

## 2 Main findings

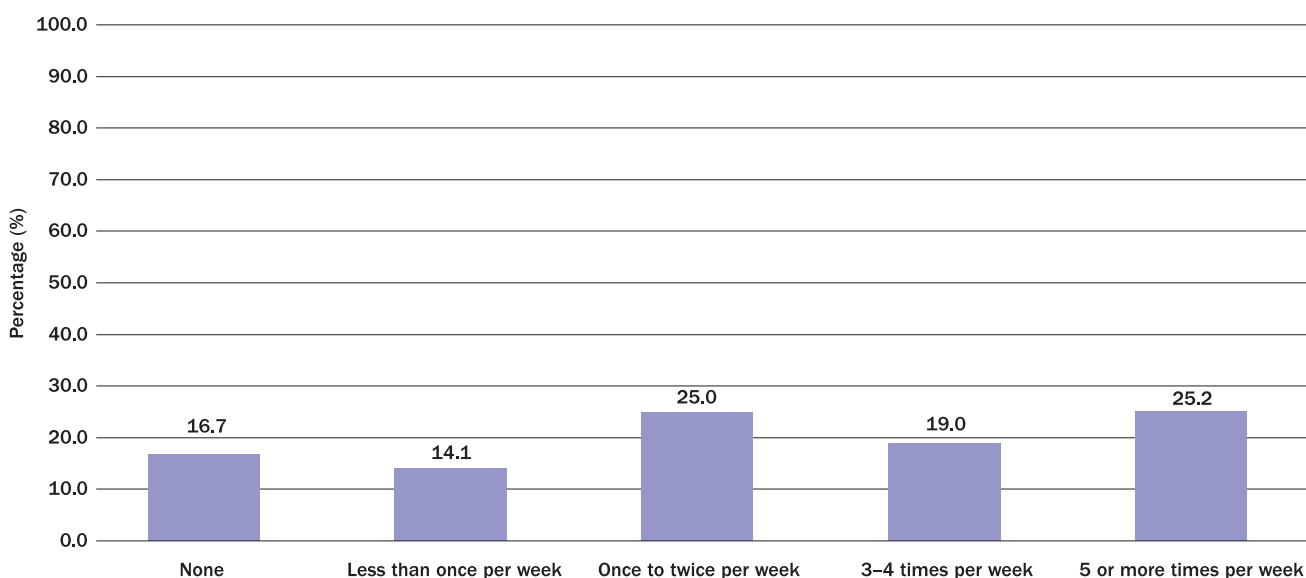
### 2.1 Overall participation

#### Overview

During the 12 months prior to interview in 2005, an estimated 11.1 million persons aged 15 years and over participated at least once per week<sup>1</sup> in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport, a participation rate of 69.2% (Table 6). Household or garden chores, or activities that were part of work were not included.

However, the participation rate drops markedly when higher frequency of involvement is considered. An estimated 7.1 million persons aged 15 years and over exercised three times per week or more (44.2%) (Table 6). A total of 4.9 million persons (30.8%) either did not participate in any activity, or participated less than once per week in the 12 months prior to interview (Figure 1 and Table 4).

**Figure 1: Weekly frequency of overall participation**



Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

Of the people that participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport in the two weeks prior to interview, 31.0% participated for five hours or more, while an additional 38.4% participated for two hours or more, but less than five hours per week. The balance (30.6%) participated for less than two hours per week (Table 10).

#### Age and sex

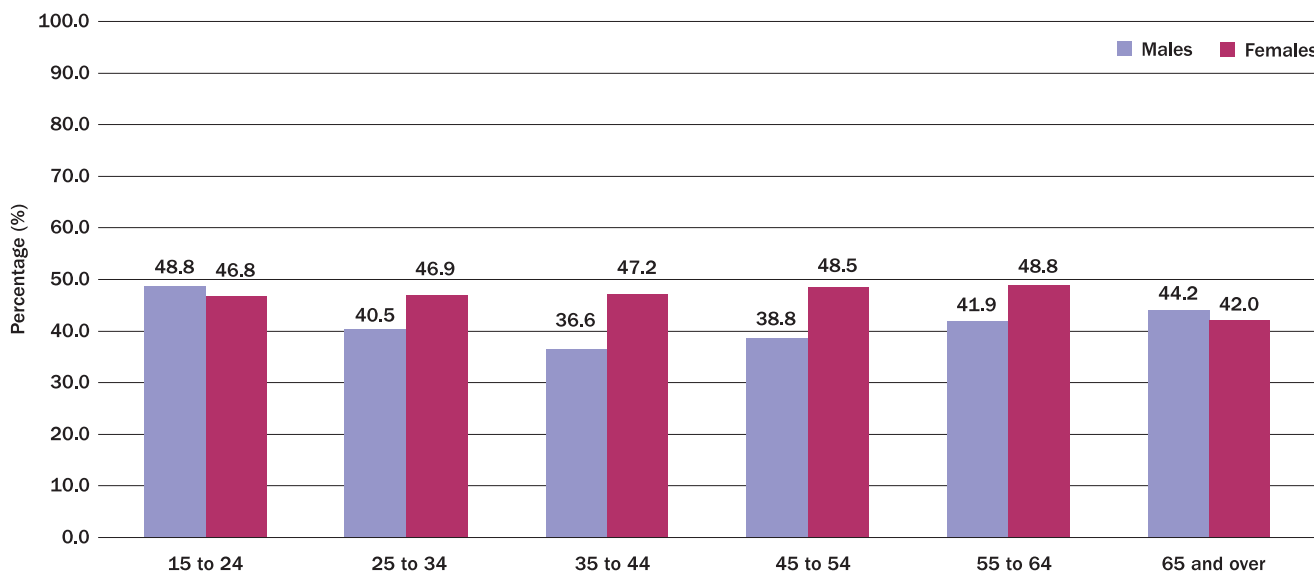
In 2005, females were more likely than males to participate three times per week or more in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport (46.7% and 41.7% respectively) (Table 6).

