

Sport Australia's Community Perceptions Monitor (CPM) survey captured the sentiment of Australians in the lead-up to, during and post the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



The Olympic and Paralympic Games had a **positive impact** on Australians.

The Tokyo 2020 Games will be remembered for many reasons, but significantly these were the Olympic and Paralympic Games that took place during a pandemic.

Postponed 12 months from the dates originally scheduled, the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games were held from 23 July to 8 August 2021; and the Summer Paralympic Games were held between 24 August and 5 September 2021.



**82%** of Australians watched a least some of the Olympic Games  
**47%** watched most days or every day



**68%** of Australians watched a least some of the Paralympic Games  
**27%** watched most days or every day

#### I feel proud

**Over half** of Australians who watched the Olympic Games (55%) and Paralympic Games (58%) said they saw something that made them **feel proud** to be Australian.

Common sentiments reported included athletes showing **determination**, **working hard**, and **good sportsmanship**.

##### Olympics

- "I felt proud that we achieved so much for a small country"
- "Being top of their sport, trying hard, losing well, being gracious in a win. Encouraging others"

##### Paralympics

- "I am so proud of the athletes and the effort they made to achieve at that level"
- "How humble each athlete was"

#### I am inspired

Around **one in five** Australians who watched the Olympic Games (22%) and Paralympic Games (20%) said they saw something that would encourage them to be more **physically active**.



**12%** of parents reported they saw something that made them think about **enrolling their child in a new sport**.

##### Olympics

- "Generally watching the most elite sports people be really active, made me want to do the same"
- "It inspired me to try a sport I haven't tried"

##### Paralympics

- "At age 67, and especially in lockdown, get out and use it - or lose it!"
- "It is inspiring and reminds you how good it feels to exercise"



**8%** of adults reported they may take up a **playing role** and **6%** in a **non-playing or volunteering role** in organised sport.

## Key Findings



The Tokyo Games were available on free-to-air broadcast and online content sharing services across Australia, with the Olympic Games televised over 16 consecutive days with approximately 572 hours of live transmission broadcast on as many as 3 digital free-to-air channels at any one time. The Paralympic Games were televised over 12 consecutive days with approximately 165 hours of content available on one digital free-to-air channel. Live and recorded content was also available on demand for both events via the Australian broadcaster's app and online content sharing services.

## CPM survey findings revealed:



The Tokyo Games had a positive impact on Australians, despite scepticism in the lead-up period to the Tokyo Games as to whether they should proceed during a global pandemic.



While winning medals was identified by Australians as something that made them feel proud, more common sentiments reported concerned athletes showing determination, working hard and demonstrating good sportsmanship.



The Olympic Games were viewed by the majority of Australians; 82 percent of Australians watched at least some of the Olympic Games, and 42 percent watched most days or every day. The figures for the Paralympic Games were lower; 68 percent of Australians watched at least some of the Paralympic Games, and 27 percent viewed most days or every day. The lower rate of viewership could be attributed in part to the reduced televised coverage of the Paralympic Games across Australia.



Australians reported that they were inspired to become more physically active as a result of watching the Olympic and Paralympic Games, although this was to a lesser extent than the reported sentiment of feeling proud. Approximately one in five Australians who watched the Olympic Games (22 percent) and Paralympic Games (20 percent) said they saw something that would encourage them to be more physically active.



The level of pride experienced by Australians when watching Australian athletes perform, including their on-field behaviour and how they represented Australia to a global audience, was similar for both the Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Over half of Australians who watched the Olympic Games (55 percent) and Paralympic Games (58 percent) said they saw something that made them feel proud to be Australian.



Australians that were inspired to take up a new sport or volunteer in a sport is less common. The most likely source of new participants as a result of viewing the Olympic or Paralympic Games is children, with 12 percent of parents reporting they saw something that made them think about enrolling their child in a new sport. In adults, 8 percent reported that they saw something that made them think about playing a new sport and 6 percent reported they saw something that made them think about participating in a new sport in a non-playing or volunteering role.

## Insights for sporting organisations



It appears what we observe anecdotally may be true—watching a major sporting event inspires some of us to become more physically active and potentially take-up a new sport.

Australian sporting organisations and clubs working within their unique context may choose to explore effective approaches on how to leverage the positive sentiment generated by major sporting events, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, to increase participation in playing and non-playing roles in organised sport.

If your organisation is interested in designing quality sport participation plans, products and experiences, visit the [Participation Design Toolkit](#) on the Sport Australia website.

