

10 October 2025 Healthway healthway@healthway.wa.gov.au

ATTN: Education and Health Standing Committee laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Subject: Submission to Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities

Thank you for the invitation, dated 22 August 2025, to provide a submission to the *Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities*.

Healthway is the only State Government agency solely dedicated to health promotion and preventative health efforts in Western Australia. Our interest in this inquiry focuses on community use of school facilities in relation to preventative health and is aligned with our <u>Strategic Plan 2024-2029</u>: Creating a heathier Western Australia together.

We offer our continuing support to maximise opportunities for the increased use of public school facilities as part of efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of the Western Australian community.

The full submission may be made public as part of this process. Healthway is also happy to provide further detail about any of the information enclosed to assist the Committee's considerations.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of our submission further, please do not hesitate to contact me on 08 9488 6839 or email carina.tan-vanbaren@healthway.wa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Carina Tan-Van Baren
Executive Director, Healthway

About Healthway

Healthway is the only State Government agency solely dedicated to health promotion efforts in Western Australia (WA). We work across systems to create healthy environments, motivate behaviour change and influence policy to reduce and eliminate barriers to good health.

Healthway's work focuses on creating healthy environments to support the Western Australian community to make more informed choices about health and leading a healthy lifestyle, while also reducing the need for hospital and clinical care. We do this through health promotion campaigns and education, grants and partnerships with sports, arts, racing and community organisations, research, and advocating for and coordinating policy and systems change across government and non-government organisations.

Response

Our response is structured to reflect the six sections in the inquiry guide for submissions and has been informed by key published reports and evidence across Australia¹⁻⁹.

Through this submission, Healthway seeks to amplify the voices of key stakeholders with whom we have long-standing relationships, including sport and arts organisations across the state, as well as community organisations seeking access to school facilities (e.g., green space) within their neighbourhoods. In addition, we would be happy to facilitate introductions to appropriate Healthway partners for direct consultation to inform this inquiry.

Overview

There is an urgent need to increase levels of physical activity and positive mental health in the Western Australian community. Out of 146 countries globally^{10, 11}, Australian teenagers are ranked 140 for physical activity. Levels of physical activity for young people in WA appear to have declined over the last 20 years. 12-22

Low levels of population physical activity cause physical health and mental health challenges. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44 years²³. Loneliness and social isolation are growing public health challenges, as our average frequency of social contact in Australia has declined in all age groups over the last 20 years.^{24, 25}

Healthway's response strongly supports the community use of school facilities as this facilitates three major material levers²⁶ on population physical activity and social connection, namely:

- 1. **proximity** (e.g., school facilities are often near homes, providing more convenient access to greenspace and facilities)
- 2. **price** (e.g., transport costs are reduced given less need to drive, as green spaces and facilities in schools are closer and free to use)
- 3. **temporality** (e.g., reducing time-based restrictions to public school facilities before and after school).

We strongly support policy change and investment to overcome all barriers to increasing community use of school facilities both informally and formally (e.g., sports and arts organisations). Our submission also highlights the clear link between this inquiry and the ongoing Parliamentary inquiry into land use in WA.²⁷

1. Benefits and risks of community use of public school facilities

a. Are there health, educational, financial, environmental or social benefits of increased use of public school facilities, especially where public spaces are limited?

Access to parks is one of the top five things that Australians want when deciding where to live. ⁵ Land is scarce and expensive in growing cities like Perth. Opening school facilities for community use means more people have access to public parks in their local area, reducing barriers to informal recreation. This directly addresses material barriers, specifically proximity, price and temporality, to physical activity and arts participation. Research shows that communities will use school grounds in an informal manner when given access. ² The following sections detail the specific benefits.

Health (physical, mental and social)

Opening school facilities, that are often embedded in communities and close to where people live, is a good opportunity to reduce distance to greenspaces and facilities to be active. Research shows that:

- proximity to facilities is strongly related to higher rates of physical activity among children²⁸;
 and
- leisure activity is increased in communities with shared use of facilities, both formally (e.g., contractual, fee-based) and informally (e.g., general open use, non-fee based).²⁹

Beyond physical health benefits, access to local facilities also improves mental wellbeing through boosting social connections, reducing loneliness and providing opportunities for resting in nature.³⁰ When communities can access greenspace they might otherwise not be able to - due to factors such as community severance, including arterial roads separating where they live from the local park - opportunities for physical, mental and social wellbeing benefits are unlocked.

Research conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) shows that schools are primarily driven to open facilities for broader use to strengthen relationships with the local community.³¹ These benefits have also been recognised by schools in New South Wales (NSW). The school-based *Physical Activity 4 Everyone* intervention included the endorsement of principals for a school policy that stated schools would work towards partnerships involving shared use of facilities where appropriate.³² This program was found to increase adolescents' physical activity by 49 minutes per week.^{32, 33}

Educational

Healthway's Healthy Schools program offers small grants for whole-school health projects addressing one or more of our priority health areas, which include physical activity. Over the last three years, Healthway has supported more than 30 schools to implement projects to improve physical activity, including fundamental movement skills among students. Upon completion, feedback from staff includes increased engagement and improved concentration and behaviour in class due to these initiatives.

