

ACTIVE GEEELONG

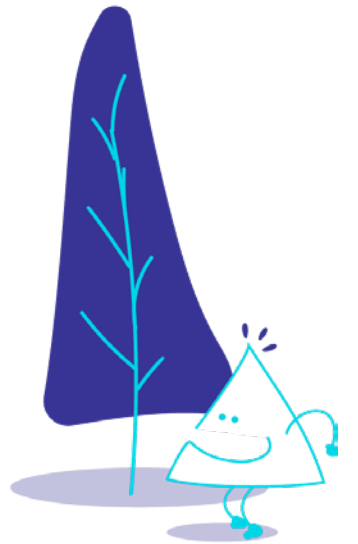
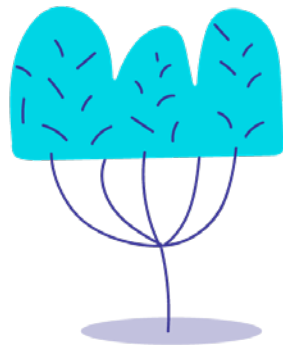
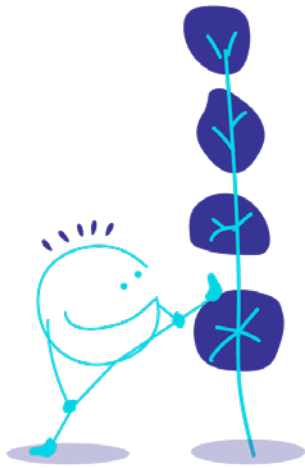
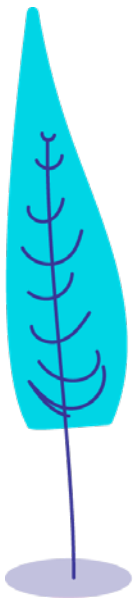
LEADERS FOR GEEELONG 2019/20

The Committee for Geelong acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations people and the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways. We pay our respects to the local Wadawurrung people of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Active Geelong project set out to produce an Active Events Guide which could then be used by event organisers to incorporate an exercise or physical activity component into their event. Should an event organiser utilise the guide they would then be able to have their event endorsed by Active Geelong.

The event guide needed to be able to satisfy the needs of corporate event planners as well as community event planners, covering areas such as transport and parking, venue selection and food and drink while also providing some information around the benefits of incorporating exercise or physical activity into an event. Throughout these discussions and research, it was identified that an insert containing a sample exercise program would also assist event organisers by providing a basic exercise program that could be easily incorporated during a break in the event.

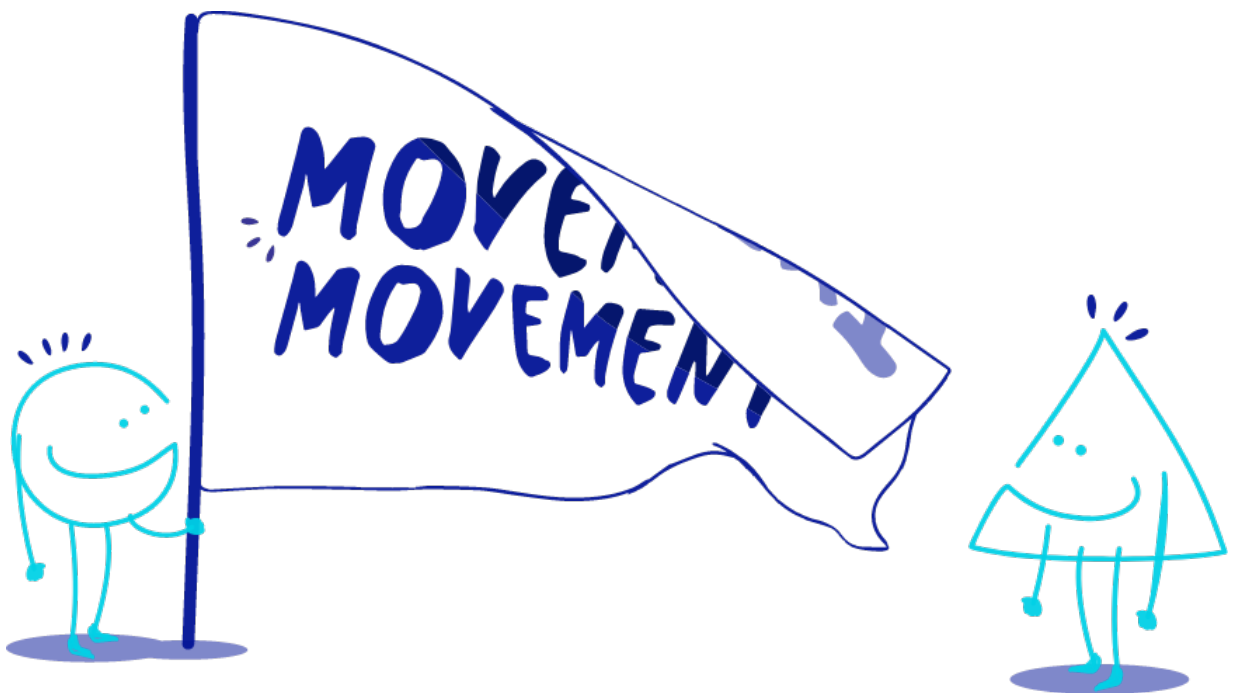
As noted in the project scope consideration was given to incorporating a working from home component given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic however was ultimately not included in this guide. As the research was being completed it became apparent that the differences in an event that is attended as opposed to a virtual event were too dissimilar to sit in one guide without compromising the initial intent.

