

Active Kyogle Final Report



Funding: Australian Government Department of Health and Aging

Author: Nancy Martin

Position within organisation: EO/DON, Kyogle Multi Purpose Service, NNSW LHD

Phone Number / Email: (02) 6632-1522 nancy.martin@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au1.

Provide a comparison between the achievement of the objectives and outcomes of the Project against the expected objectives and outcomes for the Programs, as set out in the most recent project (annual) plan. By all measures, the three-year Active Kyogle health promotion project was a phenomenal success, and achieved all of the objectives and key outcomes outlined in the most recent project plan. More than 1500 people (or 15.5% of the LGA population) directly participated in the project, known media coverage totalled 229 stories, there were nearly 5000 unique visitors and 17 500 page views of the website, and more than 850 people joined the community gym. The project budget for Active Kyogle did not include funds for a complete project evaluation, which means data for final reporting is limited. However, key data about KPIs, including participation rates, completed activities, and so on, has been provided in the six and twelve month reports throughout the project (and will mostly not be repeated here).

Objective 1: To improve knowledge of recommended levels of physical activity and fruit and vegetable intake, reduce social isolation, and achieve commitment to a healthier lifestyle, was achieved through the project activities of running multiple healthy lifestyle challenges, organising a health expo, promoting health information and local services, establishing a community garden (and supporting other community gardens in the region), and running relaxation workshops. In the evaluation survey (which included 94 responses), exactly one third of respondents reported that because of Active Kyogle, they felt they ate a more healthy diet; 63.1% of respondents said they now do more physical activity; and 48.81% said they participate in a group, activity, or club that they didn't before.

Objective 2: To set up a community gymnasium, was possibly the project's most successful

activity. In a short timeframe, a site was secured and refurbished; professional-grade equipment installed; policies, procedures, and systems established; and staff from the local were recruited and trained. After just two years, the gym is financially self-sustaining, and membership is more than 850 people, or more than 30% equivalent of the town population – an incredible take-up rate, making the gym the single largest membership-based activity in the Kyogle region.

Objective 3: To engage residents who are not currently active in healthier lifestyle choices, and rural residents of the LGA, was achieved through the taster program, community workshops and meetings throughout the region, a partnership with TAFE to provide training in community event organising in the Woodenbong/Urbenville area, community initiative grants (as per Objective 4), a community health survey, and implementing a community engagement strategy (developed in addition to the project plan). Once again, more than 1500 people participated directly in the project. If members of groups supported through community initiative grants and promotional materials are included, this number would exceed 2000, or approximately 20% of the entire LGA. Rural residents were particularly benefited through the community initiatives grants, multiple visits to the rural villages and hamlets throughout the project, and targeted participation in the healthy lifestyle challenges.

Objective 4: To provide community initiatives funding through a devolved grants program, saw funding provided to 45 community groups throughout the LGA. During the project, community feedback strongly requested training in grant writing, fundraising, events management, and governance, which would help secure future funding once Active Kyogle finished.



Evaluation survey

Active Kyogle, a three-year, federally-funded health promotion project, ran between 2010 and 2013 as a partnership between the Northern NSW Local Health District, the Kyogle Multi Purpose Service, and local community development organisation Kyogle Together. This report, a summary of a brief online evaluation survey, provides a snapshot of the respondents' participation in Active Kyogle, as well as their reflections on the project. The survey incorporated reflective questions which also invited respondents to think about what the project said about the local community, the project's outcomes, and the ongoing reverberations for participants and the broader community.

Survey context

During 2010 to 2013, more than 1500 people, or 15.5% of the entire Local Government Area population, participated in Active Kyogle. The link to the online final evaluation survey was sent to an email list of 854 participants and members of the local community. This survey is therefore not representative of the Kyogle population generally, but primarily those who participated in Active Kyogle, and who have email and internet access (which is far lower in the Kyogle LGA than the rest of the state of New South Wales). In this context, the following graphs are not representative of the impact or 'reach' of the Active Kyogle project in the whole of the region's population, but descriptive of the responding participants. The following report primarily seeks to capture the data and responses to the survey, but not interpret these, for two key reasons: first, the data is more of a 'snapshot' of the respondents, and not a quantitative representation of the broader community; second, the qualitative responses powerfully speak for themselves, and are not in need of broader interpretation.

