INQUIRY QUESTION
What influences participation in physical activity and sport?
A person’s level of physical activity can fluctuate according to their age and stage of life. In this chapter, the issue of declining levels of physical activity across the lifespan, and the reasons for it, will be examined. Various factors contribute to a lack of physical activity: gender inequality, issues of access to facilities and programs, and concern about safety and risk management.

**KEY KNOWLEDGE**
- The role of the social-ecological model and/or the Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model in evaluating physical activity promotion and sedentary behaviour reduction initiatives and strategies
- The key concepts associated with the selected contemporary issue associated with participation in physical activity and/or sport in society
- Individual, social, policy and environmental influences on participation in physical activity and/or sport in reference to the selected issue
- Local, national and/or global perspectives of the selected issue
- Historical, current and future implications on the selected issue
- Government, community and/or personal strategies or programs designed to promote participation in physical activity and/or sport.

**KEY SKILLS**
- Identify contemporary issues associated with participation in physical activity and sport
- Participate in and reflect on physical activities that illustrate the participatory perspective of the selected issue
- Collect information on a selected issue related to physical activity and/or sport in society from a range of sources such as primary data, and print and electronic material
- Analyse the historical, current and future implications on the issue identified
- Apply the social-ecological model or Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model to analyse and evaluate strategies and programs associated with the selected issue
- Draw informed conclusions and report in a suitable format on the socio-cultural and environmental influences that impact on participation in physical activity and/or sport, based on research findings

**CHAPTER PREVIEW**
14.1 Declining levels of physical activity across the lifespan

KEY CONCEPT As we age, we generally participate in less physical activity, which can cause physical and mental health problems.

Declining physical activity across the lifespan

As age increases, participation in sport and physical activity generally decreases. Recent Australian statistics show that participation in sport and physical recreation peaks at 15 to 17 years of age, with 74 per cent of this age group involved. The lowest rates, 47 per cent, are recorded by people aged 65 years and over.

There are many factors that impact our participation in sport and physical activity (see chapter 10). Many studies suggest the greater variety of physical activity you participate in when you are young, the more likely you are to be sufficiently active as you age. As people age, their interests, needs and physical ability can change, so the more ways in which one can be active, the greater the ability to overcome these barriers.

It is a widely believed myth that as people get older, their bodies become too frail and weak to participate in physical activity, and that the body doesn’t need as much activity as we age. However, there are many health benefits of physical activity at any age and, importantly, if older people can remain active, they are more likely to maintain their independence.

In Australia we have an ageing population, so it is vital that physical activity across the whole lifespan can be maintained, ensuring the benefits of fitness (see chapter 11) can be experienced for longer.

FIGURE 14.1 An active lifestyle is important for good health, no matter what your age.

FIGURE 14.2 Adequate physical activity by age and sex, 16 years and over, NSW 2014
Influences on activity across the lifespan

**Individual**
Once people retire, while they may have more time to be involved in physical activity, they often lack the finances and motivation to do so. If an individual's confidence in their physical ability and skill remains high, they will be more likely to engage in physical activity.

**Social**
As there are fewer active older people, there is less social support for those who seek to be active. Unlike for young people, there are fewer teams and groups for older people to join and feel comfortable in. If older people are surrounded by others who are active, they will be more likely to engage in physical activity as well.

**Policy**
While some sports have age restrictions for their competitions, many organisations provide subsidised memberships or benefits (for example, free morning tea) for older people who are actively involved.

**Environmental**
Many older people have less access to physical activity and recreation facilities. Many older people become less able to travel independently, which can limit their physical activity opportunities. However, if there are safe and kinesthetically pleasing recreation areas nearby, older people may be more likely to use them for physical activity.
Strategies to address the decline in physical activity across the lifespan

The following strategies have been put in place to target particular age groups.