Opening school facilities for community use can encourage and boost levels of physical activity – reducing time-based restrictions and increasing the opportunity for more people to be active. This offers myriad potential benefits for children and young people – both physically and educationally, with strong links between physical activity and academic achievement.³⁴ These links include benefits to Australian children's long-term participation in sport, NAPLAN scores, absenteeism and likelihood to attend university.³⁵

Financial

Financial benefits of physical activity and access to open spaces accrue for both community members and the economy. For community members, reducing distance to spaces used for leisure – such as opening school facilities outside school hours – reduces transport costs and offers a low- or no-cost alternative to other forms of paid physical activity opportunities such as gym memberships and personal training.

Conservative estimates from the WA Department of Health suggest that low population levels of physical activity costs \$92 million annually.³⁴ Beyond healthcare, the financial implications extend to employers, through absenteeism and presenteeism at work – ultimately costing companies and the economy millions. ^{35, 36}

Research has shown that for every 10,000 Western Australians involved in informal sport, there is a health saving of more than \$3.24 million every 12 months.³⁷ This highlights the importance of opening facilities for both formal and informal use.³⁷ Informal use includes playing with children, playing sports that are not directly affiliated with clubs or associations and dog walking. Demand for this type of activity is growing in WA.^{37, 38}

Environmental

Reducing distances to travel, by opening school facilities which are close to where people live, reduces emissions. This occurs by reducing driving distances and by making walking, cycling or public transport trips more viable. Reducing vehicle travel reduces air and tyre pollution and has the potential to reduce traffic crashes. Research has revealed that 1 in 34 deaths are caused by cars.³⁹ Opening local school facilities would support communities to replace car travel with walking, riding and public transport.

Considerations for practical implementation

Healthway offers the following considerations in relation to the practical implementation of community access to and use of school facilities:

- Benefits are likely to be larger in locations with existing low provision of greenspace and facilities of larger sizes offering more amenity.² Sites that deliver the most benefits could therefore be prioritised.² For example, if a community's local school grounds offer considerable amenity with limited other facilities available locally.
- The Thriving Perth Portal⁴⁰ is an interactive, user-friendly geographical mapping tool that can be used to identify schools and access to green spaces in the Perth metropolitan area. This may assist in prioritising schools with limited access to parks (Figure 1).

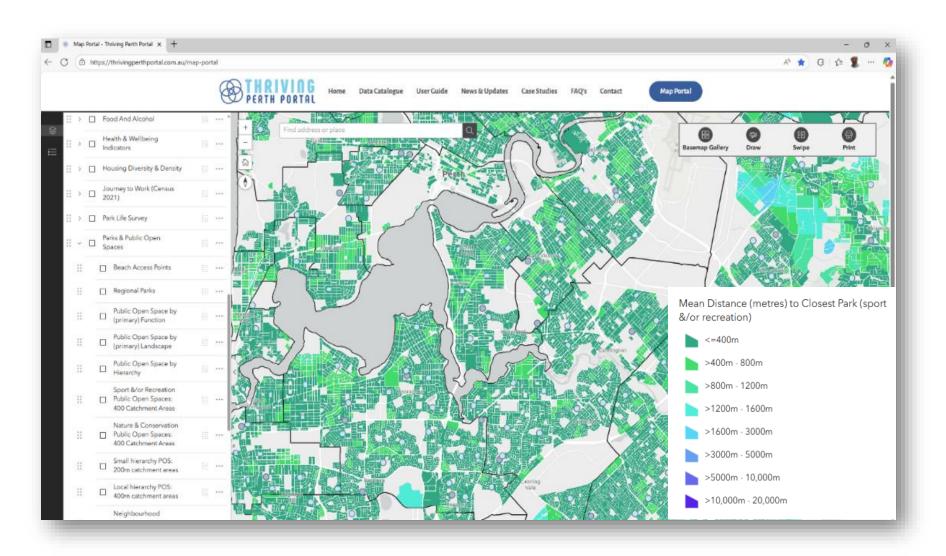


Figure 1: Thriving Perth Portal⁴⁰ data showing the location of schools (circles) with areas of less access to green spaces (see key bottom right).

- When funding is not available to upgrade school facilities, opening school grounds may lead to widening disparities. For example, a community survey found that women faced more barriers than men in accessing local sports fields, due to factors including poor lighting and feeling unsafe.⁴¹ Healthway encourages consideration of these important safety factors in implementation.
- In Victoria, government data shows lower socio-economic communities tend to have the greatest potential benefits for accessing school facilities, with these areas featuring higher prevalence of physical inactivity and culturally and linguistically diverse people. The research found areas on the urban fringe with the highest need for increased access to school facilities overlapped with areas where school grounds were more likely to be closed.² This data was drawn from a range of measures including participation in physical activity, language spoken at home and ability to access a sports field (not on school grounds) within a 10-minute walk.²
- The cost of upgrading school facilities for informal community use is likely cheaper than building new facilities. In recognition of this, a report from Infrastructure Victoria urged the Victorian Government to establish a fund that would provide up to \$2 million in funding per school to upgrade grounds for shared use.² These upgrades could include toilet facilities, field upgrades, improved lighting or other community infrastructure, like seating and benches.² It is noted that funding currently available for Western Australian schools is limited to \$100,000 for formal use agreements only.⁴²

b. Are there risks in promoting increased use of public-school facilities?

We acknowledge that the primary function of schools is to provide education to their students and ensure school sites are fit for purpose. While this is the case, there are predictable, preventable and manageable risks in increasing use of public school facilities by formal and informal user groups. For example, additional costs and burdens may accrue across administration, insurance considerations, security, maintenance, repairs and cleaning. The following are practical tips to mitigate potential risks in opening school grounds for community use.

