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## I N Q U I R I ES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300135070.

| ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION | This report examines the relationship between participation in sport and physical recreation and social wellbeing using a range of indicators from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS). It is not possible to quantify how participation in sport and physical recreation directly contributes to social capital, nor how social capital promotes participation in sport. Thus, this report shows the associations between participation and a range of social indicators that may be used to assess social capital and wellbeing. |
| :---: | :---: |
| ABOUT THE SURVEY | The General Social Survey (GSS) collected information about personal and household characteristics for people aged 18 and over resident in private dwellings, throughout non-remote areas of Australia, from March to July 2006. <br> Explanatory Notes on the 2006 GSS can be found in General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4159.0). These Explanatory Notes contain information on the scope of the survey, sample design, data collection, weighting and reliability of estimates. The publication also includes a Technical Note that provides information on data reliability. |
| ROUNDING | As estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. |
| ABBREVIATIONS | '000 thousand |
|  | ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics |
|  | ASGC Australian Standard Geographical Classification GSS General Social Survey |
|  | MPHS Multipurpose Household Survey |
|  | SEIFA Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas |
|  | Peter Harper |
|  | Acting Australian Statistician |

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## section 1

The positive impact of participation in sport and active recreation on physical health is now well accepted (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006). Research has identified a wide range of sport-induced health benefits including improving cardiovascular health, assisting in the development of strength and balance and maintaining a healthy weight (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006 and ABS 2008a). In light of this, governments at all levels have become increasingly active in encouraging people to adopt physical activities as a regular part of their lifestyle. In contrast, much less is known about the social impacts of sport and physical recreation. It is argued that sport and recreation provides opportunities and settings for social interaction, sharing common interests and enhancing a sense of community (Department for Victorian Communities 2006). However, the particular impacts of participation as well as the processes by which participation contributes to community wellbeing are not well defined. This has resulted in an increasing focus on and interest in identifying such impacts in recent years.

Social capital is often defined as being a resource available to individuals and communities founded on networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust. This is an area of considerable interest because of its links to individual and community wellbeing. Many researchers have suggested the benefits of social capital for individual outcomes in areas such as health, education, employment and family wellbeing and also in fostering community strength and resilience (ABS 2006, Department for Victorian Communities 2006, Baum 1999, Nicholson and Hoye 2008). The associational nature of sport and sporting clubs is sometimes seen as a forum for the creation of social capital (Tonts 2005). The current debate about social capital suggests that the structures within or the fabric of a society or community are an important determinant of the health of a community and that participation in community-based and social activities helps to strengthen the fabric (Baum 1999).

It is not possible to quantify how participation in sport and physical recreation contributes to, develops or maintains social capital. Nor is it possible to observe the extent to which the existence of social capital promotes participation in sport. This is the result of social processes that can not be measured in quantitative surveys. All that can be shown are the associations between participation and a range of social indicators indicators that may be used to assess social capital and wellbeing.

This report aims to examine the associations between participation in sport and physical recreation and social wellbeing using a range of indicators from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) 2006 General Social Survey.
section 2

SOURCES OF DATA ON PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

The ABS conducts two surveys that collect information on participation in sport and physical recreation. These are the Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation Activities topic of the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS) and the General Social Survey (GSS).

The General Social Survey (GSS) was conducted in 2002 and 2006 to provide information about various aspects of wellbeing and how these may relate to each other. This was in response to the recognition that social indicators related to families, health, education, employment, housing, individual opportunities and outcomes and wider social networks may be related and that the application of social policy is becoming less sectoral. The survey was also conducted to provide information that could be used as benchmark indicators of social capital. Participation in sport and physical recreation was included as a social indicator and information from this question is the common denominator in this report.

The 2002 GSS included supplementary topics on sports attendance and participation in sport and physical activity. The 2006 GSS had a shortened version of these topics, as the full topics were included in the MPHS in 2005-06.

Differences in methodology between the GSS and the MPHS mean that it is not possible to compare the overall participation rates from the 2005-06 MPHS with the 2002 and 2006 GSS. There were differences in the question wording and the actual collection method. The MPHS question asked about physical activities or sports participated in during the last 12 months and then prompted the respondent as to whether participation was for sport, exercise or recreation. The GSS asked about any physical activities or sports participated in as either a participant, coach, official, umpire or administrator. The MPHS was conducted, in most cases, as a telephone survey, whereas the GSS was conducted as a face-to-face interview. The GSS also collects information from people aged 18 years and over, whereas the MPHS collects information from people aged 15 years and over.

It is also important to note that respondents in both the MPHS and the GSS were asked about a range of social topics in addition to participation in sport and physical recreation. The number and subject of the topics was different in both surveys and the different context for the participation questions may have had some impact on the responses provided by respondents in each of the surveys.

Thus, care must be taken when comparing results from the MPHS and GSS, as the methodology used in each of these surveys differed and this may affect the validity of comparisons. This report only contains data from the 2006 GSS, as this survey included more questions relating to the social wellbeing indicators.

SOURCES OF DATA ON PARTICIPATION IN SPORT continued

The 2006 GSS found that over 9.5 million Australians aged 18 years and over participated in sport or physical recreation in the 12 months prior to interview, representing a participation rate of $62 \%$.

The full list of data items collected in the GSS are included in the General Social Survey: User Guide, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4159.0.55.002). A subset of these has been chosen for inclusion in this report and are listed in the Appendix. These primarily relate to network qualities and types but also include information on levels of trust in the community, involvement in community activities and affairs, familial and fraternal contact and support networks. Information on feelings of safety, volunteering, access to transport and health status along with some basic demographic information are also provided.

A supplementary spreadsheet containing the information analysed for this report is available separately as a data cube as part of this publication. Note that all data in the tables and graphs presented in this report are from the General Social Survey 2006.

The common denominator in the tables is "whether participated in sport or physical recreation in the previous 12 months". There are two ways to analyse and interpret the data - by looking at the rates of participation in sport according to the social indicators of the participants and by looking at the differences in the indicators according to whether people participated or did not participate in sport or physical recreation (i.e. by changing the denominator). For example, in Table 4.2, the data indicates that those who volunteered in the community had a higher rate of participation in sport ( $76 \%$ of the 5.2 million volunteers in Australia) compared with those who did not volunteer (55\%). The same data also shows that a greater proportion of participants in sport volunteered ( $42 \%$ of the 9.5 million people who participated in sport) compared with non-participants (21\%).