**Adults**
- Active workplace challenge: a program that runs for 10 weeks encouraging colleagues to be involved in groups of five
- TeamUp (VicHealth): an app that encourages adults to join others easily for a variety of physical activities
- Mums United (Heart Foundation): lots of ideas for ways the family can be active together and a fun family tracker to encourage the whole family to be involved

**Older adults (65+ years)**
- Masters games: a variety of sports for anyone over 35 years of age. Encourages older people to remain in competitive sport for longer.
- Walking groups (Heart Foundation and local councils): older people meet and walk local routes
- Warm Water exercise classes: water aerobics classes that cater for older adults in particular those suffering from arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions

**TEST your understanding**
1. Identify and justify at what stage in the lifespan physical activity levels are the highest.
2. Outline two physical environment barriers to activity for children and older adults.
3. Outline two social environment barriers to activity for adults and suggest how these could be overcome.
4. Based on figure 14.2 on page 316, identify the age group most likely to achieve adequate physical activity.
5. Outline the general trend relating to age in the graph.

**APPLY your understanding**
6. Suggest three reasons for the trend shown in figure 14.2.
7. The 45–54 age group is an anomaly. Suggest reasons for this.
8. The data has been collected from NSW. Predict if the data for Victoria would be similar or different and justify your response.
9. **Practical activity:** Participate in one of the following activities, which are often enjoyed by older people: lawn bowls, golf, dancing.
   a. Reflect on why the activity you participated in might appeal to older people. In your discussion, you should consider common barriers and enablers for this age group.
   b. You have been asked to promote the activity you participated in to older people, but also those in other age groups. Create a promotional piece (poster, advertisement, short film) for the activity.
   c. Research what other physical activities in your local area target older people.
KEY CONCEPT Why is there a difference in opportunities and participation in physical activity and sport for different genders?

**Gender equity in physical activity and sport**

Recent research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests that females are more likely to walk for exercise than males (25 per cent and 14 per cent respectively). Fitness and gym are the next most popular activities for females (17 per cent). Males are more likely than females to play golf (6.6 per cent and 1.4 per cent respectively) or participate in cycling and BMX riding (8.5 per cent and 4.0 per cent respectively).

Traditionally sports were classified as ‘male’ or ‘female’ sports, and whilst some are still heavily dominated by one sex there have been significant gains made in ensuring all people, no matter their sex or gender, have opportunities in all sports and physical activity.

In the past there have been many stereotypes regarding the roles of males and females; for example, females shouldn’t sweat and should wear respectable clothing (not bathers or shorts), females are to maintain the primary role in the house, and sport is too dangerous for females.

Thankfully some of the stereotypes have been broken down, increasing acceptance and opportunities for all people.

Some of the most significant gains have been seen in the following sports.

- **AFL**: now one of the fastest growing sports for females, with the AFL aiming for a national competition in the near future.
- **Cricket**: during the 2015/16 season the Big Bash League included a female competition that was also broadcast live on TV.
- **Tennis**: male and female Australian Open winners receive equal prize money.

**Gender** refers to the state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones).

*FIGURE 14.3* Meg Lanning, captain of the Australian Women’s cricket team, is a world-record holder and superstar cricketer. Despite receiving many accolades for her performance, her pay as a female cricketer is well below the pay of her male counterparts. The best female cricketers in Australia are paid a maximum of $85,000, while the best male cricketers are paid more than two million dollars per year.
It has also become more acceptable for males to participate in what have been seen as traditionally female-dominated sports and physical activity.

- Dance: there are now many role models and opportunities for males to participate in a variety of styles of dance.
- Netball: there is an increase in mixed and male-only competitions. This includes a national competition.

However, there is still much to be done to achieve equality as men’s sport is still much more highly paid and more commonly televised than women’s. Female athletes often have to maintain a day job as well as playing professional sport, as they cannot earn enough through their sport alone.

### National AFL Women’s League needs proper pay and resources to succeed, say players

**BY DAMIEN MCIVER**

Prospective footballers in the new national women’s AFL next year insist they need to be looked after financially for the competition to succeed.

The AFL is pushing ahead with plans to establish a national women’s league in 2017.

Western Bulldogs player Lauren Arnell, who represented the club in the last two years in exhibition games against Melbourne, said if the league wants elite athletes the players need to be treated as such.

‘They want elite athletes so we need to make sure the resources are there for female athletes and female footballers to do the job properly,’ Arnell said.

Details of the league are still being discussed, but one model being mooted involves up to eight teams playing a competition in the weeks before the men’s league beginning in late March.

‘We’ll start from a base where the girls should be no worse off for playing football,’ said AFL General Manager of Game Development Simon Lethlean.

‘As it (the league) becomes more viable, more popular and more commercial realities become available, we’ll look to reward the players,’ he said.

