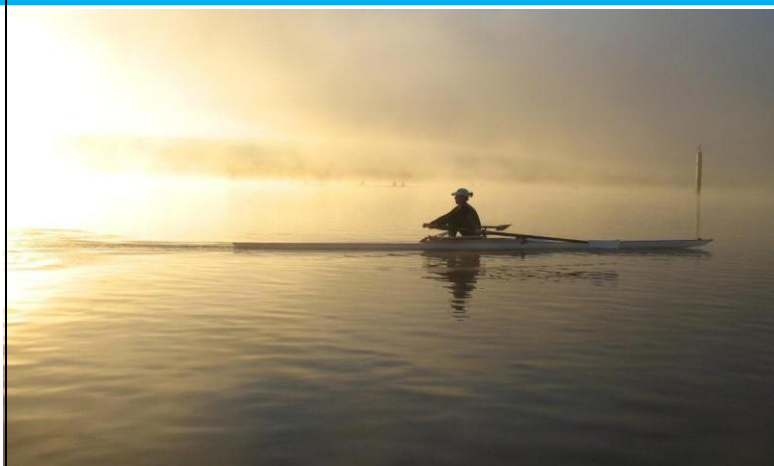


Participation of Australians and Tasmanians in Exercise, Recreation and Sport

An analysis of the 2009 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) results



Sport and Recreation Tasmania

Department of Economic Development,
Tourism and the Arts

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Introduction

The Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) is funded by the Australian Sports Commission and state and territory government agencies responsible for sport and recreation. ERASS collects information on the frequency, duration, nature and type of activities of persons aged 15 years and over for exercise, recreation and sport during the 12 months prior to interview. ERASS has been collecting this information since 2001.

The 2009 ERASS was conducted quarterly with an annual total of 21,031 respondents. This represents an overall response rate of 25.2 per cent. The total number of Tasmanian respondents was 1 697.

This paper incorporates selected information from the ERASS Annual Report 2009 to provide an overview of the key findings on the participation of Australians and Tasmanians in activities for exercise, recreation and sport. This paper includes information under the following headings:

- Total participation
- Regular participation
- Participation five or more times per week
- Regular participation by selected demographic characteristics
- Participation by gender
- Participation by age
- Most popular activities
- Participation in organised activities
- Most popular organised activities

Time series and state/national level comparisons are provided where available.

Definitions

Total participation: This is the number of persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport at least once over the 12-month period prior to interview.

Regular participation: This is the number of persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport at least three times per week* on average. This is the ERASS definition of 'regular' participation in physical activity.

Participation five or more times per week: This is the number of persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport five or more times per week.* This measure is included in this paper as it aligns with the national physical activity guidelines minimum frequency recommendation (see page 3).

* 'Per week' statistics are calculated by dividing the number of times individuals participated during the 12 months prior to interview by 52 (the number of weeks in a year).

Total participation

In 2009, 82.0 per cent of Australians (14.1 million) aged over 15 years participated at least once in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport. This is referred to as the total participation rate.

Total participation survey results show a marked increase in physical activity in Australia and Tasmania over the past nine years. However, as can be seen in figure 1, the national trend for increased total participation was reversed in 2009, resulting in a slight decrease in total physical activity participation rates both in Australia and Tasmania.

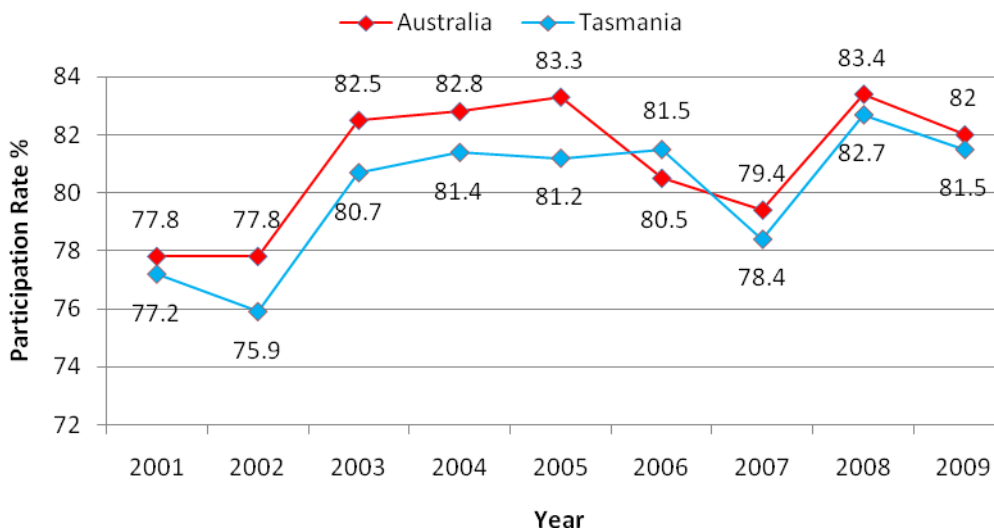
After reaching a peak level of 83.4 per cent participation rate in 2008, total physical activity participation nationally has fallen 1.4 per cent, but remains at 98.3 per cent of the total participation rate all time high.

As show in figure 1, the total physical activity participation rate of Tasmanians decreased slightly in 2009 after peaking to a nine year high in 2008, falling from 82.7 per cent to 81.5 per cent (323,600) in 2009.

Tasmania ranked sixth amongst Australia’s states and territories for total participation in 2009, ranking above only Queensland (80.6%) and New South Wales (81.4%).

Tasmania has been ranked in the bottom three every year the survey has been conducted, except for in 2006 when it ranked third behind only the Australian Capital Territory (87.0%) and Western Australia (83.6%).

Figure 1: Australian and Tasmanian total participation in physical activity*, 2001-2009



* Relates to persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport at least once over a 12 month period preceding the interview.

