
VicHealth

State Sport Program

**FOOTBALL FEDERATION
VICTORIA**

“Summer Sevens”

Progress Report

April 8, 2016

Centre For Sport and Social Impact



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the key Summer Sevens partners, VicHealth and Football Federation Victoria; their associated program providers; and the Summer Sevens participants who contributed to this report. Their generosity of time and sharing their experiences and knowledge was extremely valuable in completing the evaluation. We would particularly like to acknowledge and thank Stefan Grun, Rayoni Nelson from VicHealth, and Mike Fox from Football Federation Victoria. Their constructive feedback and involvement throughout the process has been greatly appreciated.

For further information

Associate Professor Matthew Nicholson
Centre for Sport and Social Impact
La Trobe University
Victoria, Australia

T: +613 5444 7905

E: m.nicholson@latrobe.edu.au

W: www.latrobe.edu.au/cssi

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
CONTENTS.....	2
Football Federation VICTORIA	3
Background	3
STATUS OF PROJECT.....	4
METHOD.....	4
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTCOME EVALUATION	5
IMPACT EVALUATION	7
PROCESS EVALUATION.....	8
Innovation and program development.....	8
SUMMER SEVENS delivery	10
Program reach.....	12
Program exposure.....	13
Motivations, barriers and facilitators	13
Participant Outcomes	15
“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS: pre activity.....	19
“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS post activity	21
KEY FINDINGS.....	29

BACKGROUND

The Centre for Sport and Social Impact (CSSI) at La Trobe University is currently evaluating the outcomes achieved through VicHealth's State Sport Program, of which Football Federation Victoria is a funding recipient.

VicHealth has recognised that the current trends in physical activity participation and sport are shifting, with a growth in non-organised participation as compared to traditional club-based sport. VicHealth's future focus in sport is to enable sporting organisations to get ahead of participation trends by building more welcoming and flexible approaches to organised and social sport participation. The State Sport Program funding aims to initially provide the support necessary for State Sporting Associations (SSAs) to deliver projects which would meet these trends, and ultimately result in more inactive and somewhat active Victorians playing sport.

To fulfil these aims, Football Federation Victoria decided to further develop "Summer Sevens", an existing product with perceived growth potential. "Summer Sevens" is a version of football with some modified rules (such as no offside, goal keeper throws rather than kicks the ball, and kicking the ball from the sideline rather than throwing it once it has gone out) that is played with a reduced number of players (seven a side), on a reduced pitch, typically for a period of seven weeks over the summer period. This product was originally developed over 5 years ago to take advantage of the artificial pitches that were available. Upon realising the growth potential of the sport the Football Federation of Victoria moved to a participation model.

To this end, Football Federation Victoria have placed considerable emphasis on growing the product. After some modest growth between 2013 and 2014 there has been considerable growth in the summer of 2014/2015 and in particular in the summer of 2015/2016 (see section below). As such, "Summer Sevens" is now operational at a large number of venues in metropolitan Melbourne and regional venues throughout Victoria. This report focuses on data collected between October 12th 2015 and March 23rd 2016.

The following report details the evaluation of Football Federation Victoria's "Summer Sevens" program completed by the CSSI. It is divided into seven sections:

- i. This first section provides a background to Football Federation Victoria's funded project under the State Sport Program;
- ii. The second section explains the status of the project to provide context for product development and delivery to date;
- iii. The third section outlines the method used to conduct the evaluation;
- iv. The fourth section reports on how the funded project addressed the key VicHealth physical activity objectives for the State Sports Program;
- v. The fifth section explains the process and participant outcomes (where this data is available);
- vi. The sixth presents the results from the participant survey (where this data is available); and
- vii. The final section provides the key findings.

STATUS OF PROJECT

In accordance with the approved work plan, Football Federation Victoria's project will aim to meet the physical activity objectives of the State Sport Program. The development and delivery of any project is a process, and the status of an individual initiative determines the outcome against VicHealth's objectives and the ability of Football Federation Victoria to aid the data collection process. The status typology in Table 1 explains the ability of a sport to meet VicHealth's objectives and data collection possibilities given the status of the project.

Table 1: Project status typology

Status	Description	Possible data collection
Research	Investigation into project possibilities to meet VicHealth's objectives	SSA interview
Idea	A possible course of action has been identified, but planning for project delivery has not yet begun	SSA interview
Planning	Strategies and actions have been identified, and/or talks with stakeholders have begun to deliver the project. A start date may or may not yet be identified	SSA interview
Pilot	Process and product delivery has begun to test the project on a small scale with the intention of gathering data to make improvements	SSA interview; provider interview; participant interview; pre and post surveys
Operational	The project has been launched to the market, with the intention to meet identified KPIs and VicHealth's objectives	SSA interview; provider interview; participant interview; pre and post surveys

Relative to this typology, the project funded by the State Sport Program and delivered by Football Federation Victoria has/have been classified as follows (Table 2):

Table 2: Status of project/s operated by Football Federation Victoria

Status	Research	Idea	Planning	Pilot	Operational
Summer Sevens					x

METHOD

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach to gather in-depth knowledge about Football Federation Victoria's project. In situations that allow for implementation of this complete method (see Table 1), participants are surveyed pre and post activity, and a subset interviewed post activity to explore their perception of the funded activity and to determine change. Changes in physical activity levels could only be determined if a participant completed both a pre and post survey. Program developers and providers from the funded sports association, Football Federation Victoria, were interviewed to develop a comprehensive analysis of the design process and outcomes of the activities. Table 3 outlines the data collected for each funded project and the number of people that participated in each method.

Table 3: Individual project status and applied method

Project	Status	Method
Summer Sevens	Operational	SSA interviews (N= 2); Provider interviews (N= 2); Participant interviews (N= 12); Pre surveys (N= 165); Post surveys (N= 146)

Note: the number of interviews or surveys is identified in parentheses.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTCOME EVALUATION

The following section presents the results relevant to VicHealth’s State Sport Program goal to “increase physical activity levels amongst inactive and somewhat active Victorians through playing sport by 2018”. It provides evidence to answer the following outcome questions as listed in VicHealth’s program logic:

VicHealth outcome evaluation:

1. Numbers of new or existing participants in the funded sports, who are inactive or somewhat active;
2. Change in physical activity levels of participants.

Against VicHealth’s outcome evaluation, Football Federation Victoria has a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of 10,000.

The following participant numbers include the “Summer Sevens” operational period from October 12 2015 to March 23 2016. As shown in Table 4, the activity attracted 3831 registered participants; 3831 active participants (meaning participants who attended at least one session); and the number of regular participant (meaning participants who attended at least half of the program sessions) is not known given that attendance is not recorded at “Summer Sevens”.

Table 4: Participant numbers

	Summer Sevens October 12 2015 to March 23 2016
Registered participants	3831
Active participants	3831
Regular participants	Not known

Participant activity data has been obtained from those participants over 18 who completed a registration form with the one item question:

In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate? This may include sport, exercise and brisk walking or cycling for recreation or to get to and from places, but should not include housework or physical activity that may be part of your job.

Participants who answer “0 days” are classified “inactive”; participants who answer “1, 2 or 3 days” are “somewhat active”; and participants who answer “4, 5, 6 or 7 days” are “active”.

Data Limitation: Notwithstanding the large number of active participants (see Table 4), data on pre-participation activity levels were obtained from just 92 participants due to a mix of junior and senior participants, and the registration process where only the captain of the senior team registers on behalf of participants. As this represents less than 3% of the entire registrants these data need to be interpreted with this in mind.

VicHealth outcome 1: There were 92 new or existing participants in the funded sport who were *inactive* or *somewhat active*. This represented 57% of the total registrants with data on this measure (Table 5);

Table 5: Activity level of participants prior to participating

	PRE N=163	PRE %
Inactive	6	4%
Somewhat active	86	53%
Active	71	43%

Where participants had completed both pre and post activity surveys, their change in physical activity could be determined (n=67). These data are represented in terms of shifts across physical activity categories from the pre to post-participation surveys (Table 6) and in terms of the numbers of participants increasing and decreasing their activity levels across assessments (Table 7).

Table 6: Change in physical activity levels

PRE-activity	POST-activity		
	Inactive	Somewhat active	Active
Inactive	1	0	1
Somewhat active	40	1	26
Active	26	0	7
Total	67	1	34

Table 7 shows that 26 participants had increased their physical activity levels (1 inactive, 23 somewhat active and 2 active); 14 participants saw no change in their physical activity levels (6 somewhat active and 8 active); and 27 participants decreased their physical activity (11 somewhat active and 16 active).