The analysis undertaken for this report takes account of these alternative ways of interpreting the data and the commentary presents the key findings as has been considered appropriate. Information is presented in four sections that focus on:

- selected characteristics of sport participants including demographics, self-assessed health status and work-life balance;
- the engagement of sport participants in the community through means such as volunteering, participating in community groups and attending sport, cultural and community events;
- feelings of trust and safety experienced by sport participants in their local communities; and
- the social networks of sport participants, for example, the frequency of contact with their family and friends.

Within this report, participants refer to those people that physically undertook sport or physical recreation as well as those involved in non-playing roles such as coaches, officials, umpires and administrators in the 12 months prior to interview.
Non-participants refer to those who did not partake in any such activity in this time period. For ease, the terms 'participation in sport and physical recreation', 'sport participation' and 'participation' are also interchangeable.

Participation rates varied between males and females and between age groups. Male participation was slightly higher than female participation. Of Australia's 7.6 million males aged 18 years and over, 4.8 million participated in sport or physical recreation, representing a participation rate of $64 \%$. In comparison, the female participation rate was $61 \%$, with 4.7 million of the 7.8 million Australian females partaking in sport or physical recreation.

Participation rates showed a general decline for both males and females among older age groups. Among young adults, aged 18 to 24 years, $71 \%$ participated in sport or physical recreation. In contrast, the participation rate among older Australians, aged 65 and over, was much lower at $46 \%$. The sharpest drop in participation occurred between the age groups of 55 to 64 years and 65 years and over, with the rate dropping by 13 percentage points.
3.1 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By age and sex


Age group (years)
3.2 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By age and sex

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| MALES |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18-24 years | 724.9 | 266.0 | 990.9 | 73.2 | 26.8 | 100.0 |
| 25-34 years | 1017.2 | 387.9 | 1405.1 | 72.4 | 27.6 | 100.0 |
| 35-44 years | 952.2 | 529.7 | 1481.8 | 64.3 | 35.7 | 100.0 |
| 45-54 years | 903.5 | 483.0 | 1386.5 | 65.2 | 34.8 | 100.0 |
| 55-64 years | 643.6 | 475.9 | 1119.5 | 57.5 | 42.5 | 100.0 |
| 65 years \& over | 561.8 | 607.7 | 1169.5 | 48.0 | 52.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 4803.1 | 2750.2 | 7553.3 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 100.0 |
| FEMALES |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18-24 years | 644.0 | 305.3 | 949.3 | 67.8 | 32.2 | 100.0 |
| 25-34 years | 898.6 | 505.5 | 1404.1 | 64.0 | 36.0 | 100.0 |
| 35-44 years | 998.7 | 507.7 | 1506.4 | 66.3 | 33.7 | 100.0 |
| 45-54 years | 899.2 | 514.5 | 1413.7 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 100.0 |
| 55-64 years | 676.2 | 443.7 | 1119.8 | 60.4 | 39.6 | 100.0 |
| 65 years \& over | 602.0 | 758.4 | 1360.4 | 44.3 | 55.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 4718.7 | 3035.1 | 7753.8 | 60.9 | 39.1 | 100.0 |
| PERSONS |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18-24 years | 1368.8 | 571.3 | 1940.1 | 70.6 | 29.4 | 100.0 |
| 25-34 years | 1915.8 | 893.4 | 2809.2 | 68.2 | 31.8 | 100.0 |
| 35-44 years | 1950.9 | 1037.4 | 2988.3 | 65.3 | 34.7 | 100.0 |
| 45-54 years | 1802.7 | 997.5 | 2800.2 | 64.4 | 35.6 | 100.0 |
| 55-64 years | 1319.7 | 919.6 | 2239.3 | 58.9 | 41.1 | 100.0 |
| 65 years \& over | 1163.8 | 1366.0 | 2529.9 | 46.0 | 54.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Participation rates varied with the type of household to which people belonged, with people in family households being more likely to participate in sport (63\%), compared with those in other households (58\%). Within family households, the participation rate for persons in couple families (64\%) is higher than that for persons in one-parent families (54\%).

People who were part of couple families with dependent students were most likely to participate in sport, with a participation rate of $75 \%$, whereas persons in one parent families with children under 15 were least likely to participate, with a participation rate of 52\%.

### 3.3 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By family and household type

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Couple family with children under 15 | 2597.4 | 1317.1 | 3914.5 | 66.4 | 33.6 | 100.0 |
| Couple family with dependent students | 777.1 | 264.7 | 1041.8 | 74.6 | 25.4 | 100.0 |
| Couple family with non-dependents | 939.1 | 629.4 | 1568.5 | 59.9 | 40.1 | 100.0 |
| Couple only family | 2808.1 | 1787.2 | 4595.3 | 61.1 | 38.9 | 100.0 |
| One parent family with children under 15 | 288.7 | 271.5 | 560.2 | 51.5 | 48.5 | 100.0 |
| One parent family with dependent students | 126.2 | 72.7 | 198.9 | 63.4 | 36.6 | 100.0 |
| One parent family with non-dependents | 306.6 | 261.6 | 568.2 | 54.0 | 46.0 | 100.0 |
| Other family | 120.7 | 65.1 | 185.8 | 65.0 | 35.0 | 100.0 |
| Total family households | 7964.0 | 4669.2 | 12633.2 | 63.0 | 37.0 | 100.0 |
| Lone person household | 1062.5 | 879.4 | 1941.9 | 54.7 | 45.3 | 100.0 |
| Other households | 495.4 | 236.6 | 732.0 | 67.7 | 32.3 | 100.0 |
| Total other households | 1557.8 | 1116.1 | 2673.9 | 58.3 | 41.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

Where people live, whether near to each other in densely populated urban areas or on farms or small communities situated in remote areas, may influence the way in which they form networks and interact with others. It may also affect the opportunities that they have to participate in a range of social and civic activities, including sport and physical recreation activity (ABS 2006).

The GSS uses a remoteness index based on the Remoteness Structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (ABS 2008b). It classifies broad geographical regions that share common characteristics of remoteness. Use of this index allows differences in sport and physical recreation participation between these regions to be examined.

Data from the GSS show that the sport participation rate is higher in more urban areas, with participation rates of $63 \%$ for both those living in the major cities of Australia and inner regional Australia. Participation declined in more remote areas, with a rate of $57 \%$ in both outer regional Australia and remote and very remote Australia.

