

## Swimming

Swimming is one of Western Australia's most popular activities. It is suitable for most people and provides a range of health benefits.

There are many opportunities for swimming in Western Australia given its many beaches, pools, rivers and lakes. Swimming therefore has an important role in increasing physical activity levels in the State.

Australia is also one of the strongest swimming nations in the world, achieving outstanding results at major international events.

### PARTICIPATION IN SWIMMING

#### Participation of Western Australians aged 15 years and over<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, 155,100 (9.9%) Western Australians aged 15 years and over participated in swimming at least once in the past 12 months. The participation rate was higher for males (10.6%) than females (9.3%).

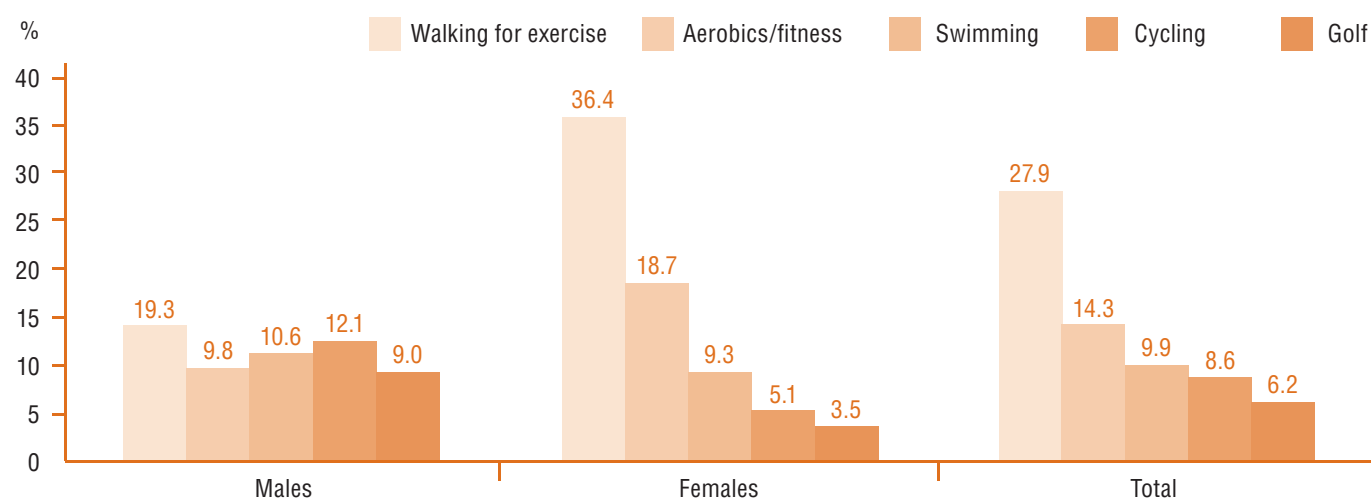
In 2006, swimming was the third most popular activity for Western Australians aged 15 years and over, after walking for exercise (27.9%) and aerobics/fitness (14.3%).

#### Participation in swimming: Western Australians aged 15 years and over – 2006<sup>(a)</sup>

	Males	Females	Total
Number	82,100	73,000	155,100
Proportion of population (%)	10.6	9.3	9.9

(a) Participation in the 12 months to survey

#### Participation in selected sports and recreation activities by sex: Western Australians aged 15 years and over – 2006<sup>(a)</sup>



(b) Proportion who participated in the 12 months to survey

# Swimming

## Participation of Australians aged 15 years and over

For the whole of Australia in 2006, the majority (87.3%) of people aged 15 years and over who swam in the past 12 months participated only in a non-organised capacity.<sup>2</sup>

More than three-quarters (77.3%) of swimming participants in Australia swam 53 times or more in the 12 months to interview in 2006. A further 12.9% participated 27 to 52 times, 6.2% participated 13 to 26 times and 3.7% participated one to 12 times.<sup>3</sup>

## Children's participation in swimming<sup>4</sup>

In Western Australia in 2006, 38,600 children (14.6%) aged 5 to 14 years participated in organised swimming outside of school hours in the past 12 months. Participation in organised swimming was similar for males and females.