People aged 15 to 24 were most likely to participate three times per week or more (47.8%), while those aged 35 to 44 were least likely (41.9%) (Table 6).

However, when participation rates for age groups and sex are considered together, slightly different patterns emerge. Roughly equal proportions of females participated three times per week or more across all age groups (ranging between 46.8% and 48.8% for 15 to 64 years olds, with a slight decrease to 42.0% for those aged 65 and over). Males, on the other hand, had higher participation rates in the youngest and oldest age groups, but showed a marked decrease in participation around the middle age groups (25 to 54) (Figure 2 and Table 6).

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the glossary for information about how 'per week' statistics are calculated.

**Figure 2: Overall participation (three times per week or more) by age and sex**

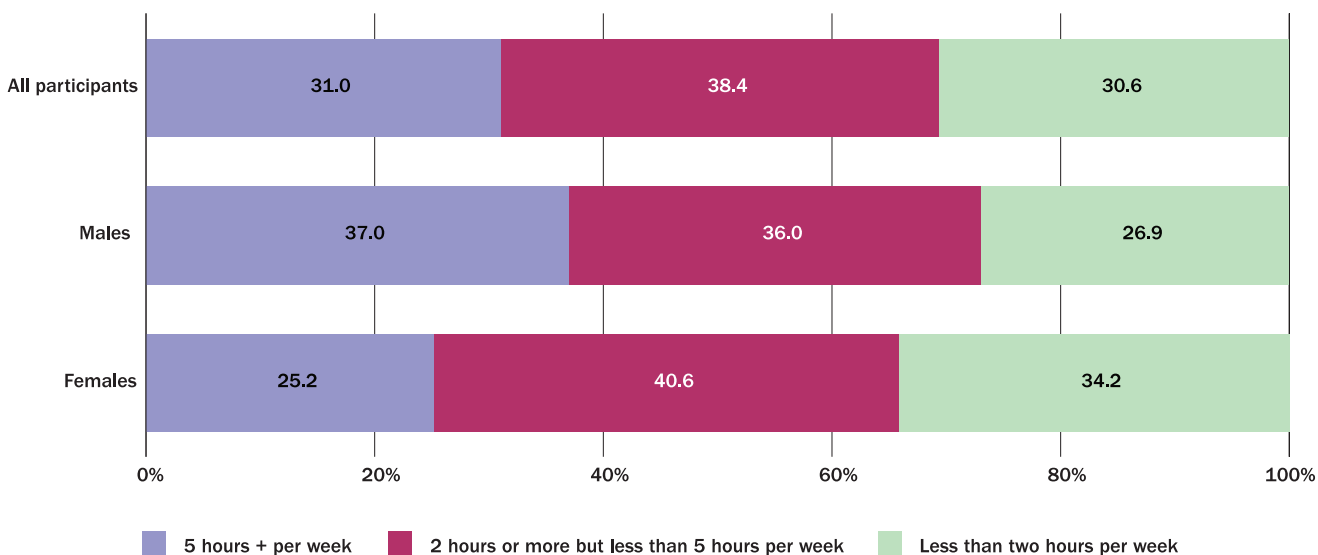


Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

While females were more likely to participate more often than males, males who participated were more likely to participate for longer periods than females. Thirty-seven per cent of males (37.0%) who participated during the two weeks prior to interview, did so for five hours or more. This compared to only 25.2% of females (Figure 3).

Comparing duration of participation across the various age groups, older males tended to spend less time participating in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport than younger males. The gap across the age groups was less pronounced for females (Tables 13 and 14).

**Figure 3: Duration of overall participation by age and sex — participants only**



Base: All participants in two weeks prior to interview (n=9,620)

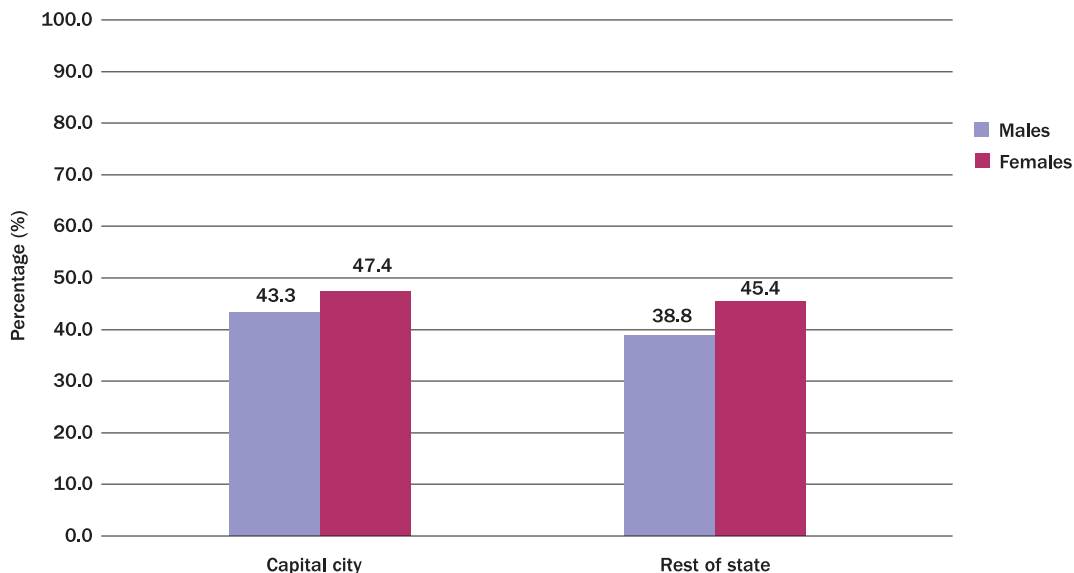
### Labour force status

Those not in the labour force, including students and retired persons, had a similar rate of participation three times per week or more (43.5%) to those employed (44.4%) and unemployed (45.9%) (Table 2).

