

Active Launceston Tasmania, Australia

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1. Active Tasmania

Through the Active Tasmania health-promotion initiative, the University seeks to partner with others to improve the health and wellbeing of communities through a capacity building process. Based on the success of the original project, Active Launceston (2008), and utilising the resources and knowledge base of the University, Active Tasmania provides consultancies, resources, and event and project management for organisations and communities. Active Tasmania currently includes; cross-sectional community-wide programs, workplace health and wellbeing initiatives, healthy lifestyle promotions, undergraduate units and post-graduate research.

Active Tasmania provides a number of community engagement, leadership, research and teaching outcomes for the University and the communities in which it serves. Active Tasmania enjoys support from across the faculties and regional jurisdictions of the University with staff and students from a variety of disciplines providing specialised input.

The current Active Tasmania commitments include:

- City of Launceston and University of Tasmania - Active Launceston
- University of Tasmania - HealthyU (staff health and wellbeing)
- University of Tasmania - CXA003 Foundations of Active Living
- Tasmanian Health Organisation North - THO-N Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Hawthorn Football Club - Game Day Healthy Living Zones

2. Active Launceston Summary:

Active Launceston is a community driven partnership with the vision of improving the health and wellbeing of the Launceston community through physical activity.

Active Launceston's mission is to mobilise the community to increase their participation in physical activity by; filling gaps in provision, creating pathways, reducing barriers and targeting those with the highest need.

As the sole university in the state, the University of Tasmania (UTAS) has a responsibility to actively contribute to the economic, cultural and social environment in Tasmania. In 2008, UTAS and Launceston City Council formed a partnership to develop Active Launceston. The partnership is one founded on an understanding of mutual benefit, with a variety of funding organisations benefitting by its standing as a community-focussed health-promoting initiative.

Active Launceston has become a multi award winning* community driven partnership that has developed a strong community profile, an excellent reputation, and a highly-recognisable brand and community identity. The partnerships events, programs, website, organisational structure, partnerships and levels of community engagement have gained accolades at a state, national and international level.

Managed by UTAS, Active Launceston has become a foundational project for the university in achieving authentic, integrated and effective community outreach. Importantly, Active Launceston has enabled the development of a strong connection to the community in a non-political (non-governmental) environment.

Active Launceston is in line with the strategic priorities of UTAS. This is even more apparent through the new strategic plan, Open to Talent, in which 'Community' is highlighted as an ongoing focus. Active Launceston is strongly aligned to this priority through partnerships, research and evaluation opportunities.

Active Launceston presents opportunities for leadership, research, evaluation, teaching, promotion and marketing; with a new focus on sharing the knowledge gained with other communities. It enjoys support across the faculties of UTAS with students and staff from a variety of disciplines providing specialised input.

The partnership was initiated as an 18 month pilot in June 2008. Due to its success Active Launceston was awarded ongoing funding for a period of three years and has now secured further funding for the subsequent three years from 2013 – 2015. Although it is important to note that at the time of writing this document, to enable Active Launceston to operate at current capacity, further funding will still need to be obtained.

The Ottawa Charter defines health promotion as supporting and enabling individuals to have control over and improve their health and wellbeing (World Health Organisation 2014, 'Health Promotion', para. 3). There is a rapidly growing body of evidence that suggests working in health promoting ways can improve health outcomes for populations (Department of the Health and Human Services 2010).

Tasmania has a particularly poor health record with a major burden to the health system caused by preventable disease. Physical inactivity is major risk factors for chronic disease. Active Launceston seeks to reduce the burden of chronic disease by providing free physical activity programs and events for the community. The Active Launceston partnership also seeks to endorse, support and guide new and existing physical activity providers to enhance their service and their connection with the community. By facilitating engagement of all members of the community in physical activity, Active Launceston seeks to encourage behaviour change through providing access to programs, resources and networks to ensure these healthy lifestyle behaviour changes are sustainable and thus reducing the burden of chronic disease on both an individual and community level.

Active Launceston is scoped around the identified lack of coordination in the community for physical activities. It is evident that there are many other services for health and wellbeing i.e. Eat Well Tas, Quit Tasmania and Heart Foundation; however there has not previously been an organised authority to promote the benefits of physical activity locally or more importantly deliver a selection of inclusive physical activity opportunities to the Launceston community. Rather than duplicating or reinventing the wheel, Active Launceston initiatives are designed to add value to existing successful local programs, fill any identified gaps in provision and develop capacity within the community to ensure sustainable participation in physical activity.

