



# Bridging the gap: Promoting an Active Lifestyle in Youth With Quality Outdoor Activity Sites

KOMPAN Australia





# Mark Chatman

- Victorian Sales Manager
- 16 years with KOMPAN in Victoria
- Board member of Play Australia for 8 years
- Keen trail runner
- Passionate about getting people of all ages active outdoors





# Agenda

- Where are we now?
- Physical activity recommendations
- Ideal site design
- Case study
- Conclusion





Physical activity in Youth: where are we now?



# Global trends point to an unhealthier population

## The WHO have found:

- Urbanisation is increasing (56% today – 66% by 2050)
- **Physical inactivity is a leading cause of lifestyle diseases (increases risk of 20-30%)**
- The number of adolescents who are overweight or obese is increasing in developed countries.
- Globally, in 2016, over 1 in 6 adolescents aged 10–19 years was overweight.





# What about Australia?

- In 2017–18, just over 1 in 10 (11%) 15–17 year olds were sufficiently active (including workplace activity) for their age
- Just over 1 in 6 (16%) met the recommended muscle strengthening activity guidelines
- Young females are proportionally less active than males. 5.3% of young females are sufficiently active compared to 16% of young males





A photograph of four children playing on a modern outdoor exercise structure with bright green vertical poles and horizontal bars. The structure is set on a dark grey rubber safety mat. In the background, there is a brick building with large windows and a dark tiled roof. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text is overlaid in the upper left portion of the image.

“To increase activity levels, countries, societies and communities need to create safe and enabling environments and opportunities for physical activity for all adolescents.”

World Health Organization





Physical activity recommendations for youth



# Physical activity guidelines for young people

Table 1:		
Behaviour guideline	15–17 year olds	18–24 year olds
<b>Physical activity</b>	Accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day, involving mainly aerobic activities at least 3 days per week Several hours of light physical activities Incorporate vigorous activities at least 3 days per week	Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities each week Be active on most, preferably all, days every week
<b>Sedentary or recreational screen-based activity</b>	No more than 120 minutes of recreational screen use per day Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible	Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible
<b>Strength</b>	Muscle and bone strengthening activities at least 3 times a week	Muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days a week
<b>Sleep</b>	Uninterrupted 8–10 hours of sleep per night Consistent bed and wake-up times	No specific guidelines

Source: DoH 2021c, 2021d.



# Don't forget – play is exercise too

- For the younger people in this age group, play is still of interest, and a valid source of physical activity
- Thea Toft Amholt, PhD student at University of Southern Denmark and Researcher at KOMPAN Play Institute has found the top 4 activities to get tweens and young teens active:
  1. Ball games
  2. Climbing and crawling
  3. Free play in zoned areas away from large play pieces
  4. Sites where some can be active, while others spectate – 'see and be seen'



