Active Banyule

Summary Survey findings report

November 2024

Banyule
City Council

About this report

Introduction

This report presents summary findings of the Active Banyule survey and intercept survey data. Two surveys were undertaken to help inform and shape Banyule's new plan for Sports and Recreation, *Active Banyule 2025 - 2029*. It outlines responses to key questions, highlighting any notable patterns within demographic subgroups (gender, precinct and physical activity participation).

Project background

Banyule City Council is developing Active Banyule, a new Sports and Recreation Plan, which will aim to support and encourage increased participation in sports and recreational activities among Banyule community members.

Sports and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of the community. Whether it's through competitive sports, park walks, or dance groups, research indicates that staying active, connecting with others, and spending time in nature significantly benefit our physical, mental, and emotional health.

This engagement aims to understand the community's priorities, identify barriers to participation, and explore future opportunities for sports and recreation in Banyule.

A survey was available on Shaping Banyule, Council's community engagement platform, from 9 February to 14 April 2024, 554 people responded to the survey.

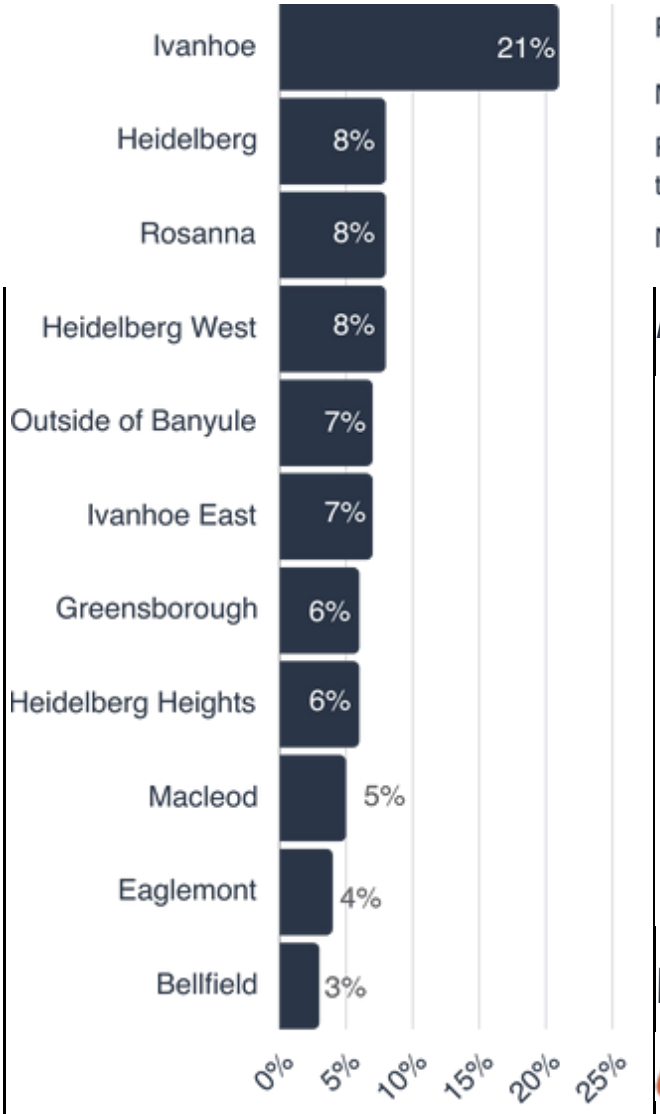
The intercept survey was completed by 117 people at face-to-face events at key locations in Banyule, including:

- Banyule Festival 2024 (Twilight Sounds) Saturday, 10 February, 5pm - 10pm
- Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, Thursday, 29 February, 4pm - 6pm
- Watermarc Greensborough, Tuesday 5 March, 8am - 10am

Who we heard from

Below is a summary of the demographic data from the 670 respondents who provided information through the online or intercept survey.