Initiatives are designed to overcome barriers community members have to participation in physical activity and these particularly include, a lack of opportunities, low self-esteem, high costs associated with participation, social disconnection and/or a lack of knowledge of the opportunities available in our community.

Active Launceston is located in the Northern Integrated Care Service (NICS) and has an 'Information Hub' on the ground level. This provides the partnership with strong promotional and awareness opportunities, but most importantly, allows Active Launceston to work closely with health professionals to provide integrated health-care for community members and patients accessing the centre.

3. Target Groups:

In line with current health statistics, research and community consultation, Active Launceston targets groups within our community who are identified as having the highest need. Active Launceston currently focuses their programs towards:

- Older people
- Disengaged young people
- Children
- Under 5's
- Sedentary adults
- Adults suffering from a chronic condition
- Those recovering from illness/injury
- Those from a non English speaking background - Migrants and refugees
- Adults and children with a disability
- Those from a lower socio-economic background

4. Benefits:

Active Launceston has a diverse range of individual and community benefits and outcomes. These benefits include but are not limited to;

1. Improving individual and community health and wellbeing through increasing the number of physical activities available along with endorsing, promoting and supporting new and existing providers
2. Encouraging sustainable participation through creating support networks and resources
3. Increasing the knowledge of the benefits, and importance of physical activity, through community advocacy
4. Developing and utilising an innovative evidence based, preventative health care model
5. Reducing inequity in our community through focusing programs towards those in our community who are the most vulnerable, with the highest level of need, and who may not have otherwise participate
6. Empowering people and communities through providing employment, training and leadership opportunities
7. Decreasing social and geographical barriers through encouraging inclusive participation
8. Providing opportunities for evaluation and research into preventive health care
9. Providing a strong return on investment through seeking to securing health for the long term by keeping people out of hospitals thus reducing the burden on the health budget and the individual cost of living
10. Contributing to the vision and goals of Tasmania's Plan for Physical Activity 2011-2021 as well as many other Federal, State and Local Government, NGO and University plans and policies in the areas of preventive health care, employment, cost of living and access to services, children and youth, sustainability, community engagement, and social inclusion
11. Providing a framework that can be adapted to meet the needs of other communities

5. Vision, Mission, Objectives and Strategies:

The following table outlines the strategic direction of Active Launceston.

Vision: Improve the health and wellbeing of the Launceston community through physical activity.	
Mission: Active Launceston is a partnership that mobilises the community to increase their participation in physical activity by; filling gaps in provision, creating pathways, reducing barriers and targeting those with the highest need.	
Objectives:	Strategies:
1. Develop strategic partnerships with stakeholders for the promotion of physical activity.	1.1 Engage and coordinate an Active Launceston reference group with broad representation from across the community sector
	1.2 Proactively develop mutually beneficial relationships through consultation, networking and the engagement of key groups.
2. Increase the opportunities for participation in physical activity with a particular emphasis on those in the community who are less active.	2.1 Develop, implement and maintain physical activity initiatives that reduce barriers to participation and support a behaviour change for those in the community with the highest identified need.
	2.2 Be an advocate within the community for the benefits of physical activity.
	2.3 Support state and national campaigns through the assistance with, or coordination of, local events.
	2.4 Provide endorsement, support and guidance for new and existing physical activity providers to enhance their service and their connection with the community.
3. Identify, develop and maintain resources that promote participation in physical activity.	3.1 Develop and maintain a variety of resources to promote physical activity such as; website, social media, posters and newsletters.
	3.2 Maintain regular communication with key stakeholders and the community through a variety of mediums.
4. Research, monitor and evaluate partnership outcomes.	4.1 Recruit research personnel to undertake evaluation on different aspects of Active Launceston.
	4.2 Provide evidence of the overall efficacy of Active Launceston through evaluating the key outcomes and their impact on the community.

4.3 Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of individual initiatives such as their; health outcomes, participation rates and their impact on sustainable participation in physical activity.