Brisbane teenager Tayla Harris says players understand there will be some trade-offs to get the competition up and running.

‘I could be a little bit negative and say I’m going to miss out on getting paid, but then I really want to be in the position where I can trail blaze . . . and be in the first group which I think is pretty significant,’ she said.

**Queensland leading the charge in women’s AFL**

Harris is one of the standout players from the Queensland system, which has become a stronghold in the women’s game.

Last year, 71 293 women and girls in Queensland played or participated in AFL programs, compared to 42 260 in Victoria.

‘We punch well above our weight compared to the traditional football states,’ says AFL Queensland’s Craig Starcevich.

‘It’s quite exciting for the years to come because we’ve got a number of good girls to choose from,’ he said.

The AFL is currently running women’s football academies in each state, designed to accelerate the development of talented players.

There is an urgency to the project, with the AFL keen to ensure the standard of the new competition is of a high quality.

‘We won’t get everything right first up,’ says Lethlean.

‘We want to have a sustainable and viable competition for the elite girls to play in . . . year two might be different to year three, we saw with the Big Bash League (cricket) how they started, year one compared to year five.

Lauren Arnell said many people were already surprised by the standard of the women’s game.

‘Whether they come and watch a training session or they see it on the TV or they come and watch a game . . . they see that women can really play a decent brand of footy and it’s worth watching.’

**Source:** abc.net.au, 9 February 2016.
**Influences on gender equity**

**Individual**
Individual mindset can play a large part in combating gender stereotypes. If you have high self-esteem it can help you tackle any stereotypes involved with the sport or physical activity of your choice.

**Social**
In some sports, due to traditional stereotypes, there can be a lack of participants of a particular gender and this can act as a barrier to social support; for example, males dancing or playing netball. However, if there are a variety of positive role models, such as the female AFL players through the draft, it can encourage more people to join in and challenge the stereotypes.

**Policy**
Some sports and physical activities, for safety reasons, do have rules and guidelines regarding who can play in what competitions; for example, in junior sport where children can play in mixed teams until a certain age. Having alternate competitions or changing these rules can help keep people involved in the sport for longer.

**Environmental**
The accessibility and maintenance of change rooms for both males and females at sporting and recreation venues can act as a barrier or enabler for physical activity. All participants in physical activity should have access to suitable toilets and changing areas.
14.2 Gender equity in physical activity and sport

Strategies to address gender equity in sport

The following strategies, in addition to those previously mentioned, have been put in place to target the particular genders.

Females
- Women-only gyms (e.g. Curves and Fernwood): these gyms only allow female members to ensure a female-friendly gym environment
- Mums United (Heart Foundation): a variety of programs aimed at mums to help them include physical activity in with family time

Males
- Men’s netball league: a state and national competition for males to play netball at the highest level
- Men’s dance classes (local): classes where males are welcome to join, or male-only classes are held

Transgender
- The Gay Games/World Outgames: an organised event that involves a variety of sports and targets the gay, lesbian and transgender community

TEST your understanding
1. Discuss some common stereotypes about physical activity and sport for each gender.
2. Outline how policies can help break down gender stereotypes.
3. Read the article ‘National AFL women’s league needs proper pay and resources to succeed, say players’ on page 320 then answer the following questions.
   (a) Outline how the AFL are providing increased opportunities for females.
   (b) Outline the barriers for females wanting to play AFL and how the AFL are/could overcome these.
   (c) Explain the benefits for increasing the opportunities for females at the AFL level.

APPLY your understanding
4. Media analysis
   (a) Complete a media analysis of sport and physical activity coverage and/or promotion. This should include at least one newspaper and a sports report on TV.
   (b) Count the number of mentions for males and females and other (both or transgender).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV sports report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   (c) Graph your results and compare your results with those of another student.
   Are they similar or different? Why?
   (d) Answer the following questions.
   i. Discuss the similarities and differences between female and male sport/physical activity coverage.
   ii. Explain three reasons for the differences.
   iii. ‘The media accurately reflects the physical activity and sporting trends in our society.’
       Compare your results with the current participation rates for males and females and debate the above statement.
   iv. Suggest ways in which the media could change to ensure gender equality in its presentation of sport and physical activity.
14.3 Risk management and safety in physical activity and sport

**KEY CONCEPT** Playing sport and being involved in physical activity comes with risks but many risks can and should be managed to ensure optimal safety and therefore enjoyment for all involved.