Regular contact was maintained with the project champion throughout to ensure that the project was aligning with the needs and expectations of Active Geelong. These meetings consisted of a combination of Zoom and face o face depending on the restrictions in place at the time. The project champion was able to provide guidance around content and also provide links to resources and information that was utilised in putting the guide together.

There was a significant discussion around the format of the guide and how this should be presented and what event planners would like to see in a guide such as this. As such a survey was sent to several event planners to gauge their interest and the information and topics, they would like to see in such a guide.

Research was undertaken into the benefits of adopting exercise into an event, doing this provided an evidence base which we were then able to summarise and incorporate into the guide. The Active Geelong website was a starting point in this, and our project champion also provided several links to aid in this research. A search online provided a number of additional resources and information to corroborate the direction the guide was going.

To assist in maintaining the Active Geelong branding the event guide was finalised by Fluid to ensure that the design and marketing for Active Geelong remained consistent with other publications.



INTRODUCTION

Active Geelong is a collaborative project that brings together leading businesses, doctors, researchers and individuals to address inactivity in the Geelong region.

Active Geelong is on a mission to make Geelong Australia's most active city. Research reveals that **54%** of the Geelong population do not meet current physical activity guidelines of participating in at least **30–60 minutes** of physical activity on at least **5 days** of the week (Victorian Population Health Survey 2014). In Australia it has been estimated that **10%** of all premature deaths are attributable to physical inactivity, costing the national health budget **\$1.5 billion** each year.

Using a collective impact model, Active Geelong aims to achieve the following goals and objectives:

GOAL 1:
Australia's most active workplaces are in Geelong by 2022.

OBJECTIVE:
Support workplaces to be active by filling gaps in workplace physical activity programs.

GOAL 2:
Australia's most actively committed GPs are in Geelong by 2022.

OBJECTIVE:
Implement innovative programs that help GPs to support their patients' physical activity journeys.

GOAL 3:
Every person gets their minimum daily physical activity requirement every day by 2025.

OBJECTIVES:
Connect and inspire our community to get active, and be known as the go-to organisation for physical activity engagement in Geelong.

Geelong is ideally placed to be Australia's most active city thanks to the environment, weather, infrastructure and access to world leaders in physical activity research.

Active Geelong is underpinned by an objective to be a sustainable and effective organisation.

PROJECT SCOPE

The aim of the project is to produce an “Active Geelong Event Guide” which incorporates both information for event organisers as well as a checklist which can be utilised in event planning. It is envisaged that event organisers will actively use this guide and seek endorsement from Active Geelong for their events.

It is anticipated to produce the events guide that we will need to;

- Liaise regularly with the project champion to ensure the project is meeting the needs of Active Geelong and identifying what a successful guide would look like.
- Liaise with Key Stakeholders to ensure that the project is in alignment with those organisation’s values.
- Continue with weekly group meetings to ensure that the project remains on track and tasks are being completed.
- Form sub-groups with the Active Geelong project team to assign tasks and then incorporate into the broader project.
- Research sustainability guides and similar active event models such as “lift up Lou” to identify how these guides and event models work and what considerations we will need to be aware of.
- Incorporate working from home considerations into the guide due to not only the current COVID-19 environment but how the changes to workplace meetings could be potentially change the way people work in the longer term or when we are back in a somewhat normal environment.