VicHealth outcome 2: 26 participants increased their physical activity levels; 14 participants' physical activity levels remained the same; and 27 decreased (Table 7).

Table 7: Progression from inactivity to activity

	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased	Total
Inactive	1	-	-	1
Somewhat active	23	6	11	40
Active	2	8	16	26
Total	26	14	27	67

IMPACT EVALUATION

The following section outlines the number of new participation opportunities (sessions) delivered that have the potential to engage the inactive and somewhat active via the following calculation:

New participation opportunities = total number of sessions per instance.

If multiple instances exist, the total number of sessions for each instance will be added together to determine the total. Also, where a sport operated the activity prior to obtaining VicHealth funding in July 2015, the number of new participation opportunities will incorporate an additional calculation, minus the number of previously existing instances x number of previously existing weekly sessions.

“Summer Sevens” was offered over 15 sites (13 different sites as two were repeated in 2016) during the summer of 2015/2016. These data are presented in Table 8 below. Not all of the competitions were new in 2015-16. Those that are offered for the first time are illustrated with an asterisk *.

Table 8: Summer Sevens for 2015/2016: Venues, days and dates of delivery and length of program

Venue	Day	Start Date	Final Date	Length of Program
2015				
State Football Centre	Monday	October 12th	November 30th	7 weeks
	Wednesday	October 14th	November 25th	7 weeks
	Thursday*	October 15th	November 26th	7 weeks
Clifton Park	Tuesday*	October 13th	December 1st	7 weeks
	Wednesday	October 14th	November 25th	7 weeks
	Thursday	October 15th	November 26th	7 weeks
	Sunday*	October 18th	December 6th	7 weeks
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex	Monday	October 12th	November 30th	7 weeks
	Thursday*	October 15th	November 26th	7 weeks
Knox Regional Football Centre	Thursday	October 15th	November 26th	7 weeks
Arndell Park Ballarat	Monday	October 12th	November 30th	7 weeks
	Thursday	October 15th	November 26th	7 weeks
Keilor Park	Wednesday*	October 14th	November 25th	7 weeks
Yarraville	Tuesday*	October 13th	December 1st	7 weeks
Caroline Springs	Monday*	October 12th	November 30th	7 weeks
Dandenong	Monday*	October 19th	November 23rd	6 weeks
Brimbank	Thursday*	October 22nd	December 10th	7 weeks
2016				
State Football Centre	Wednesday*	January 20th	March 2nd	7 weeks
Clifton Park	Thursday*	January 21st	March 3rd	7 weeks
Hume	Wednesday*	February 17th	March 23rd	7 weeks
Gippsland	Wednesday*	February 25th	March 16th	7 weeks

*new competitions in 2015-16

Based on the data presented in Table 8 the number of participation opportunities for the Football Federation Victoria has created has been calculated as follows:

20 instances (days/nights) x 7 weeks + 1 instance x 6 weeks = 146 participation opportunities

Total of participation opportunities for Summer Sevens 2015/2016 = 146

Given not all competitions in 2015/2016 were new it is also pertinent to calculate the number of new participation opportunities for “Summer Sevens”. As can be observed in Table 8 there are 13 instances (days/nights) that are delivered for the first time in 2015/2106 over 7 weeks and one delivered of 6 weeks. This equates to 91 + 6 participation opportunities.

Total of new participation opportunities for Summer Sevens 2015/2016 = 97

PROCESS EVALUATION

The findings related to the processes Football Federation Victoria has taken to designing and implementing “Summer Sevens” are presented here. This section aims to fulfil the information required for the VicHealth process evaluation objective as listed in the program logic:

VicHealth process evaluation: For each strategy, process evaluation will capture delivery, reach, exposure, facilitators and barriers.

It begins by: detailing how the Football Federation Victoria developed the program; the details of program delivery; its reach into the sports community; how the program was exposed to a new market; and finally the influences on participants’ physical activity behaviour and engagement with the program.

INNOVATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

As noted above, “Summer Sevens” was an existing product that had been in existence for some 5 years. “Summer Sevens” is a version of football with some modified rules (such as no offside, goal keeper throws rather than kicks the ball, and kicking the ball from the sideline rather than throwing it once it has gone out) that is played with a reduced number of players (seven a side) for a reduced period of time, on a reduced pitch typically for a period of seven weeks over the summer period.

What has changed is how the product was conceptualised by Football Federation Victoria. Originally, some 5-6 years ago, “Summer Sevens” was conceptualised as a way of taking advantage of the artificial pitches that were available, thereby demonstrating to local councils that these could be utilised all year round (SSA provider interview 1). Football Federation Victoria, realising the growth potential of the product, moved to a participation focus/model, with the intention of providing an opportunity to keep junior and adult players playing all year round, to provide an attractive product to lapsed players by offering them a more social and less committed avenue to play football, and to attract totally new players to the game. The VicHealth funding provided the opportunity to substantially grow the product.

SUMMER SEVENS TEAM

The “Summer Sevens” team is led by Mike Fox (Participation Manager) and Scott Atkinson (Participation Officer). Their roles are to create content for distribution through their channels, liaise with graphic designers for the promotional material, manage all registrations and customer liaisons, appoint and train staff, book and liaise with their venues, create the fixtures and deal with ongoing day to day operations. They are also supported by a Competitions Coordinator, who offers support in creating the fixture prior to the first round of competition, and a Communications Department (Media & Communications Manager, Digital Coordinator) that are responsible for distribution of content through FFV channels (FFV Facebook page, Instagram, Website).

DEVELOPING SUMMER SEVENS

As noted above, “Summer Sevens” was a pre-existing product that was perceived to have considerable capacity for growth. The emphasis since VicHealth funding has been on the growth of the product. Data suggest a substantial increase in participation in “Summer Sevens” (see Outcomes section below).

BUSINESS MODEL AND DELIVERERS

At present, Football Federation Victoria has an emphasis on growing the product, primarily through engaging with: (i) councils who have venues with surfaces (initially the emphasis was on artificial surfaces, but it is now also expanded beyond that to include grass as well) that are suitable for “Summer Sevens” to generate interest; (ii) clubs that are keen to host “Summer Sevens”; (iii) venues that are suitable and available; and (iv) teams that can be recruited. Some core expenditure relates to cost of equipment, hiring of venues, funding positions for FFV to have a presence at each of the participating venues to ensure that the competition is run smoothly, for training of these event coordinator staff, staff to oversee the running of “Summer Sevens” including liaising with core stakeholders and marketing.

At present “Summer Sevens is a **sustainable model**. It has been in operation for 5 years and at the very least has been cost neutral” (SSA staff correspondence). The VicHealth funding has allowed FFV to grow the product and increase participation opportunities by expanding the number of venues/competition nights that are offered.

FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Football Federation Victoria has a plan for an alternate sustainable business model once the VicHealth funding ceases in 2018.

The core components of the sustainable business model are:

- Shift emphasis from “Summer Sevens” being a *venue based delivery model* that requires extensive liaison and management to provide adequate customer service, to a club based delivery model. As noted by one of the SSA staff, “ ...We’ve got 330 clubs in Victoria, they’re not all going to run it but they can then become active deliverers and take a greater responsibility and give that customer service level that we would expect”.
- Although the finer details of this process have yet to be determined, it is acknowledged that this would involve FFV setting up a licencing model that was attractive to clubs and give everyone involved a return.

SUMMER SEVENS DELIVERY

During the summer of 2015/2016 “Summer Sevens” was delivered across 15 venues (see Table 8).

COMPETITION TEAMS

“Summer Sevens” has been delivered to the following types of teams in 2015/2016:

- Juniors beginning at under 12s
- Open men’s teams
- Open women’s teams
- Mixed teams
- CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) teams through work with specific councils. These teams played within their own competition. The decision to have these teams operate in their own competition was based on the differing expectations of these players and that these players often did not pay for their registration.