Regular participation

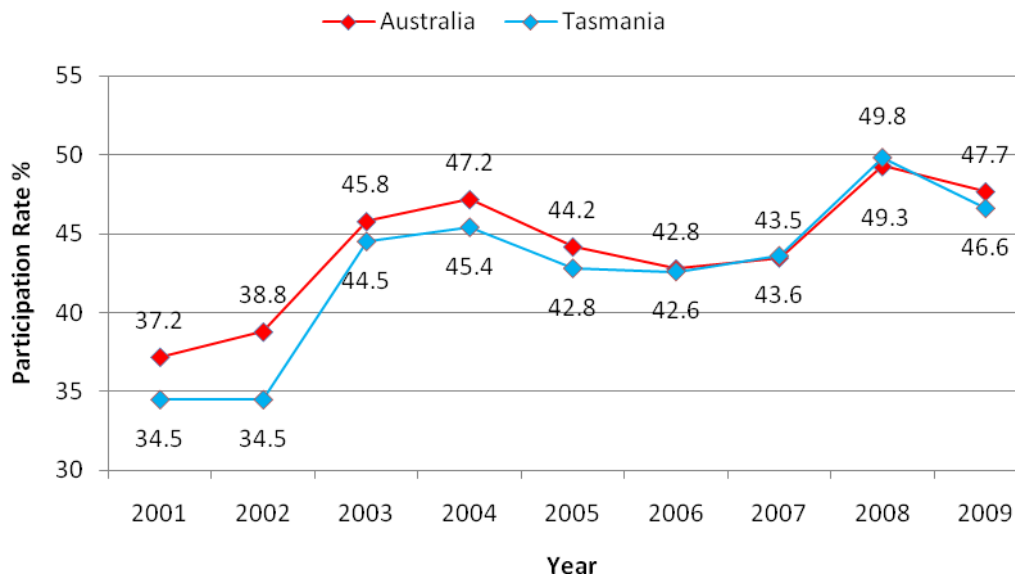
The number of Australians participating in three or more physical activity sessions per week fell from an all time high of 49.3 per cent in 2008 to 47.7 per cent in 2009. Participation three or more times per week is referred to as the regular participation rate.

The Tasmanian regular participation rate fell from being slightly higher than the national average in 2008 to below the Australian rate in 2009, residing at 46.6 per cent - a disparity of 1.1 per cent.

As shown in figure 2, the Tasmanian regular participation rate is up 12.1 per cent from 2001, but is down 3.2 per cent from 2008. The Tasmanian regular physical activity rate remains at 93.6 per cent of its all time high achieved in 2008.

In 2009 Tasmania ranked sixth in regular participation rate among Australia's states and territories, ahead of only New South Wales (46.3) and South Australia (45.4). The Australian Capital Territory had the highest participation rate, with 53.8 per cent, 7.2 per cent higher than the regular participation rate in Tasmania.

Figure 2: Australian and Tasmanian participation in regular physical activity*, 2001-2009



* Relates to persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport three or more times per week over a 12 month period preceding the interview.

Participation five or more times per week

National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend Australians achieve at least 150 minutes of 'moderate' level physical activity over at least five sessions per week in order to experience the health benefits of physical activity.

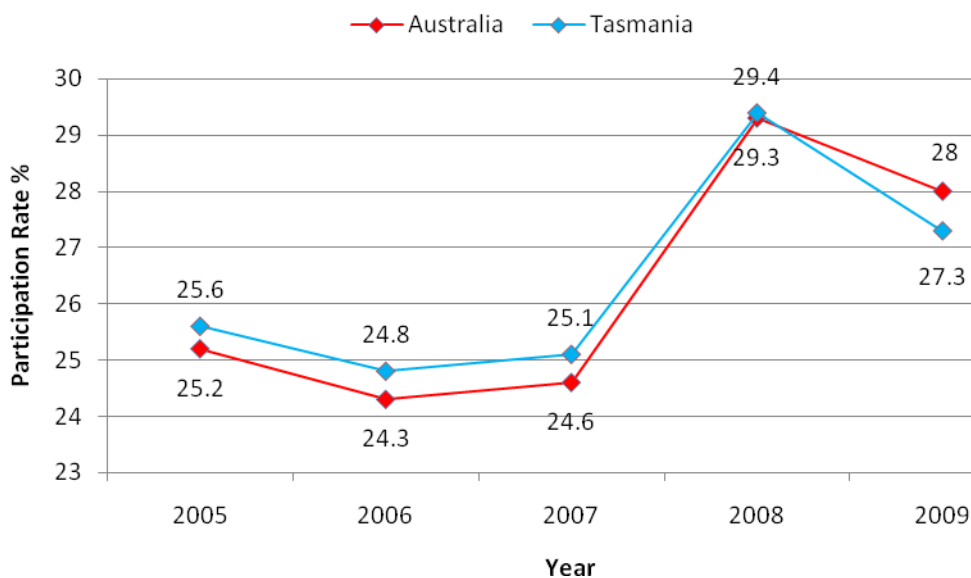
Like regular participation rates, both national and Tasmanian rates of participation five or more times per week fell slightly in 2009, as shown in figure 3. Australian rates fell 1.3 per cent from 2008 to 2009, while Tasmanian levels fell 2.1 per cent from 2008 to 2009.

The 2009 Tasmanian five or more times per week participation rate is at 92.9 per cent of the all time high achieved in 2008.

Statistics regarding participation five or more times per week have been available since 2005, and since this time Tasmanian levels have increased by 1.7 per cent, with 27.3 per cent of Tasmanians undertaking physical activity five or more times per week in 2009.

In 2009 Tasmania had a five or more time per week participation rate lower than the national average for the first time in the survey history. However the rate is still on par with the national average.

Figure 3: Australian and Tasmanian participation in physical activity five or more times per week*, 2005-2009



* Relates to persons aged 15 years and over who participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport five or more times per week or a 12 month period preceding the interview.

Regular participation by selected demographic characteristics

Education level

The results show that regular participation rates in physical activity for Australia and Tasmania are correlated with education levels; regular participation rates increase as the level of education increases.

In Australia, those with a university degree or higher qualifications have the highest regular participation rate of all education levels, at 54.3 per cent.