- Incorporate inclusivity into the guide and checklist ensuring that the active component of an event is available to all participants and all levels of fitness.
- Consideration to be given to the use of local influential organisations & individuals to endorse and promote the use of the Active Events Guide.
- Liaise with successful Active Geelong partners to identify what has worked well in creating a more active workplace and what barriers might have been experienced and how they were resolved.
- Liaise with event organisers to ascertain why they might be interested in using this guide and what would motivate them to use this guide.
- Investigate the viability of running a test event to trial the guide and checklist including the use of surveys or other metrics to determine its success.

The anticipated benefits of producing an events guide which is then utilised in event planning are that it;

- Provides a framework for event organisers to utilise in planning events
- Allows for increased participation in physical activity by event participants
- Can potentially reduce costs to the health budget by promoting healthy lifestyles
- Allows for events to include a physical activity component promoting a healthy lifestyle



ACTIVE GEELONG PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

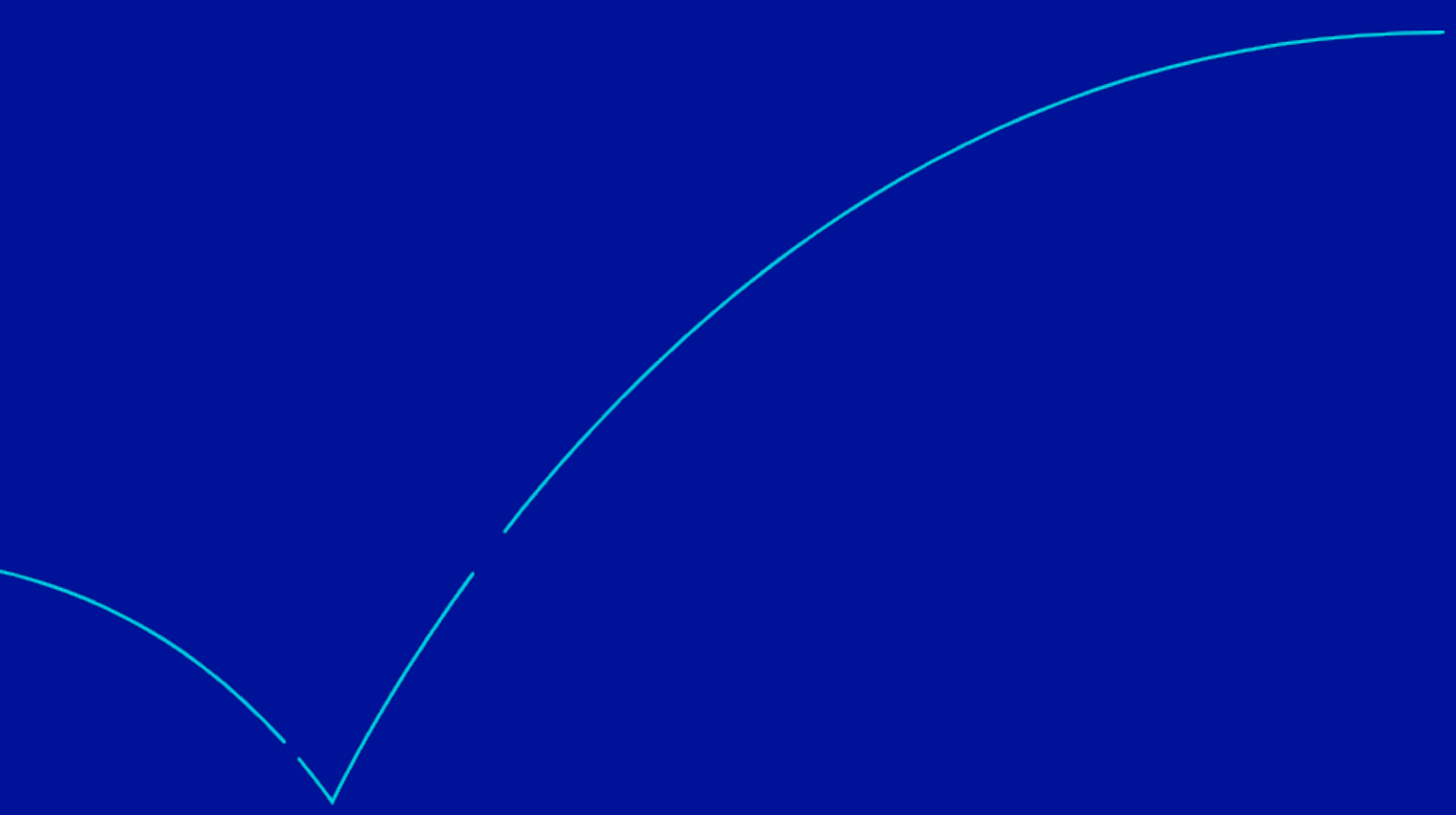
Tim Brown
Viva

Anna Fitzgerald
ANZ

Shane Risk
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Andre Smaniotto
Geelong Cats

James Law
Department of Justice & Community Safety





BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN EXERCISE WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

There are a number of studies and articles available which point to the benefits that exercise can have on your working day, some of which can be accessed via the links below. The Active Geelong website contains a case study ([Link 1](#)) completed at Norris Construction Group where a gym was constructed in a disused building with Norris Construction stating “We have seen great team building, productivity and a general wellbeing of people, especially during the more stressful times when everyone needs an outlet.” In addition, the Active Geelong website ([Link 2](#)) also contains information on staying active while working from home.