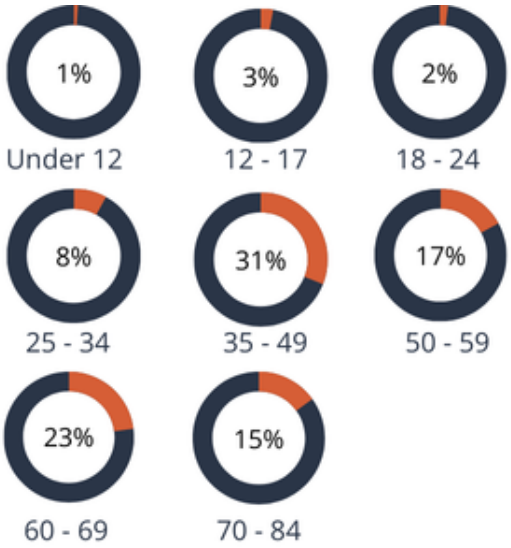
Residential suburb



Age



Age groups



Members and volunteers

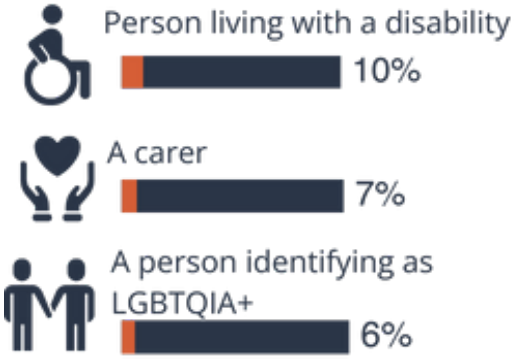


of respondents currently volunteer.



of respondents are members of a sports club.

Access and equity





Key findings

This section provides the key findings from the analysis of both surveys. Where possible, results from the intercept survey and online survey have been combined.

Activity participation and frequency

Top 3 ways of staying physically active:



Going to the gym or attending an exercise class



Participating in recreational activities (passive or active) – walking



Participating in competitive or social sport

Top 5 sports or recreation activities from those surveyed

Top recreational activities



Walking



Going to the gym



Yoga and Pilates

Top sports activities



Tennis



Basketball



Golf

Weekly active hours



58% of respondents are active 5.5+ hours per week

Further analysis

Gender

- **Men** are significantly more likely to participate in competitive sports (19%) compared to **females** (14%).
- A higher proportion of **men** (69%) engage in high levels of physical activity (*5.5 to 10+ hours per week)* compared to **women** (52%).

Precinct

- **South Precinct** stands out with the highest percentage of residents *attending the gym or exercise classes* (83%)
- **North East Precinct** shows the highest *participation in social sports* (42%) and *competitive sports* (30%).
- **North Precinct** has the lowest *gym attendance*, while **the West Precinct** has the lowest participation in *social sports* (17%) and one of the lowest *in competitive sports* (12%).

Activity

- Individuals who play competitive sports (21%) and participate in recreational activities (18%) are most likely to engage in high levels of physical activity (10+ hours per week).
- Those who go to the gym or attend exercise classes (94%) are significantly more likely to rate physical activity and recreation as important or very important compared to those who do not engage in any listed activities (56%).

Importance of physical activity

Rating of importance

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of physical activity.



Rated physical activity as **very important** (rated 8, 9 or 10 out of 10)

Why physical activity and recreation are important

General well-being: Respondents note how physical activity promotes overall well-being, including mood, energy levels, and confidence.

Physical health benefits: Physical activity is viewed as essential for maintaining physical strength, health, and fitness, especially as individuals age.

Mental health benefits: Regular physical exercise is seen as crucial for improving mental health and managing stress.

Social benefits: The social aspect of sport and recreation was recognised as it fosters social connections and a sense of community.

"It is crucial for physical, mental, and social health and well-being and supports our connection to nature, people, and the community. It also ensures my dog is happy, healthy, and stimulated and supports their well-being and socialisation."—Survey respondent.

"Physical activity and recreation connect our family with other like-minded people. The social connection is just as important as being physically fit."—Survey respondent.

Further analysis

Gender

Women place slightly more importance on physical activity and recreation, with 52% rating it as *very important* compared to 48% of **men**.

Precinct

North East Precinct (67%) and **North West Precinct** (53%) have the highest proportion of residents rating physical activity and recreation as *very important.*

Activity

Gym-goers (94%) are most likely to rate physical activity as important compared to those doing none of the listed activities (56%).

Perspectives on sport and recreation

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding physical activity.

Statements with the highest agreement



- **85%** agree that *I value the social aspect of sport and recreation, connecting with friends and others*
- **71%** agree that *participating in sport and recreation is important for my mental and physical health*
- **70%** agree that *I have access to good local sports and recreation places and facilities*

> .
>
> "ParkRun allows connection with the community, and I love that it is free. I volunteer for them occasionally." - Survey respondent.

Barriers to Participation

Most common barriers:

- Limited access (times to participate) (52%)
- Cost of participation (41%)

Significant barriers:

- Programs do not suit my needs and interests (28%)
- Limited or no information about activities available (27%)
- Community sports and recreation infrastructure that is unsafe, unwelcoming, or not inclusive (23%)
- Difficulty accessing facilities and places (23%)
- Physical and health-related barriers (22%)
- Low confidence/self-esteem to attend an activity (21%)
- An analysis of the qualitative responses from the intercept surveys revealed the following insights:



Cost: Many respondents find the cost of activities such as gym memberships or hydrotherapy prohibitive.