The greatest proportion of participants lived in the major cities of Australia (68\%), followed by inner regional Australia (22\%). Much smaller proportions of participants lived in outer regional Australia (8.5\%) and remote and very remote Australia (1.3\%).
3.4 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By remoteness area

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Major cities of Australia | 6492.6 | 3852.7 | 10345.3 | 62.8 | 37.2 | 100.0 |
| Inner regional Australia | 2097.2 | 1217.4 | 3314.6 | 63.3 | 36.7 | 100.0 |
| Outer regional Australia | 805.1 | 619.8 | 1424.9 | 56.5 | 43.5 | 100.0 |
| Remote and Very remote Australia | 126.9 | 95.3 | 222.3 | 57.1 | 42.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC

DISADVANTAGE

The ABS compiles the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage, one of five Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). The SEIFA index numbers are based on the characteristics of all persons living within a defined area, not the socio-economic situation of a particular individual, and are intended to determine the level of social and economic wellbeing of these areas. Further information is available in Information Paper: An Introduction to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2006 (cat. no. 2039.0).

The index of relative socio-economic disadvantage includes attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The lower the value of this index, the greater the average level of disadvantage experienced by residents of the area.

A relationship between the rate of participation in sport and physical recreation and the level of socio-economic disadvantage can be seen, with the participation rate increasing with each successive quintile in the index. Of those in the lowest quintile of the index $49 \%$ participated in sport or physical recreation activity while of those in the highest quintile, $74 \%$ participated.

In addition, the proportion of participants in the highest quintile of the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage (27\%) is more than double that of those in the lowest quintile (13\%). disadvantage

|  | Did not <br> participate | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | Total |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  |  | 000 | 000 | 000 | $\%$ | $\%$ |

[^1]SELF-ASSESSED HEALTH STATUS

Survey respondents were asked to make a general assessment of their own health against a five point scale ranging from excellent through to poor. Participants generally rated their health better than did non-participants. The participation rate shows a steady decline in participation with lower levels of self-reported health, with the highest rate for those with excellent self-assessed health (74\%) and the lowest for those who assessed their health to be poor (29\%).

### 3.6 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By self-assessed health status



The effect of age on self-assessed health status was also examined. The number of respondents reporting their health as excellent declined with age, except for those in the 55-64 year age group. For example, $37 \%$ of those aged 18-24 years had a self-assessed health status of excellent, while of those aged 65 and over, just $14 \%$ rated their health status as excellent. Participation rates were found to be highest for those who rated their health status as excellent in each age group.
3.7 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By self-assessed health status and age


The length of time spent living in a community is considered to influence the number of ties with others in that community and the strength of those ties. Levels of social and civic participation, including participation in sport and physical recreation, may also be likely to be higher among long-term residents of a community (ABS 2006). However, the propensity to move has been found to be strongly related to life transitions with younger people being more likely to move than the elderly. Young people are also more likely to participate in sport.

### 3.8 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By length of time in current dwelling

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Less than one year | 1601.1 | 820.4 | 2421.5 | 66.1 | 33.9 | 100.0 |
| 1-2 years | 1603.5 | 870.9 | 2474.4 | 64.8 | 35.2 | 100.0 |
| 3-4 years | 1049.1 | 628.8 | 1677.9 | 62.5 | 37.5 | 100.0 |
| Total less than 5 years | 4253.7 | 2320.1 | 6573.8 | 64.7 | 35.3 | 100.0 |
| 5-9 years | 1690.9 | 988.4 | 2679.3 | 63.1 | 36.9 | 100.0 |
| 10-19 years | 1686.4 | 1038.4 | 2724.8 | 61.9 | 38.1 | 100.0 |
| 20 years or more | 1319.3 | 1262.1 | 2581.3 | 51.1 | 48.9 | 100.0 |
| Not applicable(a) | 571.6 | 176.2 | 747.8 | 76.4 | 23.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

(a) Respondents who were not the household reference person, e.g. a family member who is younger than the length of time the family has been in the current dwelling.

Data from the survey show that of those who had lived at their current address for less than 12 months, $61 \%$ were aged 18-34. This age group also accounted for $48 \%$ of those who had lived at their current address for one to two years. This may help to explain why the participation rate is highest for those living in their current dwelling for less than 1 year and for $1-2$ years ( $66 \%$ and $65 \%$ respectively). In contrast, $67 \%$ of those residing at the same address for more than twenty years were aged over 55 and this group had the lowest rate of participation in sport and physical recreation (51\%). Refer to the data cube available as part of this publication for the data on the length of time resident in the current dwelling, together with age.

Of those who had moved in the previous five years, similar proportions moved to a different address within the same suburb or locality (46\%) or within the same state (44\%). The balance (12\%) was those who had moved from interstate or from overseas. The rates of participation by these groups were broadly similar, however, those who moved locally had slightly lower rates of participation.
3.9 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By persons who have moved in previous five years and location of move

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| In same suburb/locality/town as current dwelling | 1884.9 | 1118.8 | 3003.7 | 62.8 | 37.2 | 100.0 |
| In same state | 1942.5 | 977.9 | 2920.4 | 66.5 | 33.5 | 100.0 |
| In different state or overseas | *426.3 | **223.5 | *649.8 | *65.6 | **34.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 4253.7 | 2320.2 | 6573.8 | 64.7 | 35.3 | 100.0 |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be $\quad$ estimate has a relative standard error greater than $50 \%$ and is used with caution considered too unreliable for general use


## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

## Hours worked

Work-life balance is used to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. A 'lack of time' is often given as a reason for not participating in sport and physical recreation, with many people reporting that they are simply too busy to participate. Work commitments may be a significant contributing factor to people feeling so busy. A number of data items collected in the GSS give an indication of the balance between work and life experienced by Australians. These include total number of hours worked, travelling time to work and whether or not work allows for family and community responsibilities.