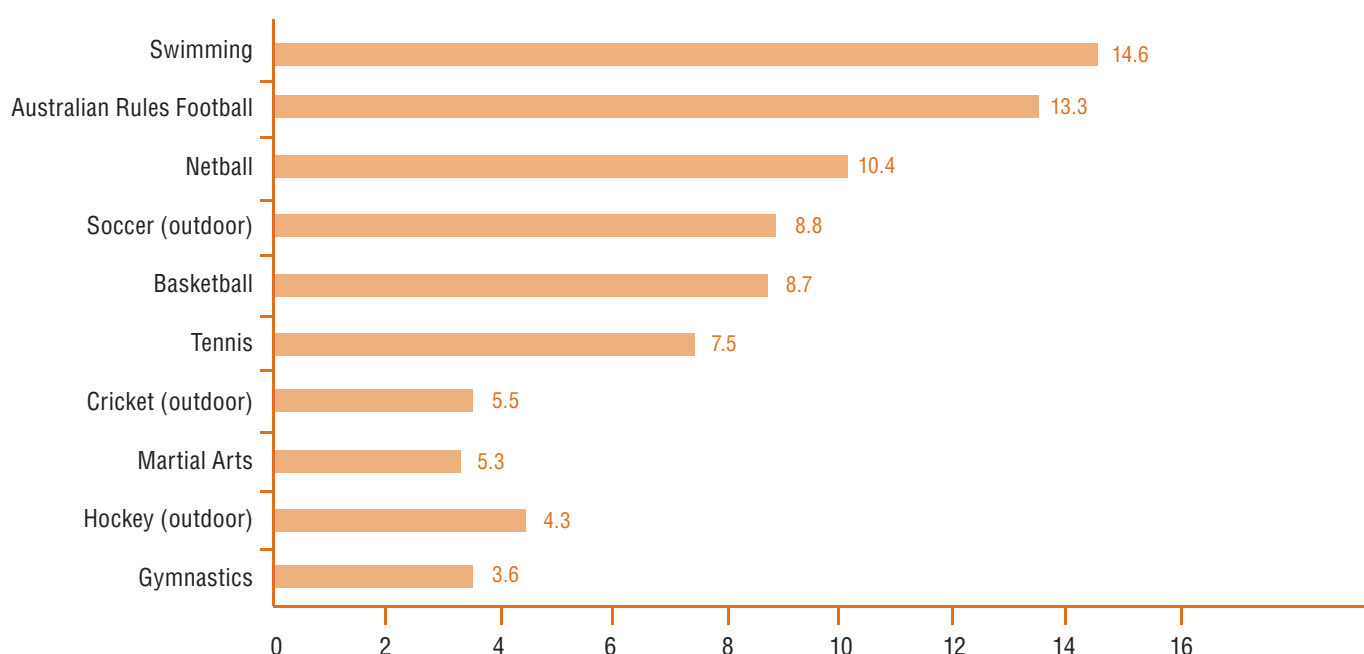
### Participation in organised swimming, children aged 5 to 14 years: Western Australia – 2006<sup>(a) 5</sup>

	Males	Females	Total
Number	19,400	19,200	38,600
Proportion (%)	14.3	14.8	14.6

(a) Proportion who participated in the 12 months to survey

In 2006, swimming was the most popular organised sport or physical activity for Western Australian children aged 5 to 14 years.

### Participation in organised sport by type of activity: children aged 5 to 14 years: Western Australia – 2006<sup>(a) 6</sup>



(a) Proportion who participated in the 12 months to survey

# Swimming

## ADULT PARTICIPATION IN SWIMMING/ SURFING

### Participation in swimming/ surfing by people aged 18 years and over

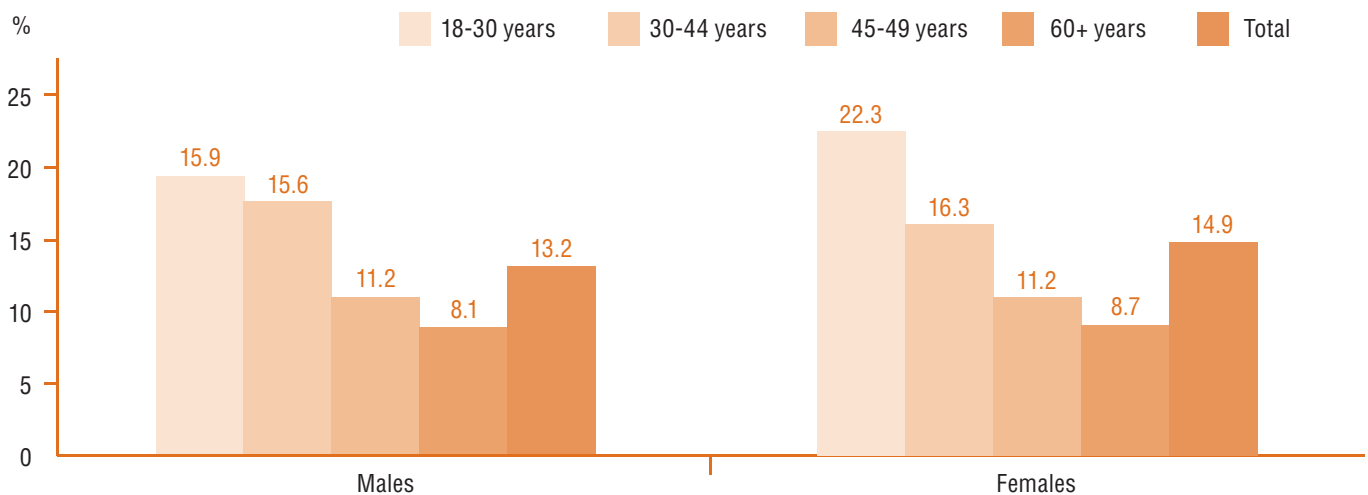
In 2006, 14.1% of Western Australians (13.2% of men and 14.9% of women) aged 18 years and over participated in swimming/ surfing in the week prior to survey.<sup>7</sup> Note that the data was from a survey of Western Australian adults which did not separate swimming and surfing.