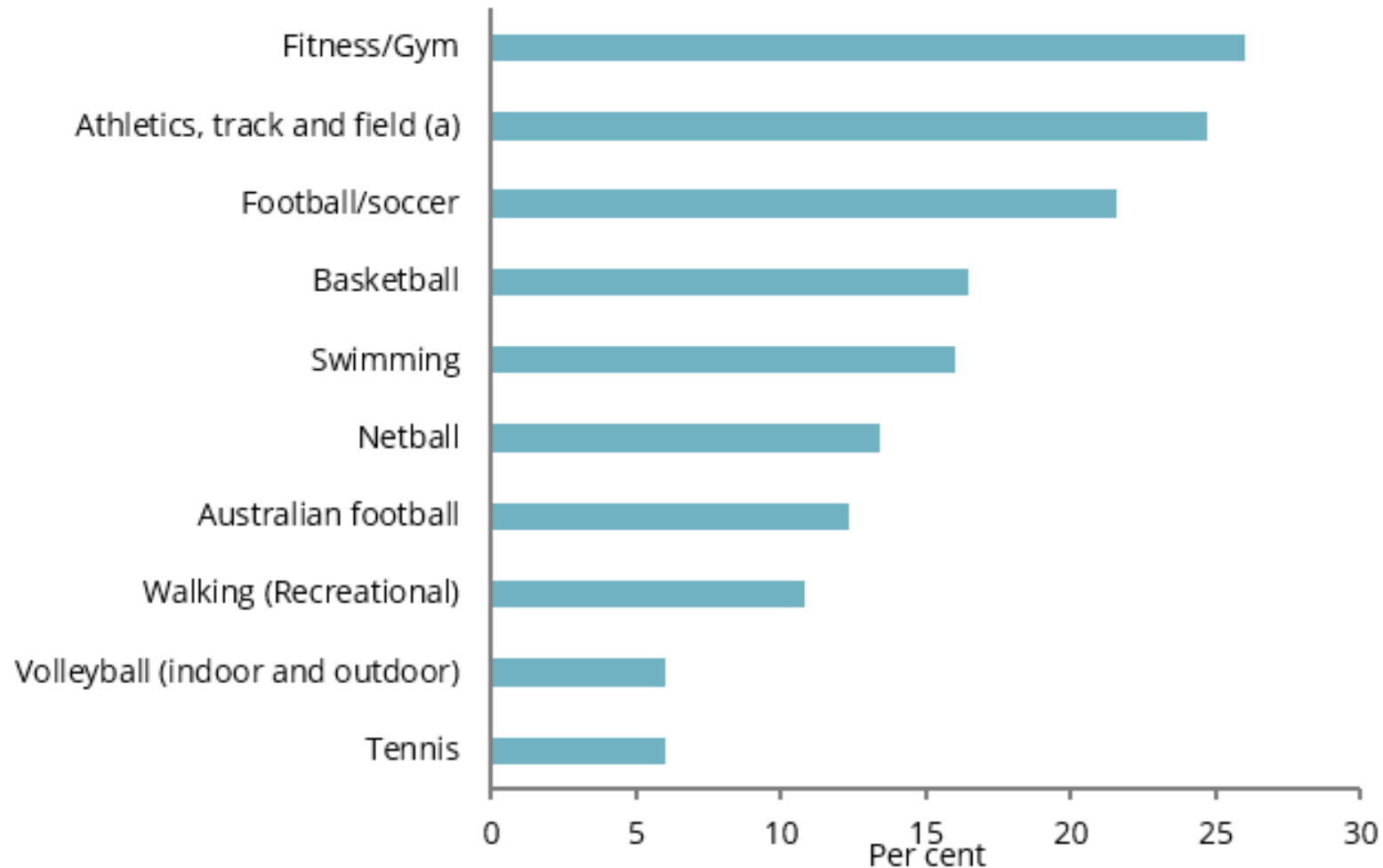
Motivating Playgrounds  
Thea Toft Amholt, PhD student  
University of Southern Denmark  
Researcher at KOMPAN Play Institute



# What types of exercise are youth interested in?

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

**Figure 5(a): 15–17 year olds**



The most popular activities for young people aged 15–17 were:

- fitness/gym (26% or 220,200)
- athletics, track and field (including jogging and running) (25% or 209,500)
- football/soccer (22% or 182,600) (ASC 2020) (Figure 5a).

