‘Go for your life’
Victoria – leading the way to a healthy and active community
Report card 2008
The Brumby Government is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and healthy eating. That’s why over $150 million has been invested in the ‘Go for your life’ initiative since 2003.

‘Go for your life’ programs aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians at a grassroots level by raising community awareness of what individuals can do to feel better and live longer in healthier communities.

This report card highlights a few of the ‘Go for your life’ achievements so far. There are more than 40 programs and 100 activities as part of ‘Go for your life’, promoting healthier lifestyles, encouraging increased physical activity and healthier eating. We know that changing people’s behaviour is a complex and long-term challenge and hope the ‘Go for your life’ examples in this report card will encourage you to get active and eat well, and to start experiencing the feel-good effects of a healthy lifestyle.

Some of the successes of the past year include the implementation of the ‘Go for your life’ Life! Taking Action on Diabetes lifestyle change program and the launch of the ‘Go for your life’ – Positive Body Image Strategy. The ‘Go for your life’ television program has also proven to be a great success, providing viewers with good news stories and tips on healthy eating and active living. The education and awareness raising activities aimed at children such as the kitchen gardens program run in schools throughout Victoria, and the healthy body image for teenagers strategy have made a significant impact.

‘Go for your life’ funds a large number of sponsorships to promote awareness throughout the community. Supporting these sponsorships is the Community Education Program team, who use their health and wellbeing expertise to educate and demonstrate a variety of engaging activities aimed at getting the community more physically active and healthy. The team visited more than 41,000 students in over 260 Victorian kindergartens and schools, and attended many community events and festivals in the past year.

Further supporting the work of ‘Go for your life’, in March 2008, the Victorian Government announced WorkHealth - an investment of $600 million so that 2.6 million Victorian workers can have the chance to be screened for preventable diseases such as type 2 diabetes. The world first initiative will target the connection between chronic disease and workplace injury across the Victorian workforce.

We hope you enjoy reading about the achievements of ‘Go for your life’ over the past 12 months.
Kids around Victoria have been getting their hands dirty while learning about fresh foods through the ‘Go for your life’ Kitchen Garden Project.

In 2006, the Victorian Government allocated funding for 40 Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Grants to Victorian schools by 2010. The aim of the program is to teach children the natural link between the garden, the kitchen and the table, giving them a hands-on understanding about food and where it comes from.

The students at Southmoor Primary School are testament to the success of this project. Not only do the kids get to dig around in the dirt and cook up some great meals, they are physically active, learn about new foods and recipes, and how to safely use kitchen equipment such as knives, hot saucepans and stoves.

As a result of the programs success, the Commonwealth Government is now working with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation to roll the project out nationally.

The ‘Go for your life’ Kitchen Garden Project with Stephanie Alexander

Walk Bendigo

Encouraging the development of a built and natural environment which supports physical activity is a key objective of ‘Go for your life’. Planning our communities to make it easier for residents to walk, cycle, participate in sport and catch public transport will make a significant contribution to reducing obesity and chronic disease. A good example of how planning can influence healthy outcomes is ‘Walk Bendigo’. The City of Greater Bendigo is leading the way with strong State Government support of $900,000. ‘Walk Bendigo’ is successfully changing the balance between walkers and vehicles and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment across the whole city. It encourages more residents to get fit and healthy by taking to the streets of Bendigo by foot.

Over 50s Riding Program

Up to 180 older Victorians who wouldn’t normally consider cycling again have become regular bike riders, thanks to ‘Go for your life’ support of Bicycle Victoria’s Over 50s Riding Program. There has been over 500 registrants into the program so far, so this number will grow.

The program involves adults aged 50 and above participating in free riding groups across Victoria led by a dedicated ride leader who uses their experience and enthusiasm for cycling to offer advice on riding techniques, bike maintenance, motivation and support. So far, there are 18 ride leaders already recruited and the biggest group has 15 members.

“The $74,000 contribution from the Victorian Government will help encourage even more people who are 50 years of age or over, who haven’t considered or been cycling for a few years to get on their bike and give it a try!” Minister for Senior Victorians, Lisa Neville said.

Participants just need a bike and helmet that fits correctly to participate.
More than 41,000 Victorian students in 260 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools across the state have been educated to be healthy and active through the ‘Go for your life’ Community Education Program.

The health and wellbeing professionals running the program have travelled 70,000 kilometres in fully equipped green ‘Go for your life’ vans providing engaging, fast paced activities that are tailored to the needs of the audience.

The ‘Go for your life’ schools program involves both students and teachers, with age-appropriate lessons to cater for all abilities. The sessions focus on how your body responds to physical activity, and are run in a fast-paced manner with creative games and discussions around healthy eating.

In 2008, the ‘Go for your life’ team visited a special needs school in Bendigo, a rural preschool in Mt Beauty, a Muslim primary school in Springvale, and various adults groups at learning centres around metropolitan Melbourne, to name just a few. The team has also completed week-long visits in regional areas across Victoria, including Mildura where the ‘Go for your life’ van visited seven schools, including kids at an Indigenous secondary school and a community house, engaging over 800 students.