**Risk management and safety in physical activity and sport**

Unfortunately, people get injured when playing sport or participating in physical activity; there is always risk. However, most risks can and should be minimised so that the benefits of participating outweigh the possibility of suffering an injury.

AFL has the highest recorded injuries of 3186 out of 222,641 adults listed as playing AFL per year. Soccer has more participants (over 535,278) and fewer injuries (2962) which is not surprising, given soccer involves less contact than AFL.

**FIGURE 14.5** Mouthguards help prevent injury to the teeth when playing contact sports.

**FIGURE 14.6** Injuries and hospitalisations due to sport in Australia per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Injuries per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>3186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>2962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>2917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water sports</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roller sports</td>
<td>1632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td>1568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>1262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice and snow sports</td>
<td>1114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Injuries have always been a part of sport but interestingly, despite our increased use of technology and better understanding of how to prevent injuries, there has been an increase in hospitalisations of children due to sport-related injuries. No one sport can be blamed for this increase. Experts suspect that the increase in children choosing to play one sport all the time, or playing several sports all at once, are factors leading to what are called overuse injuries.

Risk management has now become a very important part of sport. It is important not just for sporting organisations but also coaches and players. Most sports and organisations involved in physical activity, e.g. gyms, will have very clear and thorough risk-management policies that are designed to not only keep participants safe but also protect all involved, for example, spectators, coaches and administrators. These include, but are not limited to:

- checking the condition of grounds and equipment (e.g. no debris on oval, goal posts fixed safely)
- ensuring appropriate training and qualifications of personnel (e.g. working with children checks, first aid)
- having and enforcing rules around weather conditions (e.g. extreme heat policies at the Australian Open tennis tournament)
- having appropriate facilities to cater for participants (e.g. drink stations in marathons)
- clear procedures and policies to manage and report injuries (e.g. an incident report).

**Influences on risk management and safety in physical activity and sport**

**Individual**
A lower level of skill can put someone at higher risk of injury, not just in sport but any physical activity. For example, using gym equipment incorrectly can result in injury. An appropriate level of skill can help prevent injury, not only for the participant but others around them.
Social
Appropriate supervision is a vital component of risk management and injury prevention. This includes supervision for equipment that poses a higher risk, such as gymnastic and weight equipment, but also referees and umpires in sport. Having a positive culture at a sports club that promotes safe and fair play can help decrease risk of injury.

Policy
Having very clear regulations regarding use of equipment and maintenance of facilities can help reduce the risk of injury. Maintenance checks should be completed regularly. By identifying and removing impediments, injuries can be avoided. A lack of guidelines and procedures, or failure to follow these, can leave many people at increased risk.

Environmental
Too many injuries are caused by inadequate equipment and facilities. In all physical activity, some equipment is required and, in order to reduce risk, this equipment must be carefully fitted, and regularly checked and maintained. Modified equipment is an important part of reducing risk involved in junior sport and physical activity.

Strategies to address risk management and safety in physical activity and sport
There are many strategies focused on increasing the safety of physical activity and sport.
- Play by the Rules: includes a comprehensive website with free resources about risk management and safety for everyone involved in sport.
- Good Sports: provides a program with resources for sporting clubs to create a healthy and safe culture.
- Kids Alive — Do the Five: provides free resources for everyone to ensure safety around water.

Many local clubs and councils also have programs in place specific to the needs of the sport and the local community.

TEST your understanding
1 Describe what is meant by risk management in sport.
2 Discuss the purpose of risk management in sport and physical activity.

APPLY your understanding
3 Use the AIS Risk Management weblink in your eBookPLUS and read the risk management documents you find there.
   (a) Create a risk management template and complete a risk management for a local facility for the sport/physical activity of your choice.
   (b) Considering the risks identified, create a program to encourage safer participation in the sport/physical activity of your choice.
Children and competitive sport

**KEY CONCEPT** Is the competitive nature of sport turning children away from sport and physical activity?

Sport is defined as a range of activities that are highly organised and involve rules, complex skills and tactics, physical exertion and competition between participants (chapter 10). Competitive sport suggests that scores are kept and teams play against each other in a regular competition.

