running a bowling competition for disabled people and equipped to cater for their 'special' needs.</p>
Response to AMG	<p>Matilda really enjoyed participating in the AMG with her friends and was extremely excited to have won a medal.</p> <p>Following the games Matilda was more eager to get back to bowling. She has been once since the games and it is intended that she rejoin her league and be bowling again weekly.</p>

## **Future sporting intentions**

Now that her health has improved Matilda was looking forward to rejoining her bowling league and she hoped be bowling weekly again. It is expected that this will remain Matilda's primary involvement in sport as, as previously noted, she has not displayed any interest in taking part in other sports.

Her mother does note that if any of Matilda's friends were to get involved in a sporting activity and Matilda expressed an interest in doing it as well she would support Matilda's participation if possible. Her mother will also continue to ensure that Matilda gets regular exercise by continuing their weekly walks.

## **Consideration for future involvement in sport**

While Matilda's mother indicated that she would try to support Matilda's involvement in any new sporting activities if her daughter expressed an interest, she did cite a number of factors that she would need to consider. These included:

- the need for any activity, competition or team to be specifically for disabled people. Matilda cannot take part in standard competitions as she does not have the coordination or physical skills nor can she understand or remember complicated rules
- an activity in the local area – on a limited income she could not afford to be travelling to Melbourne regularly (unless there was transport provided at low cost as is the case with the bowling)
- cost of participation – on a limited income the ongoing cost for any regular activity could be an issue (more than \$20 to \$25 per week would likely prove to be problematic)
- timing of the activity – any activity would need to be conducted at times that would coordinate with Matilda's band commitments (two days per week).

## **Case study 4: 'Matilda' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Matilda?**

Unfortunately we were unable to conduct a full follow-up interview with Matilda. Given her disability, Matilda's mother was pivotal in the initial interview. When contact was made to organise the follow-up interview Matilda's mother was in hospital and Matilda was staying with her sister. Given the current circumstances, Matilda's sister was unable to assist Matilda in taking part in the follow-up interview.

We were able to determine that as she had hoped, Matilda returned to bowling in her league on a weekly basis, was happy to be back playing with her friends again and had won a number of new pins since our initial interview. Her sister was trying to walk with Matilda three or four times a week to keep up her exercise while her mother was in hospital.



## **Case study 5: 'John'**

### **Profile**

- Name: John
- Age: 52 years
- Marital status: married, three children aged 19 years, 16 years and 14 years
- Disability: physical disability from a viral illness in his 30s (impaired lower leg mobility and balance – similar to mild/early multiple sclerosis)
- Employment: part-time – Consultant Biologist, also assists his wife in her antiques business
- Lives: Highton (lived in current home and Geelong area for 16 years)
- Household income: approximately \$110,000.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Due to treatment for the virus he contracted, he has issues with bone density so is currently doing some light gym work (weight bearing) to assist with his bones and daily walking for general fitness.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Strong positive attitudes towards sport and exercise but no longer interested in competitive sport. His health does not allow him to play the sports he did in previous years. He is now interested in participation for health and fitness and the social opportunities it affords.

Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	9
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	9
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	7
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	8
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	3
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	7
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	4

## Previous involvement in sport

John played a lot of sport in school and through his 20s and early 30s. His primary sport was tennis which he started playing when he was eight years old. In his early 20s, he also played squash regularly with friends from his tennis club to aid in building fitness for tennis. He and his tennis friends were what he described as 'sports mad' and they played a range of other sports over the years including indoor cricket, soccer and volleyball. They chose a range of sports to 'have a go at something different' and played primarily for the fun of it. In his late 20s, John started jogging for fitness and began to play golf. While golf was originally to try something different, John found he really enjoyed not only the game but the social aspect of the sport (walking and talking with friends during the game and having a drink afterwards) and he became a regular monthly player.

John's sporting activities stopped abruptly when at 34 he contracted CIDP virus, resulting in a three month stay in hospital and a six month recovery. Subsequently he has symptoms similar to multiple sclerosis – difficulty in controlling muscles and movement (mainly in the legs and feet), which affect balance and causes the sufferer to tire more easily. He has experienced two relapses since his initial illness with each resulting in increased symptoms. Following his illness, John was physically unable to play tennis and squash and he had little interest in getting involved in other sports. He initially tried playing golf occasionally but found this too hard physically, with it taking a number of days to recover each time.

He did some swimming for five or six years (so as to be doing something) and found this less tiring, but he drifted away from it as his children got older. He became involved in his children's sporting and school activities, coaching a number of his children's sports teams, and assisting with school events including set building and staging for theatre productions and fund raising efforts. His priorities became focussed on the family.

In the past three years, it was found that the initial treatment for his virus also resulted in problems with reduced bone density. John now does some light gym work, which is weight bearing, to assist with his bones (though he had not been going regularly before the AMG). At the same time, he started walking each day for general fitness as he realised that he was putting on weight and not looking after himself as well as he could.

## **Major sporting involvement**

### **Tennis**

- Played with tennis club from age of eight to 34 years (played intra- and inter-club competition)
- Attractions of tennis:
  - his brother played and they could play together (initially lived on a farm and tennis did not require others to play)
  - less physical contact than other sports like football
  - school and club tennis offered 'team play' (a member of team – bonding with and supporting each other) as well as individual play (relying on own skills to beat opponent)
  - social opportunities and activities – playing and socialising with friends and meeting new people through competitions (social/friendship group built up through the tennis club; played and socialised together for over 20 years)
  - opportunities for travel to other clubs and away to tournaments
- Reasons for stopping:
  - physically not able to play following illness. Loss of muscle control and mobility made it impossible for John to run and severely limited his ability to move about on the tennis court. His balance was also affected and he found that even trying to play 'social doubles' and moving little he was subject to overbalancing and falling.