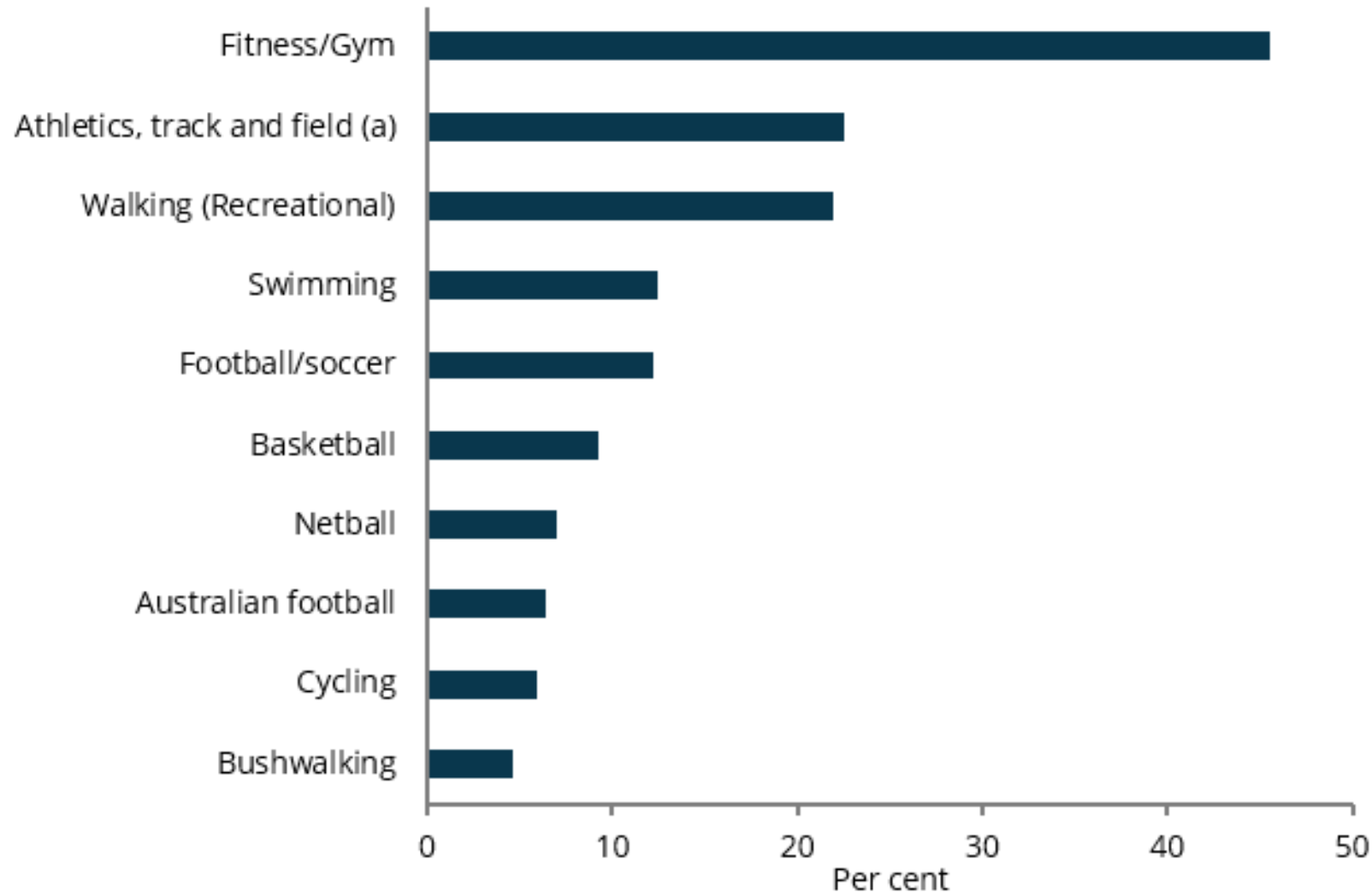
*Results from 2019 AusPlay survey*



# The answer becomes more obvious when people turn 18

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

**Figure 5(b): 18–24 year olds**



Young people are increasingly interested in Fitness/Gym physical activity as they move towards adulthood







# Motivators & barriers

Among 15–17 year olds, the top motivators for participating in physical activity were:

1. fun/enjoyment (71%)
  2. physical health or fitness (64%)
  3. social reasons (38%)
  4. performance or competition (14%)
- Once young people reach adulthood, the second most reported barrier to participating in physical activity was poor health or injury
  - Overall, class/income was also a factor, with youth in high socio-economic areas being more 8% more active