Lack of time: Often due to work and childcare responsibilities, making it difficult to find time for physical activities.



Injuries and ability: Personal injuries prevent some from participating, while others have minor or ongoing injuries that limit their ability.



Accessibility issues: Particularly for individuals with disabilities, including the need for one-on-one assistance and accessible health information at general practitioner clinics.

Further analysis

Gender

Top barriers for **women**

- *Lack of time* (65%)
- *Cost (32%)*
- *Lack of motivation* (25%)
- *Lack of child care* (18%)
- *Lack of information* (12%)

Top barriers for **men**

- *Lack of time* (60%)
- *Cost* (28%)
- *Lack of motivation* (22%)
- *Lack of facilities/poor facilities* (12%)
- *Lack of information* (10%)

Precinct

The top barrier for each **precinct:**

- ***Limited access (times to participate)***
  - Mid Precinct, North East Precinct, North West Precinct, South Precinct, West Precinct:
- ***Cost of participation***
  - East Precinct
- ***Difficulty accessing facilities and places***
  - North Precinct

Activity

- The top barriers for respondents **who don't participate in any physical activities are***:*
  - *Cost of participation (57%)*
  - *Difficulty accessing facilities and places (36%)*

Benchmarking against AUSPLAY data – National Participation Data – Australian Sports Commission

Comparison

- **Physical and health-related barriers:** Both the survey (22%) and AusPlay data (27%) highlight significant physical and health-related barriers.
- **Time and commitment:** Time constraints are a major barrier in both datasets but are more pronounced in the survey (52%) compared to AusPlay (25%).
- **Cost barriers:** The survey identified cost as a significant barrier (41%), which is not specifically addressed in the AusPlay data.
- **Information and accessibility:** Survey respondents report significant challenges with accessing facilities (23%) and lack of information (27%), issues not directly captured in AusPlay data.

The barriers reported by survey respondents align with some national trends but also highlight specific challenges not fully captured by AusPlay data. Time constraints and cost are significant barriers for survey respondents, while physical and health-related barriers are common in both datasets.

AUSPLAY data

The top barriers for people over the age of 15 to participate in physical activity, according to AUSPLAY are:

- Poor health or injury (27%)
- Not enough time/too many commitments (25%)
- Age/too old (9%)
- Not a priority (8%)
- Having a physical job (8%)

Supporting and enabling participation

An analysis of qualitative responses to the online and intercept surveys revealed the following suggestions to reduce or remove barriers:

- **Low-cost** memberships fees and participation, as well as free activities to try and experience.
- Increasing the **availability of programs, classes and activities.**
- **Improving the maintenance and facilities** of local sports clubs, gyms, swimming pools and bike paths.
- Promoting **inclusivity and diversity in sports clubs** and activities.

> "Sessions at times convenient for working parents. Adult classes/teams or exercise facilities at times when children's sports are on, at the same location. Better bike paths that are interconnected, so people feel safe riding and can ride instead of driving."—Survey respondent.

Improving participation in sporting clubs

An analysis of qualitative responses to the online survey revealed the following suggestions to improve participation at sporting clubs.



1. **Funding and affordability:** Provide grants or subsidies to reduce membership fees and offer discounted rates for low-income families, children, students, and seniors.
2. **Maintenance and upgrades of facilities:** Invest in upgrading sports facilities, swimming pools, and playing fields and ensure regular maintenance schedules to keep facilities safe and clean.
3. **Providing training and support:** Offer training programs on coaching, club management, and fundraising and provide ongoing support through workshops, seminars, and access to expert advice.
4. **Increasing availability of facilities:** Extend operating hours of existing facilities, especially during evenings and weekends and create more public access points to sports grounds and reduce usage restrictions.
5. **Promotion and advertising**: Develop marketing campaigns using social media, community newsletters, and local events that highlight available opportunities, success stories and benefits of participation to motivate involvement.

> "Financial support directly to participants to assist with fees being charged and the need for uniforms. Training and awareness to clubs on inclusion." - Survey respondent.

> "Maybe a community directory accessing activities that are less strenuous than the team or competitive sports. E.g.fishing groups, walking groups, gardening groups, dog park meet up groups, age related exercise groups, light volunteer groups for land protection." - Survey respondent.