## **Golf**

- Played regular 'social' golf with friends (at least monthly)
- Played from 28 to 34 years of age
- Attractions of golf:
  - playing with and spending time with friends
  - found the basic skills of the game easy to master
  - range of public courses to play – provided different challenges and experiences
  - relaxing – playing and walking in pleasant surroundings
  - no pressure to win – effectively playing yourself, trying to improve your own handicap
- Reasons for stopping:
  - John stopped playing golf as a result of his illness. While he was still able to swing the club quite well he could not hit the ball as hard and as far as he could previously. He also found playing even nine holes extremely tiring and it would take him a number of days to recover each time he played
  - while he still enjoyed playing he found that the pain and difficulty of recovering from each game outweighed his enjoyment and continuing to play was 'just not worth it'.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	Pitch n Putt
Why he got involved	<p>His wife was involved in administration for netball and was participating in the games. She encouraged John to have a look at the list of sports and see if there was something he could get involved in.</p> <p>Event was being conducted in Geelong and he likes to support local events. Provided an opportunity to take part in a major sporting event. Free for participants to go and see other events.</p> <p>Offered Pitch n Putt – an opportunity to play golf that he could physically cope with as it was a short game that would be less of a physical burden.</p> <p>Pitch n Putt was being played on one day, again less physically demanding.</p> <p>Social aspect of the AMG – opportunity to meet other participants/make new friends.</p>
Any reservations	<p>While Pitch n Putt would be less demanding than regular golf, John still had some concerns about whether he would be physically capable of playing – had not played any golf since before he experienced the relapses of his virus.</p> <p>Also concerned that he may not be able to swing the golf club properly – again as he had not played for such a long time.</p>
Overcoming reservations	<p>John’s wife encouraged him to just get in and give it a go – wouldn’t know what would happen and could pull out if it was too much on the day.</p> <p>He also got out his old golf clubs and ‘had a little hit on the oval’ to try out his swing and his balance.</p>
Response to AMG	<p>John found his AMG experience inspirational. He was particularly inspired by the older participants ‘getting in and having a go’. Following his playing in the Pitch n Putt he went to a number of other events and, watching the more elderly participants, was encouraged to ‘get off his arse’ and start doing more himself. He felt that if people that age could be out and being active, that at his age, despite his difficulties, he should be doing more himself.</p> <p>He is considering participating in future maters games. He would be interested in looking at the potential for participation and also in becoming a games volunteer. It also has the attraction of being something that he and his wife can be involved in together.</p>

## Future sporting intentions

While it is difficult for John to get involved in many sports due to his movement and balance problems, and the additional concerns with bone density and potential fractures, he is committed to increasing the level of physical activity he undertakes since participating in the AMG. Since the games he has increased his gym work and is going three times per week. In the week of the interview he had also started to swim again and intends to do this twice per week. At the same time he will continue with his daily walking which is not only for fitness but also, he believes, helps with maintaining his level of mobility.

In addition to this, playing Pitch n Putt has demonstrated that there are still opportunities for him to play golf and he is hoping to be able play this version of the game on a regular basis (fortnightly).

## Organised sport

### Pitch n Putt

Through his involvement in the AMG John became aware that there is a club that plays a couple of times a week in the local area and he is intending to follow this up and find out more about the opportunities to play regularly.

In joining the club, John would be looking for:

- flexibility in participation; not having to commit to when he plays and there not being any rules on the number of times he has to play (needs to have flexibility with his work and with his health – one of the appeals of swimming and the gym is he can set his own time frame)
- ability to participate on a range of days and at different times during the day (again to fit with his work commitments)
- strong social aspect – not focussed on competition but on participation and enjoying playing with others
- positive/inviting energy – somewhere that is inviting and pleasant to be. Clear that new members around and as part of the club welcomed
- broad mix of members – people of different ages and genders so he is mixing with and meeting a range of people
- social activities for members as well as playing sport so that he gets to know people outside playing together.

## **Case study 5: 'John' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to John?**

Unfortunately we were unable to conduct a full follow-up interview with John. When contact was attempted we were informed that John and his wife were in Queensland and would not be returning for six to eight weeks. A number was left for John to contact SportInfo to try and arrange an interview while he was interstate but no contact was made.

## **Case study 6: 'Bernard'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Bernard
- Age: 49 years
- Marital status: single, lives with mother and sister
- Disability: intellectual disability and acquired physical disability following a sporting accident
- Employment: currently unemployed (previously had part-time jobs); while not working is looking into becoming a volunteer with St Johns
- Lives: Geelong (lived at current home and in Geelong area all his life)
- Household income: not reported.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Currently not involved in any organised sport but does two sessions of water aerobics a week and some gym work with a personal trainer.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Holds positive attitudes towards health and fitness and knows that he needs to be undertaking regular exercise to maintain his current level of mobility.



Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	10
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	10
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	1
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	10
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	10

## **Previous involvement in sport**

Bernard had been involved in sport for most of his life. He took up martial arts (karate) at 10 years and was involved in this sport for over 30 years. Aside from martial arts, Bernard had little involvement in any other sport. While he did try a range of sports at school, he reported that he got minimal enjoyment from these experiences as he 'didn't fit in well' and subsequently had little interest in taking part. His involvement in martial arts stopped approximately seven years ago when he suffered a spinal injury ('crushed some bones' in his back) while taking part in a karate bout. He was advised by doctors that he should not do karate any longer as there was potential to do more serious damage (could 'end up in a wheelchair'). He has since been told that he is developing arthritis in his spine (as a result of the previous injury) and does have some movement problems with his back. In an attempt to ameliorate the effect of the arthritis, he has begun water aerobics and working with a personal trainer.