Participation in Active Kyogle

Active Kyogle included many activities for residents of the Kyogle LGA to participate in. The online survey respondents showed the following participation rates for the ongoing aspects of the project:

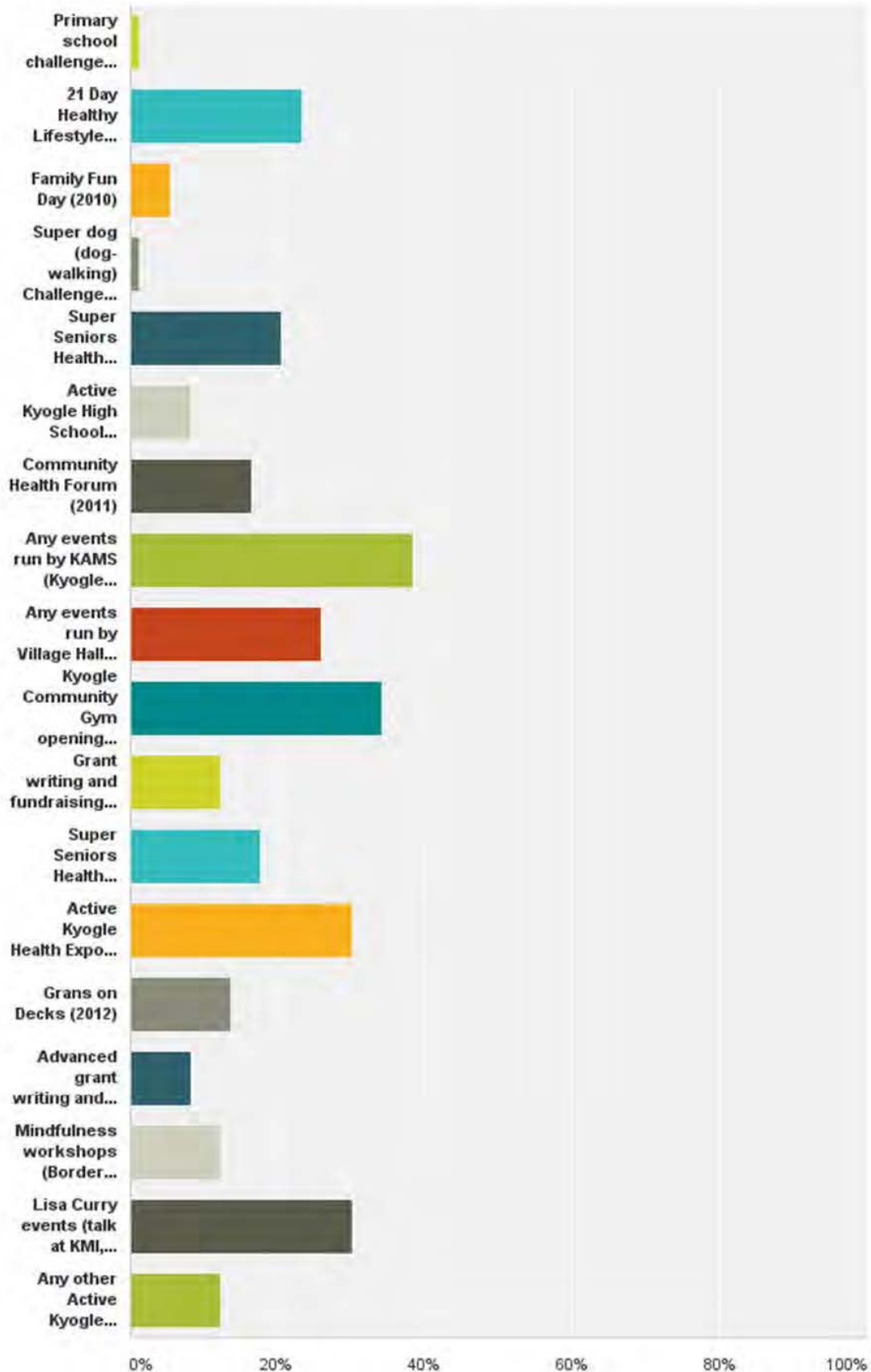
- Kyogle Community Gym (have ever attended): 66%
- Kyogle Community Gym (currently attend regularly): 43%
- Kyogle Community Garden: 10%
- The most-reported activities that respondents participated in are:
 - Kyogle Community Gym opening day

- events run by KAMS (Kyogle Acoustic Music Society) and the Village Hall Players during 2010 and 2011 (while these groups were supported by Active Kyogle)
- the Active Kyogle Health and Wellbeing Expo in 2012
- a weekend of events featuring triple Olympian Lisa Curry
- the Super Seniors Health Challenges of 2010 and 2011
- the 21 Day Healthy Lifestyle Challenge (2010).