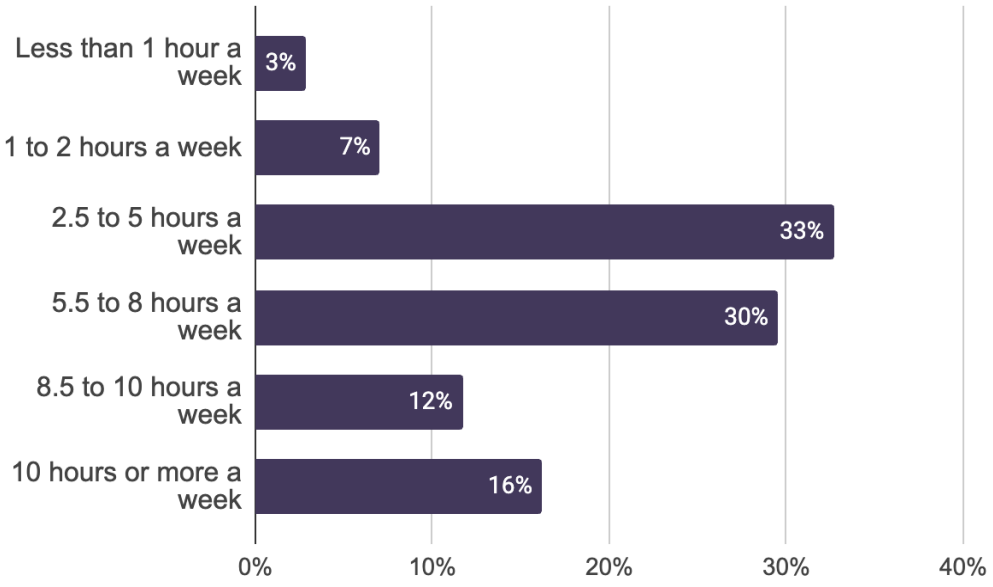
Suggestions for sports and recreational activities in Banyule

Respondents were asked for suggestions for the type of activities they would like to see more of in Banyule.

- More free or low-cost community outdoor fitness classes
- Improved facilities and access at existing sports centres.
- Enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Inclusive and diverse sports programs, such as all-abilities sports and girls-only teams.
- Work with community groups to deliver more activities.

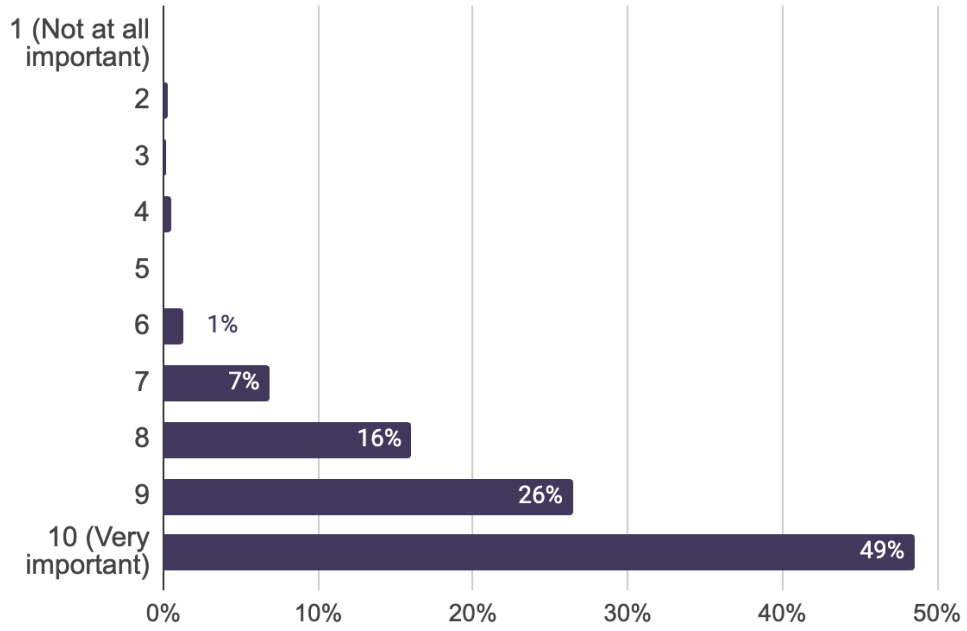
How many hours per week are you physically active?

Most respondents (63%) undertake moderate levels of physical activity, with 33% indicating they are active *2.5 to 5 hours a week* and 30% indicating they participate in activity between *5.5 to 8 hours a week* (667 people responded to this question).



How important is physical activity and recreation to you?

Most respondents indicate that physical activity is important to them, with 91% choosing a level of importance of *8* (16%), *9* (26%) or *10* (49%), (In total, 643 people responded to this question.)



