

Activity Inspired Wanganui

"Werohia te tinana ki te pai!"

*"To inspire and support the people of Wanganui to be
healthy and active"*

"Maa hauora, maa uaua rino ka ora ai a Whanganui whaanui"

Physical Activity Strategy Wanganui District

March 2007

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Why develop a Strategy?

The purpose of the Strategy is to create a plan that ensures the people in the Wanganui District are able to become the most physically active in New Zealand. This will have an impact on the future health and welfare of our community.

There is already a significant amount of work being done to increase the level of physical activity within the region. This plan will help to draw those resources together, provide a basis to understand the needs of our community and develop the appropriate initiatives.

Who has been involved in developing the Strategy?

Key agencies from the community have worked together to form this Strategy including:



Whanganui District Health Board



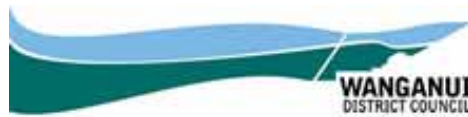
Halberg Trust



Te Oranganui Iwi Health Authority



Whanganui UCOL



Wanganui District Council



Whanganui Disability Resource Centre



Whanganui Region Primary Health Organisation



Whanganui Community Sports Centre



Sport and Recreation Wanganui

It should be noted that the process of bringing this strategy together has been very valuable. Already there is better understanding and cooperation between key stakeholders which all bodes well for the future implementation of this Physical Activity strategy.

Background Research

This strategy has been based on comprehensive research, undertaken by OPUS Consultants, into the characteristics and needs of the Wanganui region. A full copy of the research is available from Sport and Recreation Wanganui's website www.sportwanganui.co.nz in pdf format. The following provides a summary of the key findings.

What is Physical Activity?

Physical Activity can be defined as "Movement required on a daily basis to sustain health". Physical activity is more than just sport. It includes all activities that enable people to become or maintain and increase levels of physical activity.

Why is Physical Activity Important?

Physical activity is recognised as a key factor in maintaining and keeping good health and inactivity is thought to account for 8% or approximately 2000 deaths per year in New Zealand.

The Whanganui District Health Board *Needs Assessment* identifies the importance of physical activity to general health and well-being, and acknowledges the benefits in helping protect against chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity and colon cancer.

Current Research

SPARC has conducted a number of surveys looking at the activity levels of New Zealanders. The Obstacles to Action report, conducted in 2003 provided significant national and regional data. Some of the key points from this research are:

- More than two-thirds of adults in the Wanganui region are active (for more than 2.5 hours per week); but only 42% are active for 30 minutes or more on at least 5 days a week
- We need to target people that are not regularly active but plan to be and this is approximately 40% of the population

- Some inactive people do not understand the importance of physical activity and do not prioritise it
- There are LOW levels of confidence about the reality of being physically active, particularly for this target group
- There is an opportunity to GROW awareness of the informal access to physical activity e.g. walking, cycle tracks, gardening etc

Further research in 2002/03 through the NZ Health Survey found that 74.8% of people in the Whanganui District Health Board (DHB) region are "physically active" by doing more than 150 minutes of physical activity a week. This is similar to the national average of 74%.

Key results from the survey showed that in Wanganui:

- Maori were more active overall compared to national trends
- Maori females more active 74.2% (against 70.7 % nationally)
- Non-Maori males more active (79.7% vs 78.2% nationally)
- When it comes to regular physical activity Wanganui is more active with 57.5% vs 51.2% nationally
- One in eight people or 13% do not exercise in Wanganui – 13.6% being female and 10.9% being male
- Of these the 75+ age group had the highest proportions. This may be expected as ability to do exercise decreases through illness or disability

Health

Improving our community's health outcomes requires co-ordinating and integrating efforts to change physical and social environments, target high risk population groups, improve communication of key educational messages and increase the capacity of our workforce.

This plan acknowledges the link between physical activity and nutrition and the need to have an integrated approach when appropriate.

Healthy Eating - Healthy Action (Oranga Kai – Oranga Pumau) is the Ministry of Health's strategic framework (2003) for improving nutrition, increasing physical activity and reducing obesity. The framework acknowledges

that what we eat and how active we are is affected by a wide range of factors such as affordability, taste and preference, culture, accessibility, time, safety, family and peer influences, skills and convenience.