## Regional status

Persons living in capital cities participated slightly more in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport three times per week or more than those living in the rest of the state (45.4% and 42.1% respectively) (Table 2). In both areas, however, the level of participation three times per week or more was higher for females than for males, reflecting the national pattern (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Overall participation (three times per week or more) by region and sex**



Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

## Education

The level of participation three times per week or more increased with the level of educational attainment, from 35.7%<sup>2</sup> for those that never went to school to 50.2% for those with a university degree (Table 2). However, the highest participation rate was for those persons still at secondary school (53.4%).

## Indigenous status

This part of the report presents statistics regarding the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in exercise, recreation and sport. In 2005, ERASS collected information about the Indigenous status of participants for the first time. These statistics are presented in this report merely as a first step to building our understanding of the Indigenous population's participation in exercise, recreation and sport. However, it is important to note that they must be considered indicative only, and given the limitations of these statistics (described below), they should not be used as an information source to guide policy funding or development.

Statistics on the Indigenous population are subject to a range of data quality issues. In addition to cultural considerations in relation to statistical matters, data quality issues arise from the relatively small size of the Indigenous population in comparison with the total population of Australia, the high level of dispersion of the Indigenous population, particularly across remote areas of Australia, and the way in which Indigenous persons are identified in statistical collections (ABS 2006a).

In addition, ERASS collects information via telephone interviews targeted at occupied dwellings. Given that the Indigenous population is less likely to have access to a working home telephone<sup>3</sup>, it is difficult to establish if this survey adequately represents the true participation of the Indigenous population in exercise, recreation and sport. Therefore, rather than considering these statistics as absolute, readers should consider the general patterns they illustrate as approximations of the Indigenous population's participation in exercise, recreation and sport.

2 This estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution. See 'Standard errors and relative standard errors' on page 69 for more information.

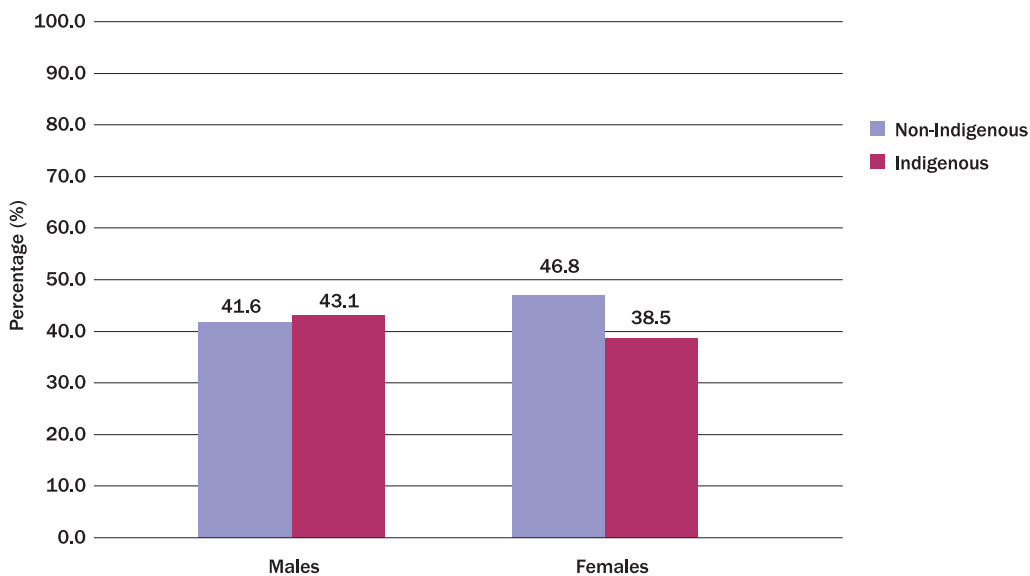
3 Approximately 97% of the Australian population have access to a working telephone in their home (ACNielsen 2006). This compares to just 71% of the Indigenous population. Indigenous persons living in remote areas were considerably less likely than those living in non-remote areas to have access to a working telephone in their home (43% compared to 82%) (ABS 2002).

A slightly lower proportion of Indigenous persons (40.9%) participated in exercise, recreation and sport in 2005 three times per week or more, compared to non-Indigenous persons (44.3%) (Table 2).

Overall, Indigenous females were less likely than Indigenous males to participate three times per week or more (38.5% and 43.1% respectively). Interestingly, this is the opposite pattern to the non-Indigenous population where non-Indigenous females were more likely to participate three times per week or more than males (46.8% and 41.6% respectively) (Table 2).

Additionally, while equal proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous males participated in exercise, recreation and sport three times per week or more, far fewer Indigenous females did so, when compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Figure 5).

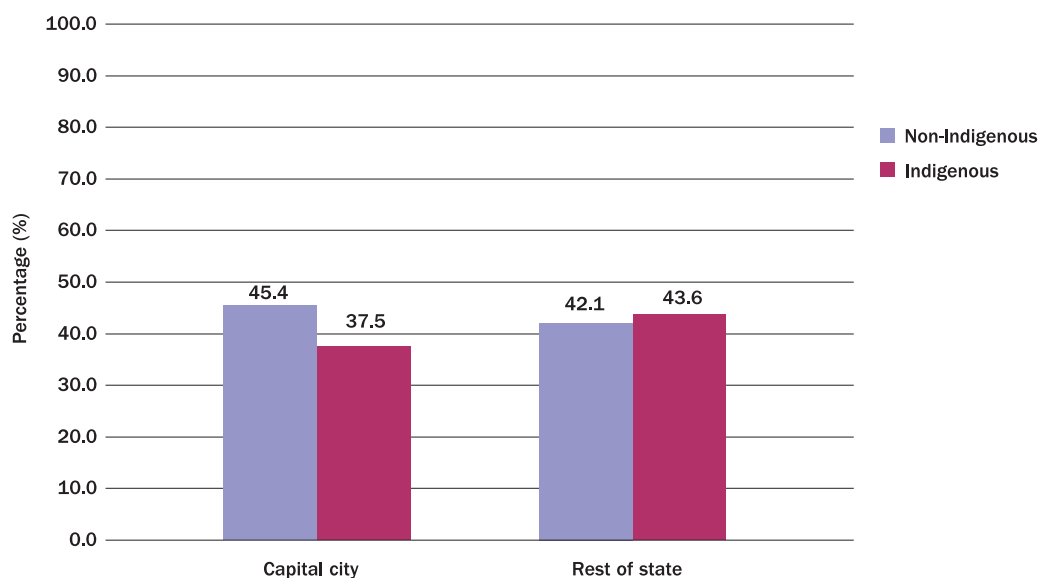
**Figure 5: Overall participation (three times per week or more) by Indigenous status and sex**



