

A more active Australia for a healthier nation

Research and economic modelling into physical inactivity and COVID-19: a tale of three pandemics

A tale of three pandemics

Physical inactivity pandemic



Second largest risk factor to the burden of disease in Australia



Costing up to 15.6 billion per annum due to healthcare costs and lost productivity



Just 12% of nation confident in what recommended physical activity levels are



In recognition of the strong link between physical activity and major noncommunicable diseases, the Australian Government committed to World Health Organisation targets of 10% more physical activity by 2025 and 15% by 2030

Mental health pandemic



Growing mental health pandemic costing Australia \$500 million a day according to Productivity Commission

COVID-19 pandemic



25% reduction in national physical activity levels



35% increase in physical inactivity / sedentary behaviour



41% of Australians have less money to spend on exercise



Looming mental health crisis with one in three Australians' mental health negatively impacted

An unsustainable burden

Economic burden



Additional \$1.5 billion burden on healthcare system due to increased chronic disease caused by physical inactivity during COVID-19, even if activity levels return to normal by April 2022



\$27.7 billion lost through fewer healthy and productive Australian lives due to chronic disease caused by physical inactivity during the COVID-19 period

Future trends



'Great resignation' and 'great migration' driving reductions in active commuting – 44% of Australians say exercise more important due to less commuting

Regional Australia snapshot



Almost three-quarters (72%) of those in outer regional / remote areas have low levels of physical activity compared to two-thirds (64%) in metro areas, placing them at greater risk of poorer physical and mental health

Fitness centres and personal trainers – lifeblood of national exercise



Fitness centres and personal trainers deliver 51% of national exercise-based physical activity (29% from sport, 20% from other & self-directed activity)



Almost two-thirds of nation's decline in exercise-based physical activity during COVID-19 attributable to closure of fitness centres & personal training

A road to recovery



Return on investment



AUSactive recommended initiatives would deliver \$2.9 billion health and economic benefits, with an ROI of \$3.11 for every \$1 spent, due to improvement in five major chronic diseases alone



Nearly two-thirds of Australian's would utilise fitness voucher (akin to NSW Dine & Discover) to help them get physically active through fitness centres and personal trainers



The NSW Government's 2018 Active Kids voucher initiative significantly increased physical activity levels, and the increases continued over time, demonstrating the power of such a voucher to instigate lasting behaviour change

Multiple opportunities for multiple benefits



Research around the world demonstrates that more physically active nations are more prosperous



There is a strong need for a national physical activity campaign to improve awareness of the risks of physical inactivity and the benefits of getting active



There are also financial barriers due to COVID-19 and reducing the cost-barrier would provide more universal access to exercise



With COVID-19 making physical and mental wellbeing top of mind for Australians, AUSactive's proposed initiatives present an enormous opportunity to demonstrate being in-tune with community mindsets around health and wellbeing whilst simultaneously demonstrating investment in economic recovery and population health