Obesity

A recent newspaper article notes that this may be the first generation where parents outlive their children due to the increasing levels of obesity. In Wanganui one in three adults (34%) are overweight¹. Nationally Wanganui has a 17% higher obesity rate than NZ as a whole and rates in Wanganui are higher than those nationally for both Maori and non-Maori, male and female.

Barriers to Physical Activity

We are all aware that being "Physically Active" is important – the difficulty is actually carrying it out. Social trends have meant that people are less active than previously. These include changes in:

- Families – the traditional model of families has changed
- Employment – some people will have more free time although less financial resources whereas others will become time-poor and income rich and weekends are becoming something of the past for some people
- Individualism - the driving question is – what's in it for me?
- Consumerism - increasing expectations of service quality, expecting high standards, added value and immediacy. Physical recreation and sport will be more and more an element of individual consumption to be purchased to satisfy desires in the same way as many products
- Safety concerns - traffic, street lighting (lack of), lack of cycle paths and poor maintenance of footpaths

There are three main types of barriers to physical activity are:

- Commitment – lack of people to exercise with, fear of failure, no motivation, time

- Community – lack of knowledge about facilities, quality and accessibility of facilities, programmes and services.
Physical – cost, poor health, other responsibilities

SPARC are currently in the process of conducting a new national survey with the results to be available early in 2008.

Current Action to Improve Physical Activity Levels

There are a number of organisations who already have a significant input into raising the level of physical activity within the Whanganui region. These include:

- Sport and Recreation Wanganui is committed to SPARC's mission of getting "*more people, more active, more often*"
- The Wanganui District Council's Long Term Council Community Plan has a number of community outcomes that relate directly to the development of physical activity
- The Whanganui District Health Board has identified that nutrition, obesity and activity are health priorities
- Health promotion is mostly guided by the Ministry of Health's Healthy Eating – Healthy Action Strategy
- Many other agencies provide programmes to support the community in areas of health, education and recreation

Wanganui District Community Profile

Demographics

- Most of the District's population live in the City and the District has a declining and ageing population
- More people are living alone; nearly 26% of the population are single parents with a child/children (19% is the national average)
- A higher proportion of the Wanganui population is Maori
- Median incomes and those holding post-school qualifications are below the national average
- The District's health is characterised by higher hospital admission rates than the national average; a recent newspaper article on a survey of life expectancy put the Whanganui DHB region at 76.5 years; this

¹ Overweight in this case refers to those with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 26-32 for Maori and Pacific peoples, and 25-30 for other ethnicities). See pg 53 WDHB Health Needs Assessment 2005.

compares to a national average of 78.9 years (Herald on Sunday, 21st May)

Physical Facilities

It is acknowledged that Wanganui has a range of excellent natural and physical facilities that enable and enhance the provision of physical activity.

- The Wanganui District covers an area of 2337 km² and stretches from “the mountains to the sea”
- Wanganui has a large number of parks and reserves which provide people with opportunities for passive recreation e.g. walking or picnicking, and active recreation e.g. playing sport. The parks and reserves add to the overall pleasantness and image values of the District
- There are many schools with grounds and facilities for physical activity and sport
- Wanganui is rumored to have the world's 4th most temperate climate and enjoys 2051 sunshine hours and relatively mild winters

Conclusion

It should be noted that the development of a PAS for Wanganui is not an isolated initiative. Most regions around New Zealand have or are in the process of developing their own Physical Activity Strategies. The learning's from these will be shared and enable more efficient and effective development of Physical Activity. It is not anticipated that geographical boundaries will limit the flow of information and possible joint initiatives.

Vision

To be the most active region in New Zealand

Goal

To inspire and support the people of Wanganui to be healthy and active

Strategies

COLLABORATION - key organisations working together

Outcome - Better results

AWARENESS - tell everyone, talk together, one voice

Outcome - Wanganui is a well informed community on becoming active

COORDINATION – bringing it together

Outcome - Working smarter!