Base: Non-Indigenous persons (n=13,445); Indigenous persons (n=281)

Fewer Indigenous persons who live in capital cities participated three times per week or more in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport than those who live in the rest of the state (37.5% and 43.6% respectively). The opposite pattern was seen for non-Indigenous persons (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Overall participation (three times per week or more) by Indigenous status and region**



Base: Non-Indigenous persons (n=13,445); Indigenous persons (n=281)

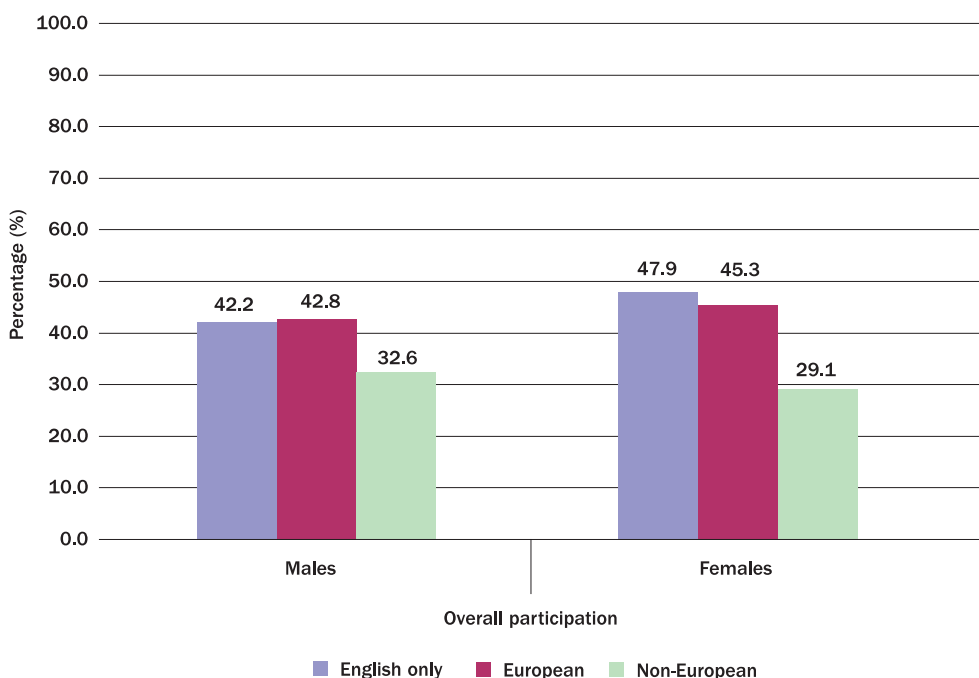
## Language spoken at home

This part of the report presents statistics regarding participation in exercise, recreation and sport among persons who speak languages other than English at home. Given that ERASS collects information via telephone, persons who do not speak English well may have been less likely to participate in this survey. However, given that a large majority of persons who speak a language other than English at home speak English well<sup>4</sup>, it is reasonable to assume that these statistics represent an accurate estimation of their participation in exercise, recreation and sport.

Persons who spoke only English at home, or spoke a European language, had very similar rates of participation in exercise, recreation and sport of three times per week or more (45.0% and 44.1% respectively). In contrast, persons who spoke non-European languages at home were considerably less likely to participate three times per week or more (30.9%) (Table 2).<sup>5</sup>

Females who spoke English or a European language at home were more likely to participate three times per week or more than their male counterparts (47.9% and 45.3% for English-speaking and European language-speaking females respectively, and 42.2% and 42.8% for English-speaking and European language-speaking males respectively). In contrast, females who spoke a non-European language at home were less likely than their male counterparts to participate three times per week or more (29.1% and 32.6% respectively) (Figure 7 and Table 2).

**Figure 7: Overall participation (three times per week or more) by language spoken at home and sex**



Base: Persons who speak English only (n=12,445); European languages (n=751); non-European languages (n=548)

## Type of activity

The activity with the highest participation rate was walking (37.3%). An estimated 6.0 million persons aged 15 years and over walked at least once for exercise, recreation and sport in the 12 months prior to interview. This does not include bushwalking (the participation rate for this was 5.7%), which ERASS reports as a separate activity. Other sports and physical activities that attracted high participation rates were aerobics/fitness (18.5%), swimming (14.4%), cycling (10.3%) and tennis (7.8%) (Box 1, Table 15 and Table 16).

4 In 2001, 81.6% of the population who spoke a language other than English at home spoke English well or very well. The balance did not speak English well or spoke it not at all (14.9% and 3.5% respectively). This equates to 2.9% of the total population not speaking English well in 2001 (ABS 2006b).