The results for Tasmania are similar; in 2009 in Tasmania those with a university degree or higher qualification had the highest regular participation rate, with 57.7 per cent participating in regular physical activity.

Those still at secondary school have the second highest total regular participation rate at 54.8 per cent. Those with undergraduate degree or associate diploma rank third, with 48.6 per cent of people of this education level participating regularly in physical activity.

In Australia those who did not complete the 'highest level of school' had the lowest regular participation rate, at 41.9 per cent. This result coincides with Tasmania where those who never completed the 'highest level of school' have the lowest total participation rate of all education levels, at 41.7 per cent.

Employment Status

Nationally in 2009 those employed part-time had the highest regular participation rate, at 53.8 per cent, followed by those employed full time (46.5%) and those who are unemployed (44.2%)

In Tasmania, those employed part-time had the highest regular participation rate, at 52.6 per cent, followed by the unemployed (48.3%) and those not in the labour force (46.4%). Those employed full time have the lowest regular participation rate at 42.4 per cent.

Indigenous Status

ERASS collected data on the participation rates of Indigenous Australian's in 2009. However, given the low sample of people of Indigenous status, the results should be interpreted with caution.

The regular participation rate of Indigenous Australians increased from 41.5 per cent in 2007 to 46.3 per cent in 2009, a 4.8 per cent increase. This participation rate remains slightly lower than that of non Indigenous Australians, who have regular participation rate of 47.8 per cent.

In 2009 the regular participation rate of Indigenous Tasmanian's was 50.4 per cent, representing a 14.3 per cent increase since 2007. This number is 4 per cent higher than that of non Indigenous Tasmanians, who have a regular participation rate of 46.4 per cent.

In all previous surveys conducted the level of regular participation was higher among non Indigenous Australians than those of Indigenous status.

Research suggests that the above statistics are not a true reflection of the actual participation of Indigenous Australians; it is commonly recognised that Indigenous Australians have significantly lower participation rates than non-Indigenous Australians –

there is a greater gap than just 1.5 percentage points. Given this and the concerns with the reliability of the data, the 2009 findings should be interpreted with caution.

Language Spoken at Home

People in households in which a European language other than English is spoken had the highest regular participation rate in 2009, at 50.9 per cent. This figure is ahead of those within English only speaking households at 48.4 per cent and Non-European households at 41.3 per cent.

Tasmanian regular participation rates buck the national trend with people in Non-European language speaking households holding the highest participation rates of 48.9 per cent. This is followed by those in English speaking only households at 46.5 per cent and European language other than English at 43 per cent*.

The Tasmanian rates are in contrast to the national results; however state level results regarding European languages other than English and Non-European language speaking households should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample of people from non English speaking households.

Total Participation by Gender

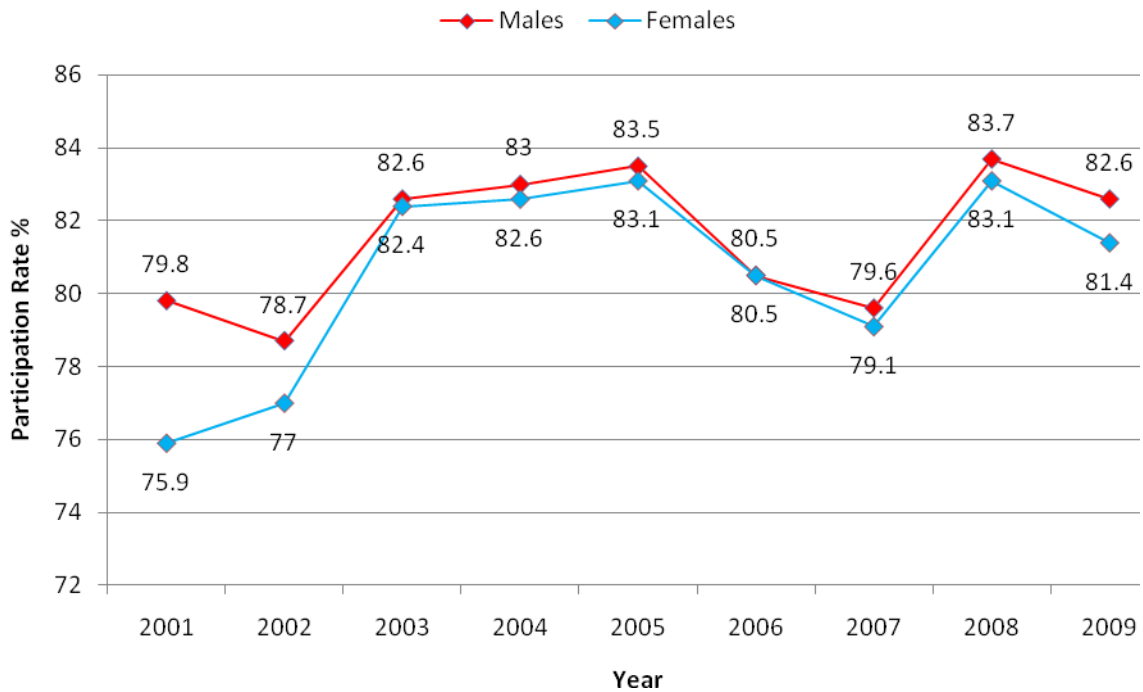
Australia

Males have had a higher total participation rate than females nationally since 2001. However, since 2003 this gap has become quite small.

The national male total participation rate fell from an all time high in 2008 of 83.7 per cent to 82.6 per cent and currently sits at 98.7 per cent of its all time high.

The national female total participation rate also peaked at an equal all time high in 2008, at 83.1 per cent, and fell in 2009 to 81.4 per cent, currently sitting at 98.0 per cent of its all time high. This change can be seen below in figure 4.