ENVIRONMENTS – build together

Outcome - Develop and maintain sustainable, accessible and inclusive environments that support all people to be active – strong foundations

RESPONSIVENESS – keep it together

Outcome - Respond to community needs and changing environments

Outcomes for the Wanganui Community

There are seven community outcomes identified by the Wanganui District Council through public consultation. It is considered that the Physical Activity Strategy will contribute to the following outcomes:

Outcome 3 – a safe and healthy community

Outcome 4 – recognition as a great place to live and visit

Outcome 5 – development of amenities and recreational opportunities

Outcome 7 – People working together

COLLABORATION - key organisations working together

Outcome

Better results

Research findings

- building on existing relationships and initiatives rather than creating new ones will avoid duplication

Needs identified and addressed by this objective

- commitment from both a policy and operational perspective from stakeholders to take action on issues impacting on physical activity

STRATEGY *and* ACTION

1.1 Work together to form Legacy Group (strategy implementation monitoring group)

- *Decide on membership, (important that disability perspective is included!) appoint Chair*
- *Develop terms of Reference*
- *Identify and secure appropriate alliances or partnerships/links with allied organisations*
- *Develop reporting structure*

1.2 Work together to develop a Memorandum of Understanding

- *Key stakeholders agree to and sign Memorandum Of Understanding*
- *Develop formal link between WDC Sport and Recreation Committee and Legacy Group*

1.3 Work together to ensure strategic alignment of policies, priorities and processes between stakeholders

- *Undertake a policy audit (including from a disability perspective)*
- *Identify and secure appropriate alliances or partnerships with physical activity related organisations*
- *Stakeholders physical activity policies and strategies are acknowledged and implemented*

1.4 Work together to acquire funding / resources for Strategy Plan implementation

- *Funding options/contributors are agreed amongst key partners*
- *Develop Active Communities funding proposal if appropriate*

AWARENESS - tell everyone, talk together, one voice

Outcome

Wanganui is a well informed community on becoming active

Sparc "Obstacles to Action" Research findings

- there is a strong awareness of the benefits of physical activity amongst the Wanganui population
- those seeking to be more active understand the importance of physical activity but do not prioritise it in their life
- key barrier to physical activity is knowledge of what appropriate activities are available in the community (along with commitment and physical condition)
- key motivators: health, well being and role modeling

Needs identified and addressed by this objective

- the delivery of messages should have a planned approach rather than an "as needed" approach
- ensure material available is relevant and accessible to the community
- keep pace with developments in the physical activity and nutrition sector and relay to the community simply and effectively
- make it easy for people to get information
- raise awareness of Wanganui parks, reserves, walkways

STRATEGY and ACTION

2.1 Identify and promote existing physical activity initiatives

- *Continue to identify physical activity opportunities available and inform the community*
- *Support and promote physical activity intervention programmes of key stakeholders*
- *Celebrate success*

2.2 Develop a media plan in collaboration with local media and disseminate up to date and relevant information

- *Develop consistent messages and establish the best way to convey them to the community*
- *Lever off national physical activity media campaigns such as: Sparc Push Play*

2.3 Identify and distribute current information to the community including information on events / physical activity opportunities

- *Work with facility/asset providers e.g. Department of Conservation, Wanganui District Council to enhance awareness of the range of opportunities and facilities available in the district*
- *Utilise existing resources such as the Information Centre, community newspapers, stakeholder newsletters etc to inform the community*
- *Explore the opportunity of producing appropriate information / brochures to highlight activities within Wanganui*

COORDINATION – bringing it together

Outcome

Working smarter!

Research findings

- stakeholders in Wanganui are already working together
- organised sport and active recreation plays a key role in fulfilling many people's physical activity needs

Needs identified and addressed by this objective

- clearly identify agencies responsible for physical activity opportunities
- identify and learn from successful sport and physical activity projects in the community

STRATEGY and ACTION

3.1 Identify current physical activity opportunities and programmes

- *Audit current opportunities and programmes including from a disability perspective*
- *Ensure community events are used as opportunities to enhance stakeholder collaboration*

3.2 Bring together current community groups, networks

- *Hold discussions, forums with groups to identify needs and ways of support*

3.3 Bring together clubs, associations to address capability, capacity and sustainability

- *Identify and use if appropriate best practice examples from within the community and from other regions*
- *Work with clubs, organisations, groups to continuously improve delivery*
- *Advise and support clubs, organisations, groups to develop membership and recruitment plans*

3.4 Bring together expertise to develop and/or support 'train the trainer' programmes to increase community capacity

- *Identify people with appropriate skills and knowledge – trainers*
- *Identify potential individuals, organisations to develop further*