5 Please refer to the glossary for definitions of European and non-European languages.

### Box 1: Top ten activities by number of participants — 2001, 2004 and 2005

	2001		2004			2005		
	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	% change 2001-04	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	% change 2001-05
Walking	1	4,353.7	1	6,168.1	41.7%	1	5,973.6	37.2%
Aerobics/fitness	3	1,961.0	2	2,698.2	37.6%	2	2,959.7	50.9%
Swimming	2	2,415.5	3	2,605.7	7.9%	3	2,311.2	-4.3%
Cycling	4	1,438.3	4	1,658.4	15.3%	4	1,646.9	14.5%
Tennis	5	1,381.8	5	1,323.2	-4.2%	5	1,253.3	-9.3%
Running	7	1,084.3	6	1,312.0	21.0%	6	1,231.7	13.6%
Golf	6	1,240.2	7	1,250.6	0.8%	7	1,139.3	-8.1%
Bushwalking	8	794.9	8	818.0	2.9%	8	910.4	14.5%
Football (outdoor) <sup>6</sup>	10	551.3	9	659.2	19.6%	9	614.3	11.4%
Netball	9	612.4	10	564.3	-7.9%	10	581.7	-5.0%

Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (2005 n=13,726; 2004 n=13,662; 2001 n=13,424)

Walking had the highest participation rate for both males and females (Table 15), and across all age groups with the exception of the 15 to 24 age group (Table 16). However, the proportion of participants in walking alone is relatively low — only 26% of participants reported that their physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport in the last two weeks was limited to walking (Table 11). The remainder participated in either walking and another activity (20.2%) or a non-walking activity exclusively (53.8%).

For males, activities with the highest participation rates were walking (26.7%), aerobics/fitness (14.7%), cycling (13.4%), swimming (12.5%) and golf (11.6%) (Table 15).

For females, activities with the highest participation rates were walking (47.9%), aerobics/fitness (22.3%), swimming (16.4%), cycling (7.2%) and tennis (7.1%) (Table 15).

In the youngest age group (15 to 24 year olds) the activities that attracted the most participants were aerobics/fitness (23.4%), walking (16.7%) and swimming (14.3%) (Table 16).

For the oldest age group (65 years and over) walking (45.9%), aerobics/fitness (11.8%) and golf (8.6%) attracted the most participants (Table 16).

The activity that people participated in most frequently was walking, where half of all persons walked 156 times or more a year — equating to 3.0 times per week. Other activities<sup>7</sup> participated in frequently were aerobics/fitness, gymnastics, weight training (all 2.0 times per week) and running (1.9 times per week) (Table 17).

Participants took part in an average (mean) of 2.1 different sports or activities in the 12 months prior to interview. This ranged from 2.4 different activities for the 15 to 24 age group to 1.6 different activities for those aged 65 and over. Males participated in an average of 2.2 different activities compared to an average of 2.0 different activities for females (Table 9).

6 Soccer is referred to as football throughout this report.

7 Activities included in this analysis refer only to those activities that were participated in by 50,000 or more persons in 2005.

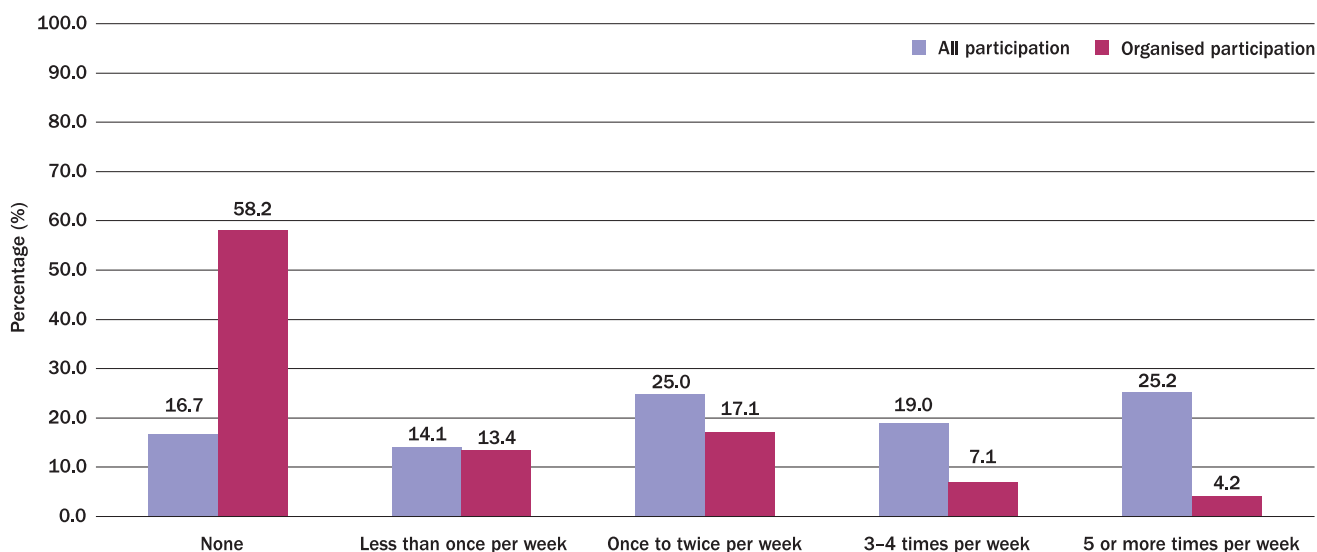
## 2.2 Organised participation

### Overview

During the 12 months prior to interview in 2005, an estimated 4.5 million persons aged 15 years and over participated at least once per week in a physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport that was organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other type of organisation. This represents a participation rate of 28.4% (Table 7). It also represents 41% of the 11.1 million persons who participated at least once per week in a physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport.

Over half of all persons (58.2%) did not participate in any organised physical activities during the 12 months prior to interview in 2005. In terms of frequency, while 13.4% and 17.1% participated less than once per week and once or twice per week respectively, far fewer people participated at higher frequencies (7.1% participated three or four times and 4.2% participated five times or more) (Figure 8 and Table 5).