Participation rates for the main Active Kyogle activities are shown in the graph below: These responses show the broad range of participation in activities during the Active Kyogle project.

Q4 From the list below, please tick all of the events, competitions, challenges, workshops, forums, or surveys you participated in:

Answered: 73 Skipped: 21



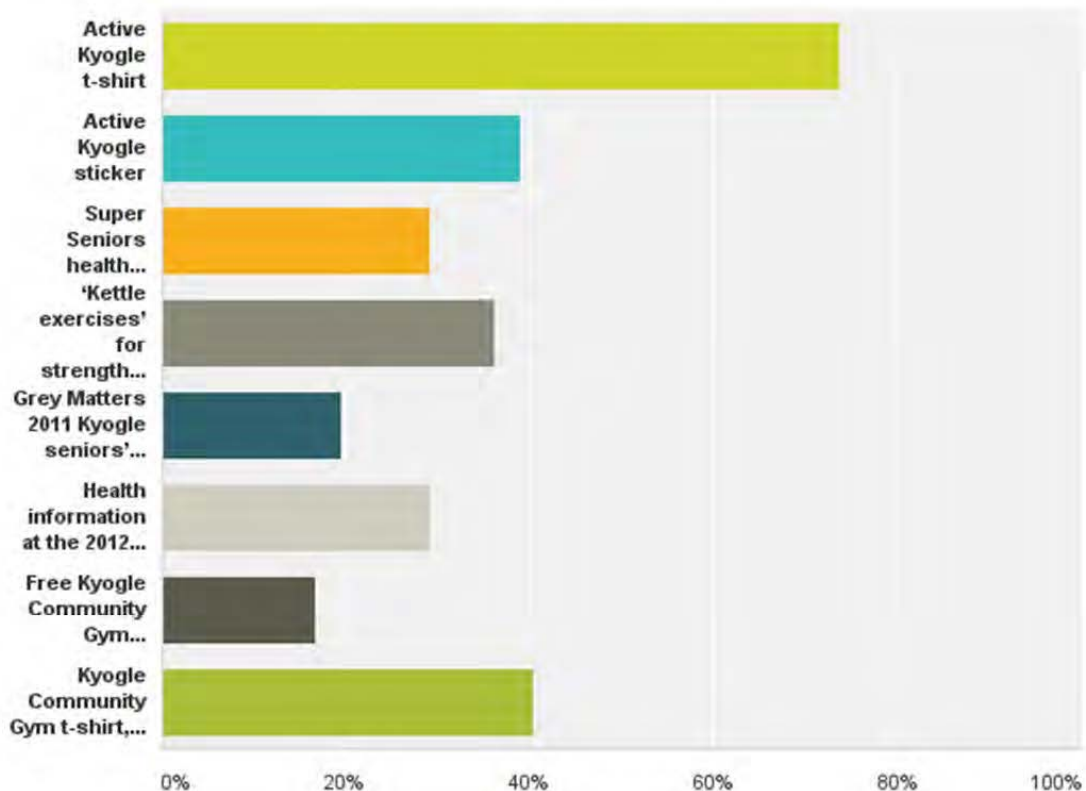
Promotional materials

While the focus of the Active Kyogle project was a community development approach to health promotion, promotional materials still played an important role in spreading the messages and creating a sense of inclusion and participation. The following graph shows how many respondents reported receiving which promotional materials. There is little interpretation that can be made from these figures, but some key results stand out:

- Nearly 75% of respondents report having received an Active Kyogle t-shirt, which are commonly seen worn in the Kyogle area.
- On average, most other promotional materials were reported as being received by 30–40% of respondents, despite that these materials are quite varied in type, and were distributed across a relatively wide timespan of three years.