## Major sporting involvement

### Martial arts – karate

- Belonged to a club from age of 10 to 42 years
- Attractions of karate, initially at 10 years:
  - saw karate in a movie on television and thought it looked exciting
  - liked the 'fighting' with other students
  - wanted to be like his Sensei (teacher) and be able to do the things he could
  - made friends among the other students
- Attractions of karate, as he got older:
  - challenge to learn new skills – progress and achieve the different belts
  - relaxation
  - training and 'fighting' with friends and meeting new friends at tournaments
  - being part of and representing his club and competing in tournaments
  - helping to teach new members the skills
  - feeling good; strong and healthy
- Reasons for stopping:
  - injured his spine in a karate bout. Told by doctors that he should not do it any longer as would risk further damage to his spine.

## The AMG experience

Sport participated in	Ten pin bowling
Why he got involved	<p>Was a volunteer at the Adelaide AMG and wanted to be a participant this time as the participants in Adelaide looked like they were really enjoying themselves.</p> <p>To meet people and make new friends. Wanted to represent Geelong – try and win a medal for Geelong.</p> <p>Provided a chance to go and see other events – got to see more as a participant than as a volunteer (was previously involved in transport and was working in the background and unable to see a lot of events)</p>
Why ten pin bowling?	<p>Could not be involved in Karate.</p> <p>Had been bowling before so knew how to bowl. Thought that bowling would be okay with his back.</p> <p>No real experience in any of the other sports that were offered.</p>
Response to AMG	<p>Bernard enjoyed his experience at the AMG and met a lot of people at the bowling competition. He would like to take part in the AMG again in the future but possibly not in bowling as he did find that his back was quite sore afterwards for a number of days. He does not know at this time which other sport he may play but was interested by the archery at the games.</p>

## **Future sporting intentions**

Bernard intends to keep doing water aerobics and working with his personal trainer. He knows that he needs to be exercising to maintain mobility in his spine.

Bernard also expressed an interest in trying archery in future. He saw this at the AMG and thought it looked like something he could do and something that would be fun to try. At this point in time, he did not know anything about the sport in the local area.

When asked how he will go about acting on his interest, it was Bernard's intention to 'look it up on the internet' and then 'go down and talk to them'. He reported he would have no hesitation in going along to see what it was like as he likes to get out and meet people.

Bernard did not like to talk about money and when asked about whether the cost to be involved in archery would be a factor in his decision to get involved he would only indicate that he 'would be able to pay'.

Whether Bernard will act on his reported interest in archery will depend on when the club shoots. Much of Bernard's time is taken up by his activities with the Geelong Vintage and Classic Car Club of which he is a member. The car club goes on regular weekend trips (both day trips and overnight) and he also spends time with other members of the club working on and restoring cars (many of the members of the club are retired people who have time to work on their vehicles during the week as well as on weekends).

Any potential involvement in archery would have to fit in around his car club involvement and with Bernard's water aerobics schedule (he would be able to make different arrangements with his personal trainer if that were required).

## **Case study 6: 'Bernard' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Bernard?**

The intervening six months have seen changes in the physical activity that Bernard is undertaking. The changes made have not been in line with his intention to investigate archery but have involved taking up cycling. This now sees Bernard more active than he was when we originally spoke with him.

There is the possibility that he will have to cease his participation in water aerobics as due to lack of numbers these classes may be cancelled. There is no other local opportunity that he is aware of, to replace this. If this does occur, Bernard is intending to increase the amount of cycling he is doing. He indicated that since he introduced cycling to the other activities he was doing (water aerobics and working with personal trainer), his mobility was better than it had been prior to this and he wanted to at least maintain the amount of activity he was currently doing.

To date Bernard has not acted on his intention to get involved in archery. Since the initial interview, Bernard commenced a course at TAFE which involves classes on two days per week and 'homework' that he needs to do each night. He also was accepted as a volunteer with St John's and was undertaking activities with this organisation. With these additional commitments (he remains involved with the Geelong Vintage and Classic Car Club), he was too busy to look into the archery option. He was able to include cycling in his schedule as this is something he can do at times that suit him. He indicated that he still intends to investigate the potential for getting involved in archery in the future but was unlikely to do anything about it until his TAFE course was finished.

Bernard's attitude toward sport and physical activity remain unchanged. He continues to hold positive attitudes towards health and fitness and to acknowledge the importance of this in maintaining his mobility and also his personal sense of wellbeing.

## Organised sport

### Archery

Still intends to investigate options for getting involved in this sport.

Additional time commitments have prevented him from following this up in the last six months. He indicated that he 'will be looking into it after the course is finished'.

The attraction in getting involved in this sport remains the social opportunities – to meet new people and make new friends.

Also seen as a sport that he would physically be able to participate in without placing stress on his back (as previously noted he found the ten pin bowling he participated in at the AMG difficult).

When he does make his enquiries about participation in the future, his ability to do so will depend upon his being able to accommodate the available participation days and times with his other activities.