**Figure 8: Weekly frequency of participation — overall and organised**



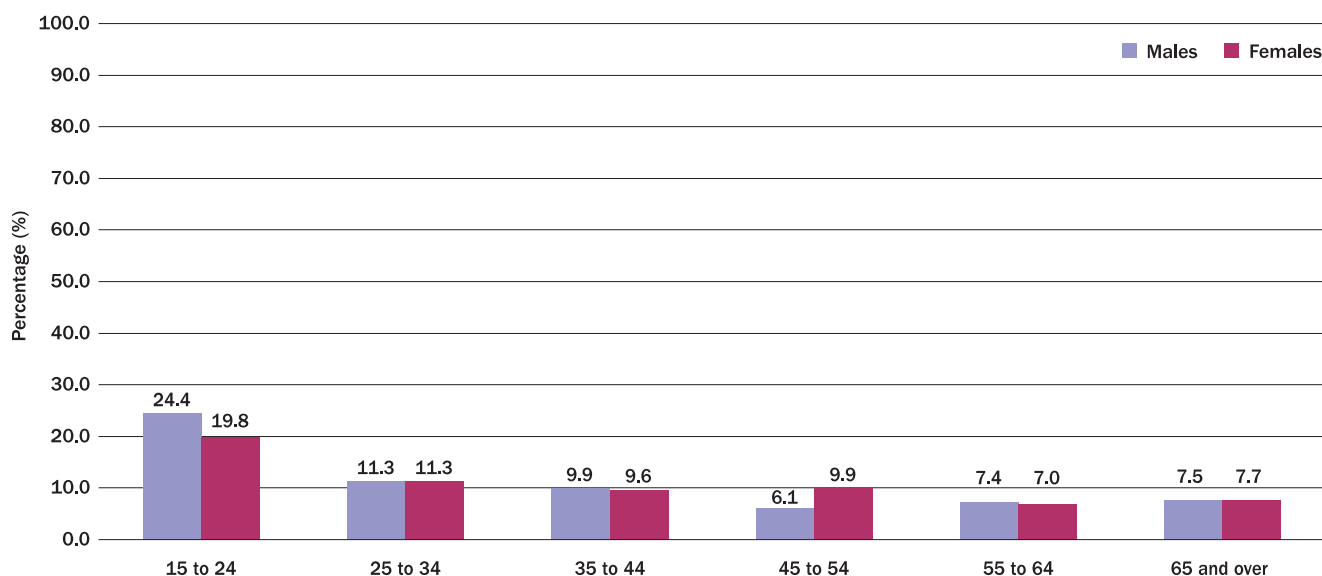
Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

### Age and sex

Overall, males and females were equally likely to participate in organised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport three times per week or more (11.5% and 11.1% respectively) (Table 7).

However, unlike the patterns observed for overall participation, older persons were less likely than their younger counterparts to participate in organised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport three times per week or more. Participation rates were almost equal for males and females, except in the 15 to 24 age group, which had more male participants, and the 45 to 54 age group, which had more female participants (Figure 9 and Table 7).

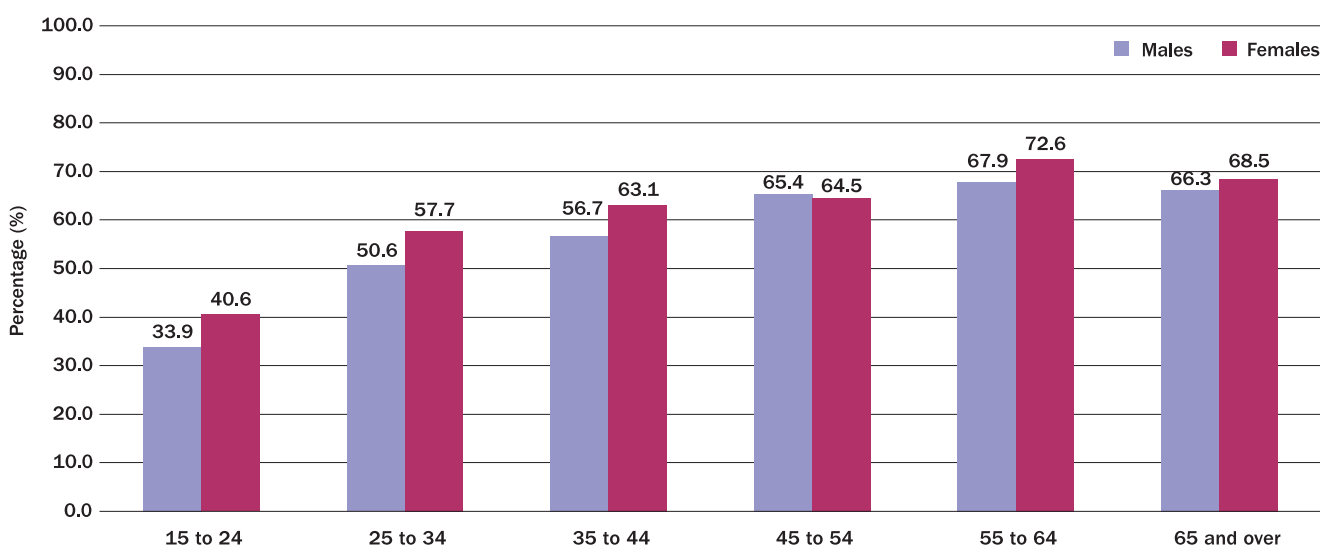
**Figure 9: Participation rates (three times per week or more) by age and sex — organised activities**



Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

Non-participation in organised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport shows a marked pattern with age — non-participation rates were lowest for the 15 to 24 age group, and highest for the 55 and over age groups (Table 5 and Figure 10). Non-participation was higher for females across all age groups, except the 45 to 54 age group.