LOCATIONS

“Summer Sevens” was delivered at a wide variety of metropolitan and regional venues that included:

- The State Football Centre
- Clifton Park
- Kingston Heath Soccer complex
- Knox regional Football centre
- Arndell Park
- Ballarat
- Keilor Park
- Yarraville
- Caroline Springs
- Dandenong
- Brimbank
- Hume
- Gippsland

CORE STAKE HOLDERS AND DELIVERERS

Several core stakeholders and deliverers were identified by the SSA providers. These included:

- *Team managers*: In line with the view that the biggest stakeholders were the people playing the game, team managers were identified as the core stakeholders. As noted by SSA staff, “Liaising with them [team managers] can make life as simple as possible to get a team registered ...you’ve got that one dedicated person who’s responsible for collecting the money, paying the fee, actually registering the player details, making sure that everyone knows the fixture”.
- *Councils or local venues/clubs*: to be able to secure a venue that is suitable to the sport and close to people so they do not have to travel too far.
- *FFV facilitators*: the people trained by FFV to attend the venues to ensure that the competition was run well and people had a quality experience.
- *Referees*: people responsible for officiating matches.

EQUIPMENT

All equipment is supplied by FFV. Where possible they store the equipment at the venue, otherwise the casual staff members are responsible for the transportation of the equipment for their shift.

In regards to equipment FFV require the following. This list is based on one Summer Sevens pitch (there are a minimum of two pitches at any given venue):

- 2 x Samba (portable) Goals
- 3 x Footballs (Size 4 or 5 depending on age group)
- 10 x bibs (in case of kit clashes)
- 20 x cones (mark out the pitch)
- 10 x flat disc cones (mark out penalty areas)

REGISTRATION AND COST

The registration process for “Summer Sevens” is completed through an external site called TryBooking. There is a two stage process for registration:

- Team Registration process: completed via the TryBooking system - in 2016 the cost was \$400 per team and in 2015, \$400 was the early bird rate with \$450 as the regular rate.
- Player Registration process: FFV send a confirmation e-mail to a team once they register with the attached player registration form; they require the team manager to submit all of the details of their participating players. There is capacity for teams to bring in players on a needs basis, given it is a social sport, and they do this by e-mailing through details during the season or writing them on a team sheet at the venue.

TIMETABLE/SCHEDULING

Seventeen of the twenty one participation opportunities were run in the period leading up to Christmas 2015 (between October 12 and December 10 2015, see Table 8). The events in this period were scheduled on a Monday (N= 5), Tuesday (N=2), Wednesday (N=3), Thursday (N=6) and Sunday (N=1). In the period between January and March 2016 three competitions were run on a Wednesday and one on a Thursday. Kick-off times are always in the evening and the following times are available on any competition evening:

- 5.45pm
- 6.30pm
- 7.15pm
- 8.00pm
- 8.45pm
- 9.30pm

PROPOSED FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Notwithstanding proposed changes to the business model as outlined above, several changes to how the “Summer Sevens” competition have been proposed by FFV staff. These include:

(i) **Splitting the competition into two:** based on feedback from players the FFV staff have proposed that in future it would be useful to split the competition into players who want a high level of competition and those who want to have a bit of a “kick around” for the social aspect. This would cater to the needs of the winter players who want to keep playing and sharpen their skills and those who want the low key social component.

(ii) **Possible grading of sides** so that the level of competition is relatively even: may not be possible at very age group or every venue but certainly a possibility for open grade men could split into an A and B grade competition.

(iii) **Examination of whether CALD communities could become a big target market for Summer Sevens** or whether it remains an ad hoc arrangement in which local councils approach FFV.

(iv) **Targeting corporate communities:** this is perceived by FFV to be a core opportunity for growth of “Summer Sevens”. As noted by SSA staff, “We know there’s a lot of organisations out there who do sport activities for their work and they settled for a competition and so how can we work with them to make their life easier and actually get them engaged through everything”.

PROGRAM REACH

- Instructors / deliverers: 100, 85 referees and 15 venue coordinators
- Metropolitan LGAs:
 - Kingston
 - Knox
 - Darebin
 - Moreland
 - Wyndam
 - Brimbank
 - Maribyrnong
 - Greater Dandenong
- Regional LGAs:
 - Ballarat
 - Mildura

PROGRAM EXPOSURE

Football Federation Victoria has an extensive database of over 63,000 players and 80,000 people if you include coaches and administrators. This is a primary source of marketing.

MARKETING CHANNELS

The core marketing strategies for promotion of Summer Sevens are as follows:

- Sending out emails and EDMs promoting “Summer Sevens” to the 63,000 players on the registered database. This is done on a consistent basis, “Whether it’s once every fortnight maybe a couple of months out and then leading into once a week when the registrations are closing”. Some consideration of whether these emails and EDMs ought to be targeted to specific demographics (e.g. lapsed players) or whether they remain open.
- Facebook: the use of paid posts to promote “Summer Sevens”. Although the audience that is reached was very high FFV is not convinced that the take up was good.
- FFV events and clubs : whenever they have a gathering of “football people” they try and make sure people leave having a good idea of what “Summer Sevens” is and this is particularly the case as the winter season comes to a close.

MOTIVATIONS, BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS

Participants reported on the motivations, barriers, facilitators and outcomes of engaging in “Summer Sevens” and in physical activity more generally.

MOTIVATIONS

Participants who were interviewed, as well as the 121 participants who responded to this question on the post-activity survey, identified the following motivations for engaging in “Summer Sevens”:

- Spend time with friends
- Have fun
- Improve fitness levels
- Learn new skills

Post-participation survey responses (see Figure 6) revealed that *Spend time with friends* was listed in the top three motives for 85% of survey respondents. *Have fun* was listed in the top three motives for over 85% of respondents and *improve fitness level* over 70%. These motives were mentioned at various points throughout the in-depth interviews with the 12 participants. For instance, several interviewees specifically mentioned the desire to maintain or increase fitness such as participant one: “It was just to get more active than just gym.” As well, interviewees also noted the importance of the social side of “Summer Sevens” and how this provided “a nice opportunity to hang out with your mates once a week that you might not make up other time to see them” (participant 3). However, one important motive that was raised by several interviewees that was not obtained from the survey data was the **love of the game of football/soccer**. Typical of these responses, were the comments of participant two when asked about their primary motive for participating in the program: “Oh, I just love it ... from a very young age I was involved in soccer and I’ve grown up in a sporting family I guess I just love it. It helps me a lot as I was growing up too, it was basically a stress release for me and I loved it”. Consistent with this were the comments of participant 2: “Just that we all love the ball, something to do when the season ends I guess. You get a bit bored and want to keep playing”.

BARRIERS

The primary barriers to participating in an organised physical activity in the past as reported by the 123 people in the post-participation survey and those interviewed included the following:

- Time constraints
- Work
- Cost
- Motivation
- Injury

Time constraints was the most frequently endorsed barrier to participation in an organised program/activity like this. This was endorsed as the major barrier by over one quarter of respondents in the post activity survey (see Figure 4) and was noted in various ways by the survey respondents. For instance, despite having a love of the sport of soccer, interviewees mentioned that barriers to participating in football included “time, commitments, family, work/life balance” (participant 6) and cost was mentioned as a barrier by several interviewees, including participant 9 when asked about barriers to participating in physical activity: “Cost, hugely cost. I would love to sign up to a gym but I just cannot stomach how much it costs”. Injury was mentioned by 7% of the 123 survey respondents as the main barrier to them engaging in physical activity and this was the most frequent response given by the 12 participants that were interviewed in depth.

FACILITATORS TO ENGAGING WITH SUMMER SEVENS

The primary facilitators to participating in “Summer Sevens” reported by those interviewed and those in the post-participation survey included the following:

- **Nature of “Summer Sevens”:** Participants clearly valued “Summer Sevens” as a football product, something that provided them with an opportunity to practice their skills and keep fit in a competitive yet social environment that was convenient for them in terms of location and time. This was illustrated when participants in the post-participation survey reported what they liked most about “Summer Sevens”; comments included “I like that it is a competitive competition in a social setting. Exercising without really thinking about it” and “A fun form of soccer different from the regular season. It’s fast paced, more casual, but still a good workout and opportunity to practice your skills”. Participants also valued the options that were available to them, including being able to play in a mixed team; when asked what they liked most about “Summer Sevens” in the post-participation survey, one participant commented: “ability to play with friends in off season, mixed as well”.
- **Good organisation, facilities and equipment:** Participants were highly complimentary about how well run “Summer Sevens” was as a competition. They made reference to how useful it was to have representatives from FFV at the games (which was reinforced by the referees in their interviews), how the games always started on time and how they valued competing in a well organised and professional environment that was “run smoothly”. This extended to all facets of the competition, including the registration system; people appreciated how easy it was. This was illustrated in post-participation survey data where it was noted that it was “easy to participate, minimal organisation required”. Participants also made reference to the high quality of the pitches and equipment, including the balls.