Why did you choose this response?

An analysis of the responses identified the following key themes:

General well-being was the most mentioned theme, with respondents noting how physical activity and recreation play a significant role in promoting general well-being, encompassing both physical and mental health, as well as social connectedness. Respondents highlight the benefits of exercise on mood, energy levels, confidence, and appearance and emphasise the social aspect of physical activity and recreation.

> "Very important to keep active for your general health and wellbeing."- Survey respondent.

Mental health benefits: respondents mention that regular physical exercise improves mental health and contributes to a positive mental outlook. They emphasise that physical activity and recreation have a significant impact on mental well-being and overall better health. Many individuals mention that being physically active helps them cope with stress, sleep better, and feel more confident.

> "I find that engaging in regular physical activity significantly enhances my well-being. Not only do I experience a noticeable improvement in my mood and energy levels after exercising, but I also feel more confident about my appearance. Overall, incorporating exercise into my routine not only boosts my physical health but also contributes to a greater sense of vitality and makes me more enjoyable company to be around." - Survey respondent.

Physical health benefits: respondents believe that regular exercise keeps them physically strong, active, and in good shape. Physical activity is seen as vital for overall health and well-being, especially as individuals age.

> "I will remain active, healthier and stronger to cope with everyday tasks if continuing to exercise." - Survey respondent.

Social connection: Respondents emphasised the role of physical activity and recreation in fostering social inclusion and connection. They highlighted the benefits of connecting with like-minded individuals, friends, and

community members through these activities. Organised sports were seen as a way to enhance social wellness and foster a sense of community.

> "As an older person physical activities and recreation are good ways to meet people as well as keeping fit." - Survey respondent.

Ageing: Respondents stressed the importance of staying active to maintain good health, independence, and the ability to participate in sports and recreation as they age. Physical activity was seen as a way to combat the effects of ageing and manage health concerns, with a particular emphasis on the importance of physical activity for older adults' physical and mental well-being.

> "As I get older it's important to maintain and improve my fitness and health to enable me to live a more fulfilling, active and healthy life." - Survey respondent.

Barriers and enablers: respondents identified time constraints, work commitments, and lack of suitable options for individuals with specific needs as barriers to engaging in physical activity and recreation. However, access to affordable and convenient facilities, supportive environments, and inclusive sports programs were seen as enablers for adopting an active lifestyle.

> "Would love to be more physically active. But time poor as well as money poor." - Survey respondent.

Tell us which three sports or recreation activities you like to participate in most?

An analysis of the qualitative responses revealed the top 10 activities below. (In total, 511 people provided a response to this question).

Top recreational activities

- Walking
- Going to the gym/ exercise class
- Yoga and Pilates
- Swimming
- Running
- Bike Riding

Top sports activities

- Tennis
- Basketball
- Golf
- Football
- Netball
- Soccer

Benchmarking with AUSPLAY data

Respondents' preferences for both recreational and sports activities largely align with national data from AusPlay. Walking, yoga, and gym activities are highly popular, mirroring national trends. Popular sports like tennis, basketball, football and soccer are also consistent with national participation rates.

Popular activities, according to AUSPLAY statistics

Most popular sports activities

Males

- Running/athletics (2,084,000)
- Cycling (1,748,000)
- Swimming (1,702,000)
- Golf (1,020,000)
- Football/soccer (1,008,000)

Females

- Swimming (2,245,000)
- Running/athletics (1,640,000)
- Cycling (1,063,000)
- Netball (573,000)
- Tennis (516,000)

Most popular non-sport related activities.

Males

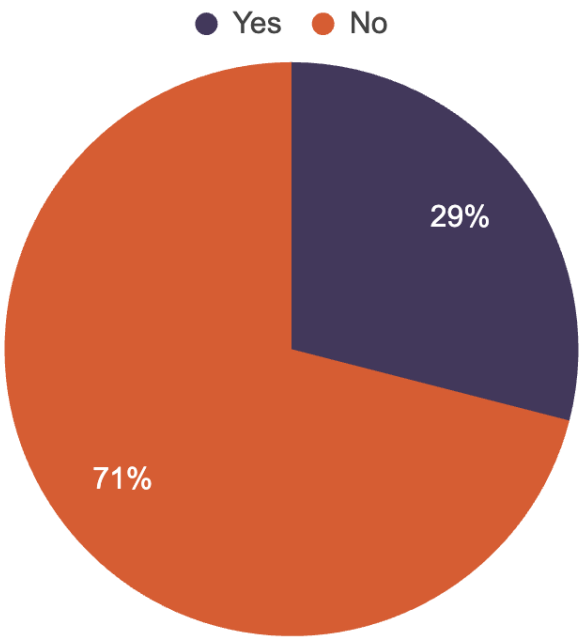
- Fitness/gym (3,861,000)
- Walking (recreational) (3,662,000)
- Bushwalking (896,000)
- Exergaming* (697,000)
- Yoga (220,000)

Females

- Walking (recreational) (5,736,000)
- Fitness/gym (4,473,000)
- Yoga (1,211,000)
- Bushwalking (1,296,000)
- Pilates (1,053,000)

Do you currently volunteer for a sports or recreation organisation?