**Figure 10: Non-participation in organised activity by age and sex**



Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

### Indigenous status

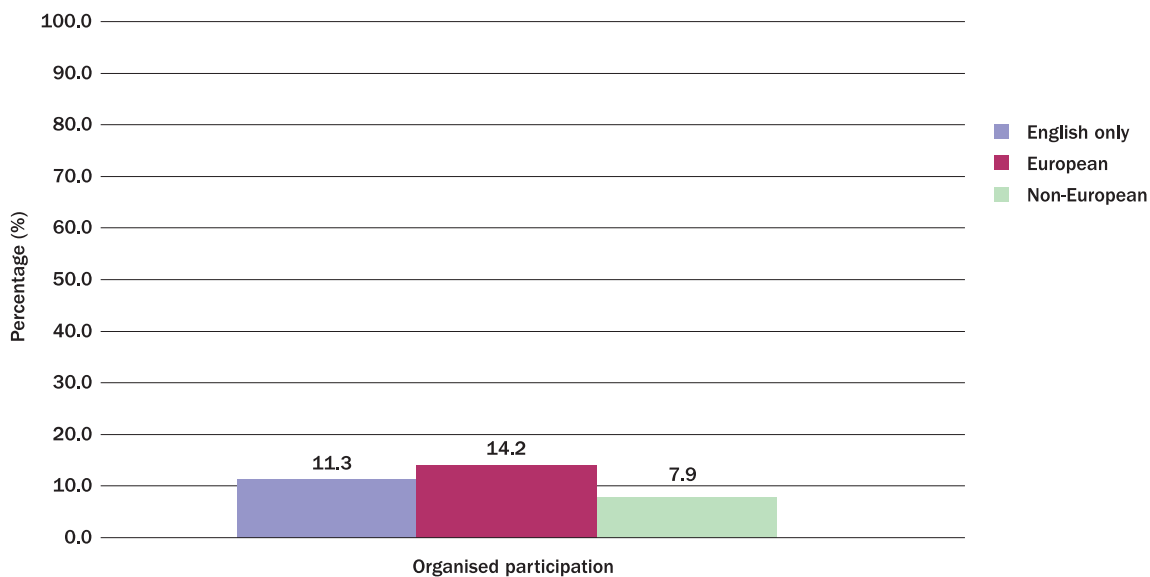
Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons were equally likely to participate three times per week or more in organised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport (11.8% and 11.3% respectively).

### Language spoken at home

Persons who spoke a European language at home were most likely to participate in organised activities three times per week or more (14.2%), followed by those who spoke English only (11.3%). As with overall participation, persons who spoke a non-European language at home were least likely to participate three times per week or more (7.9%) (Figure 11). There were no significant differences between the sexes.



**Figure 11: Organised participation (three times per week or more) by language spoken at home**



Base: Persons who speak English only (n=12,445); European languages (n=751); non-European languages (n=548)

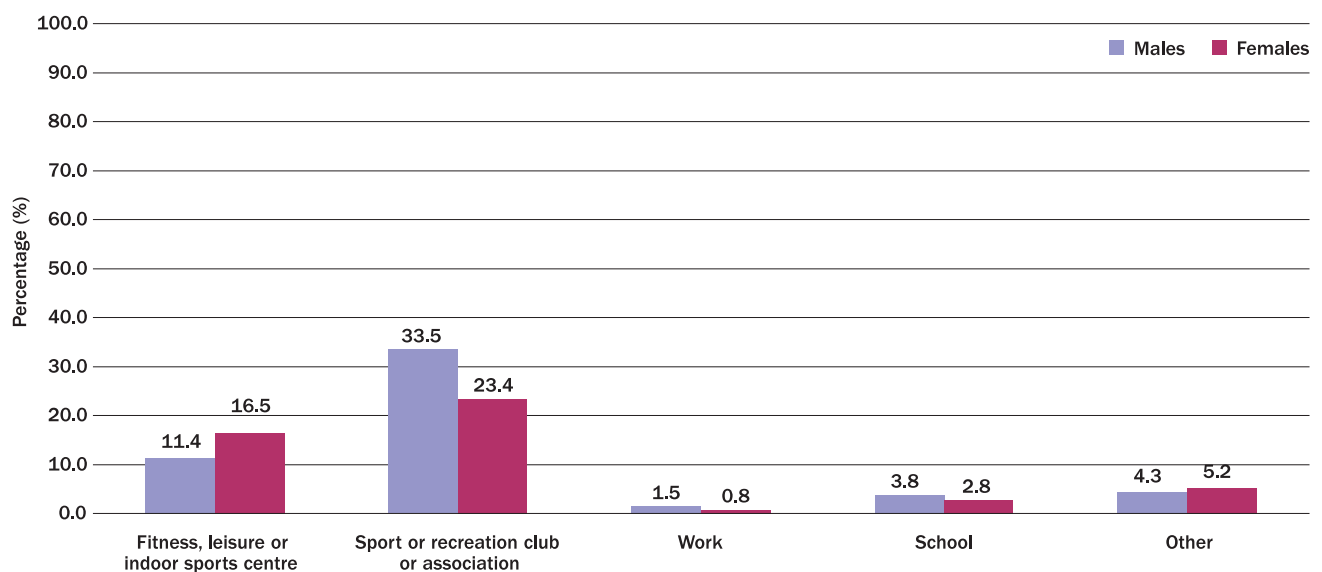
### Organisation of the activity

An estimated 4.5 million persons participated at least once in activities that were organised by a 'sport or recreation club or association'. An estimated 2.2 million persons participated in activities that were organised by a 'fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre'. In comparison, relatively few people participated in activities that were organised by school or work (529,000 and 186,000 respectively) (Table 22).

It is worthwhile noting that while activities organised by schools involved relatively small numbers of persons, school-organised activities were a significant source for organised physical activity for 15 to 19 year olds. Twenty-nine per cent (29.0%) of 15 to 19 year olds participated in activities that were organised by a school in the 12 months prior to interview. Meanwhile, 48.5% participated through a sport or recreation club or association.