- **Good value for money:** A consistent theme amongst participants was that they perceived “Summer Sevens” as something that was good value for money. Given the registration cost per team, players might only be out of pocket by \$40 over the season if there were 10 players on a team. This was clearly reflected in the participation satisfaction data (Figure 8) where 77% of the 122 survey respondents rated “Summer Sevens” as good value for money (the highest rating) and 19% as OK value for money.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

The following outcomes have been identified through interviews with participants and pre and post activity survey data and in the case of participation growth, data provided by the FFV.

PERCEIVED BENEFITS

The four main perceived benefits of participating in “Summer Sevens” included:

- **Enjoyment:** Participants repeatedly made reference to how much they enjoyed the experience of competing in “Summer Sevens”. Participants found “Summer Sevens” to be a fun activity that enabled them to maintain some skills in a more casual environment in the off season. Reference was made to how it was “fun to be part of a team”, how it was “fun and an opportunity to try things that you wouldn’t try in a normal game” (post-participation survey responses). One participant noted that they enjoyed being able to reconnect with the sport: “what I wanted to do was play soccer again, and that was good to just be out there and be able to enjoy a game” (participant interview 11). As noted previously, participants really appreciated the balance between enjoyment and challenge, as illustrated in comments like “fun and challenging” and “fun and competitive”, which were responses that were provided by participants when asked what they most liked about the activity.
- **Socialising with friends:** One of the primary perceived benefits of “Summer Sevens” recognised by participants was playing with friends, being able to socialise with others and reconnecting with people that they had played with in the past. This is illustrated in comments such as “playing a fun sport with friends over a short period of time encouraged people to take part and get involved. Gave people a reason to be active” (post-participation survey data). Consistent with this were the comments of interview participant three: “it’s just like a nice opportunity to hang out with your mates once a week that you might not make other time to see them, literally like it was just social for me so I guess that it what I got out of it the most”.
- **Fitness, motivation, and opportunity to maintain skills:** One of the core benefits noted by participants in both the interview and post-participation survey responses was that “Summer Sevens” assisted with fitness and motivation to engage in physical activity. This related to both regular footballers, who wanted to maintain their fitness and skills during the summer period prior to winter competition, and lapsed footballers or people new to the sport who wanted to build some fitness. This was illustrated in the comments of interview participant 12 who was trying to get back into activity after injury: “It (Summer Sevens) helped a bit actually when I – from the first game until like even though it was 6 weeks and I was only once a week, I still was doing my own training for it but I had realised how much my fitness had grown in just 6 weeks”. With respect to motivation to undertake activity, participants (post-participation survey data) noted: “Summer Sevens was exercising without thinking about it” and how it was a “social way to get fit”.

- **Confidence:** players also noted an increase in their confidence of their football skills and ability to be active as a result of playing in the “Summer Sevens” competition. Participants noted that football was a very accessible sport and that this competition provided a good way to reconnect with the sport (participant interview data).

PARTICIPANTS ATTRACTED TO THE PROGRAM

The target audience for “Summer Sevens” were threefold:

- (i) Traditional winter football players: to keep them active and playing all year round.
- (ii) Lapsed players: get them back into the sport by offering a more social and less committed avenue to play.
- (iii) Attract totally new players (e.g. friends of football, parents, spectators and followers of the world game) to the game and to give them an opportunity to experience football for the first time.

At present the perception among SSA providers and referees officiating the games was that the greatest proportion of players were regular winter players, followed by lapsed players who were returning to the sport, with some people who were new to the sport. For instance, one estimate from an official at the games was: “I’d say the breakdown would’ve been maybe 60% players that play for a club winter season and maybe 40% that don’t”, that’s just a rough guess I think” (referee interview 2). One way of increasing the number of new people to the sport of football through “Summer Sevens” that has been flagged is targeting the corporate sector in future. Data supplied by FFV confirm that the majority of the 3524 players in 2015 were winter players (71%). Of the remaining 29% of players in 2015, 26% were new “Summer Sevens” players and 3% were lapsed winter players. In terms of the gender breakdown in 2015, 30% of participants were female and 70% male and in terms of ages there was a relatively even split between open players (17+) and juniors, with the figures being 48% (open age) and 52% (juniors) of total players respectively.

PARTICIPATION ENGAGEMENT AND OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM

Based on interviews with participants, post-participation survey responses and interviews with referees, players in “Summer Sevens” were clearly engaged. As noted above, they were engaged with: the product itself and how well it was organised; and what it could offer them in terms of fitness, maintenance of skills, enjoyment and opportunity to socialise. This was clearly reflected in the participation satisfaction data (Figure 8), where 65% of the 122 survey respondents rated their satisfaction as good (the highest rating) with the remaining 35% rating their satisfaction as OK (the next highest available rating).

PARTICIPATION GROWTH

Based on participation data supplied by FFV there has been a considerable growth in the number of participants from the 2014/2015 summer, the period prior to VicHealth funding, to the 2015/2106 summer. Specifically, there has been a growth of 65% in “Summer Sevens” since VicHealth funding; there were 2325 participants in the 2014/2015 summer season and 3831 for the 2015/2016 summer season.

POTENTIAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Notwithstanding high levels of satisfaction and engagement with “Summer Sevens”, both participants and providers made some recommendations for how the product might be improved.

- **Splitting the competition:** As noted above, a recommendation from FFV, based on observation and feedback from participants, is splitting the competition into two: one that caters for players who want to be really challenged and are highly competitive; and one that caters more for those after the low key social experiences. In addition, it was acknowledged that it could be useful to grade teams according to their skill levels. Consistent with this, when asked about how “Summer Sevens” might be improved, participants made reference to “more emphasis on fun and playing for fun”, “too competitive at times”, “different levels of competition” and “grading of teams so that teams could be more evenly matched” (post-participation survey data).
- **More sessions:** Although the brief nature of the “Summer Sevens” competition was perceived as a facilitator for participation, many participants, when asked about how “Summer Sevens” might be improved, made reference to making the games longer and having more games during the competition period (post-participation survey data).
- **Quality of the referees:** Whilst participants were generally complimentary of the quality of the referees, several participants expressed concern about the quality of the referees. Consistent with this, when asked about how “Summer Sevens” might be improved, participants made reference to “poor refereeing” “referees” and “different rules each week as refs were unsure” (post-participation survey data). Participants also noted that players from other teams becoming too aggressive was also an issue (post-participation survey data). On this point FFV recognised that it would be useful to provide conflict resolution training to match officials moving forward.
- **Safety, lighting and lateness of some games:** Although participants were highly complimentary of the facilities and how well organised “Summer Sevens” was, several participants in the post-participation survey made reference to concerns about the lateness of some of the games (i.e., 9 pm and 9.30pm) which were deemed problematic for younger females and people having to work the next day. Another issue that was raised concerned lighting around some of the grounds: “the lighting around there [the ground], was a little scary, like I did not feel safe walking to my car afterwards even though it was only 150 metres from the field” (participant 9 interview).

FUTURE INTENTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

Data from the post-participation survey data (N = 121) showed that there was a clear intention to continue to participate in this program, with 98% noting that they were either likely (72%) or somewhat likely (26%) to participate in “Summer Sevens” in future. Consistent with this, participant interview data strongly indicated that participants would both likely return to the competition in future and emphatically recommend it to friends.

HOW PARTICIPANTS CONCEPTUALISED “SUMMER SEVENS”

The wordle in Figure 1 provides a graphic illustration of the top 20 words participants who completed an evaluation survey used to describe “Summer Sevens”. The most frequent words of “fun” “sociable”, “friendly”, “competitive” and “fitness” were consistent with participant interview and survey findings, which emphasised that “Summer Sevens” was both fun and competitive at the same time and provided a great opportunity to be active over the summer period.

Figure 1: Participants described the program as:



“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS: PRE ACTIVITY

This section reports on the “Summer Sevens” participants who responded to the pre activity survey (n=165). It provides a description of their demographics and self-efficacy.