# 4 cohorts of disengaged youth

Australian Sports Commission

<div>COHORT 1</div> <div>Students who would like to participate in sport but are unable to due to environmental barriers</div>	<div>COHORT 2</div> <div>Long-term disengaged students who do not currently participate in sport because they have never connected with sport</div>	<div>COHORT 3</div> <div>Students who participate (are present) but do not engage i.e. stand around talking, sit on sidelines</div>	<div>COHORT 4</div> <div>Students who have dropped out of sport i.e. who do not choose it as an elective</div>
<div>BARRIERS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Lack of experienced sport teachers, sport culture, <u>facilities or equipment in school</u></li> <li>&gt; Travel distance for deliverers or students in community</li> <li>&gt; Family support for sport <u>fees</u> and transport</li> </ul>	<div>BARRIERS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Lack of interest, confidence, fitness, skill or motivation for sport</li> <li>&gt; Family prioritising academic ability; not supporting girls' sport participation</li> <li>&gt; Social norms of gender appropriate sports; peer pressure</li> </ul>	<div>BARRIERS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Lack of skill, fitness, motivation, confidence, interest; doesn't value sport; feeling self-conscious</li> <li>&gt; Cultural practices that prevent mixing genders</li> <li>&gt; Repetitive or unorganised activities; inexperienced deliverers</li> </ul>	<div>BARRIERS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Time pressures i.e. employment, academic, socialising</li> <li>&gt; Sport is too competitive and is a large commitment</li> <li>&gt; Females affected by gender stereotypes and social norms</li> <li>&gt; Injured through sport; finding it challenging to return</li> </ul>
<div>MOTIVATIONS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; An interest or hobby</li> <li>&gt; <u>Be active</u></li> <li>&gt; Learn new skills</li> <li>&gt; <u>Social connection</u></li> </ul>	<div>MOTIVATIONS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Try alternative sports</li> <li>&gt; <u>Spend time with friends</u></li> <li>&gt; <u>Improve their fitness level</u> and live a <u>healthier lifestyle</u> (after psychological barriers are overcome)</li> </ul>	<div>MOTIVATIONS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Try a new sport where all students have a <u>low skill level</u></li> <li>&gt; <u>Spend time with friends</u></li> <li>&gt; <u>Improve their fitness level</u></li> </ul>	<div>MOTIVATIONS</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <u>Keep up their fitness and skills</u></li> <li>&gt; The challenge of competition <u>without the commitment and intensity</u></li> <li>&gt; Stress relief</li> </ul>

Taken from the ASC report "Addressing the decline in sport participation in secondary schools"

Common threads:

- Youth want social interaction in sport and fitness
- Barriers like lack of access (geographically and financially), lack of confidence and lack of existing fitness exist
- Gender expectations bear more weight at this age, which acts as a barrier



# So... what does this all mean?

To increase the rate of physical activity in young people aged 13-18, the public needs facilities that:



Are accessible:  
Cost (lower is better)  
Encourages spectating (and therefore learning)  
Accommodates users of all backgrounds, abilities and fitness levels



Incorporate fitness and play:  
Combination of playground and outdoor gym equipment  
Caters to a person as they age from tween to young adult



Users can reach activity guidelines with:  
Aerobic training  
Strength training  
Moderate to vigorous levels of physical activity