Q5 Active Kyogle materials During Active Kyogle, did you receive any of the following:

Answered: 72 Skipped: 22

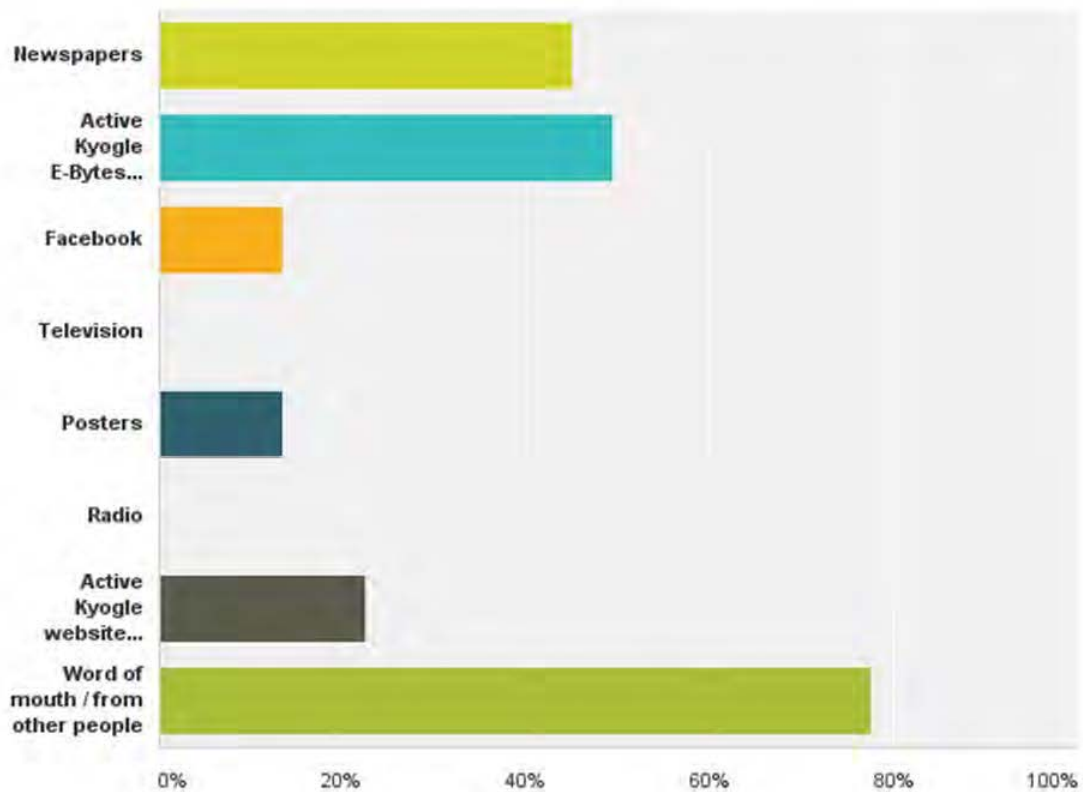


Promotion and communications

The following graph shows how respondents reported hearing about Active Kyogle: This suggests that while the project received incredibly high media coverage, with 229 known media stories – possibly making Active Kyogle the most-covered community-based project during the period – word of mouth was still an important aspect of the project and its success.

Q6 How did you hear about Active Kyogle activities?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 5