## Data Analysis

### Pre-Tokyo 2020

Many Australians were initially sceptical about the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games going ahead, saying they weren't really interested and didn't intend to watch any of the action.

The COVID-19 pandemic was widely given as a reason for being less interested in the Tokyo Games than in previous Games, with concerns for the athletes' safety as well as a feeling that it was wrong for the Games to go ahead in such an environment.

Pre-Games	Olympics	Paralympics
Not at all or only a little interested	47%	64%
Didn't intend to watch	27%	40%

### Post-Tokyo 2020

Once the Tokyo Games were under way, four in five Australians watched at least some of the Olympic Games and two-thirds watched at least some of the Paralympic Games.

Post-Games	Olympics	Paralympics
Watched at least some	82%	68%
Watched every day or most days	47%	27%

### Tokyo 2020 made us feel proud

In the weeks after the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, a majority of Australians who watched the Games told us that they felt proud of our athletes' competitive performances, on-field behaviour and how they represented Australia to the rest of the world.

Over half also said they saw something at the Games that made them feel proud to be Australian (55% for Olympics, 58% for Paralympics).

Proud of...	Olympics	Paralympics
Competitive performances	83%	81%
On-field behaviour	70%	72%
How they represent Australia to the rest of the world	75%	75%

Based on those who watched the Games (Olympics n=411, Paralympics n=345)

#### Olympics

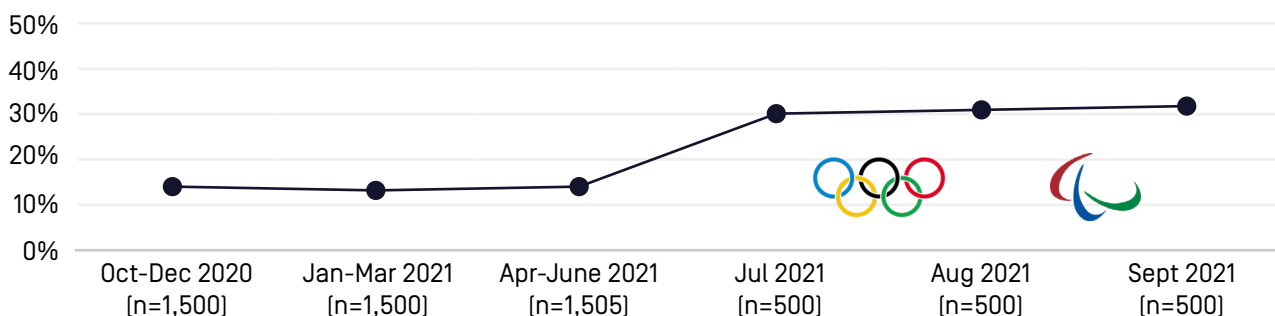
- "We all know that Australia is the best country in the world, but our sporting prowess proved it!"
- "Watching our athletes achieve their personal best made me feel proud of our country that has given them the chance to excel"

#### Paralympics

- "I live in a country with amazing people with different abilities"
- "Seeing people who have had to overcome adversity, succeed at the highest level of sport and represent our country so amazingly"

The proportion who saw or heard anything lately that made them feel more proud of Australian sport than they usually do increased in July 2021 and remained high. The spike in July was largely due to Ash Barty winning Wimbledon but in August most of those who felt more proud indicated this was because of the Olympic Games. Similarly, in September, most comments related to the Olympic Games or Paralympic Games.

### Felt more proud of Australian sport than usual



## Data Analysis

### Tokyo 2020 inspired us

Every month we ask whether Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games athletes inspire people to participate in sport and explore their full potential. The results are consistently high at around 80-83% saying they are inspired a lot or somewhat.

More specifically, around one in five Australians who watched the Olympic and Paralympic Games saw something at the Games that inspired them to think about doing more exercise or being more physically active or encouraging their children to do so.

#### Olympics

- “We have an under-used basketball net at home, this made us get out and use it more”
- “Our athletes are fabulous ambassadors for our great country and they always promote their sports encouraging children to learn and be competitive”
- “The Games made me feel as if I should get off my backside and start doing a bit more exercise”
- “It was such a positive representation of sport it was hard not to become motivated”

Inspired to....	Olympics	Paralympics
Think about doing more exercise*	22%	20%
Encourage my children to do more exercise**	22%	20%

Based on:

\*Those who watched the Games (Olympics n=411, Paralympics n=345)

\*\*Those who watched the Games and have children in the household (Olympics n=110, Paralympics n=98)

#### Paralympics

- “These athlete are amazing people who have overcome huge obstacles. It made me think if they can do it so can I. And I don't have a disability”
- “Felt like I didn't have any excuse for not doing activity”
- “These athletes are so inspiring - it's on a different level to the able Games”
- “These people are showing such a strength and they are great role models. I admire them”

Converting this idea of being inspired into action is the next step and much harder to achieve.