## Physical activity

<b>Cycling</b>	<p>Has become involved in cycling. This was something that he had done when he was younger (not mentioned in the initial interview) but had not done for many years. He indicated that he 'saw a good bike on sale and just decided to get it'.</p> <p>The attractions of riding for Bernard were noted as being good for general fitness and for loosening up his joints (particularly his back) and that he could ride at any time that suited him. It can be made to fit in with his other activities and commitments.</p> <p>He is now riding for a minimum of one hour every two weeks and will be looking to increase this as the weather improves.</p> <p>He will also increase the amount of riding he does if the water aerobics is cancelled. This would involve riding for and at the time that was previously spent at water aerobics.</p> <p>Cycling is something that Bernard sees as a solo activity and does not provide him with a social experience as well. He is looking to archery to potentially provide this. He does not have any friends who ride and was not aware of any potential options for group riding.</p>
<b>Water aerobics</b>	<p>Bernard has continued his involvement in water aerobics over the past six months attending two sessions per week. It is likely that this will cease as attendance is below the required numbers for the class to be viable (requires six to seven participants per class, sometimes only three to four).</p> <p>Bernard indicated that there are no other local options available to him for water aerobics if the classes he attends cease. While he would prefer to continue with the water aerobics he will replace this with additional cycling if he has to.</p> <p>He was expecting that a decision on the future of these classes would be made in the next month. He and other participants were intending to try and encourage other people they knew to attend to enable the classes to continue. He was not aware of what, if any, activities were being undertaken by the organisers of the class to increase numbers.</p>
<b>Physical training</b>	<p>Bernard has continued to work twice per week with his personal trainer.</p> <p>His focus in working with the trainer remains to maintain the mobility in his spine. He also sees this work as good for his general fitness.</p> <p>He has no intention to change from the two sessions that he currently does per week.</p> <p>He does have flexibility with his trainer to reschedule his sessions if required. This will allow him to continue with the two sessions per week if he does become involved in archery or if he increases the amount of cycling that he is doing in the warmer months as he intends.</p>

## Case studies – new arrival segment

### What have we learnt?

The final segment in the scope of this research was the new arrival segment. Two interviews were conducted with participants in the new arrival segment. It should be noted that there was no direct way to identify new arrivals from the AMG participant database. As a result these research participants were recruited separately and had not participated in the recent AMG in Geelong. Participants were screened on not having been involved in organised sport in Australia but having an interest in doing so in the future. The key findings to emerge from the discussions with these participants were:

- The experience of the different new arrivals was dramatic. While both arrived with no family support network, one had established friendships; the other remained largely unconnected. This was likely to be a key determinant of their likely success in integrating into sport and physical activity.
- Friendships are not only a powerful support network but provide a conduit to sport, clubs and participation opportunities. Where they exist, the chances of new arrivals having access to sport appears to increase substantially. It is clear that the friendship network is also the key information, contact and dissemination vehicle. It was apparent advice and direction was sought and taken from the friendship network. There was some evidence a strong dependency was invested in this friendship group. For sport to then access these new arrivals would require a connection to the friendship group. The natural extension here is to the broader community or ethnic groups. There is evidence they also build strong 'community walls' around new arrivals, providing a support structure and establishing themselves as the key communication and information channel. Sports will need to create effective mechanisms to tap into these communities and support structures if the message about participation opportunities is to reach this segment.
- In the case of the first new arrival, these friendship and community networks were less obvious. The research participant claimed not to have any friends or family in Australia and perhaps, not surprisingly, was yet to determine how to make contact with a sporting club or organisation. There was evidence that concerns and reservations were held about commencing this process as she was uncertain about the reception she would receive having no experience of sport in Australia and no-one to provide them with any anecdotal or inside information.



Clearly for new arrivals in this situation there is a need to provide an 'introduction' to sport in Australia. Facilitating this will likely require a range of responses as the experiences of new arrivals will be varied (this participant had not had any contact with government or community organisations that provide information or services for new arrivals but was in contact with the international student office at her university) but consideration could be given to initiatives such as developing a 'sport in Australia' information pack (made available through government and community organisations and education institutions), developing a 'sporting resources' website for new arrivals including contacts for and links to national and state sporting organisations and the conduct of multiple sport 'introduction days' to allow people to sample a range of options and make face-to-face contact with sport/club representatives.

- Consistent with the other segments in the research was the importance of the social aspects of sport. For this segment in particular, the opportunity to meet new people in an environment where common interests existed provides a powerful first step in feeling 'home'. The ability of sports and clubs to create a welcoming and engaging environment for new arrivals will ultimately be the most critical success factor in determining their capacity to attract new arrivals.

The details of the two case studies in this segment now follow.

## Key considerations for the future

<b>Community connections</b>	<p>Sports need to establish connections with the community groups and organisations that support or interact with new arrivals; in particular this includes ethnic community organisations and educational institutions to disseminate the message about sport participation opportunities.</p> <p>New arrivals need to be provided with an 'introduction' to sport in Australia. Consideration could be given to initiatives such as developing a 'sport in Australia' information pack (made available through government and community organisations and education institutions), developing a 'sporting resources' website for new arrivals including contacts for and links to national and state sporting organisations and the conduct of multiple sport 'introduction days' to allow people to sample a range of options and make face-to-face contact with sport/club representatives.</p>
<b>Leveraging the social aspect of sport participation</b>	<p>Building a social network is important for new arrivals to establish themselves in their new home. The opportunities to do this through sport cannot be underestimated and sport needs to leverage this by providing participation opportunities that are focussed on the social as well as competition aspects.</p>

## **Case study 7: 'Anush'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Anush
- Age: 29 years
- Marital status: single, no family in Australia
- Time in Australia: arrived in Australia in December 2007
- Residency status: student visa (came to Australia on a scholarship, intending to live in Australia permanently and will apply for permanent residency at end of studies)
- County of origin: Sri Lanka
- Lives: Brunswick (share student accommodation) at current address for approximately eight months
- Employment: currently not working (looking for part-time employment)
- Income: approximately \$24,000 scholarship.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Has done little physical activity or exercise since arriving in Australia. Initially tried to do some swimming but time pressures and cost made this difficult. Currently trying to walk each day.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Strong positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity. Had a long-time involvement in sport in Sri Lanka and holds strong views on the 'personal wellbeing' aspects of sport and exercise.

Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	9
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	10
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	5
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	5
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	10

## Sourcing information for new arrivals

A qualified lawyer in Sri Lanka, Anush came to Australia on an Australian Government scholarship to undertake postgraduate studies (PhD in commercial law). She chose to apply for a scholarship in Australia as she hopes to live here in the future. She believes moving to Australia will afford her a higher standard of living than Sri Lanka and greater career development opportunities.

Since her arrival in Australia, Anush has used the International Student Office at Melbourne University to source information for new arrivals. This office provides information for students in relation to their course and the university, health services and housing (they do not provide any information in relation to sport or recreation). She has not used, and is not aware of, any other government or community organisations that provide information or services for new arrivals.

In relation to information about sporting clubs or organisations, she is aware of the Union Club at the university which is involved in providing sporting facilities for students. She knows little about this club, other than she believes it is expensive to join (from conversation with other students). She is aware that there are university sports teams (netball is of interest to her) but is unsure where or who to contact for information on this. She is uncertain as to whether the sporting teams are also part of the role of the Union Club.

## **Sport participation in Sri Lanka**

Anush reports sport being an important part of life in Sri Lanka with a high level of participation across both ages and genders. She would broadly describe Sri Lankans as 'sports lovers who would generally rather be participants than spectators'. Sport is played in both the major capital cities and in the more provincial areas. Team sports such as netball, cricket and volleyball are noted as being the most widely played. The more individual sports such as tennis and swimming are more concentrated in the major cities where facilities are available.

There is reported to be large scale participation in sport through schools with considerable interschool competition. Participation in sport can continue when people leave school with many companies and government organisations having 'work' sports teams for employees.

Anush also reported the existence of large sporting clubs throughout the country with these clubs supporting multiple teams across a number of sports (for example: cricket, netball and volleyball) for both men and women from juniors through to seniors. It was noted that these clubs have a high level of involvement with community events and traditional celebrations, organising participation events that include not only club members but also other community members.

## **Previous involvement in sport**

Anush has had a long involvement in sport prior to coming to Australia, playing competitive sport from school through university and once she entered the workforce. Her involvement in sport started in school where she found she was a naturally gifted athlete. Throughout school she played a range of sports including volleyball, cricket and baseball but her primary sport was netball. She played netball, not only with her school and university, but also with a club and then with her company when she commenced working. She continued to play netball until she changed jobs (and moved cities in 2007). Her new company did not have a netball team and with increased time pressures and responsibilities in her new role she was unable to join a club team. Being unable to play netball at this time Anush started regular swimming for exercise and fitness.

## **Major sporting involvement**

### **Netball**

- Played at school, with a club and a work team
- Played from age of six to 27 years
- Attractions of netball:
  - showed natural ability; could play well (better than her friends)
  - built her self confidence; received a lot of positive reinforcement for her skills on the court
  - playing in a team; playing with friends and making new ones
  - ability to play in competitions; test skills
  - playing as a representative of her school and then her club
  - balance – not being totally focussed on study/work
- Reasons for stopping:
  - started a new role in 2007 which necessitated a move to a different city
  - her new company did not have a netball team
  - time pressures and responsibilities of her new role did not allow enough time to play netball with a club (was unable to both train and play).

## **Involvement in sport in Australia**

Anush has not played sport since she arrived in Australia. Initially on arrival, she was trying to swim but found the time pressures of her studies made it too difficult for her to do this with regularity. Being on a limited income, she was concerned about the cost of using the university facilities. Since then her only physical activity has been walking which she has tried to do each day for at least half an hour.

Anush indicated that she would like to play netball in Australia. While she would have found it difficult to find the time to play in her first year as her studies had to be her priority, she also indicated that there were a number of other reasons that she had not investigated the possibility.

The primary reasons given for this were:

- uncertainty as to where and how to connect with a team. While she is aware that the university has teams she is not sure how or where to go to get information at the university. She did not think that sporting teams fell within the scope of the Union club. She also indicated that she had no idea where to look for information on community sporting clubs – she would not have thought to contact her local council or the state or national sporting organisation. When pushed she suggested she would likely search on the internet but this would be a general search on netball rather than for specific organisations
- perception that participation in sport in Australia could be expensive. She understands that the Union Club at university is too expensive on her current income and this suggests to her that netball could also be expensive
- some reservations about the reception that she would receive at a club/team and whether there is any racial discrimination in sport in Australia (she thinks racism may be a factor in why she has not been able to obtain part-time employment). She does not know anyone who plays in a netball club in Australia and is uncertain of whether she would be welcomed and whether she would fit in. Even if she knew of a club or team the thought of approaching 'cold' causes her some nervousness
- unsure of what opportunities there are to play in Australia:
  - can new players be regulars or are there issues of tenure?
  - what level can you play at?
  - what locations can you play at (central locations or around the suburbs)?
  - how much time do players need to commit (how much training and how much time on game days)?
  - when is netball played (all year or summer/winter)?
- even if Anush knew of a club or team and how to make contact with them, the thought of approaching them 'cold' causes her some nervousness.

## **Future sporting intentions**

Anush indicated that she would have reduced study pressures in the coming semester and that this would allow her more time for sport and physical activity. She is intending initially to get back into swimming regularly. She has now found a local pool which she said is considerably cheaper than the university pool and that she can afford to use three or four times per week. She would also like to play netball, but as previously noted, she is unsure how to 'connect' with a club or team to investigate the possibilities.