Security

Opening the school gates has acted as passive surveillance for some schools, leading to Australian school principals reporting reductions in vandalism.³ In WA, passive surveillance is explicitly noted in design guidance for building schools, specifically that "external areas must facilitate movement and visual linkages between buildings, and ensure the security and safety of all users through passive surveillance." ⁴⁴ In Victoria, research has found that schools with shared school grounds are not associated with higher levels of reported criminal damage.² However, several actual and perceived concerns are still raised in relation to security, safety and anti-social behaviour on school grounds when they are opened to the public.

The role of school fences and gates in school security and community connection has been discussed in several sources.⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ In recent decades, there has been a shift in Australian school design from open or low-fenced school grounds (permeable and inviting) towards high-security 'diplomat' perimeter fences.^{45,46} See figure 1 and 2 in this source⁴⁶.

Measured against short-term objectives, such as reduction in immediate vandalism costs, security fences have been found to be effective. 46 But longer-term objectives of supporting community connection and physical activity are not considered in these short-term measures. 46 High-security fences have been criticised for: limiting access to public-funded greenspaces; limiting children's independence; limiting learning through place; fostering a low sense of community belonging and connection; and, in some cases, they have been referred to as

'prison-like'.⁴⁷ In NSW, council officers describe locked gates and fences as a signal to community that these areas are 'no-go zones'.⁴⁷ Alternative ways to secure schools have been researched, including using context-appropriate architectural and landscape design strategies.⁴⁵ A 20-item checklist has been developed to provide strategic design guidance for alternatives to school fences, for example, "are there signs instructing people on how to report maintenance problems".⁴⁵

In lieu of locked gates and perimeter fences, tips to enhance school security include after-hours contacts for any issues on school grounds (e.g., school security procedures⁴⁸), as well as rectifying issues quickly, so that the school grounds continue to feel safe and respected.³

Administration and Funding

To reduce costs and administrative burden, partnerships with local councils and the state government can reduce friction for schools. Utilising available funding streams (e.g., Community Use of School Sporting Facilities Program⁴²) to enhance security and shared use agreement guidelines from the Department of Education may also assist.⁴⁹ In New Zealand, the government funds school vandalism repairs for incidents costing less than NZD\$2,500 - outside regular insurance, operational and maintenance funding.^{2,50}

Bins and cleaning procedures

Schools can minimise litter and dog fouling issues by placing additional bins, dog waste bag dispensers and signs on school grounds. Some interstate schools have introduced a system for a routine check/clean up prior to school commencing each week.³ Needless to say, this requires sufficient funding, resourcing and capacity at the school.

Reports from other jurisdictions on barriers

In 2017, four recommendations were made to the NSW Department of Education by the NSW Audit Office to increase the shared use of school facilities.¹ These recommendations were made to overcome financial barriers, community information barriers and evaluation issues.¹ Another report from Catholic Schools NSW⁵¹ explored the role of schools as community hubs. This defines schools as education communities that operate as welcoming and enriching places to connect, share and learn with students, families, educators and the wider community.⁵¹

Play Wales has developed a toolkit: *Use of School Grounds for playing out of teaching hours.* ⁴³ This has been designed to help head teachers, governors and local organisations work together to consider making school grounds available to local children out of teaching hours. In Wales, when schools are balancing the risks and benefits, they refer to the Play Wales guide ⁴³ that includes a light-touch checklist to guide schools. A similar but more granular checklist is available for the informal use of sports facilities in WA.⁸ This includes six questions to consider:

- What other facilities/spaces for free play are available in the community?
- Is it safe for children to travel independently to the school site?
- What resources are needed?
- What other spaces are available to play?
- What are the community views?
- What is the impact on community relations?

Importantly, a separate Play Wales checklist also consider the impacts of doing nothing.⁴³

In the UK, the *Opening School Facilities* government-funded program was delivered between 2023 and 2025.⁵² This involved the distribution of up to £57million (approx. \$116 million AUD) to help schools open sports facilities outside of the school day to both students and community

users. The aim of the program was to create a sustainable increase in physical activity levels in communities and high priority groups.⁵² The top three barriers reported by 230 schools involved in the Opening School Facilities project were³¹:

- Lack of staffing
- Perceived or actual poor state of facilities or lack of facilities
- Site safety, perceived damages and security.

In WA, we have not been able to identify state-specific data pertaining to school leaders' perceptions of barriers and facilitators to opening school facilities for community use. As such, data is needed in the public domain to understand the type and extent of barriers faced by public schools.

Recommendation 1:

Consider collection of data, such as surveys or focus groups, to understand the type and extent of barriers faced by public schools to make grounds available for:

- informal public use outside school hours (e.g., open gate policy)
- formal use throughout the week (e.g., sports and arts clubs).

2. Patterns of community use across WA

a. Who uses what types of facilities, in what areas, and for what purposes, including ovals, classrooms, swimming pools, gyms and theatres?