There has been much debate about the impact, positive and negative, of competitive sport on children in particular. There have been concerns that too much competitive sport can discourage future involvement in sport and other physical activity. A counter argument is that competitive sport is an important part of a child's physical and mental development. Learning to lose is an important life lesson, as we can't all be winners all the time.

Either way, considerable efforts have been made to ensure that competitive sport is managed well, safe and enjoyable for all.

Many sports now have modified sport programs for children. These programs focus on enjoyment and allowing children to develop skills in a modified environment. Common modifications include:
- no scoring or different scoring
- lighter/shorter equipment
- no contact
- smaller playing fields
- shorter game durations.

Examples of these programs include: Auskick (AFL), Netta (netball), OzHoops basketball, Milo in2Cricket, futsal soccer, Hot Shots tennis, tee-ball and Aussie Hockey.

Another debate that surrounds children in competitive sport is the way in which sports are graded. While most sports grade children based on age, there are often significant differences in the size of children of the same age. In contact sports, this can increase the risk of injury.

Use the Juniors graded by size weblink in your eBookPLUS to read an article on this topic for more information.

**Influences on children and competitive sport**

**Individual**

If children are placed in teams based on age, but are big or small for their age, it can have a negative impact on their enjoyment of the sport. If children don’t enjoy their sport, not only are they less likely to keep playing, but it can also decrease their involvement in physical activity all together. If students understand the benefits of being active, beyond just winning or losing, they are more likely to enjoy their sport.

**Social**

Competitive sport can be enjoyable for children if they have positive people around them. ‘Ugly parent syndrome’, in which parents behave aggressively and too competitively, can result in many negative experiences for children and ultimately cause them to drop out of competitive sport.
Policy
Club costs can be a significant barrier for families who have children involved in competitive sport; for example, club fees, uniform fees, insurances, etc. Sports and clubs also have varying rules on selection criteria and expectations. If these are considered achievable, it can help maintain involvement.

Environmental
Most children rely on others for travel to and from sporting venues. If the clubs and facilities are close by, it can make it easier for children to be involved in competitive sport. As children age, there can be more travel involved; for example, bigger competitions or a need to move to other competitions. This can make being involved more challenging for children.

Strategies to address children’s involvement in competitive sport
As previously mentioned, many sports offer modified versions for children to ensure enjoyment and safety.

Other programs and strategies include:
- Good Sports: provides guidelines for supporters at sporting clubs to ensure a positive role model behaviour
- Play by the Rules: provides tips and resources for clubs to ensure a positive club culture
- Play for Life — Join a Sporting Club: linked with the active after-school sport communities, it encourages involvement in up to 70 different sports and 20 different physical activities.

TEST your understanding
1. Describe what is meant by competitive sport.
2. Discuss the issues involved with competitive sport for children.
3. Use the Juniors graded by size weblink in your eBookPLUS to read the article and then answer the following questions.
   (a) Outline why rugby league would have a greater need to grade players by weight than other sports such as soccer.
   (b) List some other sports that may benefit from grading players by weight or size instead of age.

APPLY your understanding
4. Practical activity: Participate in a modified sport (Auskick AFL, Netball, OzHoops basketball, Milo in2Cricket, futsal soccer, Hot Shots tennis, tee-ball or Aussie Hockey) then answer the following questions.
   (a) Describe the differences between the modified version and competitive version of the sport played.
   (b) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having modified versions of the sport.
   (c) Explain how the modified sport may lead to greater and longer participation in the sport.
   (d) Choose another sport and discuss how and why it could be modified.
5. Complete a pro’s and con’s table about grading players based on weight instead of age.
KEY CONCEPT The community environment is a significant influence on physical activity. There is much to be gained for the community by ensuring the environment enables physical activity.

The community and recreation

Recent research shows that walking for exercise is the most common form of physical activity for Australians (23 per cent). This was followed by aerobics, fitness or gym group (14 per cent), swimming (7.4 per cent), cycling (6.5 per cent) and jogging or running (6.5 per cent). These activities were the only activities that were participated in by more than one in twenty Australians.

All of the above physical activities rely heavily on access to local facilities such as walking tracks, public pools, gyms and safe bike lanes. These are generally the responsibility of the local council and/or the state government.