Figure 4: Australian total participation rates by gender, 2001-2009



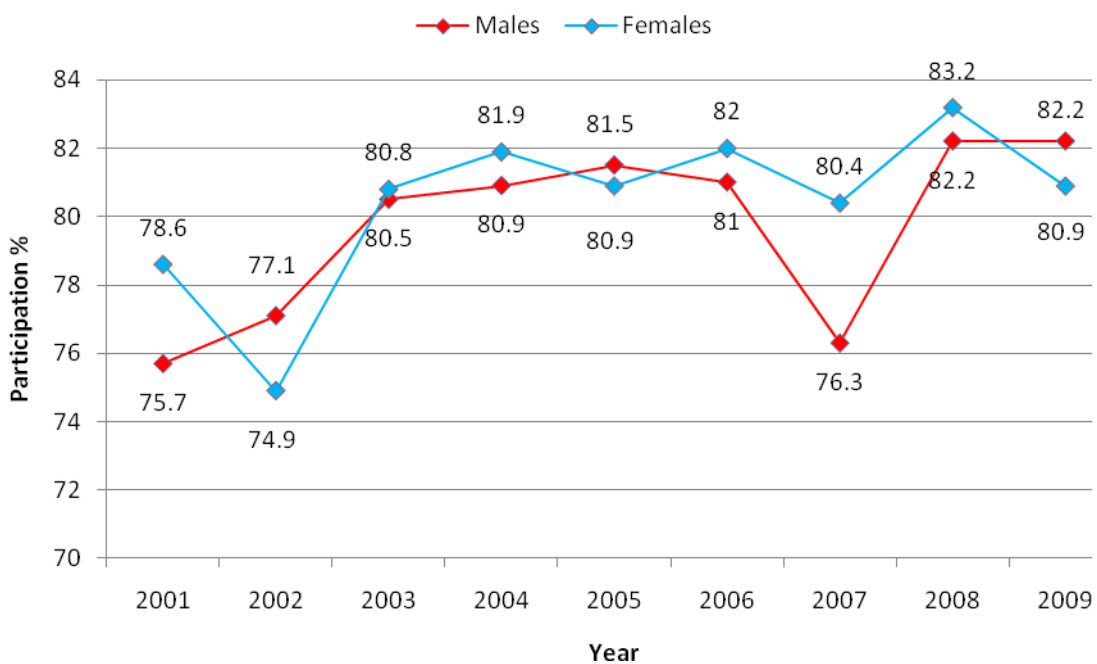
Tasmania

Contrary to national trends where total participation of males has always been greater or equal to that of females, total participation rates for Tasmanian males and females have interchanged several times since 2001.

Male participation rates remained steady in 2009 at 82.2 per cent, to equal the all time high established in 2008. However, female participation fell 2.3 per cent from the all time high of 83.2 per cent in 2008, to 80.9 per cent in 2009. This has resulted in male participation rates once again being higher than female total participation rates in Tasmania.

Figure 5 shows the fluctuation in total participation rates of Tasmanian males and females over the nine year survey history.

Figure 5: Tasmanian total participation rates by gender, 2001-2009



Regular participation by gender

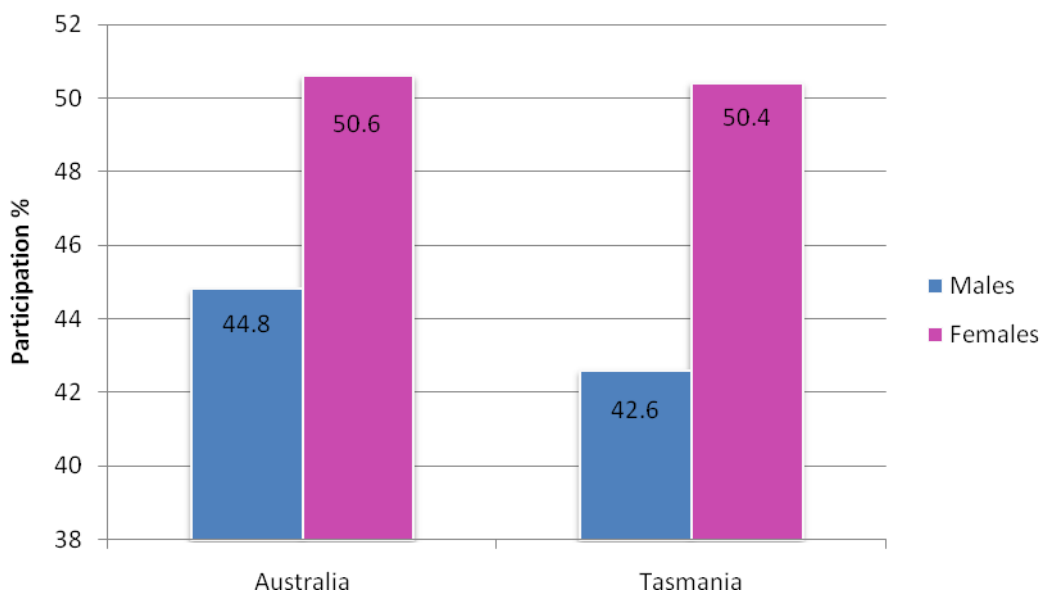
Conversely to total participation rate trends, regular participation rates have continuously been higher among females than males. As shown in figure 6, this trend continued in 2009 both nationally and in Tasmania, with significantly higher regular participation rates for females than males.

Female regular participation rates fell both nationally (50.6% down from 51.6% in 2008) and in Tasmania (50.4% down from 53.0% in 2008).

Male regular participation rates also fell nationally (44.8% down from 46.8% in 2008) and in Tasmania (42.6% down from 46.5% in 2008).

As also shown in figure 6, both male and female regular participation rates in Tasmania are slightly lower than the national average.

Figure 6: Australian and Tasmanian regular participation rates by gender, 2009



Participation five or more times per week by gender

In line with the gender differences in regular participation rates, females have a higher rate of participation in physical activity five or more times per week than males.

