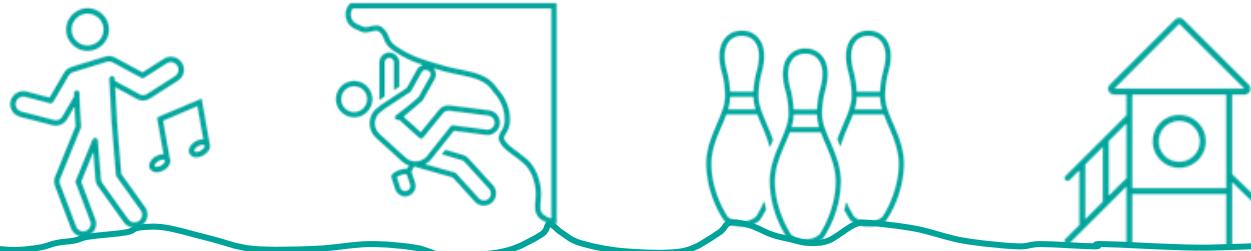


# THE ALTERNATE LEISURE INITIATIVE

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An initiative to increase physical activity and social connection in Alternate Leisure settings





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Monash Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples, and we pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

## HOW WAS THIS INITIATIVE CREATED?

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The Alternate Leisure Initiative has been created through an ethics approved research project which utilised co-design and design thinking principles, titled 'Exploring Alternate Leisure settings as a place-based health promotion approach'.

Health Promotion Practitioners at Monash Health identified that Alternate Leisure settings were not currently represented in their place-based approach for health and wellbeing. These settings have been recognised as representing important places where families, children and young adults frequent in the community for fun, entertainment and leisure, and consequently are a great opportunity to influence and support the communities' health (Geidne, S Fredriksson, I & Eriksson, C 2018).

The research showed that accessing Alternate Leisure settings supported people's social, physical and mental health and wellbeing. From this, the final Alternate Leisure Initiative has been created based on the needs identified by the community. Healthy eating and inclusion were identified as two health areas that acted as enablers to accessing Alternate Leisure settings. By removing barriers for participation at these settings more people can access the physical, social and mental benefits of Alternate Leisure settings.

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## WHAT IS THE ALTERNATE LEISURE INITIATIVE?

Alternate Leisure settings are defined as dance studios, trampoline centres, children's play centres, entertainment centres, rock climbing centres, ten pin bowling centres, water parks, go karting and laser tag settings.

*The Alternate Leisure Initiative* will help your setting to strengthen your health and wellbeing practices and create healthier environments. The initiative has been built from a co-design process and focuses on a whole of setting approach. This means that all aspects of your setting can be adapted leading to improving the health and wellbeing for all who access your setting.

The initiative focuses on improving environments for healthy eating and inclusion with co-benefits of mental wellness. This means that through working on the initiative you will also be supporting people with their mental wellness. The initiative recognises that, as an Alternate Leisure setting, you are already encouraging physical activity and social connection, and being involved in *The Alternate Leisure Initiative* will help ensure more people can access the benefits of your setting.

Alternate Leisure settings can work through the initiative at your own pace in a step by step process, while receiving expert, local-level support. There is a commitment stage to build your foundations for health and wellbeing practices followed by two health areas to work through, healthy eating and inclusion.

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## BENEFITS FOR SETTINGS PARTICIPATING

In addition to improving health and wellbeing of your employees and community, there are a number of other benefits:

- It is completely FREE to be involved and so is the ongoing support
- Receive local level, expert support to guide your setting through the process and build local connections
- Strengthen community connection and improve accessibility to your setting
- Shape the initiative to your needs and focus on your choice of health area
- Work at your own pace with support tailored accordingly
- Increase promotion of your setting to the community
- Access to free health and wellbeing workshops for your setting



# HOW THE INITIATIVE WORKS

1

Register your interest for The Alternate Leisure Initiative by completing the Commitment Document.

