



The Coalition's Policy

Key Commitments

Healthier lifestyles contribute to better and longer lives for Australians.

Unfortunately, almost two-thirds of Australians are overweight, including one in four children. Three-quarters of Australian kids spend their spare time watching television, yet only one third of children are getting the recommended hour of physical activity a day.

Only half of our kids are involved in sport.

The problems of unhealthy lifestyles are well known: being overweight contributes to detrimental physiological, social, and economic outcomes for individuals and the community.

We need to do more to promote healthier lifestyles for our children, which can help tackle obesity rates in Australia.

The Coalition has a strong record of supporting healthier lifestyles through sport. We have brought health, aged care and sport together under one Minister. These three areas are inextricably linked – health is fundamental in aged care and sport and physical activity are central to preventive health policy.

We invested \$360 million directly into Australian national sporting organisations and athletes from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

We provided \$100 million for the Sporting Schools Programme, which delivers sports before, during and after school to more than 850,000 children across more than 5,000 primary schools.

The Coalition developed the *#girlsmakeyourmove* campaign to encourage participation in physical activity among young women and girls aged 12–19 years. This campaign promotes physical activity and sport as fun, empowering and providing many positive benefits.

In the last three years, the National Health and Medical Research Council has committed over \$11 million to research into the benefits of physical activity.

The Coalition will do more to encourage healthier lifestyles for our children. We will invest an additional \$60 million to extend the Sporting Schools Programme.

The Sporting Schools Programme provides grants to primary schools to deliver sporting activities for children either before, during or after school.

Our commitment will help address childhood obesity, encourage the prevention of avoidable health problems in adulthood, and promote more active lifestyles for Australians.

Our Plan for More Sport in Our Schools

The Coalition is committed to enhancing and promoting community sport and, through it, to building healthy and active Australian communities.

Unfortunately, almost two-thirds of Australians are overweight, including one in four children.

Three-quarters of Australian kids spend their spare time watching television, yet only one third of children are managing the recommended hour of physical activity a day. Only half of our kids are involved in sport.

We will invest an additional \$60 million to extend the successful \$100 million Sporting Schools Programme, bringing the Coalition's total investment to \$160 million.

The Sporting Schools Programme, launched in 2014 by the Coalition, is designed to help schools to increase children's participation in sport and to connect children with community based sport.

The Australian Sports Commission explains that the Sporting Schools Programme:

*"...is geared to get children active, engaged and having fun while teaching them positive leadership skills, physical skills and greater community engagement. Sporting Schools will bring local sporting communities, schools and government agencies together to encourage sport participation across Australia... with a focus on strengthening the connection between 5,700 schools and sport."*¹

The Programme provides funding to co-ordinate sporting organisations, coaches and teachers to deliver sport before, during and after school hours.

More than 850,000 primary school children take part in the programme across more than 5,000 schools.

Along with physical fitness, the Sporting Schools Programme helps children develop skills for life, including resilience, respect and teamwork.

We will seek to extend the current programme to secondary schools for years 7 and 8 students to combat the significant drop out in physical activity at this age.

The program extension will be aimed at target groups of:

- young women aged 12-14
- schools where there is evidence of disadvantage or large cohorts of inactive students

¹ Australian Sports Commission (2015) *Annual Report 2014-15*, pp.41 and 75.

Leveraging off the Sporting Schools Programme, the Minister for Sport will also seek to work actively with State and Territory Ministers (in sport and health) to raise the profile of, and role for, sport and physical education in schools.

The problems of unhealthy lifestyles are obvious. As the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare notes:

“Low levels of physical activity are a major risk factor for ill health and mortality from all causes. People who do not do sufficient physical activity have a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. Being physically active improves mental and musculoskeletal health and reduces other risk factors such as overweight and obesity, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.”²

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association also notes that:

“Being overweight or obese has physiological, social and emotional impacts throughout life, as well as significant economic consequences for individuals and the community (including the cost of lost productivity and increased health care costs). The best time to try and prevent people from becoming overweight or obese is in early childhood. There are two reasons why this is so. First, health risk behaviours and weight status tend to be fairly stable throughout life. Encouraging healthy weight during childhood can set children off on a healthy trajectory and reduce their chances of developing major health problems later in life. Second, early childhood is a critical period for physiological, psychological and social development, so stopping young children from becoming overweight or obese can improve their social and emotional wellbeing throughout life.”³

The Coalition will invest an additional \$60 million to extend the Sporting Schools Programme to help address childhood obesity and encourage the prevention of avoidable health problems in adulthood.

Our commitment promotes active children and will help address childhood obesity, encourage the prevention of avoidable health problems in adulthood, and promote more active lifestyles for Australians.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/risk-factors/insufficient-physical-activity/> accessed on 10 May 2016.

³ Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (2014) *Overweight and Obesity Among Indigenous Children: Individual and Social Determinants*, p.3.

The Choice

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The Coalition developed the *#girlsmakeyourmove* campaign to encourage participation in physical activity among young women and girls aged 12–19 years by promoting physical activity and sport as fun, empowering and providing many positive benefits.

In the last three years, the National Health and Medical Research Council has committed over \$11 million to research into the benefits of physical activity.

Sport and childhood physical activity should be supported by all political parties.

The Coalition will continue to support sport and encourage physical activity for our children.

Costs

The Coalition will invest an additional \$60 million to extend the Sporting Schools Programme.



THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to
www.liberal.org.au/our-plan
nationals.org.au/our-plan/