6. Active Launceston Programs, Events and Initiatives (subject to change on an annual basis due to changes in funding and community need):

Program & Target Group	Description and IMPACT on the Community
Active Parks Sedentary adults, LSES, Families	Active Parks provides free physical activities in the outdoors (Tai Chi, Fun and Fitness, Gentle Exercise & Stretch and Strengthen). This program breaks down social and geographic barriers and encourages the multiple uses of parks & outdoor spaces.
GOLD Older people	GOLD is a program designed to engage older adults in physical activity in a fun and social environment (Rock Climbing, Horse Riding etc) The program helps build participants confidence and allows them to try activities that they may not have participated in on their own.
Active Bike Sedentary adults and Older adults	Active Bike is a program designed to support participants discover the recreational trail network of Launceston and improve their skills of riding safely on the road . Active Bike builds the confidence of the participants so that they are able to join other community cycling groups i.e Mountain Bike Tasmania, TBUG or ride with friends and family once the program has finished.
Active Aquatics (Active Swim, Hydro & Aqua) Sedentary adults Older adults People from NESB Recovering from illness/injury	The Active Swim program is targeted at those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and supports them to develop basic swimming skills, water safety knowledge and provides them with a connection to the community . Active Hydro provides hydrotherapy sessions for those recovering from a physical injury or illness . The sessions are designed to help improve the participant's health so they are able to participate in mainstream swimming and other physical activity programs after completing Active Hydro. Active Aqua is an aqua fitness program aimed at the general community. It enables participants to realise the benefits of aqua fitness and the confidence to continue with other aqua fitness providers within the community.
Active Workplace Employers and Employees	Active Workplaces promotes the importance of workplace physical activity through educational and practical sessions for employees/employers. Numerous workplaces have continued to fund their own physical activities following on from this programs success.
Events Community	Coordinate events and activities to support national and state initiatives such as; Walk to Work Day, Ride to Work Day and Get Walking Tasmania Week.
GAP Activate Your Life	Based on a Womensport and Recreation Tasmania program – GAP AYL supports sedentary adults to overcome barriers to participation

(AYL) Those suffering from or at risk of chronic conditions	in physical activity. The sessions are divided into two parts; theory (body image) and practical (Tai Chi). Throughout the program along with improved physical health, it is evident that individual and group confidence and motivation levels increase. Participants build numerous networks with service providers and increase their awareness of opportunities in the community.
Active & Inclusive Those with disabilities children/adults	A program to encourage adults and children with a disability to be physically active through a variety of adapted activities.
Active Walk Run Sedentary adults Families	Walking, jogging and running program designed to keep community members active over the cold Tassie winter months. This program provides a safe group environment to exercise after dark and also provides training for upcoming community fun runs.
Active and Alive Disadvantaged/ disengaged young people	This program includes one positive risk taking activity per month including sessions such as rock climbing, judo, mountain biking and caving. Young people increase motivation, self esteem and confidence through their participation in the different activities.
Active Dance LSES sedentary adults	Active Dance motivates and inspires participants to get moving through the use of a variety of dancing disciplines. The sessions are designed to support people to develop positive social interactions and improve participant's health and wellbeing in a fun and social environment. This program also breaks down social and geographic barriers .
Active Kids Zero to five aged children & school aged children Teachers and Families and carers	Active play sessions that utilise everyday equipment that would be found in most homes and day care centres. Active Kids provides teachers, carers and parents with lots of ideas of how to keep their children active every day. Sessions are self paced, fun and cater for a range of ages and abilities.
Active TNT Seven to twelve year old children with coordination difficulties.	Active TNT (Try New Things) is aimed at children seven to twelve years who experience difficulties in physical activity and therefore tend to avoid it. Active TNT is a small supported group with individual goal setting. Active TNT gives the participants confidence, encouragement, self esteem and the ability to try 'other' new things .
Active NICS Low SES, sedentary adults, those suffering from a chronic condition	A program located in the new Northern Integrated Care Service targeted at patients and clients of the service and of the Launceston General Hospital along with staff and general community.
Active Gyms Potential gym members and individuals	Active Gyms is specifically designed for adults to be introduced to what physical activity opportunities are provided at different gyms/fitness organisations within the Launceston community to determine what suits their needs in a less intimidating group environment.
Active Winter	Active Winter is held indoors and is aimed to provide a supportive

Sedentary adults over winter months	group environment for adults to participate in physical activity during the colder Tassie months. With the safety and convenience of an indoor setting, the Active Winter program will allow participants to explore different approaches and styles of fitness by trying a variety of activities.
Active Blokes Sedentary men who used to be fit but have let careers and families take over	This program is designed for males who would like to get active and don't know where to start. The program caters for all fitness levels, sessions are held indoors and it is a great way to lead into summer feeling fit and healthy.
Active Sports Families, Individuals who are keen on trying sport	This program was developed to support local traditional sporting clubs by encouraging community members to re-engage with a variety of sports. This program is a good opportunity for families or friends to get together and return to a sport they used to play or even try something new. Examples of sports that have been involved in the program include; softball, hockey, tennis, lawn balls, croquet, mixed netball and bike riding.