The links between exercise and mental health are discussed in the Health Direct website ([Link 3](#)) where it identifies “Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that improve your mood. It can also get you out in the world, help to reduce any feelings of loneliness and isolation, and put you in touch with other people. If you exercise regularly, it can reduce your stress and symptoms of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety and help with recovery from mental health issues. It can also improve your sleep, which is important in many different ways.” The Health Direct website also discusses the benefits to memory and brain function “Exercise pumps blood to the brain, which can help you to think more clearly. Evidence indicates that exercise can increase the size of the hippocampus, a part of the brain that is responsible for memory. It also increases the connections between the nerve cells in the brain. This improves your memory and helps protect your brain against injury and disease.”

Link 1 — <https://www.activegeelong.org.au/case-study-norris-construction-group>

Link 2 — https://www.activegeelong.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Active-Geelong_ActiveAtHome.pdf

Link 3 — <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/exercise-and-mental-health>

TRAVEL AND PARKING

The Geelong area has extensive transport links and the City of Greater Geelong website provides information around parking options within Geelong. These options can be considered when promoting car parking such as the use of all-day free parking which might require a short walk to a venue.

The **City of Greater Geelong** website also has an active travel section which assists people in choosing an active route to their destination.

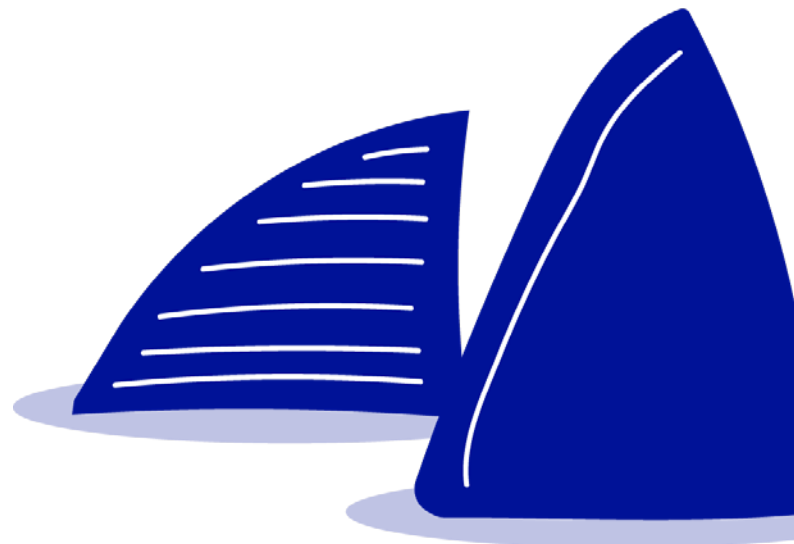
<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/activetravel/article/item/8d168dae6f2851b.aspx>

The **Active Geelong** website provides resources and links on active travel.