Even though it is often given as a reason for not participating, data shows that working a high amount of hours per week does not necessarily deter people from participating in sport and physical recreation, with the highest participation rate and greatest proportion of participants working over 40 hours per week. In fact, the participation rate is highest for those who worked a total of 50 to 59 hours per week ( $72 \%$ ). However, those working very high hours per week (more than 70 hours per week) had the lowest participation rate (55\%).
3.10 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By hours worked in all jobs

|  | Pid not | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | Total |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |

[^2]| Travelling time to work | Time taken to travel to work may be another restriction on the time available for |
| :--- | :--- |
| participation in sport and physical recreation. The participation rate is highest amongst |  |
| those who take 30 minutes to less than 1 hour $(72 \%)$ and those whose travelling time to |  |
|  | work was 11 to 29 minutes $(70 \%)$. |

3.11 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By travelling time to work

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| 10 minutes or less | 1773.2 | 816.4 | 2589.6 | 68.5 | 31.5 | 100.0 |
| 11-29 minutes | 1973.5 | 838.8 | 2812.3 | 70.2 | 29.8 | 100.0 |
| 30 minutes to less than 1 hour | 1657.6 | 635.3 | 2293.0 | 72.3 | 27.7 | 100.0 |
| 1 hour or more | 538.3 | 300.0 | 838.3 | 64.2 | 35.8 | 100.0 |
| Variable workplace | 479.5 | 245.8 | 725.3 | 66.1 | 33.9 | 100.0 |
| Worked at home | 507.6 | 226.4 | 734.0 | 69.2 | 30.8 | 100.0 |
| Not applicable(a) | 2582.8 | 2698.4 | 5281.2 | 48.9 | 51.1 | 100.0 |
| Total (b) | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

(a) Unemployed or not in the labour force.
(b) Includes travelling time not known or not stated.

Whether work allows for The sport participation rate was highest for those whose work commitments allowed family/community them to also meet other family and community responsibilities (73\%). responsibilities

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By whether work allows for family/community responsibilities

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Can meet responsibilities | 3299.3 | 1241.9 | 4541.2 | 72.7 | 27.3 | 100.0 |
| Can not meet responsibilities | 558.1 | 287.9 | 846.0 | 66.0 | 34.0 | 100.0 |
| Doesn't have family/community responsibilities | 2986.7 | 1522.0 | 4508.7 | 66.2 | 33.8 | 100.0 |
| Don't know | 95.0 | 35.0 | 130.0 | 73.1 | 26.9 | 100.0 |
| Not applicable(a) | 2582.8 | 2698.4 | 5281.2 | 48.9 | 51.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

[^3]INVOLVEMENT OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Literature suggests that volunteering in the community is an important contributor to the development and maintenance of social capital (Nicholson and Hoye 2008). Data from the GSS show that sport participants are an important source of volunteers in the community. Over three quarters ( $76 \%$ ) of those that volunteered their time and services to an organisation in the 12 months prior to survey also participated in sport or physical recreation in the same time period. The sport participation rate was particularly high amongst those volunteering for sport and physical recreation organisations (88\%), environmental/animal welfare organisations (83\%) and health organisations (83\%). for(a)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | Participated | Did not <br> participate | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | Total |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution

The proportion of sport participants volunteering is almost double that of non-participants. Just over two fifths (42\%) of those who participated in sport or physical recreation volunteered compared with just over one fifth (21\%) of non-participants. The highest proportions of sport participants volunteered for sport and physical recreation organisations (38\%), education and training organisations (26\%) and community/welfare organisations (20\%).

Reasons for being a volunteer

People may feel motivated to volunteer for a variety of reasons ranging from personal satisfaction to religious belief and feelings of obligation. More than half of those who
(a) People may have volunteered for more than one organisation. un participated in sport or physical recreation reported helping others/their community as a reason for volunteering (57\%). Other common reasons were to gain personal satisfaction

Reasons for being a
volunteer continued

Length of time as a volunteer
(44\%), personal/family involvement (37\%) and to do something worthwhile (37\%). These reasons were also common for non-participants.

The sport participation rate was highest amongst those who had volunteered for more than ten years (78\%), with the majority of sport participants (58\%) having volunteered for this length of time.

### 4.2 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By volunteering

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Reasons for being a volunteer(a) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Personal/family involvement | 1471.2 | 470.6 | 1941.8 | 75.8 | 24.2 | 100.0 |
| Personal satisfaction | 1741.9 | 556.7 | 2298.5 | 75.8 | 24.2 | 100.0 |
| Social contact | 841.3 | 313.5 | 1154.7 | 72.9 | 27.1 | 100.0 |
| Religious belief | 547.1 | 236.8 | 783.8 | 69.8 | 30.2 | 100.0 |
| To be active | 601.5 | 215.3 | 816.7 | 73.7 | 26.4 | 100.0 |
| To learn new skills | 361.9 | 120.6 | 482.5 | 75.0 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| To do something worthwhile | 1459.0 | 433.5 | 1892.5 | 77.1 | 22.9 | 100.0 |
| Help others/community | 2290.5 | 668.2 | 2958.7 | 77.4 | 22.6 | 100.0 |
| Gain work experience | 159.1 | 48.9 | 208.0 | 76.5 | 23.5 | 100.0 |
| Use skills/experience | 665.4 | 170.3 | 835.7 | 79.6 | 20.4 | 100.0 |
| Felt obliged | 281.3 | 50.1 | 331.4 | 84.9 | 15.1 | 100.0 |
| Just happened | 37.2 | *13.3 | 50.6 | 73.6 | *26.4 | 100.0 |
| Other | 113.8 | *17.2 | 131.0 | 86.9 | *13.1 | 100.0 |
| Length of time since first volunteered |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than one year | 265.7 | 124.1 | 389.8 | 68.2 | 31.8 | 100.0 |
| One to five years | 876.8 | 309.4 | 1186.3 | 73.9 | 26.1 | 100.0 |
| Six to ten years | 548.0 | 155.4 | 703.4 | 77.9 | 22.1 | 100.0 |
| More than ten years | 2298.0 | 649.1 | 2947.1 | 78.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
| Total volunteers | 3988.5 | 1238.0 | 5226.5 | 76.3 | 23.7 | 100.0 |
| Not a volunteer | 5533.3 | 4547.2 | 10080.6 | 54.9 | 45.1 | 100.0 |
| Total population | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

[^4]INVOLVEMENT IN
VARIOUS GROUPS AND

## ACTIVITIES

Social groups

The participation rate for those actively involved in at least one social group in the last 12 months was $74 \%$, which was much higher than the participation rate of those with no active involvement (42\%). Specifically, the participation rate was highest amongst those with an active involvement in a sport or physical recreation group (89\%); arts or heritage group (78\%); and adult education, other recreation or special interest group (77\%).