“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

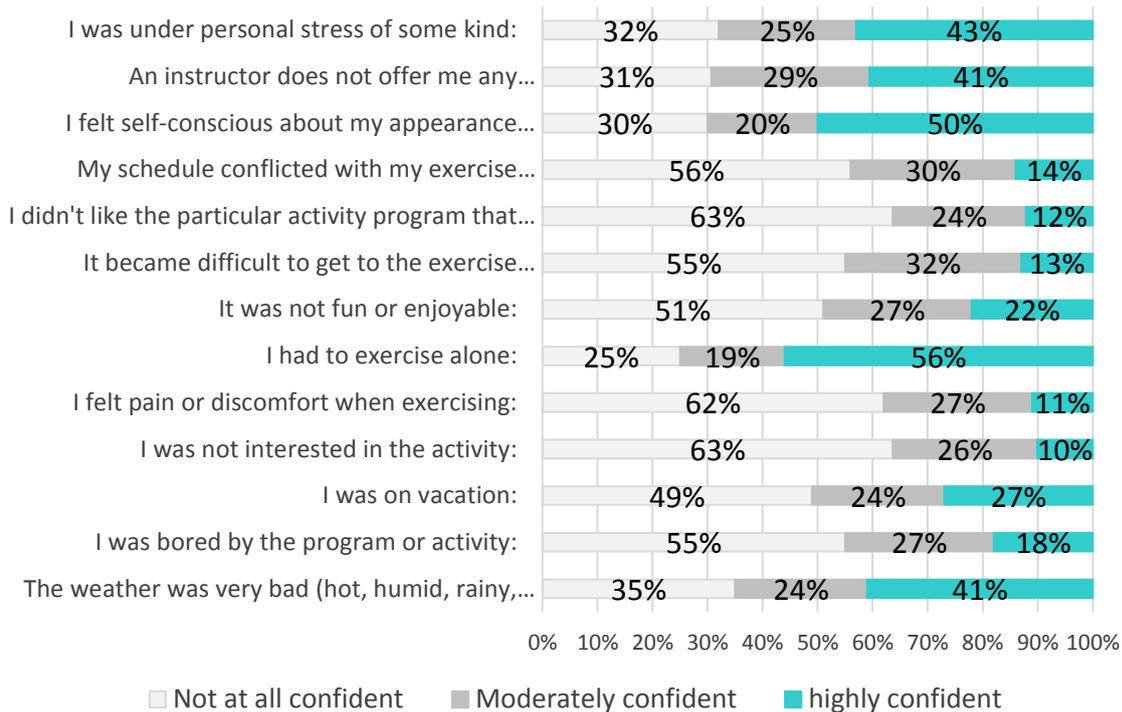
Table 9: Summary of demographics (n=165)

18 – 29 years of age		30 + years of age		
103		62		
Gender				
Male		Female		
83		82		
Where were you born?				
Australia		Overseas		
103		62		
Marital status				
Married	Single, never married	De facto or living together	Divorced, separated or widowed	
33	80	50	1	
What is the highest level of education you have completed?				
Postgraduate degree	Undergraduate degree	Advanced diploma or diploma	Secondary (i.e. High School)	Other
48	60	17	34	5
Employment status				
Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Not in the labour force	Unemployed	
100	43	11	10	
Personal annual gross income				
Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$100,000	More than \$100,000	
57	60	28	16	
Household annual gross income				
Under \$40,000	\$40,001 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$150,000	More than \$150,000
20	29	31	42	38
Do you have a disability or physical condition which has lasted, or is likely to last, for six months or more that restricts your life in some way?				
Yes	No	Not sure	Prefer not to say	
11	149	2	1	

“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SELF-EFFICACY

A participant’s perceived self-efficacy (Figure 2) is how well a participant believes they can perform or participate in physical activity. Previous studies have indicated that a participant’s perceived self-efficacy can be a large barrier to physical activity, and that the more a participant can “*imagine*” themselves participating in an activity, the more likely they is to take it up.

Figure 2: I believe I could exercise on at least five days of the week for at least 30 minutes per day if... (n=153).



“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS POST ACTIVITY

This section reports on the “Summer Sevens” participants who responded to the post activity survey (n=146). It provides: a description of their demographics; their participation and engagement with the “Summer Sevens” activity; and finally their outcomes and perception of the activity.

“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 10: Summary of demographics (n=146)

18 – 29 years of age		30 + years of age		
80		66		
Gender				
Male		Female		
68		78		
Where were you born?				
Australia		Overseas		
103		43		
Marital status				
Married	Single, never married	De facto or living together	Divorced, separated or widowed	
36	55	48	2	
What is the highest level of education you have completed?				
Postgraduate degree	Undergraduate degree	Advanced diploma or diploma	Secondary (i.e. High School)	Other
48	44	19	25	5
Employment status				
Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Not in the labour force	Unemployed	
87	43	2	9	
Personal annual gross income				
Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$100,000	More than \$100,000	
49	47	29	16	
Household annual gross income				
Under \$40,000	\$40,001 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$150,000	More than \$150,000
14	25	33	35	34
Do you have a disability or physical condition which has lasted, or is likely to last, for six months or more that restricts your life in some way?				
Yes	No	Not sure	Prefer not to say	
14	125	0	2	

“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Table 11: At which of the following locations did you participate in the program/activity?

	N= 139	%
Clifton Park (Brunswick)	73	56%
State Football Centre (Thornbury)	25	19%
Mclvor Reserve (Yarraville)	12	9%
Morshead Park (Ballarat)	10	8%
Other	10	8%
Keilor Park Recreation Reserve (Keilor Park)	4	3%
Kingston Health (Cheltenham)	4	3%
Knox Regional Football Centre (Wantirna South)	1	1%
Arndell Park (Truganina)	0	0
Springside Recreation Reserve (Caroline Springs)	0	0%

Table 12: Did you stop participating prior to the end of the program/activity?

	N=129	%
Yes	10	8%
No	119	92%

Table 13: What is the main reason that you stopped participating?

	N=10	%
Went away (on holidays)	3	30%
Injury	3	30%
Work	2	20%
Child or family care responsibilities	1	10%
Program was over	1	10%

“SUMMER SEVENS” MARKETING AND EXPOSURE

Table 14: How did you find out about the activity? (Respondents were able to choose all that applied).

	N=129	%
Friends / Family	65	50%
Email	24	19%
Word of mouth	24	19%
Social media	16	12%
Website	12	9%
Workplace	7	5%
Sports club	6	5%
Participated last season	6	5%
Local council	0	0%
Local paper	0	0%
Advertising (TV, radio etc)	0	0%

“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANTS’ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEHAVIOUR

Figure 3: Prior to participating in this program/activity, how long had it been since you participated in an organised program/activity like this? (n=126)