<https://www.activegeelong.org.au/movement-resources/active-travel>

The **Public Transport Victoria** website provides train and bus timetables as well as the route maps and details of stops which also assist in planning where people could get off a bus and then walk to an event.

<https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au>



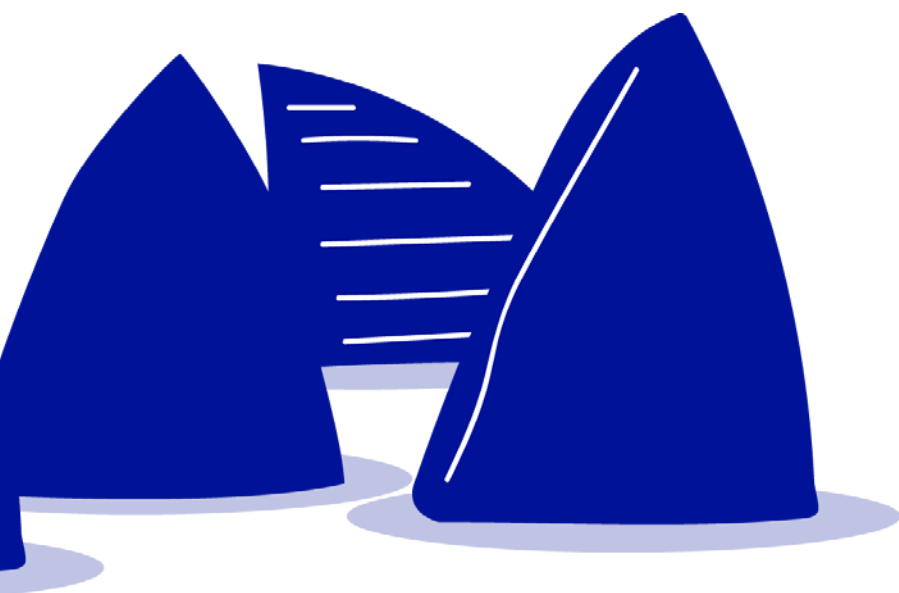
VENUE SELECTION

Venue selection was considered as important for a number of reasons, firstly does the location of a venue allow the use of active travel? A venue that is easily accessible via public transport gives participants the option of catching public transport and disembarking early and walking the final part of the journey. In Geelong all day free parking is predominantly on the outskirts of the city, providing participants who chose to drive with information around these parking options where they can park and then walk to their venue thereby being able to get some activity prior to an event.

Another consideration in relation to venue selection is the size of the room being used, does this allow for participants to be able to stand and stretch. Is there enough room to allow for a short exercise program during an event? Alternatively, is there an area available where this could occur?

Also, is there availability to have participants stand while having lunch? Utilising bar type tables and removing seats to keep participants active during a break.

Venue facilities can also be considered, if the event requires an overnight stay is there a gym which can be utilised by participants? Can a group exercise program or yoga class be organised at the end of the day or at the beginning of the day? Alternatively, if these facilities aren't available, is it possible to engage a personal trainer to run a class in a nearby park?



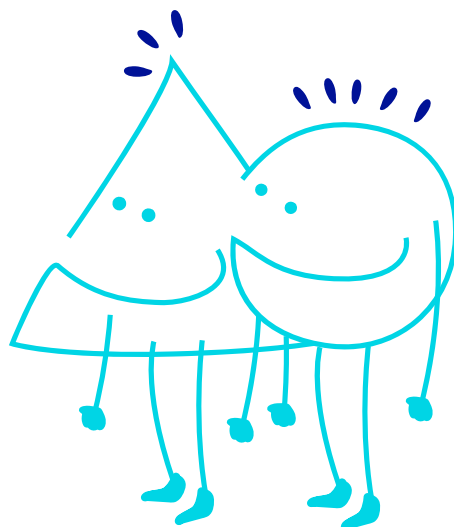
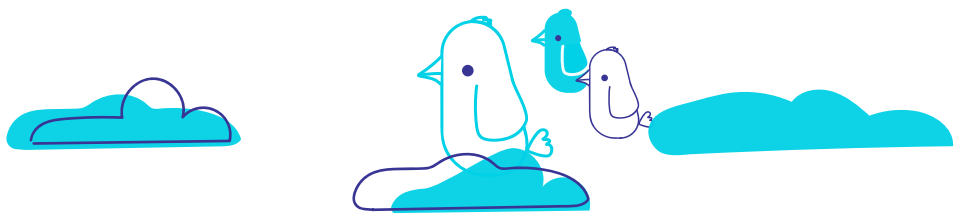
FOOD CHOICES

Food choices were looked at not only from a healthy option but also foods that will provide energy throughout the day. Looking at the options a venue can provide and working with them to provide food choices which will keep participants energy levels high throughout the day and promote engagement in an event right through the day.