Participation in swimming/ surfing was similar in 1999 (12%), 2002 (15%) and 2006 (14%).<sup>8</sup>

Participation in swimming/ surfing by age<sup>9</sup>

In 2006, participation in swimming decreased with advancing age.

### Participation in swimming/ surfing by age: Western Australia – 2006



### Facilities used for physical activity<sup>10</sup>

In 2006, 11% of Western Australian adults (13.3% of men and 9.6% of women) used the beach for physical activity. This was similar to 1999 (10%) and 2002 (12%).

### Swimming coaches and instructors<sup>11</sup>

In 2006, there were 770 people employed as swimming coaches or instructors in Western Australia and 7,587 in Australia.

Of the 7,587 swimming coaches and instructors in Australia:

- 5,978 (78.8%) were female; and
- 4,089 (53.9%) were aged between 15 to 29 years.

# Swimming

## High performance swimming

Australia has been successful in swimming at major international events such as Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games, and World Swimming Championships.

At the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia finished first on the swimming medal tally with a total of 54 swimming medals (19 gold, 18 silver and 17 bronze).<sup>12</sup>

At the 2007 World Swimming Championships in Melbourne, Australia was ranked second in terms of overall medals and third in terms of gold medals, with a total of 26 medals (9 gold, 7 silver and 10 bronze).<sup>13</sup> Perth was host to the World Swimming Championships in both 1991 and 1998.<sup>14</sup>

In Athens in 2004, eight Western Australians represented Australia in swimming. Two of them came home with a silver medal, as part of the 4 x 200m freestyle relay team.<sup>15</sup>

## Benefits of swimming<sup>16</sup>

Swimming provides a range of health benefits associated with physical activity.

Benefits that are specific to swimming include:

- Low impact – small risk of injury;
- Works entire body, especially muscles of the back, chest and arms; and it is
- Ideal for most people, particularly those who are frail, elderly or obese.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2007). Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation. (Cat. no. 4177.0). Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. p28.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p23.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p21.
- <sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006). Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities. (Cat. no. 4901.0), State Table 1 – Summary of Activities - By States or territories – 2006', data cube: Excel spreadsheet. Viewed 10/03/2008. [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/738B8C563531F5ACCA257260001112C7/\\$File/49010\\_state\\_table1.xls](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/738B8C563531F5ACCA257260001112C7/$File/49010_state_table1.xls)
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Milligan, R., McCormack, G. R., Rosenberg, M. (2007). Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2006. Results from the Adult Physical Activity Survey. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government. p32-33.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid. p33.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. p33.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid. p34-35.
- <sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2008). Employment in sport and recreation, Australia. August 2006. data cube: Excel spreadsheet. Viewed 20/05/2008. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4148.0Aug%202006?OpenDocument>
- <sup>12</sup> Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation. Aquatic swimming medal table ordered by gold ranking. Viewed 20/05/2008. <http://www.melbourne2006.com.au/Schedule+and+Results/Medals/#>
- <sup>13</sup> Melbourne 2007. Full medal tally. Viewed 20/05/2008. <http://www.melbourne2007.com.au/default.aspx?s=fullmedaltally>
- <sup>14</sup> Melbourne 2007. History of the world swimming championships. Viewed 20/05/2008. <http://www.melbourne2007.com.au/default.aspx?s=newsdisplay&id=12>
- <sup>15</sup> Australian Olympic Committee. Athens 2004 – a WA perspective. Viewed 26/05/2008. [http://corporate.olympics.com.au/wa/files/01/Athens\\_2004\\_WA\\_Athletes\\_Results\\_Listing.pdf](http://corporate.olympics.com.au/wa/files/01/Athens_2004_WA_Athletes_Results_Listing.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> State of Victoria. Better Health Channel. Physical activity – choosing the one for you. Viewed 20/05/2008. [http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/BHCv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Physical\\_activity\\_what's\\_right\\_for\\_you?OpenDocument](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/BHCv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Physical_activity_what's_right_for_you?OpenDocument)