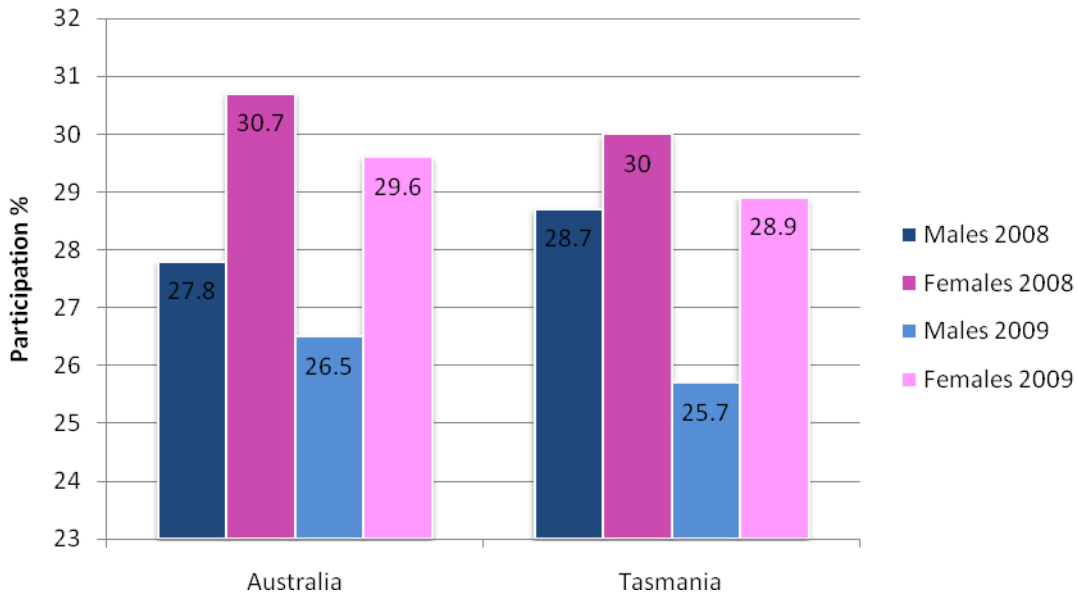
As shown in figure 7, females have a higher five times or more per week participation rate than males both nationally (29.6% female compared to 26.5% male) and in Tasmania (28.9% female compared to 25.7% male).

Female participation five or more times per week supersedes male participation at this frequency level by 3.1 per cent nationally and 3.2 per cent in Tasmania.

Participation five or more times per week decreased for both males and females in 2009, in line with the decrease in male and female regular participation rates. Female participation rates fell 1.1 per cent nationally and in Tasmania. Male rates fell 1.3 per cent nationally and 3 per cent in Tasmania.

The gap between male and female participation five or more times per week in Tasmania more than doubled between 2008 and 2009, from 1.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent, as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7: Australian and Tasmanian rates of participation five or more times per week by gender, 2008-2009



Total participation by age

Nationally and in Tasmania there is a trend for total participation rates to decrease as age increases, as shown in table I.

The highest total participation rate in both Australia and Tasmania is in the 15-24 age group, at 88.5 per cent nationally and 88.7 per cent in Tasmania.

The lowest total participation rate in both Australia and Tasmania is in the 65 years and over age group, at 70.8 per cent nationally and 69.5 per cent in Tasmania.

However, the 65 year and over age group has experienced the largest increase in total participation since 2001. In Australia, the total participation rate of the 65 years and over age group has increased by over 10 per cent in this time, from 60.1 per cent in 2001 to 70.8 per cent in 2009.

This trend also exists in Tasmania, where the total participation of the 65 years and over age group has also increased by ten per cent, from 59.0 per cent in 2001 to 69.5 per cent in 2009.

The age groups of 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 years and over have all experienced increases in total participation since 2001. Total participation of those aged below 35 years has remained relatively constant since 2001, as illustrated in table I below.

Table I: Australian and Tasmanian total participation rates by age, 2001 and 2009

Age Group	Australia		Tasmania	
	2001	2009	2001	2009
15-24	88.8	88.5	90.5	88.7
25-34	85.3	85.2	84.0	86.8
35-44	80.6	85.5	79.0	85.9
45-54	75.4	81.8	77.3	82.5
55-64	70.2	78.7	70.6	77.4
65+	60.1	70.8	59.0	69.5

Regular participation by age

Nationally in 2009, 15-24 year olds had the highest regular participation rate, at 51.1 per cent. As shown in figure 8, this was closely followed by the 55-64 age group, at 49.9 per cent.

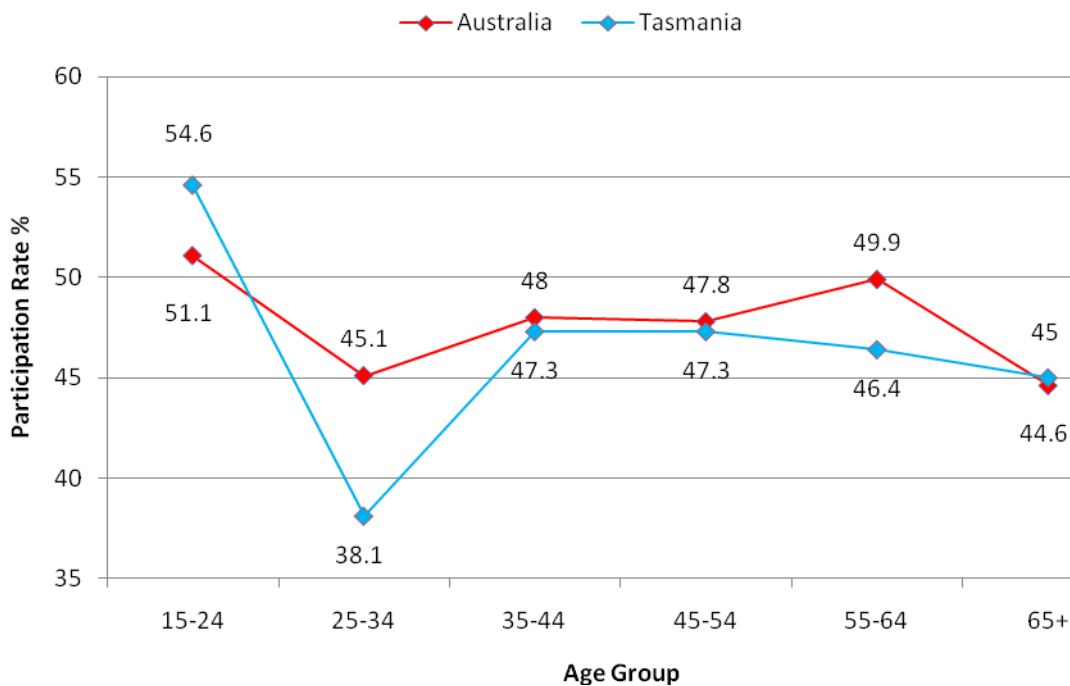
Those aged 65 years and over had the lowest regular participation rate nationally, at 44.6 per cent, just below that of the 25-35 age group, at 45.1 per cent.