But learning about healthy eating and physical activity doesn’t stop at school. The community education team have also supported almost 200 community events in 2007/08, including community health launches, multicultural festivals, community traders festivals, seniors festivals, children’s festivals, workplace health initiatives, local Indigenous network events, YMCA project launches, sponsored events and various sporting clinics.

The new $18.35 million Life! Taking Action on Diabetes program will help curb the growth in type 2 diabetes and contribute to earlier diagnosis in those who have undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

Life! is an evidence-based lifestyle intervention program directed at Victorians identified as being at ‘high risk’ of developing type 2 diabetes. The ‘high risk’ groups include all Victorians over 50 years of age and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all ages.

Life! is a six session, group-based program run by accredited facilitators who support and assist participants to set and work towards individual goals and lifestyle changes, to reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The course allows participants to be linked to a range of local and online healthy eating and physical activity supports and resources, to further strengthen their efforts of living a healthier lifestyle.

Life! Taking Action on Diabetes is only the beginning, with a suite of programs under development to further strengthen the success of preventing type 2 diabetes.
In an effort to prompt a significant shift in the way teenagers view themselves, their body image and to motivate higher self esteem, the Victorian Government provided $2.1 million to the Positive Body Image Strategy.

The strategy comprises of the Positive Body Image Grants, Body Think program and the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image.

Improved understanding of how to live a healthier and more physically active lifestyle is being tackled through the Positive Body Image Grants, provided to 56 local communities. The grants promote healthy lifestyle choices and build self confidence in young people at a local level.

The Body Think program is a community based awareness program that challenges young people to look beyond the airbrushed images they see in the media and learn more about the impact these images have on body image and self esteem. The program encourages and shows how school aged youth can have greater body acceptance and higher self esteem.

The Media Code of Conduct on Body Image is a significant step in both changing the way images are portrayed in the media and in improving body image in young people. The code was developed by the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image Working Group, with members from a diverse range of disciplines including media, fashion, youth representatives, advertising and youth workers. It is designed to encourage the media, fashion and advertising industries to show more diverse, positive body images and also encourages a focus on health rather than body shape.

Teenagers ‘Go for your life’ – Positive Body Image Strategy

Premier’s Active Families Challenge

The inaugural Premier’s Active Families Challenge, held in early 2008, motivated over 8400 families and teams, or 28,000 individuals to undertake 30 minutes of physical activity a day for 30 days.

The popularity of the event was largely due to the broad support from local partners such as councils, schools, and sporting and community organisations. Backed by a statewide media campaign, and support from key partnerships from the Herald Sun, YMCA and Rebel Sport, families joined the challenge as a way to motivate each other to be more active.

Kirsten Dilena participated in the challenge with her family (pictured) and was amazed at how the process encouraged all family members to reassess their lifestyle and activity levels. “It really pushed us to get off the couch and take charge of our health and wellbeing. We are now more motivated to be active,” Kirsten said.

Victorian families will have a chance to take part in the Premier’s Active Families Challenge when it happens again on 8 March to 19 April 2009.
People from disadvantaged backgrounds, mature aged job seekers and retirees have improved their health while doing something positive for the environment, thanks to the $1.15 million ‘Go for your life’ Green Gym program.

Local residents of Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne dedicated four hours of their time twice a week to the ongoing conservation of Victoria’s natural environment, undertaking activities like planting, weed control, track construction and maintenance, brush removal, mulching, pruning and flora and fauna surveys.

Volunteers have reported improved flexibility, stamina and general fitness as well as having overcome feelings of isolation and depression, widened their community involvement and developed more social experiences and networks.

The Green Gym project has not only helped residents make a positive contribution to their local communities and their own lifestyles, but it has also helped remove the barrier of fear that dissuades many people from attending a conventional gym.

Participant feedback confirms that light conservation activities are not just physical, they are beneficial to social and mental health by helping generate a sense of achievement, confidence, relaxation, and reduced stress levels.

Thanks to the support of ‘Go for your life’ the Green Gym program was developed by Conservation Volunteers Australia, Department of Sustainability and Environment. The program is planned to be rolled out in other sites in 2008, including the wetlands in Ballarat and Gresswell Forest in Melbourne.

‘Go for your life’ Communications highlights

The ‘Go for your life’ TV program launched in October 2007 delivered an entertaining, informative show that challenged Victorians to ‘go for their lives’. The 10-part series hosted by Tony Shaw, Flip Shelton, Shane Bilsborough, Sue Stanley and Melissa Hetherington was repeated on air in early 2008 because of its ratings success. More than 387,000 Victorians tuned in each week to be entertained and, more importantly, learn more about the ‘Go for your life’ key messages.