Impacts on diet, activity, and participation

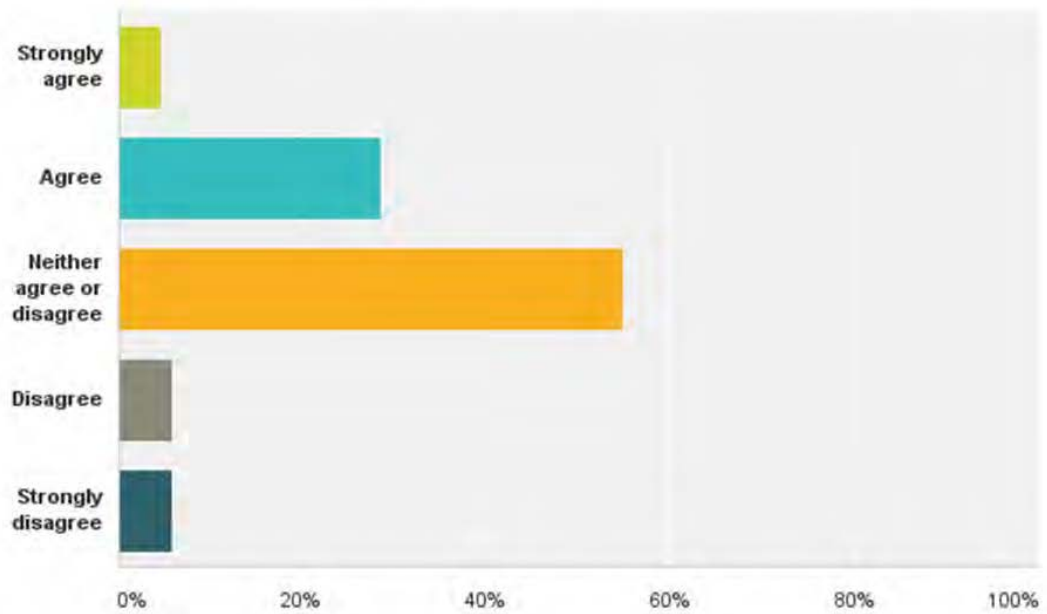
The following graphs show respondents' assessment of the impacts of the Active Kyogle project on their diet, activity levels, and participation / social inclusion.

Key outcomes for each question are:

- Exactly one third of respondents said that because of Active Kyogle, they now eat a more healthy diet
- 63% of respondents said that because of Active Kyogle, they now do more physical activity
- Nearly 50% of participants said that because of Active Kyogle, they now participate in a group, activity, or club that they did not before.
- These represent significant outcomes for the Active Kyogle project and it's participants.
- Some additional qualitative comments of interest are provided after the graphs below for each question.
 - *After the health challenge in 2010 I lost 20 kg and have kept it off.*
 - *Cafés in Kyogle show an awareness of the need for healthy food. Kyogle community*
 - *members talk about their better diets since taking part in AK educational activities.*
 - *I am always active, but AK has made me more aware of the benefits of being active and opened other opportunities.*
 - *The Lisa Curry seminar was a great kick start for this.*
 - *Have observed how many other members of Kyogle community are more aware of the need for exercise in old age.*

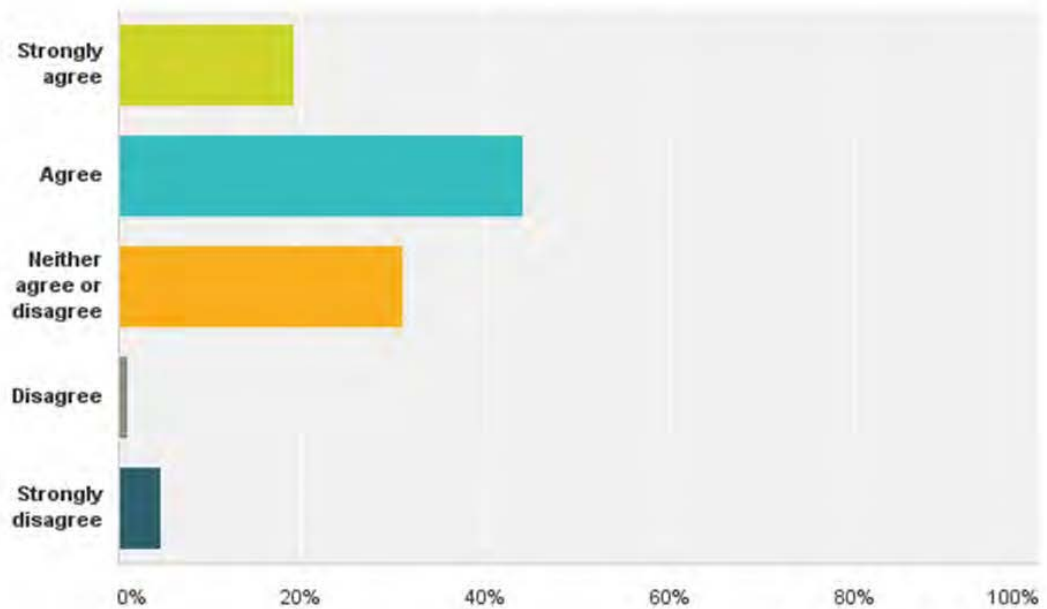
Q8 Because of Active Kyogle I now eat a more healthy diet:

Answered: 84 Skipped: 10



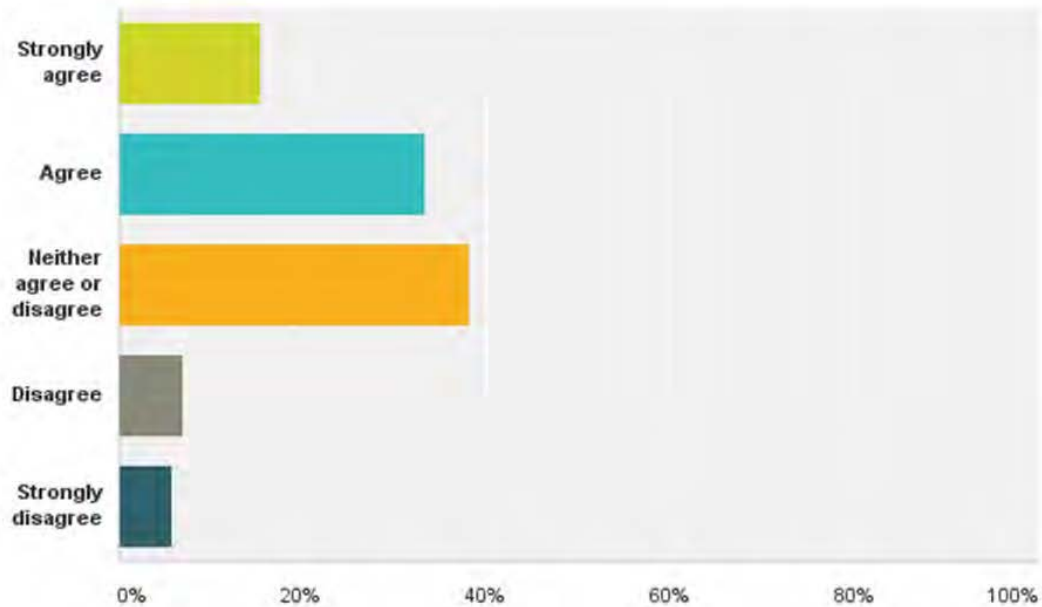
Q9 Because of Active Kyogle I now do more physical activity

Answered: 84 Skipped: 10



Q10 Because of Active Kyogle I now participate in a group, activity, or club that I didn't before

Answered: 84 Skipped: 10



Supporting local sports and activity groups

The survey asked:

The Active Kyogle project worked in partnership with a number of local community sports and activity organisations throughout the Kyogle region. We want to know if you or your group has benefitted from this partnership. If you are a member, or associated with any of these organisations, please state how you feel your organisation has benefitted from this partnership: Representative responses included:

- *Clients from KDCC improved their overall health and fitness, increased social and community participation and generally felt good about their abilities and stamina as a result of better health.*
- *Kyogle Council – Active Kyogle has been a great initiative to revitalise energy to develop activities and infrastructure for the health and wellbeing of communities in Kyogle Council LGA.*
- *The Semitones Choir provides a wonderful activity and to have this support has been most encouraging.*
- *Village Hall Players received a grant from the Active Kyogle project which enabled it to start a youth theatre program, DIRT. DIRT celebrated its 2nd birthday in July and is still going strong. Thank you Active Kyogle.*
- *I am a member of Kyogle Amateur Swimming Club. We were able to provide children with swimming kits to encourage them with their swimming training.*
- *The Active Kyogle grant to the Cawongla Community Centre enabled us to bring together local people – including some newcomers – to begin revitalising the community centre. This grant got us started and the bigger project is now well on its way.*
- *I have done fitness classes at Hanging Rock and they're fantastic. As well as helping to improve my fitness, I've met some lovely local people and had lots of fun!*
- *I have many friends who are singers in the Semitones Choir. I have enjoyed the concerts at the end of the year and in 2013 the choir sang at The World Day of*

Prayer. The connection with the primary school is so important. Singing is so good for health, physically, mentally and spiritually.

How important do you think Active Kyogle has been for the Kyogle region?