## **Reasons for wanting to get involved in sport and physical activity**

Anush identified a number of reasons behind her desire to get more involved in sport and physical activity. These included:

- improving her personal sense of wellbeing – she feels happier and healthier when she is playing sport and exercising
- expanding her social network; not knowing anyone in Australia, she would like to make new friends to overcome some of the loneliness she is currently feeling
- bringing more balance into her life – does not want her life to be just about her studies
- for stress release/relaxation
- playing netball is good for her self confidence; she likes to show-off her skills as she knows she can play well
- getting out of the house more often; currently spends a lot of time indoors
- she likes to compete and test her skills against others.



## **What would encourage involvement?**

When asked what could encourage her to get involved in sport in Australia, Anush indicated that approaching a club or team in Australia is outside her comfort zone. She would like some way to be 'introduced' to a club or team so that she did not need to make a 'cold' approach herself.

To this end she suggested an 'introduction night or day' at the university for international students with representatives from each of the sporting clubs/teams. Representatives could provide students with information about their sport and the opportunities for involvement (when they play/train, where they play, the cost to play, etc.). This would serve as an ice breaker and demonstrate that new members/players are welcome.

Anush would feel more comfortable to get involved if she had met someone from the team/club. There would be at least one familiar face.

## **Other considerations for involvement**

In addition to being able to make contact with a netball club/team, other considerations for Anush in getting involved in netball in Australia would be:

- cost of involvement. She is currently on a limited income, particularly as she has been unable to find part-time employment
- location of competitions. Anush uses public transport so any competition would need to be accessible by public transport
- amount of time involved – would be looking to play weekly with practice once per week
- being able to be a regular player – guaranteed to get a game each week and not just being a 'fill in' or reserve player.

## **Case study 7: 'Anush' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Anush?**

When we initially spoke with Anush she was doing very little physical activity. While she wanted to play sport she did not know how to go about getting involved in netball in Australia and time constraints and cost saw her unable to swim regularly. Over the past six months, Anush has increased the amount of physical activity she is doing but she is still not involved in any organised sport. The activity that she is undertaking is cycling; having purchased a 'cheap second-hand' bike from a university friend. She is now riding, rather than walking every day. Initially she was riding to and from university but now that her studies are completed, she is riding around her local area as well as to the university to meet up with friends. Anush also indicated that she had made an attempt to investigate playing tennis in the last six months but this was not successful.

While she indicated that she is now feeling better in herself as she is doing more physical activity than she was previously, Anush still wants to get involved in playing netball. She is looking to this to provide not only the health and wellbeing aspects of sport but also an opportunity to expand her social network in Australia. In the initial interview, it was apparent that in her time in Australia Anush had made few local friends or connections with the local community. This has remained unchanged over the six months between interviews. Anush still reports that she does not really have any 'Australian friends' and that her limited social circle consists of international students from the university.

Anush is hoping that now that she has finished her studies, she will be able to get involved in sport (and hopefully netball) through work. She is anticipating that companies in Australia will have and support staff sporting teams as they do in Sri Lanka and that participation in these teams will be open to all employees. She remains unaware of other ways in which to make contact with a netball club. In the interim she will continue to ride her bike each day for the exercise. While she is enjoying this, she notes that it is a solo activity and she would prefer to be involved in activity that facilitated interaction with others.

Once she started riding to university she noticed a tennis court on the way and thought this might provide her with an opportunity to become more active and also to make some new friends. She stopped off at the court on a number of occasions (at different times during the day on her way to and from university).

## Organised sport

<b>Netball</b>	<p>Anush remains interested in getting involved in playing netball but has not been able to do so as yet. She continues to indicate that she does not know how to get involved in playing netball in Australia.</p> <p>She remains unaware of council involvement in local sport and has not made any friends who could introduce her to a team or club. It should be noted that while she suggested that she would likely try to find information on the internet she had not attempted to do this in the months between interviews.</p> <p>She is now hoping that she will be able to make a connection with a netball team through work (she is looking for full-time employment).</p> <p>It appears unlikely that Anush will get involved in playing netball through her own efforts. Her future involvement will likely be dependent upon opportunities to play through work or through social connections made through work.</p>
<b>Tennis</b>	<p>Anush tried to investigate playing tennis in the local area but was unable to make contact with the local club.</p> <p>Riding to university she noticed a tennis court on the way and thought this might provide her with an opportunity to become more active and make some new friends. She stopped off at the court on a number of occasions (at different times during the day on her way to and from university) but always found the court empty.</p> <p>She took down a phone number that was on the fence at the courts but the number was not answered and she received no return phone call from a number of messages left.</p> <p>She had not made any further efforts to get involved in tennis as she was not aware of any other tennis facilities in the area. Again she had not thought to make contact with the local council to find out about any other opportunities in her local area.</p>

## Physical activity

### Cycling

Anush had purchased a bike and was now riding every day. When a friend offered her the opportunity to purchase a cheap bike she saw it as an opportunity to get some exercise (and also a chance to save money on public transport).

She had not really thought about riding as a form of exercise when she came to Australia as riding is not something that is commonly done by women in Sri Lanka. She had noticed that there were a large number of women riding around Melbourne and so took the opportunity when presented.

While this activity has improved her sense of wellbeing and she is feeling healthier now that she is more active she would prefer to be involved in a team sport.

Riding is something that she does on her own and does not provide her with the opportunity to meet people and make new friends.

Anush indicated that she will continue to ride each day until she commences full-time work.

Depending on where she finds employment and where she is living (she is hoping to move from the share accommodation she is currently in once she has a job) she will look to ride to and from work to maintain her level of physical activity.