The calls for inspiration at meal times were answered with the publishing of the second ‘Go for your life’ Recipes for life magazine, in September 2007. Filled with healthy and appetising recipes that are fun and easy to cook, the second edition of the Recipes for life was distributed to over 1.5 million Herald Sun readers, with more than 100,000 copies sent to people who requested it directly from ‘Go for your life’. Containing 50 recipes, each with a nutritional analysis showing exactly how good the recipes are, the magazine motivated cooks of all levels of experience to dish up the right food for their families.
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<th>Population group</th>
<th>Highlights of ‘Go for your life’ achievements in 2007-2008</th>
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<td>Children and young people and</td>
<td><strong>Kids – ‘Go for your life’</strong>: Designed to target professionals working with kids aged 0–12 years. 672 schools have signed up as a Kids-‘Go for your life’ member schools and are actively working toward award status. This is achieved by supporting an environment for increased healthy eating and physical activity, with 60 schools receiving the award so far.</td>
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<td>their families</td>
<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Bike Shed Seeding Grants</strong> and <strong>Ride2School program</strong>: Aimed to increase the number of children walking or riding to and from schools across the state. 40 Bike Shed grants were announced in August 2007 and an additional 41 schools received grants in 2008. 25 schools reported a combined 56% increase in bikes ridden to school since their bike sheds were completed.</td>
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<td><strong>Free Fruit Friday</strong>: Aimed to boost fruit and vegetable consumption in primary schools and encourage healthier eating habits. $11.1 million has been invested in this initiative over four years. So far 811 schools have taken part in this program with more schools to receive funding for 2009.</td>
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<td>Adults</td>
<td><strong>Community demonstration projects</strong>: Aimed to improve healthy eating and physical activity among whole communities, such as It’s Your Move!, a project in East Geelong that promoted healthy eating patterns, regular physical activity and healthy bodies among youth in five secondary schools. The project received $0.43 million of funding over three years.</td>
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<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Healthy Parks, Healthy People, Active in Parks</strong>: Targeted low-use or non-users of Victorian parks and encouraged them to develop physical activity patterns based around parks and other public open space. The $0.4 million program is run by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria.</td>
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<td><strong>Fruit and veg for health, local action</strong>: Three hubs were established to work with their local fruit and vegetable retailers and community groups to build sustainable partnerships towards increased fruit and vegetable consumption. Implementation plans for this project have commenced.</td>
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<td>Senior Victorians</td>
<td><strong>Seniors ‘Go for your life’ community projects</strong>: Grants and initiatives delivered by community organisations for disadvantaged, Aboriginal and CALD groups to provide programs including cycling, pole walking, walking, lifeball, tai chi, strength training, and chair based exercise to keep older people aged 50 + (and 40+ for Aboriginals) active, healthy and participating socially. The $3.357 million program has been running for four years and has delivered 59 projects.</td>
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<td><strong>Seniors ‘Go for your life’ workforce development</strong>: The two-year $49,000 program is designed to increase the number of fitness leaders qualified to work with older people, and has supported 97 leaders to complete their certificate three and/or four in fitness.</td>
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<td><strong>Well for Life</strong>: Aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of frail older people in aged care settings by improving nutrition and increasing levels of physical activity. The program received $0.4 million of funding which enabled 5648 older people and 1832 staff to participate. The success of the project has resulted in Well for Life being rolled out in public housing estates across three regions.</td>
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<td>High-risk population groups</td>
<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Active Places Grants program</strong>: Funding for projects that will increase the capacity of local organisations to provide sustainable physical activity opportunities in communities experiencing identified disadvantage. Four grants of $80,000 over two years were awarded in phase one for Active Places projects in Broadmeadows, Laverton, Terang and Ashwood/Ashburton/Chadstone.</td>
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<td><strong>Indigenous nutrition and physical activity</strong>: Includes the ‘Go for your life’ Being Active and Eating Well Indigenous community demonstration initiative in North Geelong, and the development of a state wide nutrition and physical activity agenda for Indigenous Victorians by the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO). Investment of $0.654 million over three years and project officers employed at Watharoung in North Geelong and VACCHO.</td>
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<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Active Connections program</strong>: Designed to address barriers to participation in physical activity for CALD communities. $0.24 million over two years is provided to three organisations delivering programs including a lawn bowls introductory course at Footscray Park. Fifty young migrants have participated in the lawn bowls eight-week course which will be rolled out to other Victorian bowling clubs in 2008.</td>
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<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Men’s Health initiative</strong>: Aimed at engaging men in physical activity through workplace settings, almost 400 men from manufacturing and construction sectors took part in the Get Active Challenge. The ‘Go for your life’ Men’s Health initiative also includes funding to RecLink Australia to deliver physical activity and social engagement opportunities for men experiencing significant marginalisation (poverty, homelessness and mental health issues).</td>
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<td><strong>‘Go for your life’ Walk Together Grants</strong>: Fourteen grants of up to $30,000 have been allocated to support projects to establish and maintain walking groups and encourage greater participation in walking in the community with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities.</td>
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