Almost three quarters of sport participants ( $75 \%$ ) had an active involvement in a social group compared with $43 \%$ of non-participants. The greatest proportion of sport participants had an active involvement in a sport or physical recreation group (66\%), social club providing restaurants or bars (32\%) and religious or spiritual groups or organisations (29\%)

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SECTION 4 • INVOLVEMENT OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS IN THE COMMUNITY
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## 4.3 <br> PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By active involvement in social group

 in the last 12 months and type of organisation|  | Participated | Did not <br> participate | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | Total |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution
* estimate has a relative standard error greater than $50 \%$ and is considered too unreliable for general use
(a) Components may not add to totals as some persons may have had involvement in more than one group.

Governance and
citizenship organisations

The participation rate for those actively involved in governance and citizenship organisations in the last 12 months was $79 \%$, which was once again much higher than the participation rate of those with no active involvement (59\%). Specifically, the participation rate was highest amongst those with an active involvement in an environmental or animal welfare group (85\%); body corporate or tenants' association (81\%); and political party (81\%).

Almost a quarter of sport participants (23\%) were involved in at least one governance and/or citizenship organisation. This is more than double the proportion of non-participants that had involvement in such organisations (11\%). The highest proportions of sport participants were involved in trade union, professional/technical associations (9.4\%); environmental or animal welfare groups (6.8\%); and body corporate or tenants associations (5.8\%).

## 4.4

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By active involvement in civil or government groups in the last 12 months

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Trade union, professional/technical association | 895.2 | 225.9 | 1121.0 | 79.8 | 20.2 | 100.0 |
| Political party | 166.4 | *40.0 | 206.5 | 80.6 | *19.4 | 100.0 |
| Civic group or organisation | 386.7 | 104.3 | 491.0 | 78.8 | 21.2 | 100.0 |
| Environmental or animal welfare group | 650.8 | 117.1 | 767.9 | 84.8 | 15.2 | 100.0 |
| Human and civil rights groups | 273.8 | 70.1 | 343.9 | 79.6 | 20.4 | 100.0 |
| Body corporate or tenants' association | 551.1 | 126.0 | 677.1 | 81.4 | 18.6 | 100.0 |
| Consumer organisation | 102.2 | 46.7 | 148.9 | 68.6 | 31.4 | 100.0 |
| Total persons with involvement | 2234.0 | 613.2 | 2847.3 | 78.5 | 21.5 | 100.0 |
| No active involvement in civil or government groups in last 12 months | 7287.8 | 5172.0 | 12459.8 | 58.5 | 41.5 | 100.0 |
| Total (a) | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution
(a) Components may not add to totals as some persons may have had involvement in more than one group.

Civic Activities

A greater proportion of sport participants (52\%) than non-participants (33\%) engaged in at least one civic activity. The most common civic activities undertaken by sport participants were boycotting or deliberately buying products for political, ethical or environmental reasons (31\% of sport participants undertook this activity), signing a petition $(27 \%)$ and writing to the council/territory government or contacting a local council/territory government member (16\%). These were also the most common civic activities undertaken by non-participants.

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SECTION 4 • INVOLVEMENT OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS IN THE COMMUNITY
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PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By type of civic activity engaged in, in the last 12 months

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Participated in a community consultation or attended a public or council meeting | 904.2 | 288.1 | 1192.3 | 75.8 | 24.2 | 100.0 |
| Written to the council/territory government or contacted a local councillor/territory govt. member | 1537.6 | 572.5 | 2110.1 | 72.9 | 27.1 | 100.0 |
| Contacted a member of parliament | 673.2 | 217.5 | 890.7 | 75.6 | 24.4 | 100.0 |
| Signed a petition | 2540.7 | 907.6 | 3448.2 | 73.7 | 26.3 | 100.0 |
| Attended a protest march/meeting/rally | 634.9 | 155.3 | 790.3 | 80.3 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper | 414.2 | 115.6 | 529.8 | 78.2 | 21.8 | 100.0 |
| Participated in a political campaign | 242.1 | 70.3 | 312.4 | 77.5 | 22.5 | 100.0 |
| Boycotted or deliberately bought products for political, ethical or environmental reasons | 2900.9 | 859.8 | 3760.7 | 77.1 | 22.9 | 100.0 |
| Total persons engaged in civic activity | 4957.6 | 1891.2 | 6848.9 | 72.4 | 27.6 | 100.0 |
| Engaged in none of these in past 12 months | 4564.2 | 3894.0 | 8458.2 | 54.0 | 46.0 | 100.0 |
| Total (a) | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

(a) Components may not add to totals as some persons may have been engaged in more than one activity.

ATTENDANCE AT
CULTURAL, SPORTING
AND COMMUNITY VENUES
AND/OR EVENTS

Taking part with others in mutually enjoyed activities is a way of forming and maintaining relationships. It thus contributes to social connectedness and a sense of belonging, and can promote trust, cooperation and tolerance. Social participation can include attendance, even if attending alone, at any of a variety of cultural, sporting or community venues and events. Such activities provide important contexts for people to meet and share in the life of the wider community (ABS 2006).

The sport participation rate is significantly higher amongst those who have attended selected cultural venues and events (67\%), sporting (73\%) or community events (71\%) when compared with the rate amongst those who did not attend any of those events or venues ( $28 \%, 51 \%$ and $47 \%$ respectively).

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By attendance at culture, sport and community events

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Attended any selected cultural venues and events in last 12 months |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attended | 9036.2 | 4526.8 | 13563.0 | 66.6 | 33.4 | 100.0 |
| Did not attend | 485.6 | 1258.4 | 1744.1 | 27.8 | 72.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Attended any sporting events in last 12 months |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attended | 5787.2 | 2188.3 | 7975.5 | 72.6 | 27.4 | 100.0 |
| Did not attend | 3734.6 | 3597.0 | 7331.6 | 50.9 | 49.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Attended a community event in past 6 months |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attended | 6966.8 | 2892.6 | 9859.5 | 70.7 | 29.3 | 100.0 |
| Did not attend | 2555.0 | 2892.6 | 5447.6 | 46.9 | 53.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

ATTENDANCE AT
CULTURAL, SPORTING
AND COMMUNITY VENUES
AND/OR EVENTS
continued

When people do not have access to transport, this can act as a barrier to their participation in the range of social, civic and economic activities of mainstream society.

Most people (84\%) felt that they could easily get to the places where they needed to go; $12 \%$ felt that they sometimes had difficulty getting to such places; while $4 \%$ felt that they either could not get to places where they needed to go or often had difficulties in doing SO.