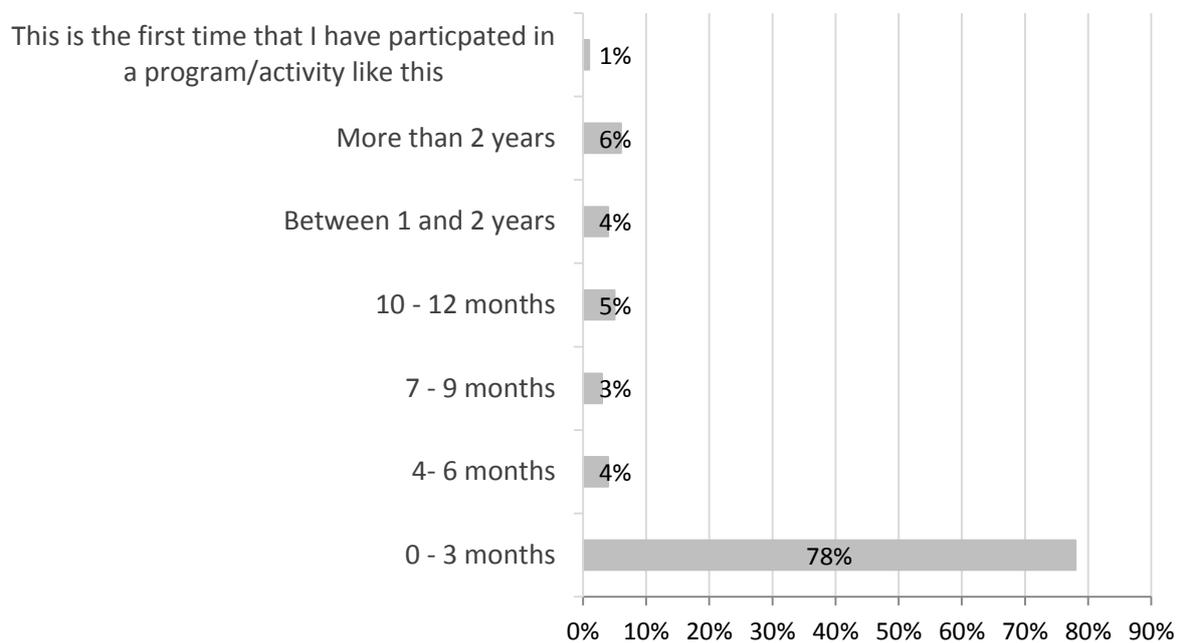
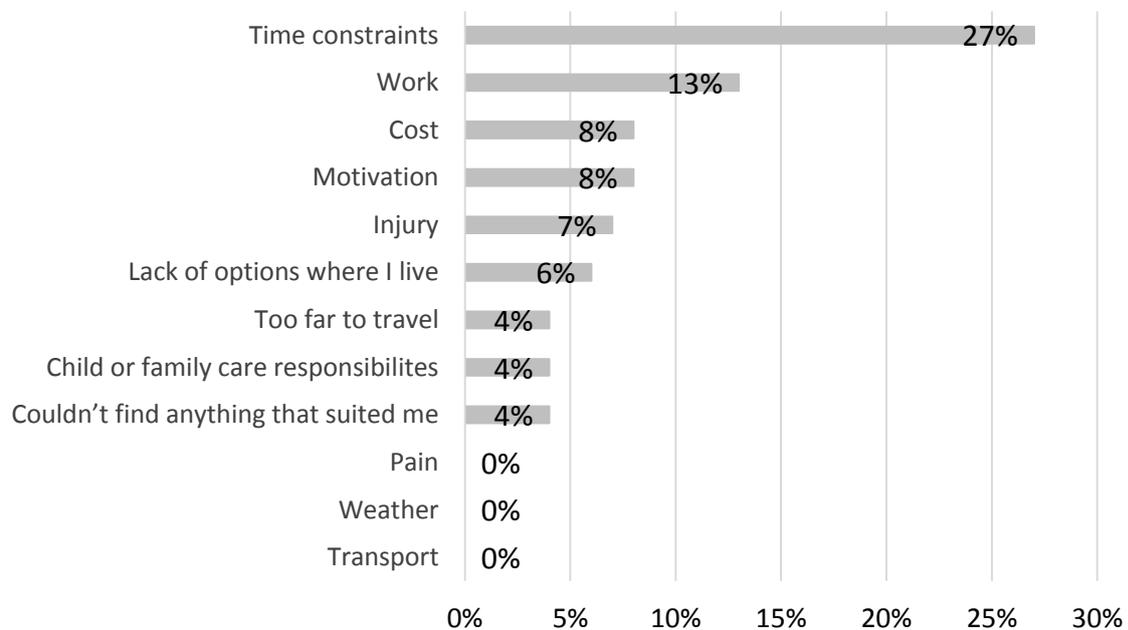


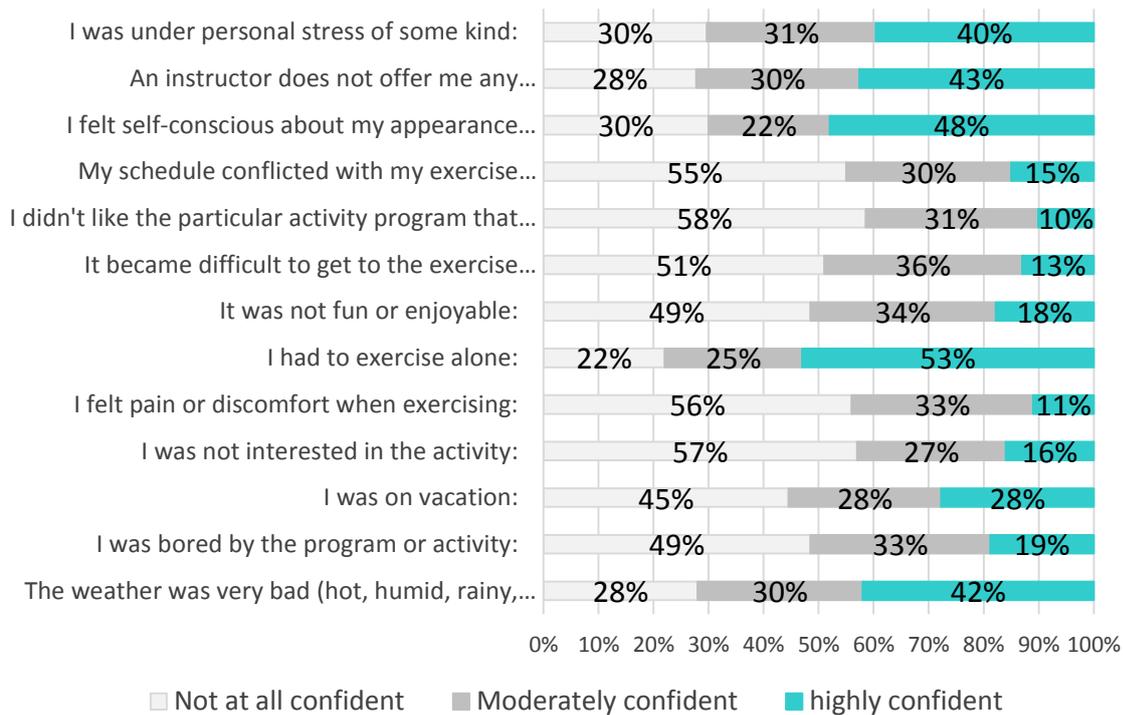
Figure 4: Prior to participating in this program/activity, what has been the main barrier to your participation in an organised program/activity like this? (n=123)



“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SELF-EFFICACY

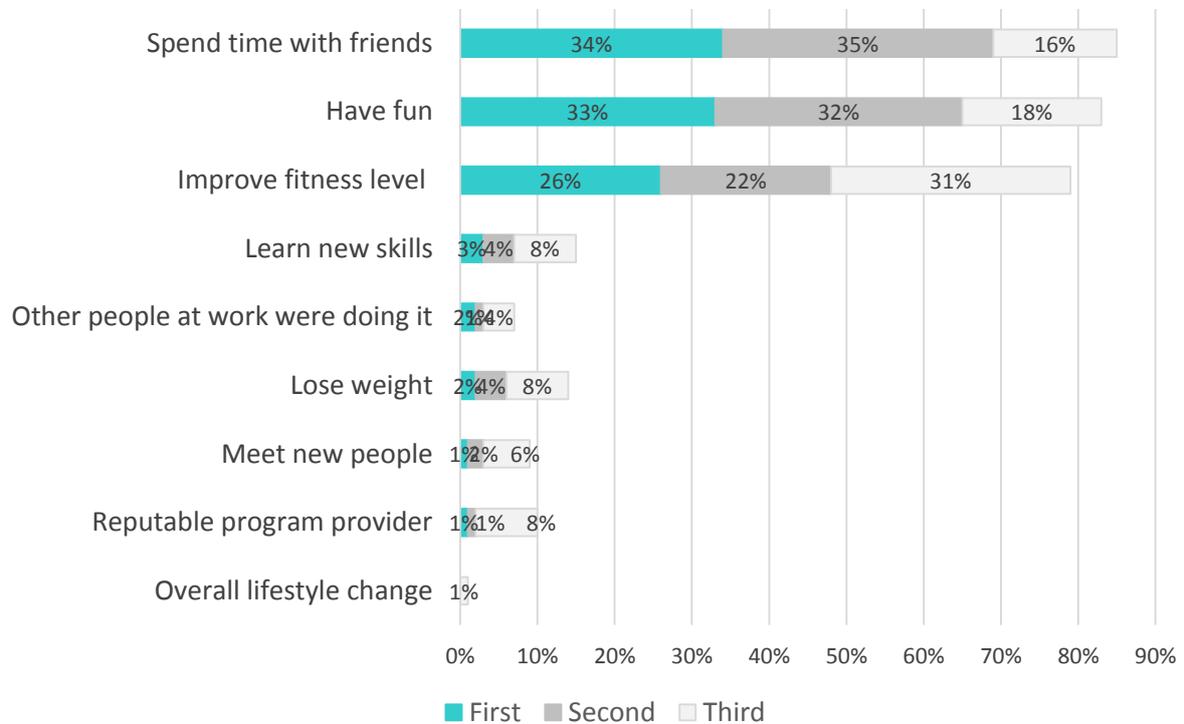
A participant’s perceived self-efficacy (Figure 2) is how well a participant believes they can perform or participate in physical activity. Previous studies have indicated that a participant’s perceived self-efficacy can be a large barrier to physical activity, and that the more a participant can “*imagine*” themselves participating in an activity, the more likely they is to take it up.

