

Peanut Farm Exercise Equipment Information Sheet



Why a focus on physical activity?

The benefits of physical activity and participation in sport and recreation are widely documented and include physical, mental, social, environmental and economic benefits.

Physical activity is of clear benefit in seven of the nine current Australian national health priorities including; cardiovascular health, cancer control, obesity, injury prevention and control, mental health, diabetes mellitus, and arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

According to VicHealthⁱ, regular physical activity is ranked second only to tobacco control as the most important factor in promoting good health and preventing chronic disease in Australia - yet less than a third of Australians are getting enough physical activity to benefit their health.

Physical inactivity has been estimated to cost Australia more than \$719 million a year, and account for; 6.6 per cent of the burden of disease and injury in Australia, 22 per cent of heart disease, 11 per cent of stroke, 14 per cent of diabetes, 10 per cent of breast cancer, and 16,178 premature deaths per year in Australia.

What are the benefits of providing outdoor exercise equipment?

Providing outdoor exercise equipment helps alleviate many of the identified barriers to participation in physical activityⁱⁱ, some of which are shown below:

Barrier	Benefits of outdoor exercise equipment
Monetary cost	Use/participation is free
Lack of time	Are freely available for use - participants can use whenever is appropriate for their lifestyle/schedule
Transport	Equipment to be installed at easily accessible site via multiple transport options
Access / opportunities	Equipment installed in public park settings provide highly accessible opportunities to participate in physical activity
Lack of confidence, image issues and intimidation of attending formal gym	Equipment allows use in an open, non-intimidating environment at the users leisure

Who is the equipment targeted for?

An outdoor gym is best designed in a way that encourages use by people of all ages, with a range of skill and fitness levels from beginner to advanced. A key focus on the proposed equipment at Peanut Farm Reserve is to ensure that it caters for use by older persons in our community.

The City of Port Phillip understand that to support the aspirations of older people to age well in their community, the Council, the Port Phillip community and the local business sector will need to work together to build a more age friendly inclusive living environment where older people feel safe and secure and are able to actively participate in community and public life.

National Physical Activity Guidelines state that older people should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.

The installation of exercise equipment at Peanut Farm Reserve targeted for use by older persons ensures we continue to provide opportunities for our community to remain active throughout their life and achieve these guidelines.

What type of equipment will be installed?

Outdoor gym equipment designs vary from static equipment (no moveable parts, strategically placed benches/bars used to perform particular muscular exercises) to mechanical equipment (moveable parts emulating indoor gym equipment).

While traditional outdoor exercise equipment have included chin up bars, push up bars, step-up stations and other static pieces of equipment, often these items require a pre-determined level of fitness for usability. For instance, a chin up bar is only useful to somebody who is already reasonably physically fit and capable of lifting their own body weight.

Modern mechanical equipment, which has been seen installed more recently across Australia, provides a more entry-level physical movement. Most items of equipment either use a predetermined resistance level that is set relatively low to enable use by all, or utilise a counter-weight system to limit the resistance to a proportion of the users body weight (typically 30%). These pieces of equipment are also very intuitive and simple in design and are installed with instructional signage to ensure ease of use by all.

It is proposed that predominantly mechanical equipment is installed at Peanut Farm Reserve to ensure it encourages use by older persons in our community, while also being available for use to all other members of our community. As users gain increases in strength and fitness, the use of the equipment can be modified to provide more of a challenge.

Have the exact pieces of equipment been chosen?

While we have undertaken research into what the most suitable pieces of equipment to install will be, no final decisions have been made on suppliers, finishes etc.

The publication 'Choose Health: Be Active - A physical activity guide for older Australians'ⁱⁱⁱ states that older Australians should try to be active in as many ways as possible, doing a range of activities that incorporate fitness, strength, flexibility and balance.

The choice of specific pieces of exercise equipment should be reliant on providing opportunities to use the major muscle groups in strength training and conduct general cardiovascular training. According to Fitness Australia the major muscle groups include legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms.

The selection of individual pieces of equipment reflect these guidelines in providing at least on piece of equipment that enables use by each major muscle group, and incorporates cardio, balance and flexibility.

An outline of the basic pieces of equipment that are proposed can be found below:

Item	Prime use
Leg Press	Legs
Chest Press	Chest (secondary triceps and shoulders)
Pull Down / Chin Up	Back (secondary biceps)
Crunch	Abdominals
Elliptical Trainer	Cardiovascular fitness
Balance Beams	Balance and flexibility

ⁱ Encouraging regular physical activity, VicHealth (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Programs-and-Projects/Physical-Activity)

ⁱⁱ Australian Sports Commission and Department of Veterans' Affairs. (2001). Older, smarter, fitter: a guide for providers of sport and physical activity programs for older Australians. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Australian Sports Commission and Department of Veterans' Affairs. p12. & McCormack, G., Milligan, R., Giles-Corti B. and Clarkson, J.P. (2003). Physical activity levels of Western Australians 2002: Results from the adult physical activity survey and pedometer study. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government, p54.

ⁱⁱⁱ Choose Health: Be Active - A physical activity guide for older Australians, Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/3244D38BBEBD284CA257BF0001FA1A7/\\$File/choosehealth-brochure.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/3244D38BBEBD284CA257BF0001FA1A7/$File/choosehealth-brochure.pdf)