National Survey

A detailed report of a 2021-22 national survey⁴ of school staff (mainly school principals) addressed most of the elements of the above question. This survey of government, Catholic and independent schools, including 70 responses from schools in WA, found that organised sports and recreational activities were the most common program or activity offered to communities using school facilities.⁴ This represents opportunities to increase access for informal use (e.g., dog walking, playing with children). Furthermore, playing fields and sporting facilities were the most common facilities shared with local communities⁴, suggesting there may be opportunities for arts organisations to use music and drama facilities. Schools also reported offering classrooms, kitchen facilities, multi-purpose spaces, gyms, libraries and arts spaces.⁴

Schools reported a variety of funding models for sharing school facilities. Regarding fees and funding, 163 (40%) schools did not charge fees for community groups to use school facilities.⁴ Funding for additional programs, services and activities was most often provided through the school budget (68.4%). About half (50.6%) of the activities were covered by participants. Fewer respondents reported state government funding (22.7%).⁴

Schools reported various sources of funds for upgrading school facilities. Less than one-third of schools (29.5%) reported school facilities being intentionally designed or renovated to improve utility for local community groups, whereas more than two thirds of schools (70.5%) reported no intentional design or renovation.⁴ Where facility was designed intentionally, or renovated, this was most often paid for through school budget (54%) followed by state government (38%). Although donations, philanthropy, charity, shared use agreements, joint use agreements and hire fees played a role for some schools.

Schools also reported barriers to sharing facilities. Most respondents (77%) agreed that current school facilities supported the provision of additional programs, services or activities, including

those provided by outside groups/organisations. However, only 13% strongly agreed, indicating there may be some barriers that persist to sharing facilities.

Informal use

Although Healthway strongly encourages the opening of more schools in WA for informal use by the public, it would be prudent to undertake an audit of public schools to better understand the extent and nature of informal and formal access currently provided.

In Victoria, about two-thirds of government schools already make school grounds available for informal public use outside school hours.²

b. Do disparities exist in the use of public school facilities across WA?

Disparities appear to exist in the use of school facilities. Formal user groups (e.g., sports clubs, arts clubs) who may pay to use facilities often receive preference over informal use by the public (e.g., walkers, runners, pet exercising). The latter is often referred to as the 'opening the gates' approach – allowing both formal and informal use.

A 2021-22 national report⁴ suggests that disparities also exist in facility use according to geographic location. Remote and very remote schools share facilities extensively but have fewer formal partnerships. The facility-sharing in remote schools is led by principals and most often provided for free to user groups. More often than urban schools, principals report that the cost of these sharing agreements is borne by the schools.

From our literature review, it is unclear if disparities exist between postcodes within urban areas (i.e., higher versus lower income areas).

In Western Australia, we have not been able to identify data pertaining to the extent of community use of public school facilities.

Recommendation 2: Consider collection of data to understand how many schools make grounds available for:

- informal public use outside school hours (e.g., open gate policy)*
- formal use throughout the week (e.g., sports and arts clubs).

^{*}Some of this data is available through the Thriving Perth Portal.40

3. Current policy framework and other arrangements that guide community use

- a. What legislation, regulations, policies, guidelines and other arrangements currently enable and support public schools to make their facilities available, and are these working as well as possible?
- b. How are local governments, State and Commonwealth Government agencies, and community organisations involved in supporting community use of public school facilities?

Funding

The Department of Cultural Industries, Tourism and Sport (DCITS) and the Department of Education have a joint funding program of \$10 million over two years (2024-2026) that aims to increase use of public school sporting facilities in WA.^{42,53} Public primary and secondary schools can apply for up to \$100,000 for equipment or infrastructure, improvements to existing facilities, playing surface upgrades of ovals or hardcourts, or other relevant activities that help enhance facility usage.⁴² It is a funding requirement that schools partner with a community organisation (e.g., sports club), therefore use of the funding for informal use by the community appears to be excluded.

Government school building guidance

The Department of Treasury and Department of Education's *WA Schools Public Private Partnership Project: Schedule 26 Design Brief*⁴⁴ outlines WA's design aspirations and the minimum functional and technical requirements for the design and construction of school facilities. The brief states that works must "enable opportunities for the School Facility to be shared by the community and cater for activities beyond traditional school use where appropriate" (p. 38). Furthermore, the brief outlines the responsibilities for construction and maintenance of sports ovals and hard courts within schools (p. 58).

State government policy

The Department of Education's *Community Use of School Facilities and Resources Policy*⁴⁹ sets out that "school facilities can be made available for use by third parties. Arrangements for use of school facilities by third parties must not adversely affect the safety or welfare of students and staff, and must not interfere with the normal operations of the school." (p. 2).

Other relevant state government strategies (including upcoming strategies) that are aligned to increased use of school facilities by community include:

- WA's first Play Strategy⁵⁴. This will be a Southern Hemisphere first strategy and will provide opportunities to support the increased use of existing greenspaces in schools, as well as arts, drama and crafts space, to facilitate play.
- WA Government Priorities for 2025-2029⁵⁵ includes a priority focus on health, including specifically a focus on "Promoting active healthy lifestyles" and "Providing more support for mental health"
- WA's first Active Travel Strategy Walk, Wheel, Ride, Thrive⁵⁶ forthcoming
- WA's Active Living for All physical activity strategy⁵⁷
- WA's Health Promotion Strategic Framework (2022-2026)⁵⁸
- WA's State Public Health Plan (2025-2030)⁵⁹
- Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy (2025-2030)⁶⁰ forthcoming

Global policy

Promoting the use of school facilities is aligned with action 2.4.4 of the *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018-2030)* from the World Health Organization.⁶¹ This includes advice to "encourage and strengthen the policy of shared use of school facilities, as appropriate, to increase the provision of playing fields and other open public spaces for utilisation by the community."⁶¹ Research has shown that governments and others experience challenges in implementation of the *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018-2030)*, for example, due to lack of intersectoral responsibility for action delivery.^{62, 63} There is a need to fund and assign capacity for implementation of action plans.

