

More People Using Parks, Sporting And Recreational Facilities, And Participating In The Arts And Cultural Activity

Participation in cultural, recreational and sporting activities is fundamental to the development of communities and individuals, and to our quality of life. The State Plan recognises this and includes targets to increase our participation in physical and cultural activities.

TARGETS

- Increase the number of visits to State Government parks and reserves by 20% by 2016.
- Increase the number of people participating in sporting activities and physical activity by 10% by 2016. This is equivalent to 4,800,000 people participating in sporting activities and physical activity in 2016.
- Increase visitation and participation in the arts and cultural activity by 10% by 2016. This is equivalent to 4,644,000 people aged 18 years and over visiting cultural venues and events and participating in the arts and cultural activity at least once in the previous 12 months.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Parks and Reserves¹

Visitation to major urban parklands is currently estimated at 25.8 million visits annually. Demand is strong and increasing between 4% and 20% annually, with a number of metropolitan parks already at capacity for visitation.

It is estimated there are over 22 million visits to national parks annually. Overall visitation to national parks is currently declining or static, consistent with an overall decline in tourism. However, national parks near highly urbanised areas are experiencing similar visitation demand pressures to the large urban parklands.

There is currently no reliable data on visits to State forests and Crown reserves. There is anecdotal evidence of increased demand for active recreation, particularly near the urban fringe.

Sport and Physical Activity

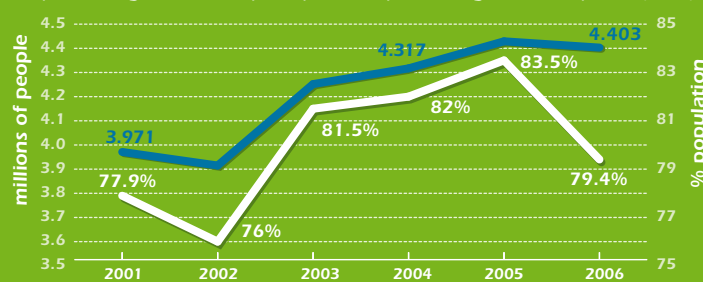
In 2006 nearly 4.5 million people (4,403,100) participated in a sport or a physical activity at least once over the twelve months—a participation rate of 79.4% or four out of every five people in NSW aged 15 and over. This was a 4.9% decrease from 2005 when NSW had a participation rate of 83.5%.

The measure we are using is the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS), conducted for the Commonwealth Ministerial Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS) by ACNielsen. It collects data on participation by adults aged 15 years and over in organised and non-organised sport and physical activity.

The opposite graph shows that participation numbers are growing in NSW however since 1999 the increase has not kept up with the growth in population.

Trend in adult participation in sport and physical activity in NSW

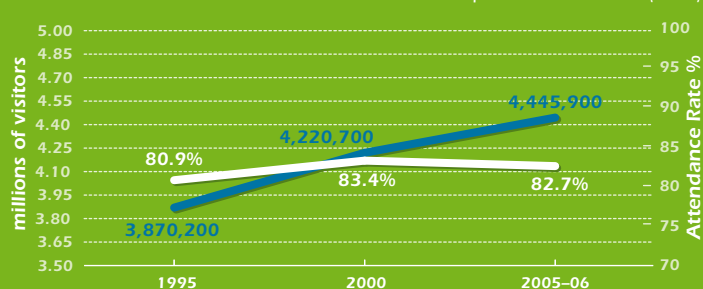
Population aged 15+ who participated in sport during 12 month period (NSW)



Source: Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS)

Arts and cultural activities

Attended cultural venues and events at least once in previous 12 months (NSW)



Source: Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events 2005-06 (ABS Cat No 4114.0)

1. State Government parks and reserves include major urban parklands (Sydney Olympic Park, Parklands [Millennium Parklands], Centennial Parklands, Western Sydney Parklands, Parramatta Park and the Botanic Gardens), national parks including marine parks and aquatic reserves, State forests and Crown reserves. Visitation figures for these parks are subject to review and refinement. These parks and reserves cover close to 15% of NSW's land area and marine parks cover 34% of NSW's marine waters.

The Way Forward

The Government will increase opportunities for participation in cultural, recreational and sporting activities. Areas of work include:

Improving access to parks and reserves

- Improving visitor infrastructure, facilities and information within existing parklands. For example, Stage Two Queens Park playground upgrade at Centennial Parklands will help to ease some of the pressures on recreational facilities in the eastern metropolitan area of Sydney, which is one of the most densely populated parts of the State.
- Revitalising Sydney's National Parks Program to upgrade visitor facilities in the Blue Mountains, Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay, Ku-ring-gai Chase, Royal, Lane Cove and Georges River National Parks.
- Acquisition of new parks and reserves to increase available opportunities for recreation, for example, Renfrew Park, near Gerringong and South Golden Beach, north of Brunswick Heads.
- Enhancing partnerships with commercial operators, Aboriginal people and promoting greater community involvement. For example Forest NSW's Communities in Forests Program to expand volunteering in State forests and Department of Lands proposed harbourside developments at Coffs Harbour and Batemans Bay.

We are also putting in place new methods to more accurately measure visitation and usage of our urban and national parks.

Sport and recreation

- Greater focus on development of sport at the community level including the proposed development of Sport Accords with Local Government and Clubs NSW to involve more stakeholders in community sport.
- Looking at opportunities to share recreational resources with schools, local government, clubs and other bodies is one potential solution, for example, group sports clubs using public school sports fields on weekends or during school holidays.
- Promoting new models for attracting and retaining volunteers in sport and recreation, including programs for committee members on good corporate governance, and accreditation for coaches and officials.

Arts and cultural activities

- A focus on improving access to the arts for under-represented areas and groups through initiatives such as the Western Sydney Arts Strategy and the Indigenous Arts Strategic Initiative.
- Increasing options for the development and management of arts infrastructure and facilities through partnerships with councils, other government agencies and the Arts sector.
- Infrastructure improvements for the State's cultural institutions and increasing on-line access to the collections and services.
- Extend the ConnectEd Arts partnership with DET, which targets disadvantaged students and schools in regional and urban NSW.

What will be achieved in the next 12 months:

Parks and reserves

- Continued implementation of the Revitalising Sydney's National Parks Program in the Blue Mountains, Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay, Ku-ring-gai Chase, Royal, Lane Cove and Georges River National Parks. Specifically: upgrades to the campground and day use area at Bonnie Vale in Royal National Park including new picnic shelters, BBQs and car parking; and upgrades to the boat launching facilities and improved car parking at the Morgans Creek precinct within Georges River National Park
- Forests NSW will build on the Communities in Forest Program in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia.
- Continuation of Department of Lands programs for maritime infrastructure, providing benefits to all boating users, and development of key coastal sites providing enhanced tourism and recreational opportunities.

Sport and Recreation

- Implement three pilot Sport Accords with local government.
- Work with the Department of Education and Training to identify and promote models for improving access to school facilities for community use.

Arts and cultural activities

- Implement Stage Two of Western Sydney Arts Strategy.
- Implement the Indigenous Arts Strategic Initiative in Western Sydney.
- Expand the ConnectEd Arts program
- Australian Museum to complete its redevelopment project to house museum collections, staff and upgrade exhibition spaces.