Figure 5: I believe I could exercise on at least five days of the week for at least 30 minutes per day if... (n=134).



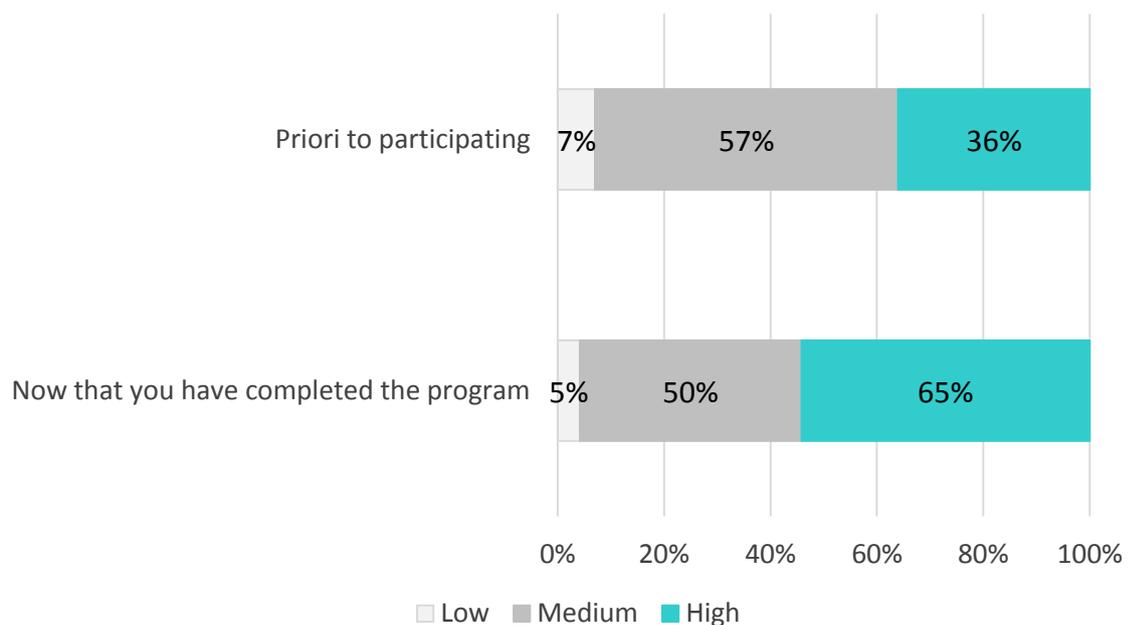
“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT MOTIVATION

Figure 6: What were your top three motives for participating in the program/activity? (n=121)



“SUMMER SEVENS” ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

Figure 7: How would you rate your skill level... (n=124)



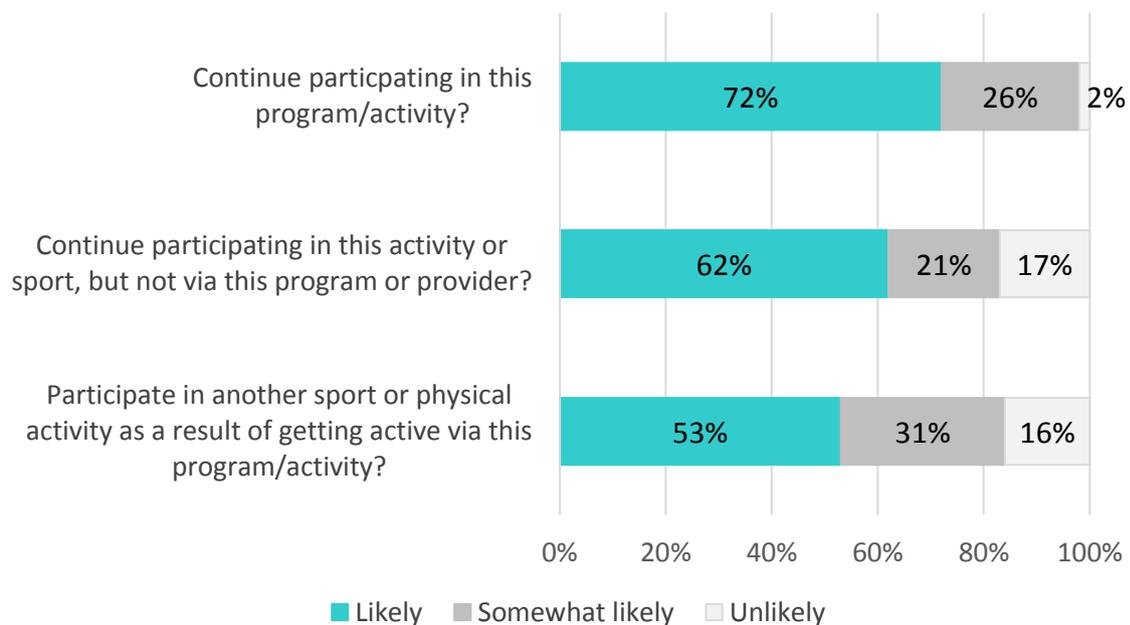
“SUMMER SEVENS” PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

Figure 8: How would you rate... (n=122)



FUTURE INTENTIONS

Figure 9: How likely are you to.... (n=121)



“SUMMER SEVENS” SESSION SCHEDULING

Figure 10: On which days of the week did you most often participate in the activity? (n=122)

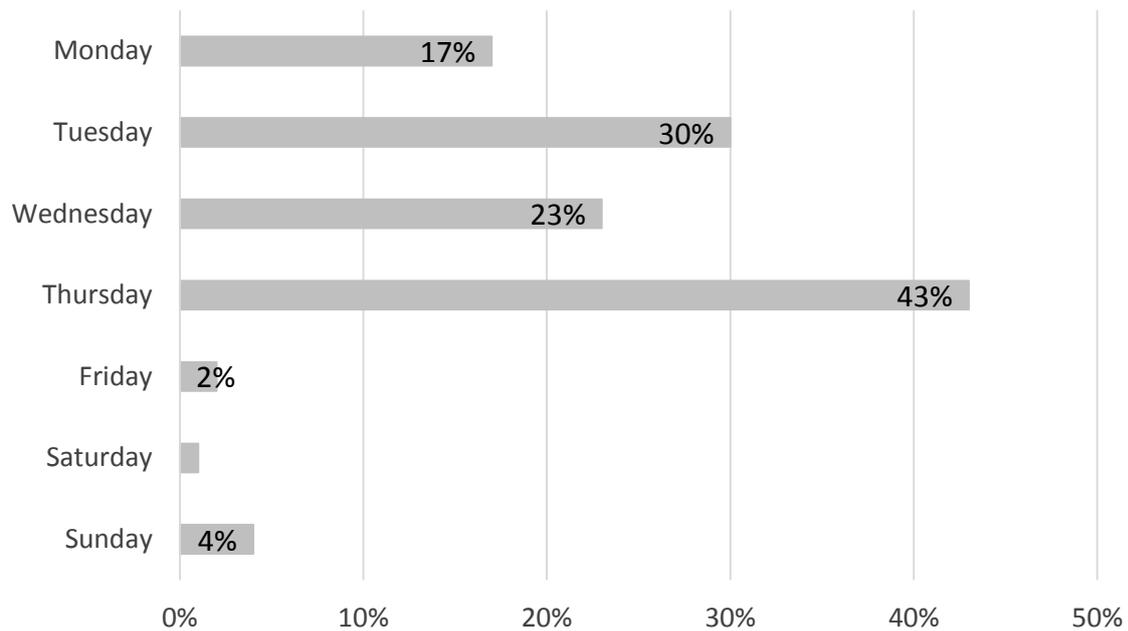


Figure 11: If you were going to continue with this program/activity, which days of the week would be most convenient for you? (n=122)

