



## INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

### GUEST EDITORIAL

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In the last issue of the *Public Health Bulletin*, two articles provided background information about physical activity in NSW – its health benefits, participation rates and strategic initiatives to increase population physical activity levels in NSW.

The following three short reports are case studies showing how initiatives at a local level can influence individual physical activity behaviour and improve local environments. The common theme is the importance of forging partnerships between the health sector and other sectors.

The Illawarra project, through partnerships, maximised opportunities for inexpensive publicity promoting physical activity – an important use of social marketing in public health. Intersectoral work in Central Sydney over the past year and a half has resulted in strong working relationships and a mutual understanding of the capacities of collaborating organisations. The work in Western NSW shows that exchange of information between the health sector and local government officers, particularly engineers and town planners, can result in the development of a resource beneficial to the objectives of both.

These separate pieces of work demonstrate that successful intersectoral collaboration can occur at a local level as well as at a Statewide level. They also reflect three important areas of physical activity promotion:

- increasing the motivation of individuals to be physically active;
- increasing knowledge of local opportunities for physical activity; and
- changing the physical environment.

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will contain articles which focus on research and evaluation initiatives in physical activity promotion.

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#### Infectious Diseases

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