While there are significant costs in building, maintaining and staffing these facilities, the costs can be heavily outweighed by the benefits. If these facilities are used correctly and frequently by the community, they can increase physical activity levels. Increased physical activity levels can lead to many health, economic and social benefits for the community (see chapter 11).

As our population increases and our cities become more densely populated, urban planning that provides open spaces and facilities to encourage physical activity has become a necessity. This helps to ensure our communities are conducive to recreation and physical activity.
Influences on the community and recreation

**Individual**
Community recreation areas will be more likely to be used if people know the benefits of being active and where the physical activity and recreation facilities are. Without understanding the purpose of the spaces or equipment, it is unlikely that there will be much interest in them.

**Social**
Recreation spaces such as ovals and parks can encourage physical activity but it is often harder if you are on your own. If large numbers of people use the recreation spaces and facilities, it not only provides positive role models but also social support for others.

**Policy**
Rules and regulations about the use of community recreation areas are vital in ensuring these spaces encourage physical activity. Unfortunately, some spaces have curfew times, which can restrict their use and therefore people’s physical activity. However, there are also many rules in place that increase the perception of safety, such as slower speed limits near parks and bicycle lanes, which help encourage the use of these areas.

**Environmental**
Having the space and equipment is important but maintaining these is just as crucial to ensure long-term use for physical activity. If equipment is not maintained, it can become unsafe which will reduce its appeal to the community. Continual checks and upgrades are important to ensure the safety and interest of the community.

**Figure 14.9** Councils have a responsibility to ensure that public amenities are well maintained and safe for members of the public to use.
14.5 Community and recreation

**Strategies to address the issue**

There are a number of strategies at the local community level aimed at increasing spaces and places for physical activity. Some of these include:
- walking tracks
- outdoor gym equipment
- ovals
- bike racks
- water taps
- skate parks
- playgrounds (with shade cover).

Programs to assist local governments with this include the following:
- Healthy Spaces & Places: a national guide to help communities plan for appropriate places of recreation
- VicHealth’s Community Activation program (active until July 2015). Grants were given to councils to help create more opportunities for communities to be active. One example of this is by Manningham City Council, where changes are planned for an existing space in the plaza forecourt of City Square in Doncaster. The money provided by the grant will allow the space to be transformed to include a vertical green wall, exercise stations and dedicated spaces for fitness and sporting activity, as well as yoga and dance. A grassed area, sandpit and sporting equipment are also planned to help encourage physical activity. It is hoped that local providers will use this new space to organise physical activity opportunities for the community.

**TEST your understanding**

1. List ten ways in which the community environment can encourage physical activity.
2. List five barriers that may exist in the community environment.

**APPLY your understanding**

3. Consider your local community (preferably using a current map).
   - (a) Outline the barriers to physical activity within your community.
   - (b) Suggest ways to overcome the barriers identified.
   - (c) Outline the enablers to physical activity within your community.
   - (d) Focusing on the enablers within your local community, create an advertisement (poster, brochure, short film) encouraging the use of the community recreation facilities.
14.6 Issues of access

**KEY CONCEPT** Money, roads, schools, parenting, safety and ability are some of the many factors that determine access to programs, education and facilities in relation to physical activity. The movement of children, rural and remote communities, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others in Australia are affected by factors related to access.

**Access**

People are most likely to be active if they live in walkable neighbourhoods and have easy access to green space and sporting facilities. Access to coaching and instruction about skills and fitness can also be enablers of movement. People with disabilities may need modified ramps and other alterations to the built environment to make it easy for them to access facilities.

There is anecdotal and indirect evidence that suggests modern-day children are less active than children in previous decades.

The ABS statistics (2013) show that 38 per cent of ATSI adults in non-remote areas participated in sufficient physical activity to maintain good health. This is compared to 43 per cent of the adult population in Australia.

A study conducted at the University of South Australia showed that 47 per cent of the South Australian population was classified as inactive, compared to 57 per cent in some regional areas.

The ABS Perspectives on Sport report (2012) shows the participation in sport and physical recreation activities of people with and without a disability. The results showed that 68 per cent of males with a disability participated, compared to 82 per cent of males without a disability.
For some communities in Australia, these factors are present and are therefore enablers to physical activity. For others, such as some children, rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) and people with disabilities, conditions are not ideal and can be barriers to physical activity participation.