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SECTION 4 - INVOLVEMENT OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS IN THE COMMUNITY
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PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By access to a motor vehicle and transport difficulties

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Has access to motor vehicle to drive |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Access to motor vehicle(s) | 8677.3 | 4509.7 | 13187.0 | 65.8 | 34.2 | 100.0 |
| No access to motor vehicles | 844.5 | 1275.6 | 2120.1 | 39.8 | 60.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Perceived level of difficulty with transport |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Can easily get to the places needed | 8341.1 | 4526.1 | 12867.2 | 64.8 | 35.2 | 100.0 |
| Sometimes have difficulty getting to the places needed | 945.4 | 820.4 | 1765.7 | 53.5 | 46.5 | 100.0 |
| Often have difficulty getting to the places needed | 197.2 | 319.0 | 516.2 | 38.2 | 61.8 | 100.0 |
| Can't get to the places needed/never go |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| out/housebound | 38.1 | 119.8 | 157.9 | 24.1 | 75.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

## ACCESS TO TRANSPORT

continued

The participation rate shows a steady decline with increased difficulty with transport.
The rate is highest among those who can easily get to the places needed (65\%) and substantially lower among those who cannot get to the places needed (24\%).

# FEELINGS OF SAFETY AND TRUST OF SPORT 

 PARTICIPANTSHaving trust in others to behave according to accepted social values and norms is a fundamental aspect of a well-functioning community and data which seek to measure levels of trust in others are recognised as being important to monitoring levels of social capital (ABS 2006).

FEELINGS OF SAFETY An indirect measure of trust available from the GSS is people's feelings of safety while at home or walking alone. Feeling unsafe might relate to fear of threat from other people or to the possibility of not having someone else around to provide help in the case of a health-related mishap, such as a fall. In either case it might be expected that having close links with others in one's vicinity or having established habits of contacting others, for help if needed, could increase feelings of safety (ABS 2006).

The GSS asked respondents how safe they felt in various circumstances - when home alone during the day, when home alone after dark and when walking alone through their local area after dark. Feelings of safety were reported on a five point scale ranging from very safe to very unsafe. Overall, GSS data show that the rate of participation in sport and physical recreation activity declines as feelings of safety diminish. For example, the participation rate is $66 \%$ for those who feel very safe at home alone during the day compared with $23 \%$ for those who feel very unsafe.
5.1 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By feelings of safety in various circumstances


In each of the three situations, a greater proportion of sport participants than non-participants reported strong feelings of safety in their local communities. When at home alone during the day, $96 \%$ of sport participants feel either very safe or safe compared with $93 \%$ of non-participants. Similarly, $88 \%$ of sport participants felt very safe

FEELINGS OF SAFETY
continued
or safe at home alone after dark compared with $82 \%$ of non-participants. The difference in feelings of safety between sport participants and non-participants was most marked for walking alone in their local area after dark. Over half (53\%) of sport participants felt very safe or safe in this situation, compared with $39 \%$ of non-participants, while $16 \%$ of sport participants never walk alone after dark, compared with $31 \%$ of non-participants.
5.2 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By feelings of safety

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Feelings of safety at home alone after dark |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Very safe | 4921.7 | 2484.2 | 7405.9 | 66.5 | 33.5 | 100.0 |
| Safe | 3470.7 | 2261.3 | 5732.0 | 60.5 | 39.5 | 100.0 |
| Neither safe nor unsafe | 570.3 | 397.4 | 967.7 | 58.9 | 41.1 | 100.0 |
| Unsafe | 337.9 | 417.4 | 755.3 | 44.7 | 55.3 | 100.0 |
| Very unsafe | 138.0 | 135.6 | 273.6 | 50.4 | 49.6 | 100.0 |
| Never home alone after dark | 83.3 | 89.2 | 172.5 | 48.3 | 51.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Feelings of safety at home alone during day |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Very safe | 6564.4 | 3358.8 | 9923.2 | 66.2 | 33.8 | 100.0 |
| Safe | 2606.8 | 1999.2 | 4606.0 | 56.6 | 43.4 | 100.0 |
| Neither safe nor unsafe | 213.1 | 201.4 | 414.6 | 51.4 | 48.6 | 100.0 |
| Unsafe | 87.4 | 145.3 | 232.6 | 37.6 | 62.5 | 100.0 |
| Very unsafe | *10.7 | 36.5 | 47.3 | *22.7 | 77.3 | 100.0 |
| Never home alone during the day | *39.3 | 44.0 | 83.4 | *47.1 | 52.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Feelings of safety walking alone in local area after dark |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Very safe | 1954.1 | 839.1 | 2793.1 | 70.0 | 30.0 | 100.0 |
| Safe | 3106.8 | 1409.8 | 4516.6 | 68.8 | 31.2 | 100.0 |
| Neither safe nor unsafe | 1279.8 | 634.0 | 1913.8 | 66.9 | 33.1 | 100.0 |
| Unsafe | 1131.2 | 719.7 | 1850.9 | 61.1 | 38.9 | 100.0 |
| Very unsafe | 485.0 | 411.4 | 896.4 | 54.1 | 45.9 | 100.0 |
| Never walk alone after dark | 1565.0 | 1771.2 | 3336.2 | 46.9 | 53.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution

Another more direct measure of feelings of trust is available from the GSS. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements including:

- That most people can be trusted,
- That your doctor can be trusted,
- That hospitals can be trusted to do the right thing by you, and
- That police in your local areas can be trusted.

Responses were reported on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

FEELINGS OF TRUST
continued

Focussing on the level of generalised trust, sport participants reported greater levels of trust in people than did non-participants. The participation rate was found to decline as feelings of trust diminished. The rate amongst those who strongly agreed that most people could be trusted was $69 \%$, compared with $48 \%$ for those who strongly disagreed.

### 5.3 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By level of generalised trust

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Strongly agree | 1066.8 | 470.5 | 1537.3 | 69.4 | 30.6 | 100.0 |
| Somewhat agree | 4507.9 | 2235.5 | 6743.4 | 66.8 | 33.2 | 100.0 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1465.7 | 942.0 | 2407.7 | 60.9 | 39.1 | 100.0 |
| Somewhat disagree | 1796.0 | 1383.8 | 3179.8 | 56.5 | 43.5 | 100.0 |
| Strongly disagree | 685.5 | 753.3 | 1438.9 | 47.6 | 52.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

Some $59 \%$ of sport participants reported that they either strongly or somewhat agreed that most people could be trusted compared with $47 \%$ of non-participants.

