



INFORMATION ON THE NSW PREMIER'S COUNCIL FOR ACTIVE LIVING

1. Introduction

The Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) reports to the NSW Premier through the Minister for Health. It has a comprehensive intersectoral plan that has prioritised the following issues; urban planning and its influence on health and well being, community inclusion and the liveability of NSW cities and towns.

The focus of the Council is providing advice to government and influencing and improving government guidelines, policy, and ultimately legislation with a view to increasing the physical activity levels of all citizens in NSW.

The work and the focus of the Council have become even more important as the evidence detailing the human and economic costs of sedentary living are revealed. We can now confirm that many of the health impacts of sedentary lifestyles such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, depression, and various forms of cancer are preventable, or manageable, through moderate regular physical activity of some type.

We also know that the economic costs of inactivity are in the billions for NSW alone – and they are growing.

As the Terms of Reference intimate, the Council is very well aware that it will not achieve the vision of all people in NSW being engaged in regular physical activity unless supportive physical and social environments are created to encourage and facilitate active living, and unless all levels of government and the private sector are involved.

2. PCAL Terms of Reference

- Provide leadership and advice to the Premier to encourage more people, to be more active, more often
- Initiate and manage partnerships and harness resources, across government, non-government organisations and the private sector
- Work collaboratively with key organisations to develop a comprehensive physical activity strategy for NSW
- Make recommendations for mechanisms to implement and monitor progress against the strategy
- Report to the Premier of NSW every year

3. Website

The PCAL website is www.pcal.nsw.gov.au

4. Council Membership

The Council has an independent Chair (Ms Libby Darlison). PCAL members include senior representatives from the following government and non-government sectors:

- Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care – Office for Ageing
- Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation
- Department of Community Services – Communities Division
- Department of Education & Training
- Department of Environment & Climate Change
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing
- Department of Local Government
- Department of Planning
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Roads & Traffic Authority
- Fitness NSW
- Insurance Australia Group
- Ministry of Transport
- National Heart Foundation
- NSW Centre for Physical Activity & Health (CPAH)

5. Council Projects

PCAL's focus is on initiating policy change through the provision of strategic advice and advocacy. Through its partnership agreements PCAL is also able to work with government and a range of non government and business stakeholders. The Council's work plan endorsed by members includes a key focus on health promoting urban environments, active transport, and the facilitation of community development through active communities. PCAL is funded through a range of sources to advance work in these areas.

Some of our recent initiatives include;

- *Input into the Metro Strategy*

Before the most recent changes to the Metro Strategy, PCAL hosted a working group which included the former Sustainability Commissioner and Government Architect, as well as representatives from local and state government, and the property industry. The group reviewed the Metro Strategy (including the sub-regional strategies) and, at the request of the former Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Environment, produced recommendations for the inclusion of a range of initiatives to improve the health impacts of the Metro Strategy.

- *Greater Western Sydney Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Project*
WSROC (Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils) with input from Sydney West and Sydney South West Area Health Services aims to conduct a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the development plans for western/south western Sydney as outlined in the Sydney Metro Strategy and related documents. Active living is one of the dimensions of health being considered by the HIA. PCAL has given its support to the project by convening the reference group. The expert reference group provides input into the recommendations.
- *Hunter New England Liveable Communities Project*
This is an initiative of Hunter New England Area Health Service, with funding from the University of Newcastle. It aims to develop a toolkit for property developers that will help them to improve health and limit the negative health impacts of their developments. PCAL has provided them with information about *Designing Places for Active Living* website – and encouraged the project group to ensure that developers are referred to the website for information on physical activity-related design guidelines. PCAL is a member of the project’s reference group.
- *Landcom – Healthy Renwick Project*
The National Heart Foundation NSW has been working with Landcom on incorporating active living design considerations into their Renwick development near Mittagong. PCAL initiated the first meeting with Landcom and continues to work with Landcom on the improvement of planning guidelines for active living.

In 2007-2008 PCAL plans to;

- Initiate and host an ‘*Active Transport Forum*’. The forum is planned to be a high-level round table meeting for senior executives from government, academia and the transport industry. The purpose of the round table meeting will be to identify, confirm and discuss strategies related to ‘Alternative Transport options for Sydney.’ PCAL will then work with government, academic and business members who attend the Round Table to help translate proposed strategies into action.
- Expand the *Designing Places for Active Living* website
The PCAL Active Living website contains planning and design guidelines for active living. *Designing Places for Active Living* seeks to propose key design considerations for the promotion of active living in urban places in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. These design considerations have the potential to positively impact individual and community health and wellbeing in the broadest sense, thereby meeting multiple health, environmental and social objectives. The next stage of the project is to develop and roll-out a two-phased implementation strategy focusing on knowledge and skills development of planners and developers. Photographic case studies demonstrating application of active living principles will also be added to the guidelines.
- *Input into METRIX*
PCAL is working with the Department of Planning to provide advice regarding the active living physical environment characteristics that would ideally be assessed through METRIX. METRIX is the proposed tool that the Department of Planning is currently developing to evaluate each local council’s Local Environment Plans (LEP).
- *Input into the Urban Design Code/Development Code for the new release areas*

The Council is working with the Growth Centres Commission to ensure that every opportunity to develop urban environments that encourage active living is incorporated within the planning stage of Sydney's designated New Release Areas.

- *Input into Open Space issues*
General Open Space Issues – The council is working with the Department of Planning in regards to the Open Space Strategy. PCAL will be expanding the *Designing Places for Active Living* Website with a specific section relating to 'open space and recreational facilities' based upon the conclusions of the current Green Space Parliamentary Review.
- *Travel Smart*
PCAL is working with Sydney South West Area Health Service, the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Climate Change to promote active transport options for participating schools. The ultimate goal of the program is to demonstrate how active transport principles can be integrated into school communities to encourage more children to walk or cycle to school.
- *Externally-provided Physical Activity Programs in the School and After-School Settings*
There is an increase in the number of private providers delivering physical activity and sport within our schools. In response to this, PCAL will be providing advice to the Premier, Health and the Education Minister on the development of appropriate standards for such programs, including a social justice component with a view to developing an approved provider list.
- *Community Strengthening Project*
PCAL is reviewing the role that active living plays in community strengthening strategies. Depending on the outcome of collaborative research with PCAL agencies and the Centre for Physical Activity and Health at the University of Sydney, we will be providing recommendations to the government.

6. PCAL Position Statement

To assist and support leaders in the public, private and community sectors to make decisions that will facilitate and encourage active living, PCAL has summarised in an 'Active Living Statement' the key evidence demonstrating the benefits of active living and the individual and social costs of a sedentary lifestyle.

The final draft is available both in print and on the PCAL website: www.pcal.nsw.gov.au