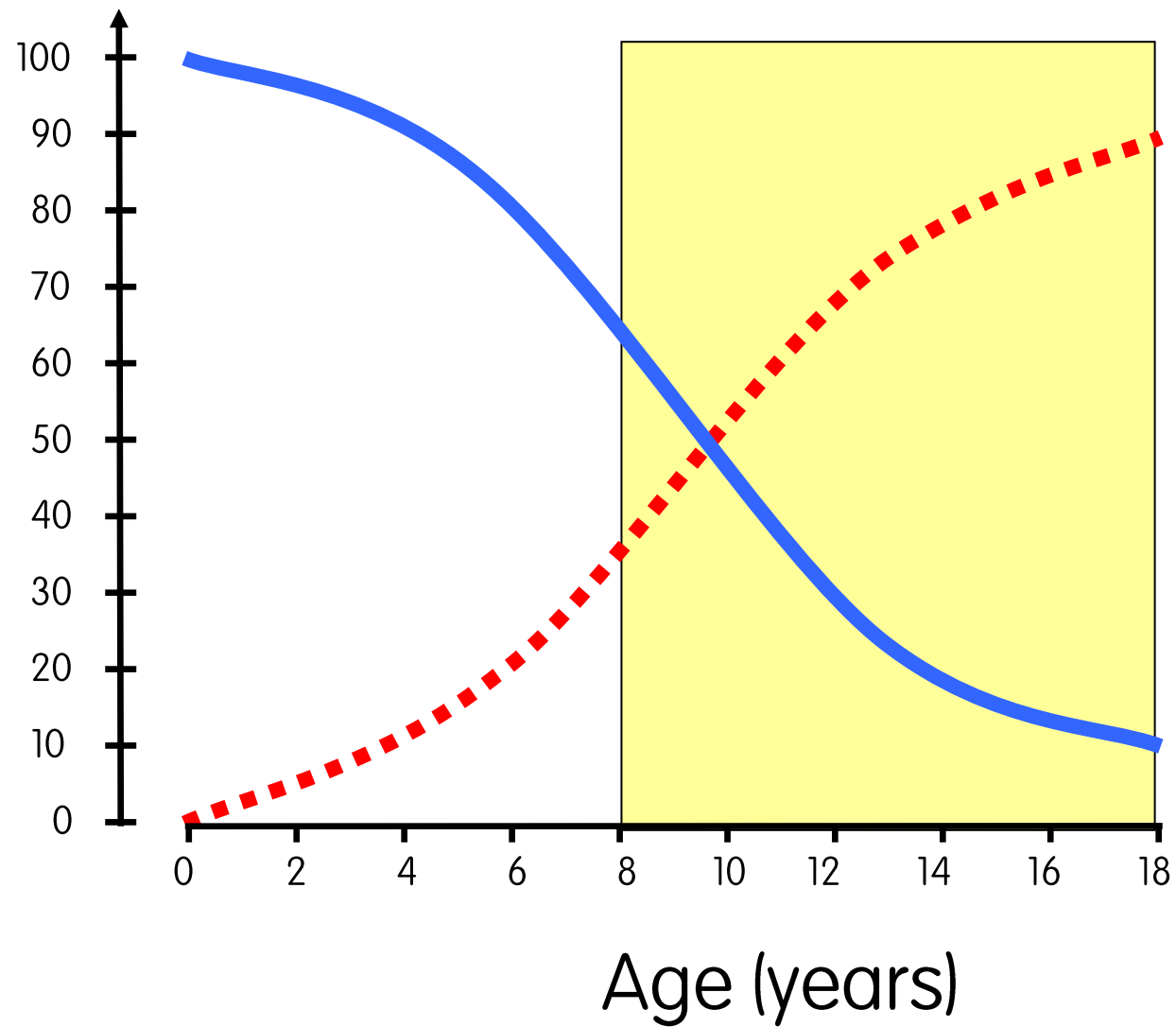
Are attractive to youth:  
Fitness/Gym style  
Incorporates fun and social interaction  
Allows users to achieve real health and fitness results