Slightly more variation is evident when examining the levels of trust in hospitals, people's own doctors and police in their local area. Participation rates fluctuate with differing levels of trust as shown in Table 5.4, with the rate peaking for those who somewhat agreed that these institutions and people could be trusted. However, participation rates are lowest for all three groups where the level of trust was lowest.

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SECTION 5 • FEELINGS OF SAFETY AND TRUST OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS
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5.4

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By level of trust in hospitals, own doctor and police in local area

| Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | Participated | Did not <br> participate | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | \% |

## SECTION 6

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT
WITH FAMILY AND
FRIENDS

THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF SPORT PARTICIPANTS

Where there are well-functioning social networks the positive effects of social connections may include increased happiness, health and longevity (ABS 2006). Playing sport and taking part in other forms of physical recreation is often a social activity in which energies are focused on a common goal. It can provide participants with an opportunity to make and/or maintain friendships, develop extended networks and keep in touch with family or friends. Even doing physical exercise or recreation activities alone in public places may create opportunities for meeting like-minded people while attending sporting events also provides opportunities for being with others or making new contacts (ABS 2006).

Data from the 2006 GSS indicate that sport participants generally have more frequent contact with their family and friends, a greater number of friends to confide in and a greater ability to obtain support in times of crisis than non-participants.

A slightly greater proportion of sport participants have daily or weekly contact with their family and friends (97\%) compared with non-participants (95\%).

The sport participation rate is shown to be highest among those who have daily contact with their family and friends at $64 \%$. The rate remains high for those who have weekly contact at $62 \%$ but drops substantially to $49 \%$ among those who have monthly contact and $41 \%$ for those who have quarterly contact.
6.1 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By frequency of contact with family or friends

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Everyday | 4680.1 | 2597.4 | 7277.5 | 64.3 | 35.7 | 100.0 |
| At least once a week | 4589.3 | 2872.9 | 7462.2 | 61.5 | 38.5 | 100.0 |
| At least once a month | 211.6 | 222.9 | 434.6 | 48.7 | 51.3 | 100.0 |
| At least once in three months | *31.3 | *45.7 | 77.0 | *40.6 | *59.4 | 100.0 |
| No recent contact(a) | **9.5 | 46.3 | 55.7 | **17.1 | 83.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

[^5]The GSS provides further detail on the type of contact made with family and friends, breaking it down into either face to face contact or telephone, email and mail contact. Similar trends can be seen when examining this data, with the participation rate generally declining as contact becomes less frequent. In addition a greater proportion of

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT
WITH FAMILY AND
FRIENDS continued
sport participants have more frequent contact than non-participants. For example, $82 \%$ of sport participants have face to face contact at least once a week or every day compared with $75 \%$ of non-participants, while $95 \%$ of sport participants have contact via the telephone, email and/or mail at least once a week compared with $90 \%$ of non-participants.

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By frequency of specific contact with family and friends
$\qquad$
Total

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be
(a) Includes the category 'no family and no friends'. used with caution

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Number of friends can confide in

It is suggested that contact with others is important in providing individuals with identity, social roles and social support mechanisms (ABS 2006). For example, family and friends can act as confidants, carry out favours and provide support in times of crisis.

Sport participants were more likely to have a greater number of friends they felt able to confide in, with $59 \%$ having 3 or more (compared with $43 \%$ for non-participants). Sport participants were also much less likely than non-participants to have no friends to confide in. Just $9.3 \%$ of sport participants did not have any friends to confide in, less than half the proportion of non-participants (20\%).

Number of friends can
confide in continued
6.3 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By number of friends can confide in


As the number of friends people can confide in increases, so too does the sport participation rate. The rate reaches a high of $71 \%$ amongst people who have 5 or more friends they feel they can confide in and a low of $44 \%$ amongst those with no such friends.
6.4 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By number of friends can confide in

|  |  | Did not <br> participate | Total | Participation <br> rate | Non-participation <br> rate | Total |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |

Ability to ask for small favours

The sport participation rate was much higher among people who felt able to ask for small favours at $64 \%$ than those who did not feel able (44\%). The ability to ask for small favours was slightly more common among sport participants, with a greater proportion (95\%) having this ability compared with non-participants (90\%)
6.5 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By ability to ask for small favours

|  |  | Did not |  | Participation | Non-participation |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| rate |  |  |  |  |  |$\quad$ Total

Ability to obtain support

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By ability to get support in times of crisis from persons living outside the household

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Able to get support | 9070.6 | 5215.7 | 14286.3 | 63.5 | 36.5 | 100.0 |
| Not able to get support | 451.2 | 569.5 | 1020.7 | 44.2 | 55.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

Support in times of crisis was most commonly obtained by sport participants from a family member (83\%), friend (73\%), neighbour (34\%) or work colleague (26\%). The same sources of support were most common among non-participants, with $75 \%, 57 \%$, $30 \%$ and $15 \%$ respectively.
6.7 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By source of support in times of crisis

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Friend | 6951.4 | 3272.3 | 10223.7 | 68.0 | 32.0 | 100.0 |
| Neighbour | 3273.9 | 1754.4 | 5028.3 | 65.1 | 34.9 | 100.0 |
| Family member | 7880.5 | 4319.6 | 12200.0 | 64.6 | 35.4 | 100.0 |
| Work colleague | 2468.2 | 874.8 | 3343.0 | 73.8 | 26.2 | 100.0 |
| Community, charity or religious organisation | 1268.1 | 642.8 | 1910.9 | 66.4 | 33.6 | 100.0 |
| Local council or other government services | 549.7 | 242.5 | 792.2 | 69.4 | 30.6 | 100.0 |
| Health, legal or financial professional | 1018.0 | 381.9 | 1400.0 | 72.7 | 27.3 | 100.0 |
| Other | 105.3 | *26.0 | 131.2 | 80.3 | *19.8 | 100.0 |
| No support | 451.2 | 569.5 | 1020.7 | 44.2 | 55.8 | 100.0 |
| Total (a) | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

* estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution
(a) Components do not add to totals, as some respondents identified more than one source of support.