Representative responses included:

- *It has been extremely important to health and the development of people's self-esteem as well. The Seniors Diary was a fantastic initiative which had a year-long effect and beyond.*
- *Community gym has been an outstanding success. Great collaboration between Health and community has forged stronger links in community-based way rather than Health Dept focussed.*
- *Very important. AK has provided opportunities for people of all ages and persuasions to come together, work together, to learn, to grow together, and to become more healthy.*
- *It has brought the community together in many ways and encouraged a healthy lifestyle.*
- *There are many residents attending classes of different types such as gym, tai chi, yoga, and being more aware of making healthy choices in life. It has enabled many people, young and old, to become involved in music.*
- *It has got a lot of unmotivated people to think about their fitness and diet.*
- *Active Kyogle has involved folk in a fitness regime not otherwise believed important; the whole community, as a whole, is living a healthier lifestyle.*
- *Most important project in 10 years.*
- *It's been a very positive program that has brought an increase in health-related activities and awareness. Good to see support for seniors who may have seen their fitness decline and realise that it's never too late to gain strength and agility.*
- *It has been very important. From my perspective of the veteran community, I have watched seemingly tired old men become much more active and happier.*
- *One of the most important projects ever undertaken in Kyogle, for the benefit of all its citizens.*
- *Extremely important. It has given the community a focus of activity, brought all sorts of different people together who normally wouldn't have met, and left us with the legacy of the gym. Very impressive.*
- *Very important to have a gym within the Kyogle area. It certainly made me more active for an 81 year-old.*
- *This project has been a wonderful example of how an outreach program can work. Kyogle is a large shire but so much of the village schools and organisations were able to participate and be funded for undertaking healthy projects.*
- *Immensely important. A community functions far better when its members are in good health. Physical exercise aids a positive mental outlook. These are invaluable and Active Kyogle has been a wonderful resource and inspiration.*
- *I live right at the shire boundary, but even out here you can see the impact of Active Kyogle in bringing people together and creating opportunities for people to get more active. Hugely important.*
- *Working in the community sectors of aged and disabilities, this program has been extremely beneficial to many walks of life in our region.*
- *It has brought about connections with people who I might never have met and I'm sure this has happened Kyogle shire-wide. So people are happier and healthier both physically and mentally.*
- *Extremely. I have seen many people benefit from the gym and other activities. It has also bridged the gap between young and old.*
- *Extremely important. It involves a massive portion of the community and particularly the elderly.*

- *It has been the most important community health and activity education project my husband and I have taken part in. It has been beneficial to so many people in the Kyogle region of all ages because it has raised the awareness of the importance of healthy activity and diet. AK*
- *has also widened people's social interaction in the community.*
- *Really important ... it has helped many people become more active, more social, more involved in the community, and has brought the community closer together.*

What do you think it says about the Kyogle community that we have run the Active Kyogle project over the last three years?

Representative responses included:

- *I think it shows that the community was really ready for something like this and many have benefitted from it.*
- *It says that the Kyogle community is vibrant and involved, and that there is a growing need for ways to be active and involved in the community.*
- *Kyogle really needed this project and the community has been keen to participate.*
- *Kyogle people are a wonderful bunch who, given a little help and encouragement, do wonders.*
- *Kyogle has a very strong community spirit with community members who achieve great things for the rest of the community.*
- *It is a project that has been embraced by our community and it says that this is something that is very much valued by all. Health and wellbeing are important aspects of people's lives.*
- *This project affords those opportunities for the community.*
- *That we have a fantastic organiser, a willing community, and a great zest for life.*
- *It said that we are willing to work together to achieve a common goal or greater wellbeing.*
- *It says that healthy living is important to the community but that it needs leadership and inspiration to make lifestyle changes ongoing. That leadership and the planning that made the program possible came from within the community with the assistance of a strong CEO.*
- *That the community is eager to raise their level of fitness and to participate in a wide variety of activities together. This community WANTS Active Kyogle!*

Is there anything we could have done to improve your Active Kyogle experience?

Nearly half the respondents to this question explicitly stated that there was nothing that could have been done to improve their experience of Active Kyogle. Example responses included:

- *No, it was very inclusive.*
- *I believe that the project could not be improved as it was excellent.*

Other responses included specific suggestions for changes to the community gym opening times, location, equipment, and so on – essentially, ways to expand and/or improve on what is already running, and many of which are already part of the gym's operational plan.