Federal government policy

Federal government strategies (including upcoming strategies) that are aligned to increased use of school facilities by community include:

- Play Well Australia's Sport Participation Strategy⁶⁴
- National Sport Strategy Sport Horizon⁶⁵
- National Preventative Health Strategy (2021-2030)⁶⁶
- National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan⁶⁷
- National Obesity Strategy⁶⁸

Civil society

Several charity and not-for-profit organisations have developed guidance and suggest provision for community use of school facilities. These include:

- Heart Foundation Blueprint for an Active Australia 3rd Edition⁶⁹
- Australian Prevention Partnership Centre Getting Australia Active⁷⁰
- International Society for Physical Activity and Health Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity⁷¹⁻⁷³

Healthway funding

Healthway provides funding to sports and arts organisations across WA that may be involved in the use of school facilities outside of school hours. The following case study shows how an organisation can partner with schools to bring costs down and provide local access for communities.

Case study: Rave About Arts

Funding from Healthway is enabling Rave About Arts to engage children through arts activities at Hopetoun Primary School. The funding supports teaching artists and art educators to participate in a social and emotional wellbeing program which enhances the skills and knowledge of arts practitioners to support the wellbeing of participants - children and young people. As a not-for-profit, using school facilities brings down the funding requirements for the program and the partnership between Rave About Arts and the school is mutually beneficial, with Rave About Arts assisting Hopetoun Primary School with its performing arts program.

4. Barriers to maximising community use

- a. Do barriers to community use of public school facilities exist relating to:
 - Administration and workload
 - School needs and priorities
 - Governance and decision-making structures
 - Regulatory issues
 - Legal and insurance requirements
 - Financial and cost implications
 - Planning and infrastructure capacity, security and access
 - Location and geography
 - Equity, inclusion and disability access concerns.

Research outlines perceived barriers raised in interviews with senior state government staff.⁷⁴ For example, in interviews with 47 senior Australian state government staff (including those from WA), 88% of participants supported 'making school facilities available to the public outside of school hours'. However, this was contingent on agreements being in place regarding maintenance, public liability insurance and security.⁷⁴

In a survey of school staff, almost two-thirds (64%) of schools reported not having access to adequate funding to operate and maintain the facilities that are used for additional programs, services or activities.⁴ Many respondents (43%) believed it is not the responsibility of school staff to source funding for additional programs, services or activities.

A 2010 national report⁷⁵ explored 'extended service schooling' and identified barriers and enablers for "targeted delivery of support services to young people who are most at risk of not engaging in education and making a successful transition to schooling, further education and training, and participation in the wider community." This included partnerships with government, local providers, community members and schools. The detailed report found that the six most consistently discussed barriers were⁷⁵:

- 1. Navigating, and working within, funding systems at a school-level.
- 2. Building parent support for the philosophy of the model so that they are keen to embrace and participate in the services provided.
- 3. Mitigating any potential negative stigma associated with parents, their children, or members of the broader community, accessing services through the school.
- 4. Addressing the impact of staff turnover.
- 5. Maintaining an appropriate balance between a focus on educational outcomes and a focus on the wellbeing of students more broadly.
- 6. Ensuring a shared understanding of the model and its aims with a range of stakeholders.

5. Opportunities to enable increased use of public school facilities

- a. What opportunities and incentives exist in the following areas?
 - Amending existing policies and practices
 - Alternative funding arrangements
 - Logistical and administrative support
 - Data capture and analysis
 - Identifying locations in need of greater access to public school facilities
 - Provision and promotion of information about available facilities.

In a national survey of school staff⁴, the top three factors for providing additional programs, services or activities through school facilities that were rated very important or essential, were:

- 1. Funding.
- 2. School leadership.
- 3. Relationship building.

Other factors identified as important included partnerships, support organisations, community engagement and infrastructure.⁴

The 2010 national report⁷⁵ on extended service schooling found that the most consistently discussed enablers were⁷⁵:

- Securing consistent funding from a variety of sources;
- Embedding the philosophy of the approach into the culture of the school;
- Developing and maintaining an understanding of the needs of the local community so that the approach can be modified, as necessary, to align to these needs;
- Having the physical and human resources to support at least some school-based delivery of services;
- A school-based capacity to develop strong partnerships with external agencies, particularly
 for schools in jurisdictions that do not have broader governance structures to manage this
 process; and
- Provision of system-level support to assist schools in navigating from identification of need through to implementation and evaluation of an extended service schooling approach.

In addition, 11 strategies were described for enabling good practice, including having a coordinator position and a fully committed school leader .⁷⁵

A recent study supported by DCITS has identified several items to improve access to informal sport environments. Many of the recommendations would be broadly applicable to school facilities, despite being designed initially for local government operated facilities.^{6-8, 37}

Additionally, the Thriving Perth Portal provides easy access to data to support prioritisation of public school facilities for site upgrades, including the existing provision of available public parks.⁴⁰

- 6. Approaches taken to promote community use of school facilities by non-government schools, and in other jurisdictions.
- a. What might be learned from approaches adopted by non-government schools and in other jurisdictions that could be applied to public schools in WA?

We have integrated interstate and international case studies throughout our responses to the five questions above.