Attracting and engaging youth: ideal site design





Physiological  
stimuli



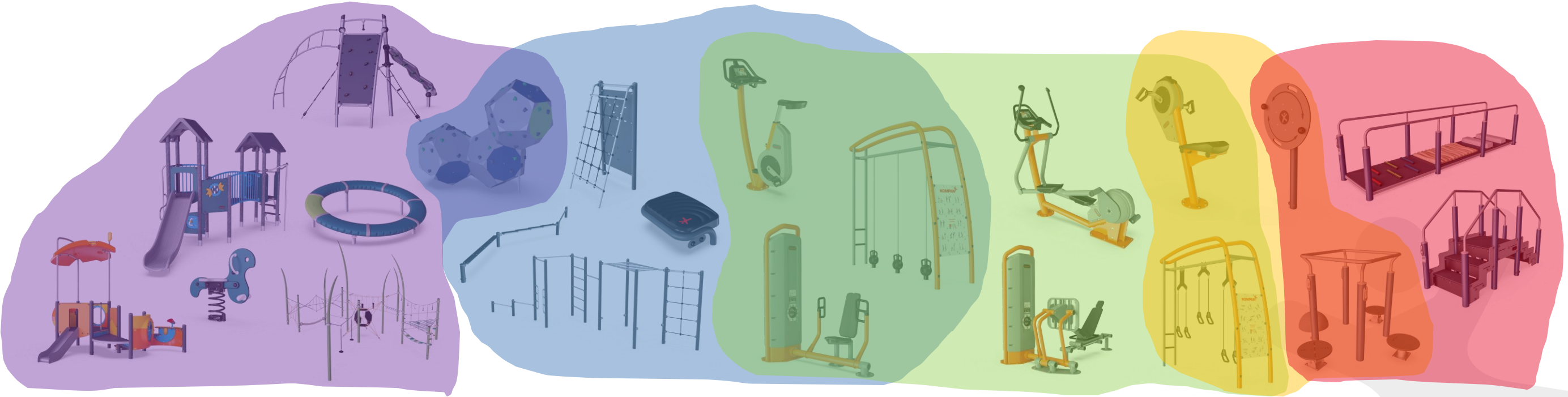
Motor skills





Play → Play & Fitness → Fitness →

← A lifetime of health →



Childhood

Adolescence

Adulthood

Middle Age

Golden Years

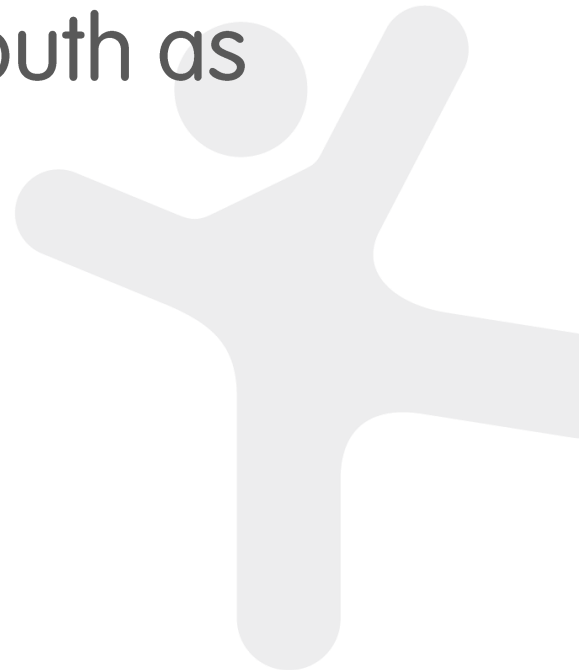


Biggest risk period for  
physical inactivity /  
active lifestyle  
dropout



## A note on **universal design**

We do not need to create sites that solely cater to youth – we need to create sites that cater to all, while recognizing youth as a key user group.