<http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/workplaces-hospitals-universities>

<http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/energy-boosting-foods#1>

<https://www.naturalbalancefoods.co.uk/community/fitness/vegan-foods-for-energy>



SIMILAR PROGRAMS

A search was undertaken for similar programs that might exist elsewhere throughout Victoria, Australia or overseas with little success. A number of programs similar to Active Geelong were identified however a guide to hosting active events could not be located. The research we conducted into locating other active event guides demonstrated an exciting opportunity for Active Geelong to take the lead in making people more active in an area which has traditionally been sedentary.

Lift up Lou – is a community initiative in Louisville, US, during COVID-19 to keep people connected through exercise, healthy eating, music among other activities. However, it didn't provide an active events type guide.

<https://louisvilleky.gov/government/lift-lou>

Active Stonnington – brings together the facilities within the Stonnington Local Government area in one site where you can book a swim, gym session etc. It also provides information on local sporting clubs and walks, parks and cycling in the area. However, it didn't provide an active events type guide.

<https://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/active/Home>

Sustainability Guides were identified as the closest in nature to what we were looking to produce with a number available for reference such in the links below. We were able to adopt a format somewhat similar to a sustainability guide utilising information, ideas and a checklist.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/sustainable-business/sustainable-event-guide/Pages/sustainable-event-guide.aspx>

https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/256239/Sustainable-Events-Meetings-Guide.pdf

<http://mams.rmit.edu.au/go5yt43n3hf2.pdf>

SURVEY

A 7-question survey was completed with event planners to gauge their interest and items they would like to see included. The survey articulated it was being sent from the members of the project group as part of the Leaders for Geelong Program run through the Committee for Geelong and that the project involved the development of an active events guide for Active Geelong.

60% of respondents to the survey indicated that they would be willing to adopt an active component as part of an event. In relation to the length of an event the response indicated that **50%** of events organised by respondents ran for 4 to 6 hours with the remaining events less than 3 hours. When asked what would make their event stand out **80%** of organisers identified small physical groups as an active component would do this. **40%** of those who responded advised that they have attended an event with a active component and reported that this did improve the event making it more interactive and engaging. When asked about items that must be included **60%** of organisers reported healthy food options as a clear standout while regular breaks and group activities also received some support. Notably sessions that encourage standing did not receive any responses at all. Finally, event organisers were asked about factors which contribute to unsuccessful events with long hours spent seated, short breaks and unhealthy food options being identified.

Comments received as part of the survey;

“

“Active events would need to cater for a wide range of health and age options as well as the fact people will likely be in formal clothing. To me the events you’re describing here are more rest and stretch type exercises rather than what I’d consider an active event that encourages physical activity, such as one that encourages walking during breaks (which to be fair is one of the options you presented earlier).”

“

“Icebreaker or re-engagement type activities would probably work best. Not always just physically active but mentally active as well.”