DIVERSITY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Having diverse social networks can expose people to others of different cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds, developing values of acceptance and inclusiveness. Some indicators of such diversity can be gained from the GSS, which asks respondents what proportion of their friends were of the same ethnic background, of a similar age and of roughly the same educational background. The data shows that a smaller proportion of sport participants than non-participants have all of their friends with similar characteristics to them. This may indicate that sport participants have slightly more varied social networks than do non-participants.
6.8 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By persons with all friends with similar ethnic background, age and level of education


PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION, By proportion of friends of same ethnic background, similar age and level of education

|  | Participated | Did not participate | Total | Participation rate | Non-participation rate | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | '000 | '000 | '000 | \% | \% | \% |
| Same ethnic background |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All | 2481.0 | 2020.5 | 4501.5 | 55.1 | 44.9 | 100.0 |
| Most | 4546.4 | 2053.0 | 6599.5 | 68.9 | 31.1 | 100.0 |
| About half | 998.2 | 532.5 | 1530.8 | 65.2 | 34.8 | 100.0 |
| Few | 955.8 | 588.3 | 1544.1 | 61.9 | 38.1 | 100.0 |
| None | 474.0 | 392.0 | 866.1 | 54.7 | 45.3 | 100.0 |
| Don't Know | *34.8 | 39.0 | 73.8 | *47.2 | 52.8 | 100.0 |
| No friends | *31.5 | 159.9 | 191.4 | *16.5 | 83.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Similar age |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All | 1053.5 | 870.7 | 1924.3 | 54.7 | 45.2 | 100.0 |
| Most | 5472.0 | 2657.2 | 8129.3 | 67.3 | 32.7 | 100.0 |
| About half | 1813.4 | 1007.1 | 2820.5 | 64.3 | 35.7 | 100.0 |
| Few | 990.1 | 825.4 | 1815.6 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 100.0 |
| None | 141.5 | 229.4 | 370.9 | 38.2 | 61.8 | 100.0 |
| Don't Know | *19.7 | 35.4 | 55.1 | *35.7 | 64.3 | 100.0 |
| No friends | *31.5 | 159.9 | 191.4 | *16.5 | 83.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |
| Similar level of education |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All | 1228.1 | 949.6 | 2177.8 | 56.4 | 43.6 | 100.0 |
| Most | 4415.6 | 2151.1 | 6566.8 | 67.2 | 32.8 | 100.0 |
| About half | 1890.8 | 773.6 | 2664.5 | 71.0 | 29.0 | 100.0 |
| Few | 1233.9 | 828.7 | 2062.6 | 59.8 | 40.2 | 100.0 |
| None | 202.5 | 282.9 | 485.5 | 41.7 | 58.3 | 100.0 |
| Don't Know | 519.3 | 639.3 | 1158.6 | 44.8 | 55.2 | 100.0 |
| No friends | *31.5 | 159.9 | 191.4 | *16.5 | 83.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9521.8 | 5785.2 | 15307.1 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 100.0 |

[^6]
## EXPLANATORY NOTES

1 This publication presents data on social wellbeing indicators and participation in sport and physical recreation, compiled from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS collected information about personal and household characteristics for people aged 18 years and over resident in private dwellings, throughout non-remote areas of Australia, from March to July 2006

2 This publication consists of a data cube and a report available from the details tab of the publication.

3 Further Explanatory Notes on the 2006 GSS can be found in General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4159.0). These Explanatory Notes contain information on the scope of the survey, sample design, data collection, weighting and reliability of estimates. The publication also contains a Technical Note that provides information on data reliability.

4 Figures have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between totals and the sums of the component items.

5 Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:
Aspects of Social Capital, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4911.0)
General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4159.0)
How Australians Use Their Time, 2006 (cat. no. 4153.0)
Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital, An Australian Framework and Indicators, 2004 (cat. no. 1378.0)
Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics, 2001 (cat. no. 4160.0)

Voluntary Work, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4441.0)
Volunteers in Sport, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4440.0.55.001)
6 Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed in the Catalogue of Publications and Products (cat. no. 1101.0). The Catalogue is available from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au> (Statistics). The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the website (Future Releases) which details products to be released in the week ahead. The National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics theme page also contains a wealth of information and useful references. This site can be accessed through the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au> (Themes - Culture and Recreation).

## DATA ITEMS FROM THE 2006 GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY THAT ARE INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

## A1.1

Participation in sport and physical recreation by:
Age and sex
Family and household type
Index of remoteness
Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage (quintiles)
Self-assessed health status
Mobility (length of time in current dwelling and location of move)
Hours worked
Travelling time to work
Whether work allows for family/community responsibilities
Attended sports events or cultural venues or events in the last 12 months
Attended cultural venues or events in the last 12 months
Attended sports events in the last 12 months
Attended community events in the last 6 months

## Volunteering

Type of organisation volunteered for
Reasons for volunteering
Length of time as a volunteer
Network qualities - trust
Level of generalised trust
Level of trust in hospitals
Level of trust in own doctor
Level of trust in police in local area
Network qualities - sense of efficacy
Feels able to have a say within community on important issues
Network qualities - active involvement in groups
Active involvement in social or support group in the last 12 months by type of organisation
Active involvement in governance and citizenship groups in the last 12 months by type of organisation
Type of civic activity engaged in, in the last 12 months
Network qualities - friendship
Number of friends can confide in
Network type
Frequency of contact with family or friends
Frequency of face to face contact with family or friends
Frequency of telephone, email and mail contact with family or friends
Proportion of friends of same ethnic background
Proportion of friends of similar age
Proportion of friends with similar level of education

## Feelings of safety

Feelings of safety at home alone after dark
Feelings of safety at home alone during the day
Feelings of safety walking alone in local area after dark
Access to motor vehicle and difficulties with transport
Difficulty accessing service providers
Language difficulties when communicating with service providers
Type of service provider where language difficulty was experienced
Main reason find it difficult to access services
Ability to ask for small favours and to obtain support in times of crisis
Source of support in times of crisis

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[^0]:    Acting Australian Statistician

[^1]:    (a) Includes index not available.

[^2]:    (a) Unemployed or not in the labour force.

[^3]:    (a) Unemployed or not in the labour force.

[^4]:    * estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be
    (a) People may have indicated more than one reason for volunteering. used with caution

[^5]:    * estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution
    ** estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50\% and is considered too unreliable for general use
    (a) Includes the category 'no family and no friends'.

[^6]:    * estimate has a relative standard error of $25 \%$ to $50 \%$ and should be used with caution