Tasmanians aged 15-24 years had the highest regular participation rate in 2009, at 54.6 per cent, 3.5 per cent higher than the national average for this age group, as shown in figure 8.

Those aged 25-34 years had Tasmania's lowest regular participation rate, at 38.1 per cent, 7 per cent below the national average for this age group.

Tasmanians aged 25-34 years fell from being on par with the national regular participation rate for this age group in 2008 to being 7 per cent below in 2009, experiencing a decline of 7.7 per cent.

Figure 8: Australian and Tasmanian regular participation rate by age, 2009



Participation five or more times per week by age

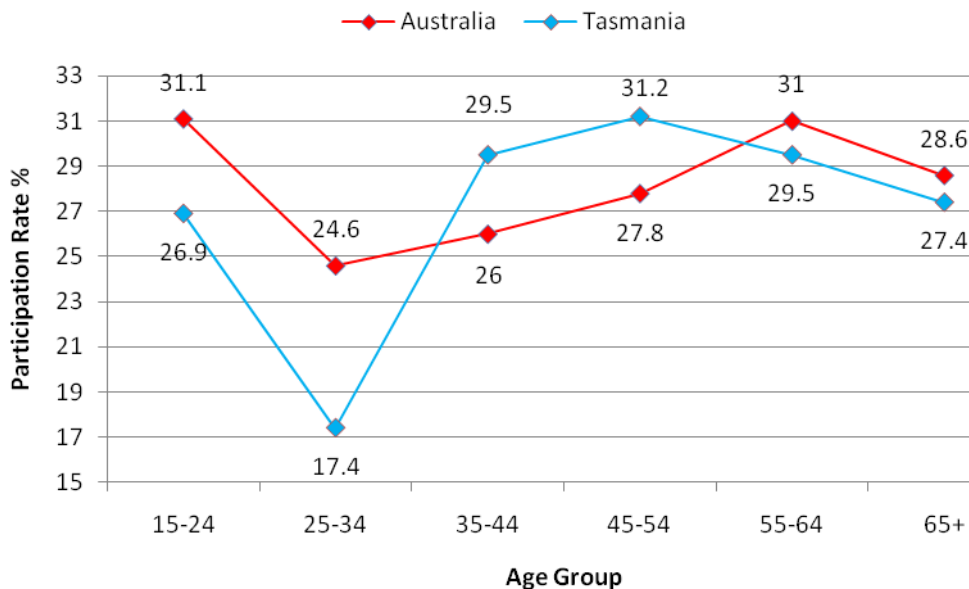
Nationally in 2009, those aged 15-24 years and 55-64 years shared the highest rate of participation five or more times per week, at around 31 per cent. Those aged 25-34 years had the lowest rate of participation five or more times per week nationally, at 24.6 per cent, 5.5 per cent lower than the national average for this age group.

In Tasmania in 2009, those aged 45-54 years increased in ranking in regard to participation five or more times per week, from second lowest in 2008 (26.1%) to the highest in 2009, at 31.2 per cent, 3.4 per cent higher than the national average for this age group.

Tasmanians aged 15-24 years experienced an 11.1 per cent decrease in participation five or more times per week, from 37.0 per cent in 2008 to 26.9% in 2009, to be ranked second last. The 15-24 year age group has experienced much fluctuation in five or more times per week participation rates over the past three years (19.9% in 2007 to 37.0% in 2008 to 26.9% in 2009)

Those aged 25-34 years had the lowest rate of participation five or more times per week in 2009, at 17.4 per cent, 7.2 per cent below the national rate for this age group. This is a 4.6 per cent decrease on 2008, when the 25-34 year age group also had the lowest rate of participation five or more times per week.

Figure 9: Australian and Tasmanian participation five or more times per week by age, 2009



Most popular activities

Australia

Since the survey began in 2001, walking has remained the number one physical activity in terms of total participation rates both nationally and in Tasmania, for both females and males.

The top 10 Australian physical activities have encompassed the same top 10 activities during the history of the survey. The 2009 ranking and participation rate of these activities can be seen below in table 2.

Of the top 10 most popular activities, aerobics has experienced the largest participation rate increase of all activities, increasing 76.2 per cent since 2001, from 13 per cent to 22.9 per cent.

The second largest participation rate increase has been in running, increasing 52.8 per cent, from 7.2 per cent in 2001 to 11.0 per cent in 2009.

The largest participation rate decrease has occurred in tennis, which has fallen 30.4 per cent, from 9.2 per cent in 2001 to 6.4 per cent in 2009.

Table 2: Top 10 physical activities in Australia, 2009

Rank	Activity	Participation rate (%)
1	Walking (other than bush)	36.1
2	Aerobics/ Fitness	22.9
3	Swimming	14.1
4	Cycling	11.1
5	Running	11.0
6	Golf	6.4
7	Tennis	6.4
8	Football (outdoor)	5.1
9	Walking (bush)	5.0
10	Netball	4.0

Tasmania

The top 10 physical activities participated in by Tasmanians in 2009 (total participation) is similar to the national top 10, with two exceptions. As illustrated in table 3, Australian rules football and fishing have both made their way into the Tasmanian top 10, differing from the Australian top 10 which instead includes netball and football (outdoor).

Football (outdoor) fell from eighth on the 2008 Tasmanian top ten list, at 4.8 per cent, to eleventh in 2009, at 3.5 per cent.

Fishing returned to the Tasmanian top 10 in 2009 for the first time since 2006.