Females participating in organised physical activity were more likely than males to choose activities organised by a fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre (16.5% and 11.4% respectively). Meanwhile, far more males participated in activities organised by a sport or recreation club or association than females (33.5% and 23.4% respectively) (Figure 12 and Table 22).

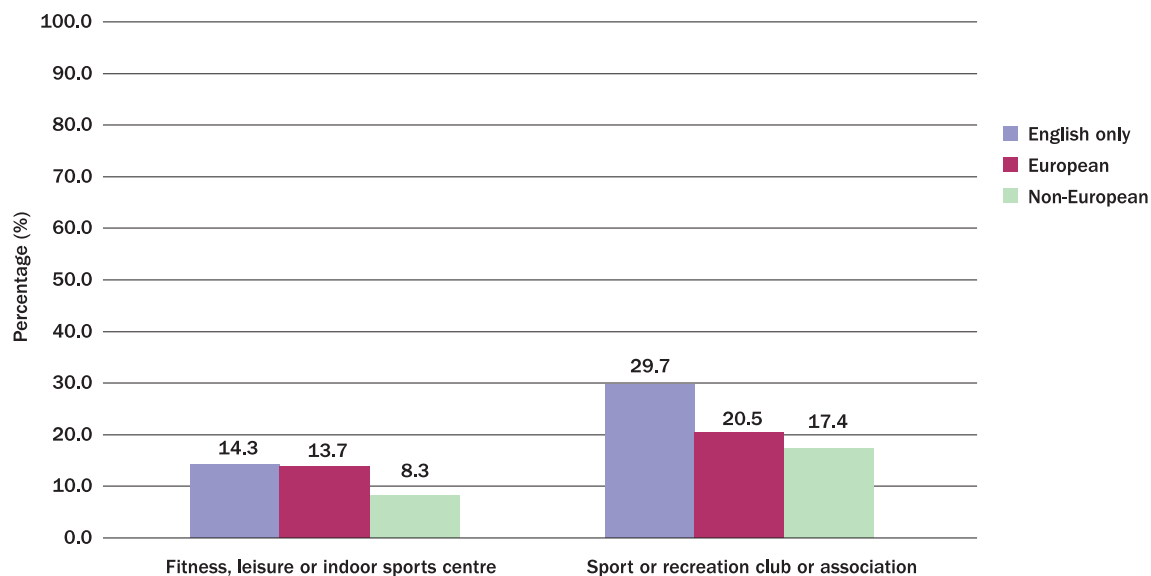
**Figure 12: Participation in organised activity by type of organisation**



Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (n=13,726)

Roughly equal proportions of persons who spoke English or European languages at home attended fitness, leisure or indoor sports centres (14.3% and 13.7% respectively), while persons who spoke non-European languages had far lower levels of attendance at such organisations (Figure 13). Similarly, persons who spoke English at home attended sport or recreation clubs or associations to a significantly greater degree (29.7%) than those from the other language groups (20.5% and 17.4%).

**Figure 13: Organised participation (three times per week or more) by language spoken at home and type of organisation**



Base: Persons who speak English only (n=12,445); European languages (n=751); non-European languages (n=548)

### Type of activity

The organised activity with the highest participation rate was aerobics/fitness (9.4%). An estimated 1.5 million persons aged 15 years and over participated in this activity in an organised environment at least once in the 12 months prior to interview. Other sports and physical activities that had high numbers of participants involved in an organised environment were golf (3.7%), tennis (3.4%), netball (3.2%), football (outdoor) (2.7%) and Australian football and basketball (2.4% each) (Box 2 and Table 21).

Participants in organised physical activities for exercise, recreation and sport engaged in an average (mean) of 1.5 different organised activities in the 12 months prior to interview (Table 19).

## Box 2: Top ten organised activities by number of participants — 2001, 2004 and 2005

	2001		2004			2005		
	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	% change 2001-04	Rank	Number of participants ('000)	% change 2001-05
Aerobics / fitness	1	982.9	1	1,393.3	41.8%	1	1,502.8	52.9%
Golf	2	655.1	2	678.8	3.6%	2	590.8	-9.8%
Tennis	3	548.6	3	597.8	9.0%	3	547.5	-0.2%
Netball	4	533.2	4	509.9	-4.4%	4	510.3	-4.3%
Football (outdoor)	5	381.9	5	447.5	17.2%	5	431.1	12.9%
Australian football	11	272.5	10	342.1	25.5%	6	387.0	42.0%
Basketball	6	364.3	11	341.1	-6.4%	7	376.3	3.3%
Swimming	8	334.0	6	442.8	32.6%	8	345.8	3.5%
Lawn bowls	9	280.3	9	343.4	22.5%	9	340.9	21.6%
Yoga	15	153.1	7	380.5	148.5%	10	323.5	111.3%

Base: All persons aged 15 years and over (2005 n=13,726; 2004 n=13,662; 2001 n=13,424)

### 2.3 Organised versus non-organised participation

Activities that were commonly participated in where participation is most often organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other organisation included lawn bowls (95.6% of lawn bowls participants engaged at least once in organised lawn bowls), softball (91.7%), athletics/track and field (91.6%), rugby union (90.1%) and baseball (88.2%) (Table 21)<sup>8</sup>.

Activities least likely to be organised included waterskiing/powerboating (only 3.1% of participants engaged in organised waterskiing/powerboating), walking (3.2%), roller sports (5.6%), cycling (8.7%) and surf sports (9.8%).

Most participants (30.9%) spent two to five hours per week in non-organised activities in the two weeks prior to interview. A further 24.2% spent five hours or more on non-organised physical activities. In the case of organised activities, 17.8% participated for five hours or more, while a further 16.4% participated for more than two hours but less than five hours per week (Table 20).

<sup>8</sup> Activities 'commonly participated in' refer to all those activities in which 50,000 or more Australians participated in 2005.