Other specific comments included:

- *More t-shirts! I would love a t-shirt!*
- *Always more that can be done – like more healthy eating programs, as one idea.*
- *Build an exercise park/area where the many early morning walkers can participate, eg. at Anzac Park or the area behind the tourist information centre.*
- *Keep it going, achieve goals outlined in meetings for future opportunities and development.*

If you have any stories to tell us about your involvement in Active Kyogle, or what you liked about Active Kyogle, please provide the details below:

Representative responses included:

- *It's been wonderful to regain the fitness I had years ago. I'm feeling physically stronger and more psychologically positive. It would have been difficult to achieve these benefits, and maintain them in the long term, without the gym and ongoing motivation from its excellent staff.*
- *Active Kyogle was truly local, and focussed on things that made a genuine difference 'on the ground'. Congratulations to all involved.*
- *The fun we have had and the people we have met have expanded our life in Kyogle. We plan to stay healthy, active, and involved in our wonderful community.*
- *I'm glad I made the effort; it gave me the incentive to give up smoking, then try to make weight adjustments.*
- *People have engaged with people in the community they may never have had interest to engage with before because of this program ... friendships have been made and the community has come together in a more inclusive, supportive way.*
- *I think that it is fantastic that Kyogle now has a gym, and especially a gym where people like myself, who have never been involved in a gym before, can participate and feel welcome and not embarrassed at their lack of fitness.*
- *It is absolutely wonderful having a gym in Kyogle; it has made a huge difference to many people's lives, including mine! Active Kyogle has achieved great things in the three years it's been going and is one of the best things ever to happen to Kyogle. Thank you.*
- *I retired to Kyogle six years ago and have followed with interest the activities of AK since its inception, even though I have only joined one of the groups you support. What you are doing helps to unify this diverse community through the medium of inviting people to come together in groups to pursue goals of common interest so that they learn and grow together.*
- *Having worked in a health profession, I am aware of the importance of lifestyle choices in the prevention of chronic health problems. You are doing a great job! Please keep on going – I might want to join another activity some day!*
- *I love the gym; it is fantastic for our little community! I feel that even though I am not super fit or super intelligent with computers, I am not afraid to have a go now. I have made some very good new friends and it is amazing how 'connected' we are now. Also, I am very pleased to see the benefits to some of the older residents in that their lives have improved dramatically.*
- *Well done!*
- *Have never heard a negative comment about Active Kyogle which is a significant achievement in itself! We now have a group of enthusiastic community members wanting to develop new/better facilities and future opportunities.*
- *It is the Gym I use most. I appreciate the professionalism with which it is run. The atmosphere is great. A bigger venue one day will improve on it.*
- *I live in Sydney but joined the gym in Kyogle for when I visit family up there. I love coming to this gym and am so grateful to have such a good gym in Kyogle as it didn't have one for years. My sister and brother-in-law used the gym on a regular basis. Other members of my family have used it on special occasions (e.g. Lisa Curry). It's good to hear that the gym is getting too small for the members it now has – I think this proves it is making an impact on the community!*
- *I'd had a heart event before Active Kyogle and my activities in both the gym and the choir have had a very beneficial effect on my health.*
- *I have found that all involved with Active Kyogle have been helpful and willing to go the extra mile for me. I have improved my strength, health, and fitness as a direct result of the programs/facilities provided by Active Kyogle.*
- *The exercises at the gym have helped me reduce my body weight by 10 kilograms.*
- *Active Kyogle provided a small grant so that I could start a line dancing class as a form of gentle exercise for seniors. That class continued for almost two years and would still be going if I was able to teach it. The grant, while small in terms of dollars,*

had a far-reaching effect. A number of the participants went on to more advanced line dancing classes; most of the initial intake stayed with the class till the end. The dancers gained confidence through doing a couple of public appearances and classes encouraged socialisation. One lady, a dairy farmer, had hardly left the farm except to shop for a number of years. She came along and loved it because she was able to have fun, get some much need exercise and reengage with the community. Not bad benefits for a small investment.

- *Seeing people with chronic illness gain a better level of health and fitness through this program, and therefore a better quality of life, has been very heartening.*

North Coast Health Promotion

31 Uralba Street; PO Box 498

Lismore, NSW 2480

Phone: (02) 6620 7585

www.nnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Active Kyogle

c/o Kyogle Together

PO Box 751

Kyogle, NSW 2474

Phone: (02) 6632 1833

Email: info@activekyogle.org.au

Web: www.activekyogle.org.au Number / Email: (02) 6632-1522

nancy.martin@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au