References

- I. Audit Office NSW. Report on sharing school and community facilities. Published 01/11/2017. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/pdf-downloads/Sharing%20school%20and%20community%20facilities%20-%20final%20report.pdf. 2017.
- 2. Infrastructure Victoria. Getting more from school grounds. Sharing places for play and exercise. Accessed 06/10/2025. Available from: https://assets.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/assets/Getting-more-from-school-grounds-sharing-places-for-play-and-exercise.pdf?utm source. 2024.
- 3. VicHealth. Opening the Gate. A resource to support Victorian schools to activate school grounds and open spaces for community use. Published 10/09/2024. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/resources/resources-download/opening-the-gate. 2024.
- 4. Schools as Community Hubs ARC Linkage project research team. National Patterns of School Facility Sharing: Report from the Connecting Schools + Communities Survey. Published 12/10/2023. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://sites.research.unimelb.edu.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0003/5257335/National-Patterns-of-School-Facility-Use-Technical-Report.pdf?utm source=chatgpt.com. 2023.
- 5. National Heart Foundation of Australia, McCrindle Research. What Australia Wants. Neighbourhood design. Healthy Active By Deisgn. Victoria Australia. Published June 2025. Accessed 23/06/2025. Available from: https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/What_Australia_Wants_- National Heart Foundation FINAL.pdf and https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/community-walkability. 2025.
- 6. Monash University. Developing Informal Sport Friendly Communities. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.monash.edu/ data/assets/pdf file/0004/3486739/Developing-Informal-Sport-Friendly-Communities.pdf. 2024.
- 7. Monash University. Sporting facility booking systems to support informal sports participation. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.monash.edu/ data/assets/pdf file/0011/3486737/Sporting-facility-booking-systems.pdf 2024.
- 8. Monash University. Supporting Informal Sport Participation: A checklist for local government. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.monash.edu/ data/assets/pdf file/0012/3486738/Supporting-informal-sport-participation.pdf 2024.
- 9. Commissioner for Children & Young People. Position Brief: Keeping school grounds open after hours to increase opportunities for physical activity. Community Use of School Grounds. February 2025. Accessed 09/10/2025. Available from: https://www.ccyp.com.au/publications/community-use-of-school-grounds/?utm_source=chatgpt.com. 2025.
- 10. Guthold R, Stevens GA, Riley LM, Bull FC. Global trends in insufficient physical activity among adolescents: a pooled analysis of 298 population-based surveys with 1·6 million participants. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. 2020;4(1):23-35.
- II. Hyndman B. 140th out of 146: Australian teens do close to the least physical activity in the world. The Conversation. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://theconversation.com/140th-out-of-146-australian-teens-do-close-to-the-least-physical-activity-in-the-world-127434. 2025.
- I2. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2012. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/2012-HWSS Child Overview and Trends 2012.pdf. 2012.
- 13. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2013. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from:

https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/2013-HWSS Child Overview and Trends 2013.pdf. 2013.

- 14. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2014. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-wellbeing-Children-WA-2014-OandT.pdf. 2014.
- I5. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2015. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health and Wellbeing of Children in Western Australia 2015 Overview and Trends.pdf. 2015.
- 16. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2016. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-Wellbeing-of-Children-in-Western-Australia-2016-Overview-and-Trends.pdf. 2016.
- I7. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2017. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-Wellbeing-of-Children-in-Western-Australia-2017.pdf. 2017.
- 18. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2018. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Files/Corporate/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/The-Health-and-Wellbeing-of-Children-in-WA 2018.pdf. 2018.
- I9. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2019. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-Wellbeing-of-Children-in-WA-2019.pdf. 2019.
- 20. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2020. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-Wellbeing-of-Children-in-WA-2020.pdf. 2020.
- 21. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2021. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-Wellbeing-of-children-in-WA-2021.pdf. 2021.
- 22. Department of Health. WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance (HWSS) Surveillance System. Health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia 2022. Accessed 30/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Population-surveys/Health-and-wellbeing-of-children-in-WA-2022.pdf. 2022.
- 23. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Deaths in Australia. Figure 3.2: Leading underlying causes of death in Australia, by age group, 2023. Published 09/04/2025. Accessed 10/07/2025. Available from: https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-deaths/deaths-in-australia/contents/leading-causes-of-death. 2025.
- 24. World Health Organization. From loneliness to social connection: charting a path to healthier societies. Published 30/06/2025. Accessed 12/08/2025. Available from: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/978240112360. 2025.

- 25. Australian Insitute of Health and Welfare. Social isolation, loneliness and wellbeing. Release Date: 07/09/2023. Accessed 07/10/2025. Available from: https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare-2023-data-insights/contents/social-isolation-loneliness-and-wellbeing?utm. 2023.
- **26.** Ennis G. Dark PR: how corporate disinformation undermines our health and the environment. . Wakefield, Québec: Daraja Press; 2023.
- 27. Parliament of Western Australia. Inquiry into land development and planning in Western Australia. Date Commenced 13/08/2025. Accessed 07/10/2025. Deadline for submissions 31/10/2025. Available from:

https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/0/1871563B966B96F948258CE600223BB3#Det ails. 2025.