The regular CPM asks people if they have recently looked for information, started a new sport, gone back to a sport they did previously, or become more physically active on purpose. If they have, they are asked if any of a number of things inspired them to do so, including seeing or hearing about Australian athletes and teams at the Olympic Games.

The proportion who said they were inspired a great deal by seeing or hearing about Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games athletes or teams increased immediately after both events. We will continue tracking this figure to see if it continues at this higher level.

Sought information, started a new sport, went back to sport or became more physically active and were...	Average Oct 2020 - July 2021	Post-Olympics	Post-Paralympics
Inspired a <i>great deal</i> by seeing or hearing about Australian Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games athletes or teams	20%	25%	27%

Based on those who said they had sought information about a sport, tried a new sport, gone back to a previous sport, or become more physically active on purpose (Oct-20 - Jul 21 n=2241, post-Olympics n=244, post-Paralympics n=215)

**Data Analysis**

**Opportunities for sports**

Around one in 12 Australians who watched the Olympic Games [8%] say it made them think about taking up a new sport and one in eight parents [12%] think about enrolling their children in a new sport. Around one in twenty [6%] say it made them think about volunteering in a sport. Results for the Paralympic Games were not significantly lower.

Although this is a relatively low proportion, if it is taken in the context of current participation in organised club sport [21% of adults aged 15+ participate through a sports club or association ], conversion of all these people from thinking to doing could have a positive effect on overall participation or the number of sports played.

Sports are already aware that, in order to grow participant numbers, they need to find ways to attract new players and volunteers. This is even more important as Australia moves out of a period of significant COVID-19 restrictions in the most populous jurisdictions.

To see how major sporting events might be leveraged to increase participation, we asked those who said they saw something in the Olympic and Paralympic Games that made them think about taking up a new sport or enrolling their children, what might help them move from thinking to doing. The results are not a surprise and confirm what is already known – people are keen to ‘try before they buy’ and to do so with a group of friends rather than alone. Making trial opportunities easy to find out about and available at different times are also important.

Inspired to....	Olympics	Paralympics
Think about taking up a new sport*	8%	5%
Think about enrolling my children in a new sport**	12%	7%
Think about volunteering in a sport*	6%	7%

Based on:

\*Those who watched the Games (Olympics n=411, Paralympics n=345)

\*\*Those who watched the Games and have children in the household (Olympics n=110, Paralympics n=98)

Initiatives that would encourage those who thought about taking up a new sport or being more active after seeing the Olympics/Paralympics.....	% who say this would encourage them*
Sports and clubs having ‘free trial’ days for people who are interested in the next few months	43%
If you could try or join the sport / activity with a group of friends	43%
If you knew there were introductory programs and levels specially for new participants	38%
A way to help you easily find your nearest club or facility	38%
If the sport / activity was available at a wider range of times and days of the week	30%
A way to borrow or hire equipment without having to buy it	27%
A single, easy website for all people interested in connecting to any sport after the Olympic Games	27%
If there was a program for quickly learning the skills, without competition to start with	26%
If Australia’s Olympic athletics prepared advice for people thinking about trying their sport	17%

Based on those who said they saw something in the Olympics or Paralympics that made them want to be physically active or take up a new sport (or encourage their children to be more active/enrol their children in a new sport) [n=228]

**About the Community Perceptions Monitor (CPM)**

The Community Perceptions Monitor surveys 500 Australians aged 18+ each month, in a sample that is representative of the population by gender, age and region. It asks respondents about their attitudes to a range of sport topics and sporting categories. These include high performance categories – athletes at the Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games, Australian national teams, individual athletes competing internationally and professional codes – as well as casual and local organised sport.

In July and August, the CPM included some questions about interest in and intention to watch or follow the Tokyo Olympic Games (July) and Paralympic Games (August). After each event (in August for the Olympic Games and September for the Paralympic Games) the survey included questions on how much they actually watched and the impact they made.

Results in this summary report are based on the full sample of 500 in each month unless otherwise stated.

For further information, please contact the insights team at [asc\\_research@ausport.gov.au](mailto:asc_research@ausport.gov.au).