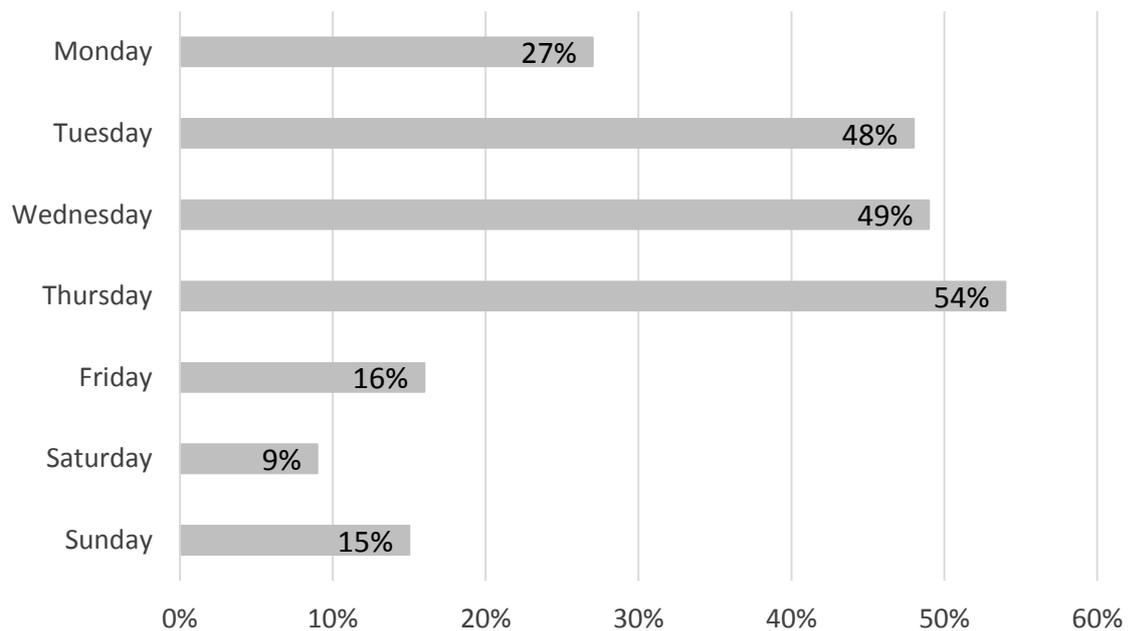


Figure 12: At what time of the day did you usually begin participating in the activity? (n=122)

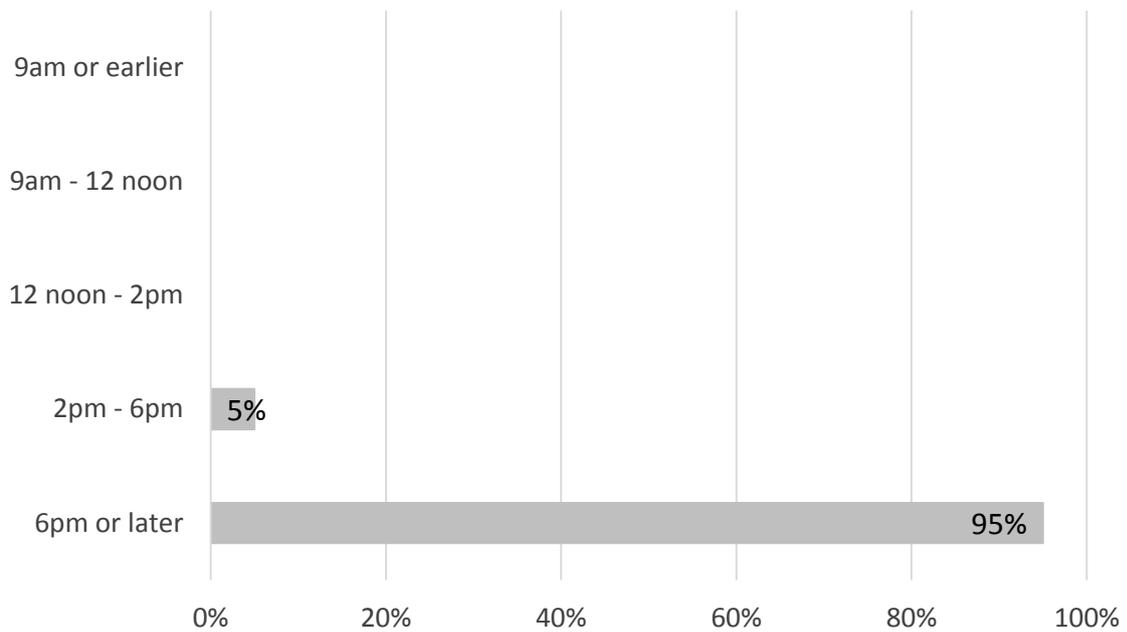
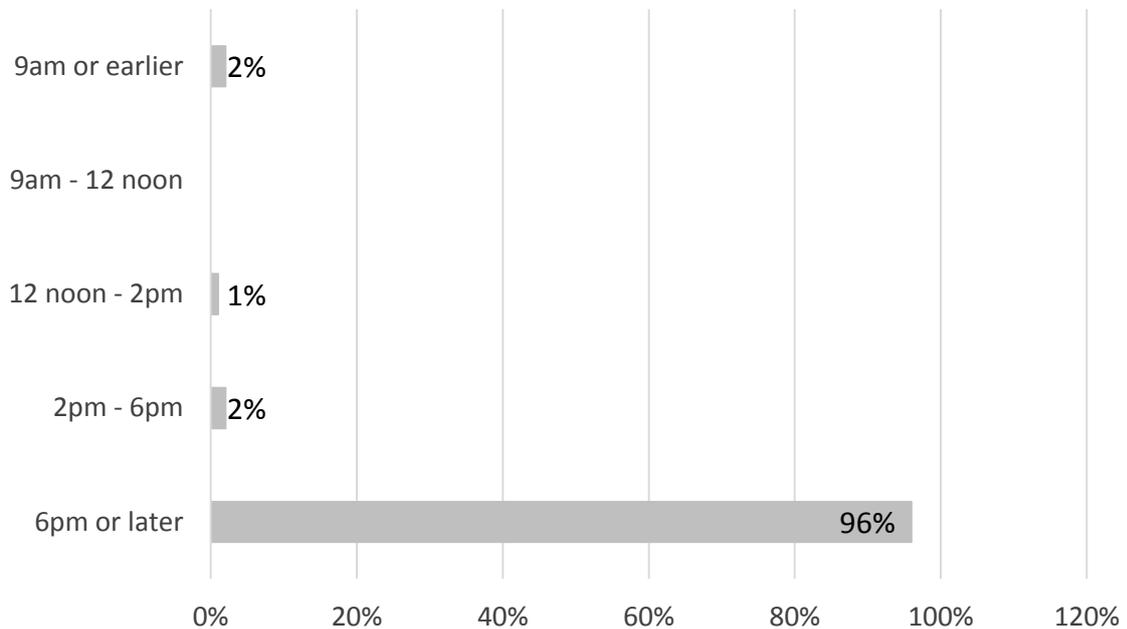


Figure 13: If you were going to continue with this program/activity, which times of the day would be most convenient for you to begin? (n=122)



KEY FINDINGS

The seven key findings of the evaluation are:

KEY FINDING ONE

“Summer Sevens” experienced a considerable growth in participation numbers of some 65% as a result of VicHealth funding.

KEY FINDING TWO

The primary motives for participating in “Summer Sevens” were *spending time with friends, having fun, and improving fitness*. Another core motive described by participants who were interviewed was *love of the game and the desire to keep playing all year round*.

KEY FINDING THREE

Notwithstanding the need for some caution given the small data set relative to total number of participants, it seems that “Summer Sevens” was successful in being able to attract the *somewhat active* to the competition. Specifically, 53% of the 163 people who completed the one item scale of physical activity prior to participation could be classified as *somewhat active* with a further 4% as *inactive*.

KEY FINDING FOUR

Based on the modest data available, there were no clear patterns on the effect of “Summer Sevens” on the activity levels and physical activity categorisation of players. For instance, whilst 32% of participants classified as *somewhat active* prior to participation had shifted into the active category at the post-participation assessment of physical activity, a comparable amount of participants (27%) had shifted in the opposite direction (from *active* to *somewhat active*) across assessment points.

KEY FINDING FIVE

“Summer Sevens” operates under a sustainable, break even business model and there is potential in the future to move the product from a venue based model run by FFV to having the clubs more involved in running the competition.

KEY FINDING SIX

The core perceived benefits of participating in “Summer Sevens” were: *enjoyment; spending time with friends; fitness; motivation to undertake physical activity; opportunity to maintain skills and confidence*. Participants were clearly engaged with the competition, which was supported by high levels of participation satisfaction and a strong desire to return to the competition in future.

KEY FINDING SEVEN

Data indicated that “Summer Sevens” was generally successful in reaching their target market of current winter players wanting to remain active and engaged in the sport all year round and lapsed players. It was less successful in tapping into people who were new to the game. To this end, there will be an emphasis on tapping into the *corporate world* as a potential recruitment source in future.