- 28. Stanley RM, Ridley K, Dollman J. Correlates of children's time-specific physical activity: A review of the literature. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 2012;9(1):50.
- 29. Carlton TA, Kanters MA, Bocarro JN, Floyd MF, Edwards MB, Suau LJ. Shared use agreements and leisure time physical activity in North Carolina public schools. Preventive Medicine. 2017;95:S10-S6.
- **30.** Flemons O, Rigby B, Flemons M, Matias T, Piggin J. Beyond Movement Alone: Rethinking Health Implications of Purposeful Physical (In)Activity, Stillness, and Rest. Journal of Physical Activity and Health. 2025:1-4.
- 31. Department for Education, Sport England. Opening School Facilities. Final Project Report: Key Learnings. February 2021. Accessed 02/10/2024. Available from: https://activepartnerships.org/sites/default/files/ACTIVE%20PARTNERSHIPS%20OSF%20REPORT_022 1-compressed.pdf. 2021.
- 32. McLaughlin M, Duff J, Campbell E, McKenzie T, Davies L, Wolfenden L, et al. Process Evaluation of a Scaled-Up School-Based Physical Activity Program for Adolescents: Physical Activity 4 Everyone. J Phys Act Health. 2024;21(8):741-55.
- 33. Sutherland RL, Campbell EM, Lubans DR, Morgan PJ, Nathan NK, Wolfenden L, et al. The Physical Activity 4 Everyone Cluster Randomized Trial: 2-Year Outcomes of a School Physical Activity Intervention Among Adolescents. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2016;51(2):195-205.
- 34. Department of Health, Government of Western Australia. Estimated healthcare spending attributable to modifiable risk factors in Western Australia 2018–19. Accessed 30/09/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Burden-of-disease/Estimated-healthcare-spending-attributable-to-modifiable-risk-factors-2018.pdf. 2019.
- 35. Crosland P, Ananthapavan J, Davison J, Lambert M, Carter R. The Economic Cost of Preventable Disease in Australia: A Systematic Review of Estimates and Methods. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2019;43(5):484-95.
- **36.** Hafner M, Yerushalmi E, Stepanek M, Phillips W, Pollard J, Deshpande A, et al. Estimating the global economic benefits of physically active populations over 30 years (2020–2050). British Journal of Sports Medicine. 2020;54(24):1482.
- 37. Jeanes R O, Connor J, Penney D, Spaaij D, Magee R, O'Hara J, et al. Informal sport as a health and social resource. Monash University. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/informal-sport-as-a-health-and-social-resource (PDF: https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/3365571/Informal-Sports-report-2023.pdf). 2023.
- **38.** Jeanes R, Ramón S, Dawn P, and O'Connor J. Managing informal sport participation: tensions and opportunities. International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics. 2019;11(1):79-95.

- **39.** Miner P, Smith BM, Jani A, McNeill G, Gathorne-Hardy A. Car harm: A global review of automobility's harm to people and the environment. Journal of Transport Geography. 2024;115:103817.
- 40. Thriving Perth Portal. The Thriving Perth Portal is an interactive web-based mapping and decision-support tool that brings together spatial data from across key domains—including environment, planning, hydrology, climate, population, and health—into a single, accessible resource, enabling enable local governments to visualise and analyse the distribution of health determinants, outcomes, and environmental factors within their communities. Accessed 09/07/2025. Available from: https://thrivingperthportal.com.au/map-portal. 2025.
- 41. Quantum Market Research. Access to social infrastructure consumer research. Full report. Prepared by Quantum Market Research for Infrastructure Australia. Ref: 24001. Published May 2024. Accessed 07/10/2025. Available from: https://assets.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/assets/Access-to-social-infrastructure-consumer-research-sports-grounds.pdf. 2024.
- **42.** Department of Cultural Industries Tourism and Sport, Department of Education. Community Use of School Sporting Facilities Program. Program guidelines. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.cits.wa.gov.au/funding/sport-and-recreation-funding/community-use-of-school-sporting-facilities-program. 2025.
- **43**. Play Wales. Toolkit: Use of school grounds for playing out of teaching hours. Published 16/09/2013. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://issuu.com/playwales/docs/using-school-grounds-out-of-teachin. 2013.
- **44.** Department of Education, Department of Treasury, Government of Western Australia. WA Schools Public Private Partnership Project. Schedule 26. Design Brief. September 2015. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2020-01/wa-schools-ppp-project-schedule-26.pdf. 2015.
- 45. Jahangiri J. Safe Yet Welcoming: Alternative Design Strategies for Secure Schools. In: Cleveland B, Backhouse S, Chandler P, McShane I, Clinton JM, Newton C, editors. Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore; 2023. p. 147-56.
- **46.** Rooney T. Higher stakes the hidden risks of school security fences for children's learning environments. Environmental Education Research. 2015;21:885 98.
- **47.** Aminpour F, Feng X, Mularczyk L, Pettit C. Sharing public open spaces with local schools: A stakeholder-based analysis of governance issues. Cities. 2024;150:105007.
- **48.** Department for Education. Security for Public Schools and Residential Facilities Procedures. Version 4.1. Effective date: 27/02/2024. Updated 14/03/2024. Accessed 07/10/2025. Available from: https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/policies/-/school-security-for-public-schools-procedures. 2024.
- 49. Department of Education. Community Use of Public School Facilities Policy. Version 2.2. Effective date 03/12/2020. Last update date: 20 March 2023. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/policies/-/community-use-of-public-school-facilities-policy. 2020.
- 50. Ministry of Education New Zealand. Vandalism funding to repair school property. Captured 18/05/2024. Accessed 07/10/2025. Available from: https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/funding/vandalism-funding/. 2024.
- **51.** Teo I, Mitchell P, van der Kleij F, Dabrowski A. Schools as Community Hubs. Literature Review. Australian Council for Educational Research. Accessed 02/10/2025. ISBN 978-1-74286-684-0. Available from: https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-684-0. 2022.