- Meet with your local Health Promotion Practitioner from Monash Health to complete the Commitment Document.
- The first page of the Commitment Document has general registration questions and a place for members from your Alternate Leisure setting to sign.
- The second page of the Commitment Document contains an action plan to help you set the foundation for a healthy workplace.
- Items from this action plan must be implemented before the Alternate Leisure setting moves onto step 2.

2

When all the actions from the Commitment Document action plan have been implemented, the Alternate Leisure setting can choose a health area to work through.

- Pick a health area to focus on between Healthy Eating and Inclusion.
- Meet with your local Health Promotion Practitioner to help you build an understanding of your local context.
- Start the action plan for your chosen health area and rate your current actions from 1-3.
- Decide on new actions to implement that will support you to reach the aims of the health area.
- Send out a survey to staff and customers to understand their needs and current feelings towards health and wellbeing.

3

Once the action plan is completed, the Alternate Leisure setting can begin to implement actions.

- Work through actions in your action plan with the support of your local Health Promotion Practitioner.
- Organise periodic check-in meeting with your local Health Promotion Practitioner to update your progress and discuss any challenges.
- Once all actions are implemented and checked off by your local Health Promotion Practitioner, send out a survey to understand how the actions impacted upon staff and customers health and wellbeing.
- Promote to the community that your Alternate Leisure setting is recognised as a setting that supports health and wellbeing of the community.

# HEALTH AREAS

Leading an active life improves our health and wellbeing and reduces our risk of ill-health (State of Victoria 2019, p. 25). Physical activity can help prevent non-communicable diseases, improve mental health and increase levels of happiness (State of Victoria 2019, p. 25).

To support our local communities' physical activity levels, we need to remove any barriers to accessing Alternate Leisure settings and support their health and wellbeing while they're at the setting. There are two different health areas that Alternate Leisure settings can choose to work on to support this.

## HEALTHY EATING

The food environment and our diet has changed a lot in the last 30 years, with many Victorians not consuming enough fruit, vegetables and wholegrain cereal, and consuming too many food and drinks high in saturated fat, added sugars and salts (State of Victoria 2019, p. 23). Overweight and obesity, and dietary risks are two of the leading risk factors for burden of disease in Australia (State of Victoria 2019, p. 14). The accessibility, affordability and marketing of unhealthy food and drinks options strongly influence an individual's choice (State of Victoria 2019, p. 33).

Local community settings are in the perfect position to change their food environment to support the community to make the healthy option the easy option. By offering healthy options at food retail outlets in Alternate Leisure settings, you're supporting your local community with their health and wellbeing.

Consultation with the local community showed a need for Alternate Leisure settings to provide healthy options for their customers. Limited availability of healthy options and marketing of unhealthy food items at Alternate Leisure settings was a barrier to some community members accessing their services.

The Healthy Eating area focuses on: menu changes; pricing; culturally appropriate food options; promotion and marketing; and policy.

## INCLUSION

A fairer and inclusive community is fundamental to improving the health of the population, however good health and wellbeing is not equitably distributed across our communities (State of Victoria 2019, p. 15). Those who experience health inequities are: people who live with greater economic and social disadvantage; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people with disability; refugees and asylum seekers; people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and people from the LGBTI+ communities (State of Victoria 2019, p. 15).

Local community settings are in the perfect position to challenge and shift socio-cultural norms and reduce discrimination and health inequities for some members of their community. By working to ensure you have an accessible, welcoming and inclusive environment in your Alternate Leisure setting, you're supporting access to physical activity opportunities for everyone in your local community and supporting their health and wellbeing.

The design thinking process showed a need for Alternate Leisure settings to be welcoming and inclusive of all. Alternate Leisure settings that didn't feel welcoming, inclusive or provide accessible programming options were a barrier to some community members accessing their services.

The Inclusion area focuses on: cultural safety; access for all abilities; welcoming spaces; inclusive marketing and promotion; and policy.