Just under a third of respondents (29%) currently volunteer (411 people provided a response to this question).



Benchmarking against national volunteer statistics

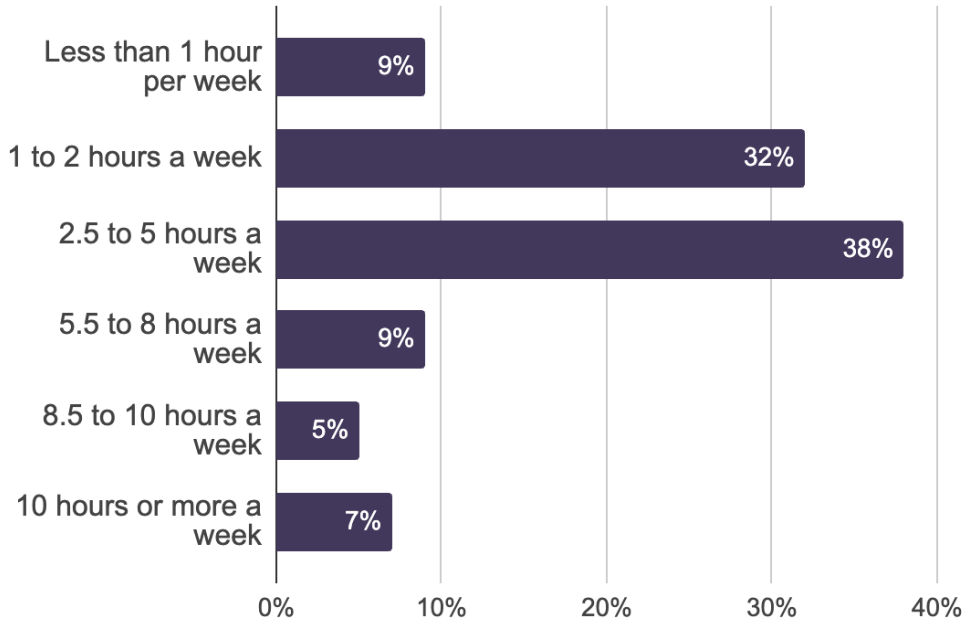
According to the *Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021)*:

- One quarter (25%) of Australians aged 15 years and over participated in unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in 2020.
- The most common types of organisations for which people volunteered were those relating to sport and physical recreation (31% of volunteers), religious groups (23%), and education and training (19%).

The level of volunteering among survey respondents (29% in Banyule) is **slightly higher than the overall volunteering rate** in Australia (25% nationally) as reported for 2020. However, when specifically comparing to the percentage of volunteers **involved in sports and physical recreation** (31% nationally), survey respondents are slightly below but still closely align with this average.

How many hours per week do you volunteer?

Overall, the results indicate that a majority (59%) of **those who volunteer** (118 respondents) do so for *more than 2 hours per week*. 9% of respondents volunteer for *less than 1 hour per week* (117 people responded to this question).



Rank your level of agreement with the following statements.

Respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement with a set of statements, below, the responses are categorised by level of agreement (547 people responded to this question).

Strong agreement:

- 85% agree that *I value the social aspect of sport and recreation, connecting with friends and others.*
- 71% agree that *participating in sport and recreation is important for my mental and physical health*

Mixed views:

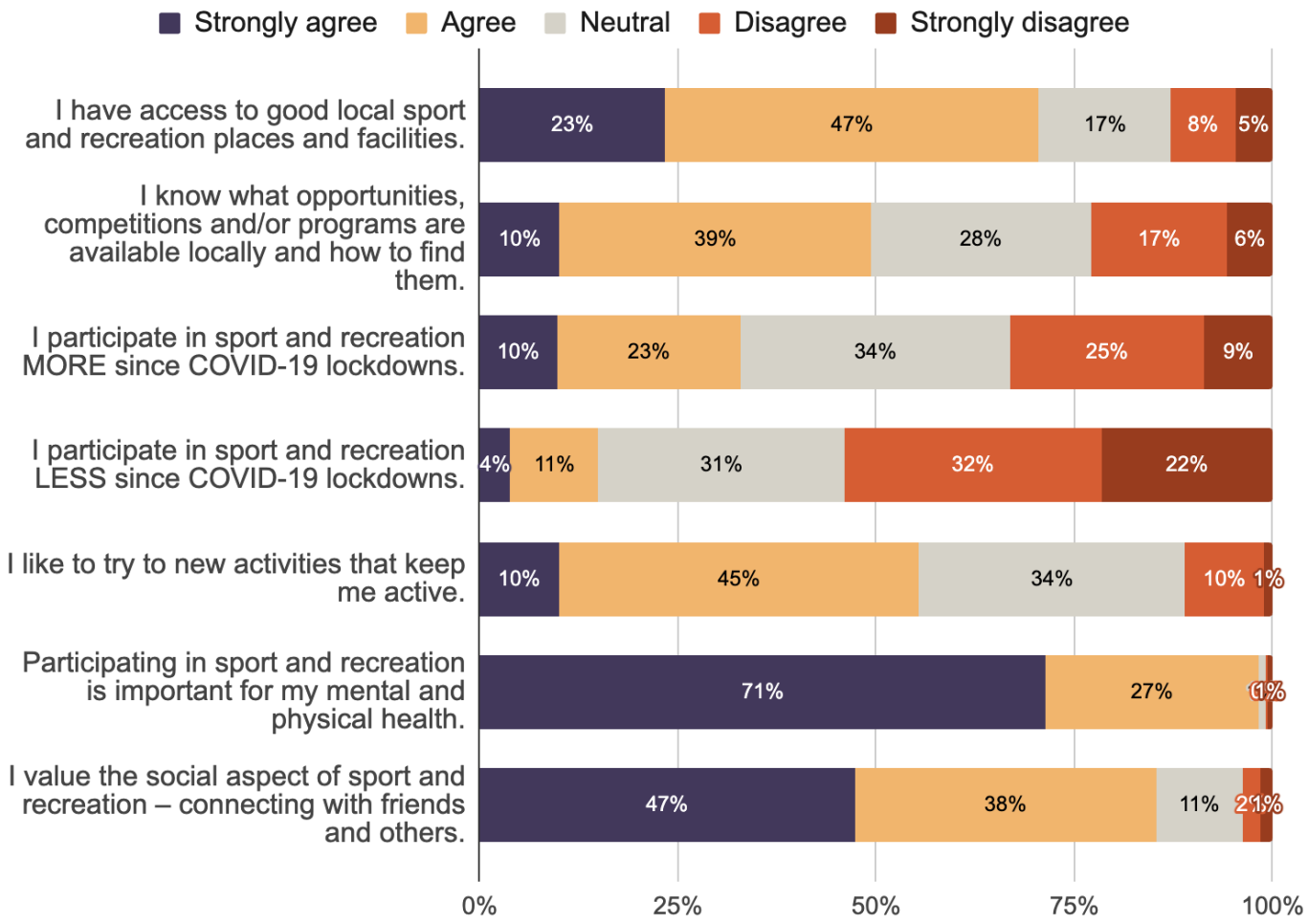
- 70% agree, but 13% disagree that *I have access to good local sport and recreation places and facilities*
- 55% agree but 11% disagree that *I like to try new activities that keep me active*

Low agreement:

- 23% disagree that *I know what opportunities, competitions and/or programs are available locally and how to find them.*

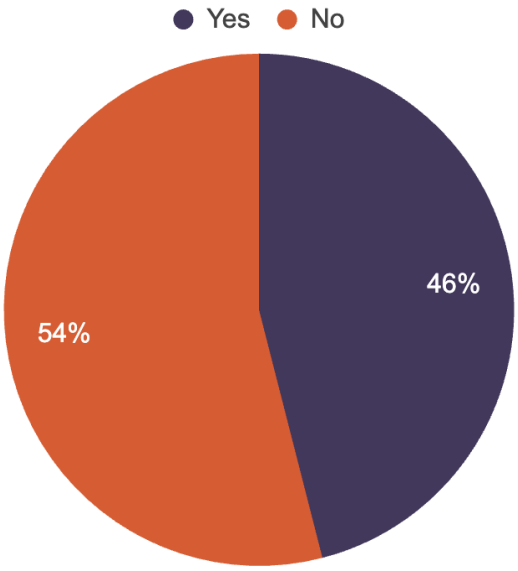
COVID-19 impact:

- *Most respondents did not change their participation levels since COVID-19 lockdowns, with* 34% neutral on both the increase in participation and the decrease in participation since COVID-19 lockdowns.
- 33% of respondents are *more active since COVID-19 lockdowns,* while 15% are *less active.*


Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree
I have access to good local sport and recreation places and facilities.
23%
47%
17%
8%
5%
I know what opportunities, competitions and/or programs are available locally and how to find them.
10%
39%
28%
17%
6%
I participate in sport and recreation MORE since COVID-19 lockdowns.
10%
23%
34%
25%
9%
I participate in sport and recreation LESS since COVID-19 lockdowns.
4%
11%
31%
32%
22%
I like to try to new activities that keep me active.
10%
45%
34%
10%
1%
Participating in sport and recreation is important for my mental and physical health.
71%
27%
1%
I value the social aspect of sport and recreation – connecting with friends and others.
47%
38%
11%
2%
1%
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%

Are you a member of a sport club or group who provides sport and recreation activities to Banyule residents?

Results were almost evenly split, with 46% of respondents *current members of a sports club or recreation group,* while 54% were not (546 people responded to this question).



Are you a member of a sport club or group who provides sport and recreation activities to Banyule residents?	No.	% (n=546)
Yes	250	46%
No	296	54%

How can Council support clubs and groups to increase participation and involvement?

An analysis of the responses revealed the following top ways Council could support clubs and groups to increase participation and involvement (300 people responded to this question)

Funding and affordability: Respondents noted the need for financial support to make participation more accessible and affordable for all community members. This includes providing funding for resources, subsidising memberships and equipment, and reducing fees for participation.

> "Maybe price? A lot of people are struggling at the moment." - Survey respondent.

Maintenance and upgrades of facilities: Respondents noted the importance of providing well-maintained and modern facilities to attract and retain members, as well as to create a positive and inclusive environment for participation and involvement.

Promoting and advertising clubs, groups and events to increase awareness and visibility, including conducting targeted marketing and outreach to specific demographic groups to increase awareness and participation among these populations.

> "Better facilities - club rooms, advertising what programs are available, times and costs and free trials." - Survey respondent

Providing training and support: emphasises the importance of empowering clubs and groups with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to thrive. Respondents suggested that by offering training programs, financial assistance, and ongoing support, Council can play a crucial role in helping clubs and groups increase participation.

> "Provide training and incentives to clubs. It is about culture change - and this takes time, education and a sustained effort!" - Survey respondent.

Improving access to facilities to make it easier for individuals to participate, including opening facilities for extended hours, providing more public access to sports grounds and reducing or offering subsidised membership options.

> "Increase flexible membership options, consider social sport over competition, increase access." - Survey respondent.

Improving accessibility and inclusivity: Involving measures aimed at making clubs and groups more accessible and inclusive for a diverse range of individuals. This includes making facilities and infrastructure more accessible, promoting diversity and inclusion, and supporting women's sporting groups.

> "Educate and advise them on the power of diversity and inclusion. Make panels or groups that run clubs more democratic." - Survey respondent.

Inclusion and access

Additionally, a key theme that arose in the comments was the need for more inclusive activities and facilities, our analysis identified the following sub-themes:

- Providing activities and facilities for people with disabilities and health issues
- Women's sports facilities
- Activities for older people

Do you have other suggestions or ideas for sport and recreation activities in Banyule?

The suggestions or ideas for addressing or removing barriers to participation in sport or recreation activities in Banyule are as follows (205 people responded to this question):

More free or low-cost community outdoor classes: This suggestion emphasises the need for more outdoor classes, such as Tai Chi, that encourage physical activity and community participation.

> "More free community outdoor classes, like Tai Chi, or things that get people moving." - Surrey respondent

Enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure: This suggestion involves improving bike trails, lanes, and paths, as well as creating bike-friendly roads that link to parkland tracks. This would encourage active transportation and provide opportunities for walking and cycling.

> "Improved bike trails and lanes in/around Montmorency. Park and dog off-leash area upgrades in Montmorency." - Survey respondent

Inclusive and diverse sports programs: This includes funding programs that cater to people with complex mental health needs, encouraging female participation in sports during the teen years, and promoting sports like to be more inclusive and welcoming to diverse demographics.

> "Work with LGBTIQA+ organisations such as Proud2 Play and Pride Cup to help clubs and leagues become more inclusive." - Survey respondent

Work with community groups: This suggestion involves leveraging community groups to deliver more activities, organising local walking and cycling groups, and providing opportunities for small businesses to use parks and provide innovative ideas for the community.

> "I suggest you leverage the community groups you have and assist them in delivering more." - Survey respondent