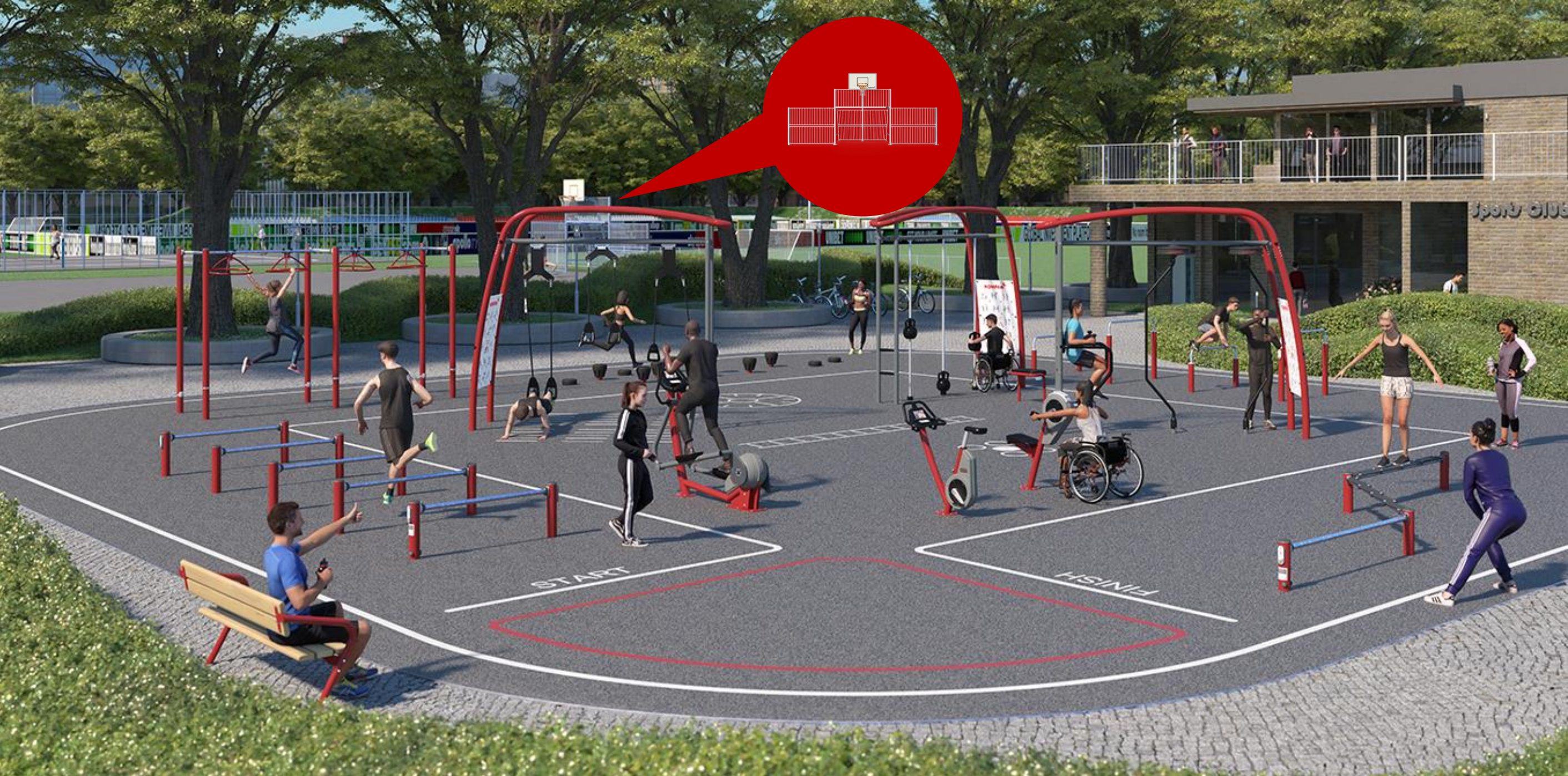
Early Youth: Ages 12-14





Middle Youth: Ages 12-16





Middle to Older Youth: Ages 15-17





Case study – Victoria Park, Dubbo NSW





# The zones

- |  |                        |   |                       |
|--|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Junior Play            |  | Pools                 |
|  | Senior Play            |  | Sports Grounds & MUGA |
|  | Adult + Senior Fitness |  | Skate Park            |



# Project brief

- Play and fitness for all ages
- Reintroduce the iconic and beloved space rocket place piece as part of the landscape design
- Repurpose an old play space for a new outdoor fitness site
- Use colour themes indicating the zones for play and fitness
- Must have inclusive elements for all abilities
- Encourage independent fitness with a varied range of equipment





Junior Play









Senior Play









Fitness zone









# Why this site works

- All ages, all abilities
- Promotes a lifetime of play and fitness
- Regards Youth (ages 13-18) as a key user group
- Understands & implements the needs and interests of different age groups when being active outdoors (play and/or fitness) with the right equipment
- Visual landscaping promotes a natural progression between sites
- Surrounding facilities supplement other ways to get active: MUGA, skate park, aquatics, sport etc.



# Conclusion

1. Youth aged 13-18 are significantly less active than 18-24 year-olds and young children
2. Youth walk the line between an interest in mature play and traditional fitness
3. Youth have a unique set of motivators and barriers that should be considered when choosing equipment and designing a site
4. Youth should be considered as a distinct user group within an intergenerational outdoor activity site
5. Accessible, safe, interesting and effective sites will attract youth







Q&A



**KOMPAN<sup>®</sup>**  
Let's play