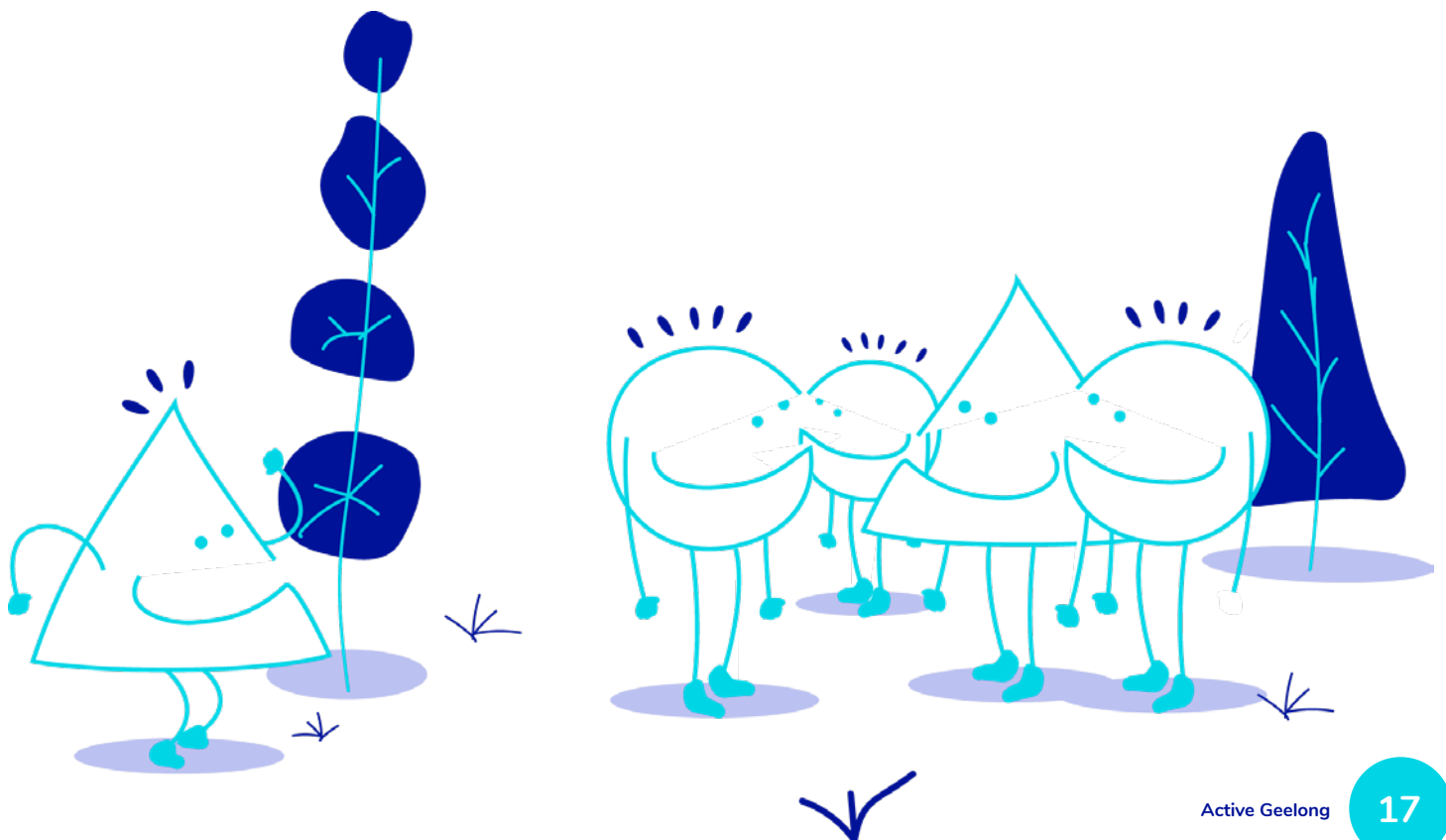
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“Pre-planned wellness sessions during lunch to maximize break period and come back into content sessions refreshed.”

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The development of a virtual active events guide to sit alongside this version. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the switch to working from home seminars, conferences, meetings etc. have been taking place via platforms such as Teams and Zoom. A virtual events guide would allow planners of these events to build in an active component that meets the requirements of a virtual event.

Further to this a guide for community events could be developed or incorporated into the existing events guide. This would enable the organisers of both large-scale community events such as festival of sales or the Geelong Revival as well as smaller events such as school fetes and markets to adopt an active component and seek endorsement through Active Geelong.



CONCLUSION

There were a number of challenges in completing this project given the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions impacting the ability of events to be run. As such a trial event utilising a workplace scenario was unable to be scheduled given the work from home requirements. Most meetings were required to take place via Zoom with some face to face meetings as restrictions allowed.

As shown in [Appendix 1](#) below the final Active Events Guide was completed incorporating information about Active Geelong, the benefits of exercise as well as the benefits of incorporating exercise into an event. It also included information on active travel, venue selection, food choices and the types of exercise which could be incorporated as well as a checklist to assist in identifying those tasks when completed. A supplement to the guide was also completed ([Appendix 2](#)) which provided a sample exercise program which could be easily incorporated into an event.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Active Geelong Events Guide

https://www.activegeelong.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AG_Events_Guide.pdf

APPENDIX 2

Active Geelong Exercise Guide

https://www.activegeelong.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AG_Exercise_Guide.pdf