## **Case study 8: 'Ricky'**

### **Profile**

- Name: Ricky
- Age: 30 years
- Marital status: single, no family in Australia
- Time in Australia: arrived in Australia in August 2007
- Country of origin: Kenya
- Lives: St Kilda (shares with friends)
- Employment: research project with RMIT (unpaid) and working part-time
- Income: approximately \$25,000.

### **Current involvement in sport and physical activity**

Not currently involved in playing any organised sport. Is a member of the RMIT gym and does four gym sessions per week for fitness.

### **Attitudes towards sport and physical activity**

Strong positive attitudes towards sport and exercise. While not able to get involved in sport since his arrival in Australia, exercise is a priority and he goes to the gym three or four times per week to at least maintain fitness while he is not playing sport.

Agreement with statements about sport and physical activity (0 strongly disagree – 10 strongly agree)	
Playing sport or being physically active is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
Playing sport or being physically active is important for people of all ages	9
Eating a nutritionally balanced diet is important for a healthy lifestyle	10
I feel better in myself when I am physically active	10
For me participating in sport is mainly about competition	7
For me participating in sport is mainly about the social aspects	7
Playing sport or being physically active is an important part of my life	8

## Sourcing information for new arrivals

While Ricky has no family in Australia, he does have a number of friends from Kenya (both of his own and his family) who are currently living here. He reports to have relied on these friends and ‘immigration’ for any information that he has required since he arrived. He has not sourced information from any other government or community organisations.

## Sport participation in Kenya

While Ricky indicated that he had played a considerable amount of sport in Kenya, he suggested that the ability to participate in sport for many people in Kenya is limited due to their financial circumstances and poor sport administration and coordination.

The main sport is reported to be athletics, which almost anyone can get involved in (no expensive equipment). Team sports are apparently not as popular due to the lack of organisation and administration of competitions/leagues, the costs involved in participation and the availability of facilities. There is considerable support for sports within the ‘better more affluent schools’.

Ricky also noted that sport is played mainly by younger people in Kenya. While he was uncertain why, it appears (at least to him) that most people cease their involvement in sport in their late 20s and that this is the case across sports generally. Again this may be related to the costs of involvement in sport and the lack of professionalism evident in sports administration.

## **Previous involvement in sport**

Ricky was heavily involved in sport in Kenya. He first became involved in sport through school, playing a range of sports including soccer and badminton, both of which he played in interschool competition. He also played badminton with a club and continued his involvement in this sport when first at university. His major involvement in sport was cricket. While he first played at school, the cricket competition was poorly organised and they played few games.

He loved the game and when friends joined a cricket club he was encouraged to do so as well. As his involvement in cricket increased, he was unable to continue with playing badminton, and cricket became his only sporting activity from around 20 years of age.

He continued to play cricket up to late 2006. Knowing he was coming to Australia, he felt it best to leave the team as he would not be able to play the full season and wanted to leave time for a new player to take his place.

## **Major sporting involvement**

### **Cricket**

- Played at school and then with a club
- Played from age of 10 to 27 years
- Attractions of cricket:
  - skills and challenge of batting
  - challenge of the game – always different physically and mentally
  - strong social aspect; playing with 21 others; playing with friends and meeting new friends
- Reasons for stopping:
  - moving to Australia and not able to play a full season, wanted to allow time for new player to come into the team (better for the team).

## **Badminton**

- Played at school and then with a club
- Played from age of eight to 19 years
- Attractions of badminton:
  - offered at school and school had good reputation in this sport
  - opportunity to represent school; competed at national level
  - skills of the game were a challenge to learn
  - became a skilled player – liked competition and winning
  - playing as part of team with club
  - representing club; competed at national level
- Reasons for stopping:
  - increased involvement in cricket (increased training sessions) and university studies so could not continue with badminton
  - played at highest level and had no real opportunity to go further in the sport (was a very good player but not an elite player).



## Involvement in sport in Australia

Since arriving in Australia, Ricky has made enquires in relation to getting involved in playing sport, both cricket and badminton. To date he has not been able to take part.

<b>Cricket</b>	<p>Before he had looked up any cricket clubs, a neighbour saw Ricky and his friends playing in the park and invited him to come down and find out about to the St Kilda club. The club was very welcoming – providing him with all the information required in relation to training and explaining the club structure (what was required in relation to training to play at various levels). There was no cost involved to go down to training and he did attend a couple of seasons.</p> <p>The training times, however, clashed with his work and research project lab times. He wanted to play in the first team and being unable to attend all training sessions this was not possible. The club has maintained contact with him, invited him to a number of social events and encouraged him to come back when his schedule allows.</p> <p>When he could not play with St Kilda, Ricky contacted the Garden Vale club (a friend plays there) which had some appeal as they play and train on weekends. With this club there was a long waiting list of players so he was not guaranteed a game each week. The travel time on public transport was over one hour each way, which he deemed too much when not guaranteed to play.</p>
<b>Badminton</b>	<p>When he initially arrived, Ricky asked a friend about badminton and they told him about the RMIT badminton club.</p> <p>He made an enquiry with the club and received a prompt response from a representative but the cost to be involved was too expensive. While he could afford the club fees of \$40 there was an additional cost of \$100 per month for access to MSAC for the training and playing facilities. He could not support the MSAC fee on his current income and as a result did not pursue this further.</p>

## **Future sporting intentions**

Ricky intends to maintain his current gym routine of four sessions per week for fitness. He also hopes that once his research project is completed, around midyear, that he will be able to get involved in playing cricket with the St Kilda club. Playing with St Kilda is his first choice as he was impressed by the efforts they made to make him feel welcome at the club. They have maintained contact and invited him to a number of social events since he made enquiries about playing with them. If he cannot play with St Kilda, he will then investigate options at other clubs (will look up clubs on the internet or phone book and contact them). It is his definite intention to be playing competitive cricket next season.