Other programs and initiatives include; Active GP Forums, The Giant Walk, Inveresk Park and Walk, Active Garden, Sports Ability Hub, Giant Walk, Active Suburban Walking Maps and Point of Decision Marketing.

7. Future Directions

The future directions of Active Launceston will continue to be based on the evaluation and feedback received from stakeholders and community members. The **Active Launceston Evaluation and Research Plan** is a guiding document which outlines the requirements and methods for continual project improvement. Since the inception in 2008, Active Launceston has undergone many changes and improvements and will continue to do so, to ensure the changing needs of community members and stakeholders are met.

Active Launceston has now developed a strong framework, a well respected brand and identity and a suite of programs, events and initiatives that are inclusive, that caters for all ages and abilities and are professionally instructed and managed. The challenge for the partnership in the future is to engage more community members in each session and ensure their participation in physical activity is sustainable into the future.

8. Evaluation and Research:

As a publically funded initiative, evaluation of Active Launceston has been a priority. Evaluation findings have provided valuable insights into the benefits of the program to participants, stakeholders, UTAS students and the broader community. Mixed method evaluations have assessed the outcomes of Active Launceston between 2008 and 2012. Including; cross-sectional time-series telephone surveys, online surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and student testimonials. This evaluation is supported by the analysis of participation statistics, management processes and

demographic information. The evaluation design was utilised due to the variety of individual and community benefits that were seen to be derived from the initiative. Associated research projects will aim to further validate the outcomes of Active Launceston.

The 2012 Evaluation is summarised in a document entitled **Active Launceston Evaluation Summary 2012**

Evidence from the 2012 evaluation demonstrates Active Launceston is a highly successful partnership achieving a high level of community participation and engagement across all ages and abilities. The award winning partnership has become an economic multiplier, contributing to the prosperity of the greater Launceston community. There is ample qualitative evidence that participation in Active Launceston programs can impact profoundly on people's lives, improving both physical and mental health and increasing social engagement. Active Launceston is a socially inclusive partnership which has contributed to the development of social capital in the Launceston community (Byrne, 2013).

Further statistical analysis of the data gathered during the 2012 evaluation demonstrated that, community members reporting that they had participated in physical activity during the last twelve months increased by 22.7 percentage points (54.4% in 2008 versus 77.1% in 2012, $p < 0.0001$). In addition, the proportion reporting that they undertook moderate intensity activity in the previous fortnight increased by 17.1 percentage points (56.1% in 2008 versus 73.2% in 2012, $p < 0.0001$) and those reporting participation in vigorous activity increased by 18.1 percentage points (19.2% in 2008 versus 37.3% in 2012, $p < 0.0001$). (Byrne, Odgen & Allen 2014)

9. Background Information

Background information on Active Launceston is available via the following links;

Active Launceston Website: www.activelaunceston.com.au

Active Launceston in the media: <http://www.activelaunceston.com.au/about-active-launceston/active-launceston-in-the-media.aspx>

Active Launceston Evaluation and Research: <http://www.activelaunceston.com.au/About-Active-Launceston/Evaluation-Research>

Project Manager's Profile (Mrs Lucy Byrne):

<http://www.activelaunceston.com.au/Portals/0/Lucy%20Byrne%20Profile%20Jan%202015.pdf>

10. Awards

1. * Active Launceston - Active Tasmania Overall State Award and Partnership Award– Medibank Private and Premiers Physical Activity Council – 2009
2. *Active Launceston -Healthy Weight Program - Local Government Awards – Heart Foundation 2009 (including a National commendation award)
3. *University of Tasmania, Vice Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Community Engagement 2009 – Lucy Marshall for Active Launceston
4. *Active Launceston - Whole of Community Involvement Award, Premiers Physical Activity Council 2013.
5. *Active Launceston – Community Achievement Awards Tasmania Finalist, Howrah Plumbing Community of the Year 2013

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12. References

- World Health Organisation 2014, *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* World Health Organisation, viewed 25 November 2014, <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>
- Department of Health and Human Services 2010, *Working in Health Promoting Ways: A strategic framework for DHHS 2009-2012*, viewed 25 November 2014, http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/healthpromotion/wihpw/wihpw_publications/WiHPW_BackgroundPaper.pdf
- Byrne, L, 2013, *Active Launceston Evaluation Summary 2012*, University of Tasmania, Launceston.
- Byrne, L, Ogden, K & Allen, P 2014, ‘Active Launceston: How effective is a partnership project in increasing physical activity in a community setting?’, *Proceedings of the Be Active National Physical Activity Conference*, Canberra, Australia.