- **52.** Active Partnerships, Opening School Facilities Consortium. Opening School Facilities end of programme evaluation & learning report. Published June 2025. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.youthsporttrust.org/media/ja1nmmx2/osf-end-of-programme-report-2025.pdf. 2025.
- 53. WA Government. WA State Budget Papers. Part 6 Education and Training. The Community Use of School Sporting Facilities Program will enable increased community use of public school sporting facilities, helping to build community relationships, strengthen schools' position as community hubs, improve school facilities and alleviate demand pressure on facilities currently used for training and competitions. Grants funding of \$10 million across 2024-25 and 2025-26 has been approved to run the program. Accessed 06/10/2025. Available from: https://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au/2025-26/budget-papers/bp2/2025-26-wa-state-budget-bp2-part6.pdf. 2024.
- 54. Government of Western Australia. Nation-leading boost to kindy access for WA families. Office of Early Childhood established to oversee trial rollout, workforce measures, curriculum development, and the WA Play Strategy. Media Release. Published 09/06/2025. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook%20Labor%20Government/Nation-leading-boost-to-kindy-access-for-WA-families-20250609 2025.
- 55. Government of Western Australia. WA Government Priorities 2025-2029. 'The little black book'. Published 26/09/2025. Accessed 30/09/2025. Available from: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/wa-government-priorities-2025-2029. 2025.
- **56.** Department of Transport. WA Active Travel Strategy. Last updated 22/05/2025. Accessed 03/07/2025. Available from: https://transport.wa.gov.au/active-transport/wa-active-travel-strategy. 2025.
- 57. Government of Western Australia. Active Living For All. 2017-2019. A Framework for Physical Activity in Western Australia. Accessed 02/05/2025. Available from: https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/sport-and-recreation/active-living-for-all-2017-19.pdf?sfvrsn=709284e5 1. 2017.
- 58. Department of Health. Western Australian Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2022–2026. Accessed 05/06/2025. Available from: https://www.healthway.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Healthway-s-Strategic-Plan-Feb-2024-FINAL-version.pdf. 2022.
- **59.** Department of Health. State Public Health Plan for Western Australia 2025–2030. Accessed 05/06/2025. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/About-us/Public-Health-Act/State-Public-Health-Plan-2025-2030.pdf. 2025.
- 60. Mental Health Commission. Discussion Paper: Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2025-2030. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/our-initiatives/our-projects/mental-health-and-alcohol-and-other-drugs-strategy-2025-2030. 2025.
- **61.** World Health Organization. Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/272722/9789241514187-eng.pdf?sequence=1. 2018.
- 62. Murphy J, Milton K, McLaughlin M, Shilton T, McLoughlin GM, Reece LJ, et al. Advocating for Implementation of the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity: Challenges and Support Requirements. Journal of Physical Activity and Health. 2023;20(1):10-9.
- 63. Direito A, Murphy JJ, McLaughlin M, Mair J, Mackenzie K, Kamada M, et al. Early Career Professionals' (Researchers, Practitioners, and Policymakers) Role in Advocating, Disseminating, and Implementing the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity: ISPAH Early Career Network View. J Phys Act Health. 2019;16(11):940-4.
- **64.** Australian Sports Commission. Play Well Everyone has a place in sport. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.ausport.gov.au/playwell. 2023.

- **65.** Australian Government Office of Sport. SPORT HORIZON. National Sport Strategy 2024 2034. Accessed 28/04/2025. Available from: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-sport-strategy-2024-2034. 2024.
- **66.** Department of Health. National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030. Accessed 28/05/2025. Available from: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-preventive-health-strategy-2021-2030?language=en. 2021.
- 67. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Health and Aged Care. National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan. Prevention Compassion Care. Accessed 06/10/2025. Available from: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-australian-governments-national-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention-plan?language=en 2021.
- 68. Commonwealth of Australia 2022. The National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032. Health Ministers Meeting. Published 2022. Accessed 13/08/2025. Available from: https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022/03/national-obesity-strategy-2022-2032 0.pdf. 2022.
- 69. National Heart Foundation of Australia. Blueprint for an active Australia: Third Edition. National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2019. Accessed 29/04/2025. Available from: https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/blueprint. 2019.
- 70. Bellew B, Nau T, Smith B, Bauman A. Getting Australia Active III: A systems approach to physical activity for policy makers Eds.) Getting Australia Active III: A systems approach to physical activity for policy makers. Sydney, Australia. The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and The University of Sydney. Accessed 29/04/2025. Available from: https://preventioncentre.org.au/resources/getting-australia-active-3-summaries/. 2020.
- 71. International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH). ISPAH's Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity. November 2020. Available from: www.ISPAH.org/Resources.
- 72. International Society for Physical Activity and Health. Infographic. ISPAH's Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity: infographic, animation and call to action. British Journal of Sports Medicine. 2021:bjsports-2020-103635.
- 73. Milton K, Cavill N, Chalkley A, Foster C, Gomersall S, Hagstromer M, et al. Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity. J Phys Act Health. 2021;18(6):625-30.
- 74. Shill J, Mavoa H, Crammond B, Loff B, Peeters A, Lawrence M, et al. Regulation to create environments conducive to physical activity: understanding the barriers and facilitators at the Australian state government level. PLoS One. 2012;7(9):e42831.
- 75. Department of Education, TNS Social Research, National Smarter Schools Partnerships, Australian Government. Extended Service School Models Summation Report. Accessed 02/10/2025. Available from: https://www.education.gov.au/download/2263/extended-service-school-models-report/3072/document/pdf. 2010.