Walking (bush) and running had the largest falls in total participation in 2009, decreasing from 10.5 per cent in 2008 to 7.7 per cent in 2009 and 9.6 per cent in 2008 to 7.8 per cent in 2009 respectively.

Golf attained the largest participation rate increase of the top 10 activities, increasing participation rate by 1 per cent, going from 5.6 per cent in 2008 to 6.6 per cent in 2009.

Table 3: Top 10 physical activities in Tasmania, 2009

Rank	Activity	Participation rate (%)
1	Walking (other than bush)	41.4
2	Aerobics/ Fitness	16.5
3	Swimming	11.6
4	Cycling	8.9
5	Running	7.8
6	Walking (Bush)	7.7
7	Golf	6.6
8	Australian rules football	5.3
9	Fishing	3.9
10	Tennis	3.8

Total participation in organised activities

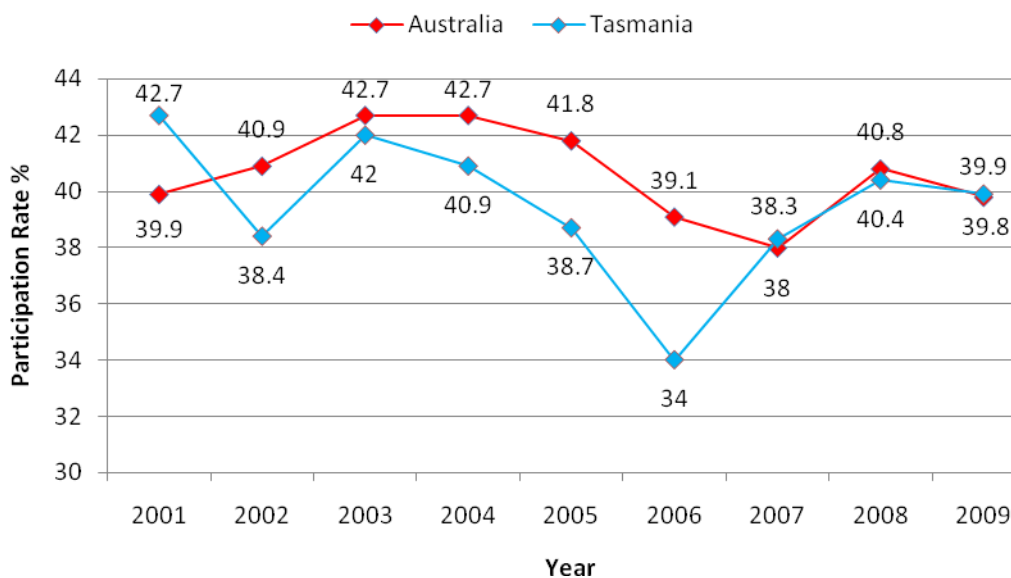
In 2009, 39.8 per cent of Australians participated at least once in physical activity organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other organisation.

As shown in figure 10, there has been an overall trend for total participation in organised physical activity to decrease over the last five years, with the exception of a slight increase in 2008.

Nationally, total participation in organised activity was on par with the 2001 rate in 2009 and is currently at 92.8 per cent of the all time high reported in 2003 and 2004.

Total participation in organised activities in Tasmania also remained constant in 2009. However, the 2009 rate is still 2.9 per cent below the 2001 rate of 42.7 per cent, which remains the all time high for total Tasmanian participation in organised activities.

Figure 10: Australian and Tasmanian total participation in organised activities, 2001-2009



Tasmania ranked fourth amongst Australian states or territories with regard to total organised participation in 2009, 4.4 per cent behind the Northern Territory which had the highest rate at 44.3 per cent.

Both nationally and in Tasmania, males had a higher rate of total organised participation than females in 2009. Nationally, 41.9 per cent of males participated in organised physical activity at least once in the 12 months prior to survey, compared to 37.7 per cent of females.

In Tasmania in 2009, 43.1 per cent of males participated in organised physical activity at least once in the 12 months prior to survey, compared to 36.8 per cent of females. Total participation of Tasmanian males in organised activity was 1.2 per cent above the national average, whilst that of females was 0.9 per cent below the national average.

Regular participation in organised activities

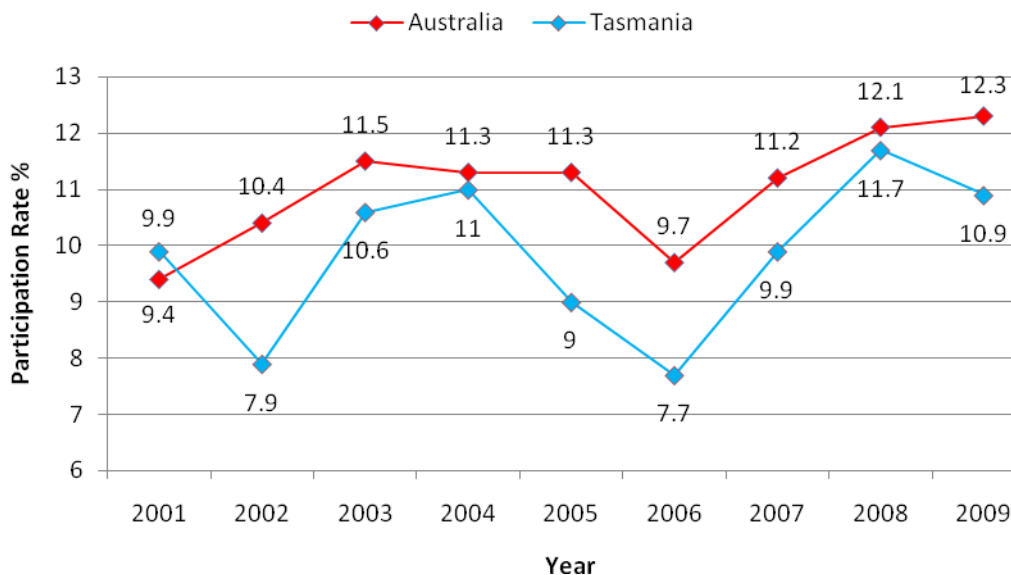
During 2009, 12.3 per cent of Australians participated in regular physical activity organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other organisation.