3.5 Co-ordinate appropriate and current information to the community

- *Identify existing physical activity directory databases and coordinate*
- *Ensure that hard copy information on physical activity opportunities are also available*
- *Ensure information is available in accessible formats (e.g. **non**-PDF versions, able to be read by screenreading programmes.)*

3.6 Develop an event database/calendar, linked with club/group/organisation calendars and promote through all mediums

- *Utilise SRW media system to coordinate and improve existing databases/calendars*
- *Identify physical activity promotional material and methods of delivery and coordinate dissemination*

ENVIRONMENTS – build together

Outcome:

Develop and maintain sustainable environments that support all people to be active – strong foundations

Research findings

- both physical and social situations impact on the uptake of physical activity
- people need a supportive, encouraging environment to enjoy and regularly participate in physical activity
- known environmental barriers to participation in physical activity in Wanganui are related to traffic, street lighting, lack of cycle paths and maintenance of footpaths

Needs identified and addressed by this objective

- promote incidental physical activity such as walking/cycling to and from work/school as an effective form of physical activity
- improvements to physical environments will remove barriers to physical activity
- an estimated 7% of Wanganui's population are considered to be 'inactive'

STRATEGY *and* ACTION

4.1 Identify and enhance physical environments that are suitable for physical activity and are available, accessible and affordable

- *Carry out a resource audit to identify key recreation assets in the district*
- *Identify barriers to participation by disabled people.*
- *Ensure that environmental enhancements are incorporated in stakeholders' planning processes e.g WDC Ten Year Plan*
- *Work with council to undertake Health Impact Assessments (HIA)*
- *Present submissions on LTCCP, Annual Plan*
- *Ensure that related strategies are catered for in Council's planning processes (such as the LTCCP, Annual planning processes) and are funded appropriately e.g. cycling strategy, walkways, sports strategy (under development)*
- *Council secures expert active transport and urban design input into future reviews of all physical activity strategies*
- *Council ensure the regional land transport strategy maximises support for uptake of activity e.g. walking and cycling*
- *Council develop urban design principles to ensure urban spaces enable and enhance physical activity*

4.2 Identify high needs groups and develop or link to appropriate physical activity opportunities that are available, accessible and affordable

- *Council collaborate with health agencies, seniors groups, disability groups to ensure their specific needs to access facilities is met*
- *Consider the need for a low income scheme providing access to a range of physical activity opportunities*
- *Carry out research projects to better understand physical inactivity within the community and address appropriately*
- *Investigate possible funding schemes to support new initiatives*

RESPONSIVENESS – keep it together

Outcome:

Respond to community needs and changing environments

Background

- responsiveness is to operate with flexibility and a caring approach, forming innovative and creative solutions to change
- this strategy is a building block enabling stakeholders to co-ordinate and remain focussed
- the strategy must be open to continuous review, to understand and address the issues impacting on people becoming active
- more investigation into achieving a greater understanding of the issues presenting in Wanganui will help target resources to where they are most needed

Needs identified and addressed by this objective

- recognising the process of developing this Strategy has provided a catalyst to achieving a greater understanding of the community's physical activity needs
- continue to be informed of changes in society that impact on people's ability to be active
- raising the profile of the importance of physical activity and how it links to other work areas
- maintaining communication amongst all stakeholders and interested parties

STRATEGY and ACTION

5.1 Identify key local and national policy decisions

- *Monitor local and national policies impacting on the uptake of physical activity and ensure key stakeholders continue to incorporate into planning and strategy documents*
- *Ensure the Strategy remains acknowledged and is incorporated in key stakeholder plans and reflected in their outcomes*

5.2 Consult formally and informally with relevant sector and community groups, so that interventions will be responsive to the changing needs of the community

- *Wanganui District Council, Sport and Activity committee and Physical Activity Strategy legacy group continue to develop, implement and evaluate the Strategy*
- *Use existing sector focus groups and/or establish focus where required, to carry out "action research" to better understand current issues and trends, including identification of barriers to physical activity - particularly for the following: older persons, Maori with a focus on young children and adults, 'at risk' youth*
- *Carry out a local needs analysis to give better picture of community recreation needs*
- *Repeat past surveys*