**Influences on access**

**Individual**

**Cost**
Cost is a barrier for some people with disabilities due to limited employment opportunities. The increased cost of travel can be a barrier for people who live in rural and remote communities.

**Cognitive ability**
Low literacy or computer skills among people with a disability can be a barrier to movement because they are unable to follow instructions, understand promotional material or register for programs.

**Social**
Sociocultural factors such as social capital and children's preferences are the greatest enablers of movement for children. Socioeconomic status can influence access to physical activity, sport and exercise. Family income can be a barrier or an enabler for children because it can determine the opportunities that they have to access a variety of sports and quality instruction.

**Policy**
Access to modified exercise and sports programs such as wheelchair basketball is an enabler of movement for people with disabilities.

**FIGURE 14.10** Factors such as family income and ease of travel can affect whether children are able to participate in sporting activity.
Programs that meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are enablers of movement. The amount and type of programs available in rural and remote areas may be a barrier to movement for people who reside in these areas.

**Environmental**

Environmental factors such as the distance from home and school also influence movement. Access to parks and playgrounds can encourage participation. Neighbourhood safety, the condition of parks and playgrounds, and the amount of traffic can be barriers to physical activity, sport and exercise for children.

**Transport**

The city of Whitehorse in Melbourne released a report based on their Sport and Physical Activity project. In this report, people with disabilities indicated that transport was a major barrier to physical activity participation.

Talented children or youth from remote or rural areas may have limited access to elite training and/or competition. People in remote communities and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may not have facilities within a commutable distance.

**Facilities/services**

Factors that determine access to facilities are interrelated. Access to facilities such as indoor playing areas, grass areas, gyms, aquatic facilities and tennis courts is dependent on many factors. People with disabilities may have difficulty accessing facilities due to their mobility, cost may make it prohibitive, the physical environment may make it difficult for them to enter the premises or they may not feel that their individual needs, such as privacy in the change rooms, are catered for. Children may not be able to access facilities such as gyms because of their age, lack of transport, cost or safety. Facilities and services may not exist in rural and remote communities.

**Built environment**

The built environment can include the density of housing in the area we live in, or it can relate to modifications to buildings that encourage access. For example, the presence of ramps, handrails and lifts would be enablers to movement for people with physical disabilities.
FIGURE 14.13 Ahmed Kelly overcame many obstacles in his life to swim for Australia at the 2012 London Paralympic Games and at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Social influences on Ahmed, such as the love and support from his adoptive mother and his siblings, as well as the policies of Swimming Australia, have enabled him to participate in swimming at an elite level.

Strategies to address the issue of access

Below is a list of programs and organisations that are making access an enabler rather than a barrier for people with disabilities, people in rural and remote communities, children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities.

- Swimming Australia: have developed a framework for inclusion
- VicHealth: 'Active for Life' resource is aimed at increasing the activity levels of children
- Playing Out: an organisation in the UK that aims to transform neighbourhoods to encourage active play
- Sporting Schools: physical activity programs that are conducted before, during and after school
- Inclusive Play Space: landscape architects who provide advice about how to enhance the inclusiveness of recreation facilities and playgrounds
- Aboriginal Family Holiday Program: a holiday program that provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access physical activity
- Regional Sport and Recreation program, Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Pop-Up-Park: a temporary park set up on vacant land in suburban Melbourne

TEST your understanding

1. Watch the videos that are included in the Vic Swimming weblink in your eBookPLUS. Outline the strategies that are included in their framework for inclusion. Choose one of the groups discussed in this chapter and provide an explanation of how this framework may be an enabler of movement for a person within this group.

APPLY your understanding

2. In relation to neighbourhood spaces, there are some innovative solutions being developed in other countries. In the UK, the Playing Out organisation provides support for residents of a neighbourhood who want to make some changes that encourage physical activity of children.

Use the Playing Out weblink in your eBookPLUS to access their website. Taking the information you find there as a stimulus, develop five ways in which access to physical activity could be improved where you live.
CHAPTER REVIEW

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- There are many issues that impact participation in sport and physical activity.
- The issues have changed and will change over time.
- There are many programs and strategies in place to combat some of the issues negatively impacting on physical activity levels.
- Multiple factors influence physical activity behaviour including individual, social environment, physical environment and policy.
- The social-ecological model and Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model can be used to help create, evaluate and modify programs designed to increase participation in physical activity and sport.