Whilst the total proportion of Australians participating in organised activity is declining, a greater proportion of those who are participating are doing so regularly, with regular participation in organised activity increasing since 2001.

Figure 11 shows regular participation of Australians in organised activity has increased by 2.9 per cent since 2001 and is at an all time high of 12.3 per cent.

Tasmania's rate of regular participation in organised activities dropped slightly in 2009 after gradually increasing over the past two years, and remains slightly above the 2001 rate.

Figure 11: Australian and Tasmanian regular participation in organised activities, 2001-2009



Regular participation in organised activity is 4.5 per cent higher for Tasmanian males than Tasmanian females, with 13.2 per cent of males participating regularly in organised activity compared to 8.7 per cent of females. The national trend is the same, although the gap between males and females is much smaller (12.9% compared to 11.7% respectively).

Most popular organised activities

Australia

Table 4 shows the top 10 organised activities in Australia in 2009 (total participation). The top five organised activities have remained the same since 2001.

Lawns bowls enters the Australian top 10 in 2009 for the first time since 2006 and replaces swimming, which fell to eleventh in 2009.

Touch football had the largest participation rate decrease of all activities from 2008 to 2009, dropping from sixth (2.5%) in 2008 to tenth in 2009.

Table 4: Top 10 organised physical activities in Australia, 2009

Rank	Activity	Participation rate (%)
1	Aerobics	7.4
2	Football (outdoor)	3.4
3	Netball	3.4
4	Golf	3.3
5	Tennis	2.7
6	Basketball	2.4
7	Australian rules football	2.2
8	Cricket (outdoor)	2.0
9	Lawn bowls	1.9
10	Touch football	1.8

Tasmania

Table 5 shows the top ten organised physical activities in Tasmania in 2009 (total participation).

The most prevalent difference between the Australian and Tasmanian top ten organised activity lists is that the number one organised activity in Tasmania is Australian rules football, which ranks seventh on the national list.

Total participation of Tasmanians in organised Australian rules football increased by 1.2 per cent from 2008 to 2009, moving up from fourth on the list to first.

Other differences between the national and Tasmanian lists include that running and walking (other than bush) appear in the Tasmanian list but not the Australian list and accordingly touch football and tennis do not appear in the Tasmanian list.

Touch football and hockey narrowly missed out on inclusion in the Tasmanian top ten list, both with participation rates of 2.0 per cent.

Table 5: Top 10 organised physical activities in Tasmania, 2009

Rank	Activity	Participation rate (%)
1	Australian rules football	4.4
2	Aerobics/fitness	4.3
3	Golf	3.8
4	Cricket (outdoor)	3.0
5	Football (outdoor)	3.0
6	Netball	2.8
7	Running	2.6
8	Basketball	2.5
9	Walking (other than bush)	2.2
10	Lawn Bowls	2.1

Summary: 2009 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS)

Key Tasmanian Findings

The past nine years of survey results show a moderate trend of increased physical activity in Tasmania. **Total participation** in physical activity has **increased by 4.3 per cent since 2001** (when it was 77.2%) to **81.5 per cent in 2009**.

Encouragingly, participation of Tasmanians in **regular physical activity, that is three or more times per week**, has **increased 12.2 per cent since 2001** (when it was 34.4%), to **46.6 per cent in 2009**. The Tasmanian rate is almost on par with the national rate (47.7%).

Data collection relating to participation in physical activity **five or more times per week** began in 2005 and since then Tasmanian participation at this frequency level has **increased by 1.7 per cent**, with **27.3 per cent** of Tasmanians undertaking this level of physical activity **in 2009**. Again, the Tasmanian rate is on par with the national rate (28%).

Gender

Total participation in Tasmania was 1.3 per cent higher for males (82.2%) than for females (80.9%). This is the first year in the survey history that Tasmanian males have had a higher total participation rate than females.

Male total participation has increased by 6.5 per cent since 2001 (75.7%), while female total participation has increased by 2.3 per cent since 2001 (78.6%).

Whilst Tasmanian males have a higher total participation rate, females have a higher rate of regular participation than males (50.4% compared to 42.6%) and a higher rate of participation five or more times per week (28.9% compared to 25.7%).

However, participation in organised activity is higher for males. Males have a higher rate of total participation in organised activity (43.1% male compared to 36.8% female) and regular participation in organised activity (13.2% male compared to 8.7% female).

Age

In Tasmania, total participation remains highest among those aged 15-24 years (88.7%) and decreases with age.

In 2009, the total participation rate of those aged 65 years and over was 69.5 per cent. However, although they have the lowest participation rate, the 65 years and over age group has experienced the greatest increase in total participation since 2001, increasing by 10.5 per cent during this time.

In 2009, the 15-24 year age group had the highest rate of regular participation in Tasmania, at 54.6 per cent. The lowest rate of regular participation was among those aged 25-34 years, at 38.1 per cent.

The 15-24 year age group also had the highest rate of participation five or more times per week (31.1%), with those aged 55-64 years closely aligned at 31 per cent. Those aged 25-34 years were least likely to participate five or more times per week (24.6%).

Organised physical activity

During 2009, 39.9 per cent of Tasmanians participated at least once in physical activity organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other organisation. This represents a 2.8 per cent decrease in total organised activity in Tasmania since 2001, when it was at an all time high of 42.7 per cent.

In 2009 10.9 per cent of Tasmanians participated regularly in physical activity organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other organisation. Regular participation in physical activity has remained fairly steady over the survey history and is currently one per cent higher than the 2001 rate.

Most popular activities

The most popular physical activity for both males and females in 2009, nationally and in Tasmania was walking, with 41.4 per cent of Tasmanians aged over 15 years participating in the activity at least once in the 12 months prior to survey. Walking is followed by aerobics, swimming, cycling and running to make up the top five activities (organised and non-organised).

The most popular organised physical activity in Tasmania is Australian rules football, followed by aerobics, golf, cricket and football (outdoor) to make up the top five organised activities.