While he made initial enquires about playing badminton, this was primarily to meet people when he first arrived. He has now developed a strong social circle through his friends and work contacts and doesn't feel the need to look further at playing badminton.

## **Any perceived difficulties in getting involved in sport in Australia**

The primary reason that Ricky has not got involved in sport since his arrival in Australia has been his own schedule and time constraints. He has not encountered any difficulties with any of the clubs he has contacted. He found the clubs he contacted (both cricket and badminton) to be:

- extremely welcoming, made him feel like they would like to have him as a member of their club/team. Never had any sense that he was not wanted
- very interested in getting to know him and what he could bring to their club and to explain the opportunities that their club could offer him
- easy to contact and responsive to any enquiries or questions he had.

## **What is he looking for in a club?**

Ricky identified a number of factors that he is looking for in a sporting club (and which he believed are demonstrated in each of the clubs he has had contact with in Australia):

- welcoming attitude, making people feel that the club wants them to be a member and that they are a part of the club
- focus on enjoyment of the game as well as performance, not focussed on winning to the exclusion of all else
- positive attitude from coaches/trainers – encouraging and supporting players
- strong administration and organisation to support the playing teams and coaches.

## **Other considerations for getting involved in sport**

While Ricky is determined to get back involved in cricket next season (and he has identified who he wants to play with), there are other factors that will come into consideration:

- he wants to play competitive cricket at the highest level he can – he is not interested in playing in a 'social league' (he can play a social game with his friends each weekend)
- location of the club – Ricky does not have a car so is reliant on public transport to get to and from training and games.

## **Case study 8: 'Ricky' – follow-up interview**

### **What has happened in the six months since we spoke to Ricky?**

While not involved in organised sport when we spoke initially, Ricky was maintaining his fitness level with three to four gym sessions per week and playing social cricket each weekend with friends. He had made enquiries with a number of local cricket clubs; however, work and research commitments and travel time prevented him from getting involved at that time.

Ricky is now a member of a cricket club and is training with the club for the upcoming season. He is training a couple of nights a week and playing social intra-club games. He also continues to go to the gym for four to five sessions per week. Members of the St Kilda club kept in contact with him after his initial enquiries and once he had the time available at the end of his research project, he felt very comfortable recontacting the club and joining them.

Ricky indicated that he is looking into joining the tennis club in the local area. The tennis club has the advantage of not only offering tennis but also gym facilities. This is appealing to him as now his research project is finished he is travelling into the city only to go to the gym and having a local option would be more convenient.

Ricky had not mentioned intentions to get involved in tennis in the initial interview, but this was because getting involved in cricket was his first priority. Once he was able to achieve this, he started to think about other things he could get involved in. He had seen the tennis club in his local area and felt that this would provide him with, not only the opportunity to improve his tennis game and meet new people; it could remove the need to travel into the city for the gym.

Ricky is looking forward to playing competitive cricket over the summer months and is enjoying training with his new club. He has made some 'very good friends already' through his association with the cricket club and is hoping to expand his social circle over the season as they play other teams. He is feeling quite excited about the potential to get involved in what, for him, is a relatively 'new sport'. He has not really played much tennis and is looking forward to learning the skills of the game and to making some more friends in his local area.

In contrast to our other new arrival, Ricky has had no problems in making contact with sporting organisations and finding sport opportunities since arriving in Australia.

## Organised sport

<b>Cricket</b>	<p>As he was hoping, Ricky is now a member of a cricket club.</p> <p>He is training a number of times a week and playing social intra-club games in the lead-up to the season.</p> <p>The club have made him feel very welcome by staying in touch with him since he made his initial enquiries. They have indicated they will organise transport to games with other club members once the season starts.</p> <p>He will initially be playing a relatively low grade but is hoping that as he really gets back into cricket with training and playing, he will be playing in a higher grade by the end of the season.</p>
<b>Tennis</b>	<p>Once he had his cricket organised, Ricky started thinking about other sporting opportunities that he could pursue. He had seen the tennis club and thought this would provide not only a good exercise opportunity but also a strong social opportunity.</p> <p>He contacted the club by searching for it on the internet and sent off an email requesting information. He was pleased to receive an immediate response which included an invitation to come down to the club and have a look around.</p> <p>As noted previously, the tennis club holds strong appeal as it has a gym which would enable him to move his training sessions from the city. Going to the gym is his only reason for going into the city now.</p> <p>The opening hours of the tennis club and the gym were appealing to Ricky. While he is not working at present so opening hours are not an issue, the fact that the club is open early in the morning (6.00am) and has lights for night time means he could fit his tennis and gym session in around his work when he gets a new job.</p> <p>The only barrier that Ricky identified in getting involved in tennis was the cost. He was not sure what the costs would be (he was scheduled to visit the club later in the week of the interview) and was currently on a limited income as his research project was finished and he was looking for a new job. This would only be an issue while he was not working. Once he had a job, he indicated that cost would not be a factor as sport and exercise were very important to him. He has always been very active but also sees sporting involvement as a way to build a strong social network or friendship group.</p>

## Physical activity

### Gym sessions

Ricky has continued with his gym sessions over the six months since the initial interview and has no intention of stopping.

As previously noted, physical activity and fitness are important to Ricky and he likes to be both physically fit and active.

He will continue his gym sessions to maintain his fitness for both playing sport and for his general health and wellbeing.

If he is not able to immediately join the local tennis club, he will maintain his gym membership in the city and continue to train there until he takes out membership at the tennis club.



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation  
PO Box 154 Carlton South 3053 Australia  
T. +61 3 9667 1333 F. +61 3 9667 1375  
[vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

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