



## CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

There is a genuine sense within Active Geelong that we have regained our momentum after the Covid years and made significant progress in 2023. From workplace events and our Annual Awards, to the commencement of My Clinic Walks, and an increased enthusiastic participation within our organisation's committees, we feel our message to boost activity levels is reaching more within our Geelong region.

We were grateful to receive a large contribution towards our GP walking program initiative from Western Victorian Primary Health Network creating a GP special interest group, gaining wonderful cooperation from the National Heart Foundation, and starting our walks in October. Our walking program coordinator Janet Ashton has put great energy into this program. The first stage, the recruitment and retention trial, has provided important lessons as we plan the more formalised effectiveness trial in 2024, supported by CPD audit opportunities, to attract GP referrals.

Michelle Hemley has managed our organisation's new committee structure and with our Workplace Committee has conducted Walk and Talk events, Seminars, a Showcase event, and an intensive Group Model Build at Cobram Estate. This culminated in our wonderful Workplace Awards breakfast where the activity-promoting initiatives of our local businesses, large and small, were on display.

Our finances are in a healthy state as local businesses continue to support our aspiration to improve the

health of our region through encouraging physical activity. Pat Murnane has built empowering relationships across our region to encourage generous contributions from key businesses.



## Annual Review 2022-23



We continue to focus on strengthening relationships with Institutions across Geelong including Deakin University, Barwon Health, the City of Greater Geelong and the Geelong Football Club. The Geelong Independent Schools Sports Association is a new partner, and we plan to expand our influence to encourage and maintain activity amongst our younger population.

Our key sponsor and supporter GMHBA continue to underpin our activities, but we are grateful to all our sponsoring organisations for their support.

We have farewelled several board members and welcomed newcomers to this important role. Mike Beck retired in August and had been a director and wonderful supporter since we began, and together with his business Fluid, has created all our engaging branding that has become an integral part of the Active Geelong message. At our AGM he was presented with our first Achievement Award.

2024 provides expanding opportunities to lift our support for participating businesses and to expand our GP walking program My Clinic Walks, as we also consider new initiatives to achieve our aim to become Australia's most active region.

**Dr Hugh Seward AM (Active Geelong Chair)**





## EXECUTIVE SUPPORT REPORT

After the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Active Geelong operations through 2020 & 2021, it now feels like our organisation can gain real momentum with the reintroduction of face-to-face activities.

With the lifting of restrictions and a return to more 'normal' working conditions through 2022-23, Active Geelong had a year to be proud of where we launched two highly impactful events; the 'Active Geelong Workplace Awards' and the 'Active Geelong Showcase', alongside a range of other initiatives outlined below:

### *Inaugural Active Workplace Awards (November 2022)*

As a way to showcase and reward the many physical activity workplace initiatives we know are happening in the Geelong region, plus inspire workplaces to innovate regarding workplace physical activity in the new hybrid working environment, Active Geelong was pleased to deliver the inaugural 'Active Workplace Awards' in November 2022.

The award criteria are based off the State Government's Healthy Workplace Program Physical Activity Benchmarks and winners were selected through the Active Geelong Workplace Committee. The nominees and winners were recognised at an Awards Breakfast at GMHBA Stadium and congratulations to the 2022 Active Workplace Award Winners:

- Active Culture: West Carr & Harvey
- Active Community Connections: Christian College Geelong
- Active Physical Environment: Fluid Branding
- Active Opportunities: Deakin University





- Active Workplace of the Year: Geelong Football Club

Generous support for the Active Workplace Awards event was provided by the Barwon Health Healthy Communities team as event sponsors and through our major Active Geelong Community Partner, GMHBA.

### **Inaugural Active Geelong Showcase (May 2023)**

Off the back of the Active Workplace Awards, Active Geelong bought together 80 professionals during May 2023 for the inaugural Active Geelong Showcase.

Hosted by Active Geelong Supporter WorkSafe at their beautiful waterfront office, the showcase presented:

- Latest physical activity research applicable to workplaces, presented by Active Geelong Chair Dr Hugh Seward (Move for Your Mind), Deakin Professor Colin Bell (Get Motivated to Move) and Deakin/Bakers Institute Professor David Dunstan (Move More at Work)
- Our ambassadors Dr Kathy Turner, Janet Ashton, Renee Garing and Kristy Harris, presented their physical activity stories
- 2022 Active Workplace Award winners had a chance to share what they do

### **Group Model Build (March 2023)**

In collaboration with the Barwon Health Healthy Communities team, Active Geelong was involved in an extensive 'Group Model Build' for Cobram Estate Olives. This involved a two-part workshop where a select group of employees from across the organisations various departments explored the question 'What prevents me from being more active at work?'.





Through exploring this question as a collaboration, our team were able to identify common themes and therefore provide targeted intervention suggestions to increase workplace physical activity at Cobram Estate. This is an in-depth process that sees great results and Active Geelong are looking forward to future GMB's with more workplaces in the region, alongside the Barwon Health Healthy Communities team.

**'Move More in May' Social Media Campaign (May 2023)**

The 'Move More in May' social media campaign during May 2023 was an opportunity to utilise Active Geelong Ambassadors, Committee Members and Directors showcasing the importance of physical activity as the days get shorter and the weather cooler. Photos and stories were shared through Active Geelong social media channels via LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram and resulted in Active Geelong's biggest reach across social media ever. Our team are currently exploring how we can expand this opportunity during May 2024.

**Movement Motivator Pilot Project (October 2022)**

Active Geelong is incredibly fortunate to benefit from the expertise of Director Dr Craig Nossel, who has extensive experiences in health tech and behaviour change. After an extensive lead in period, we were able to trial the Active Geelong 'Movement Motivator' WhatsApp program in late 2022 with an internal pilot. With the learnings, successes, and challenges from this trial we have been able to look to the future with plans to target specific population groups to increase physical activity levels. Watch this space!

All the above would not be possible without the expertise and passion of the Active Geelong Directors and Committee members. We shifted to a new





governance and meeting structure this year to efficiently utilise the specialist skills of our volunteers, and this worked wonderfully. In addition to the Active Geelong Board, we now have specialist sub-committees for 'Health & Research', 'Community & Communications', 'Finance & Legal' and 'Active Workplaces'.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge our Active Geelong Ambassadors, who promoted and supported key Active Geelong initiatives and helped share the message of 'a little more activity everyday' and the teams at Circus Media and Fluid Branding who add the 'polish' to what we do.

We finished the 2022-23 year with the exciting news that the Western Victoria Public Health Network (WVPHN) would be able to provide significant support to Active Geelong to re-establish the 'GP MY ClinicWalks' and GP/Medical Initiatives.

Exciting times ahead for Active Geelong!

**Michelle Hemley (Active Geelong Executive Support)**

