This report presents data from the *Children’s Participation in Cultural & Leisure Activities Survey (CPCLAS)* which was administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012.

The CPCLAS collected information about participation in *organised sport outside of school hours* for Australian 5-14 year olds as recalled by their parents.

More details on the CPCLAS can be found via ABS cat. no. 4901.0 or the following link: [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4901.0Main+Features1Apr%202012?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4901.0Main+Features1Apr%202012?OpenDocument)

This report has been prepared by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and includes some data that has not been presented in previous ABS CPCLAS publications. The ASC purchased custom data for select sports through the ABS Sports Unit.
The Children’s Participation in Cultural & Leisure Activities Survey asked parents:

Which sports has [Child name] played or trained for outside of school hours since this time last year?

In each year the survey was administered, a number of parents responded:

Swimming *

* In this report the definition of swimming participation also includes diving, but excludes triathlon.
Explanatory notes for interpreting the Children’s Participation Data

Data from the CPCLAS should not be directly compared with results from other sport participation surveys, such as the Exercise Recreation And Sport Survey (ERASS) or the ABS adult sport participation surveys, without considering the difference in methodology, scope and years.

It should be noted that the CPCLAS data:

• Is based upon a different data collection process to the ERASS adults’ data
• Is not collected in the same years as the ERASS and ABS adults’ data
• Reflects parent responses, while the ERASS and ABS adults’ data reflects participant responses
• Reflects participation outside of school hours only, while the ERASS and ABS adults’ data also included measures of total participation
• Reflects organised participation only, while information on non-organised participation data was also collected for the ERASS and ABS adults
• Reports different participation frequency categories to the ERASS adults data (e.g. Regular participation for the children’s data is defined as 27 times or more a year, while for the adults data is defined as 26 times or more a year)
How to interpret the Children’s Participation Data

Some of the data in this report has not been publically released by the ABS. The ASC sourced custom data tables from the ABS containing information relevant for sports. Please note that the ASC did not have access to the raw data. As the ABS reported the total survey sample size (sample size in 2003 = 8,900; sample size in 2006 = 8,682; sample size in 2009 = 5,825; sample size in 2012 = 7,300), it was possible to compare the proportion of Australian children participating in a sport across the four time periods with significance testing. The ABS, however, did not report the sample sizes for the demographic (e.g. age or gender) categories, so it was not possible to conduct significance tests on demographic subgroups. As such, the interpretation of data relating to the demographic subgroups in this report is indicative only.

The ABS does not publically release data with high Relative Standard Errors (RSEs). It is important to note that all the swimming data presented in this report was associated with acceptable RSEs. For further information* related to RSEs associated with the data please refer to ABS cat. no. 4901.0.

Please note that scales may differ between charts.

Australian children's population (5–14 year olds) by year from ABS population estimates:

- 2003: 2,647,500
- 2006: 2,664,700
- 2009: 2,722,500
- 2012: 2,786,100

Participation frequency definitions:
- Annual defined as participating in a given sport at least once a year
- Regular defined as participating in a given sport at least 27 times a year
- Non-regular defined as participating in a given sport at least once but less than 27 times a year

*http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4901.0Technical%20Note1Apr%202012?opendocument&tabname=Notes&prodno=4901.0&issue=Apr%202012&num=&view=
Summary of Trends
Summary of General Trends in Children’s Participation Among 21 Selected Sports

Between 2003 and 2012 there was a significant increase in children’s organised participation in the following sports:

- **Gymnastics** and **rugby union** had a significant increase in annual, regular and non-regular participation rates.
- **Rugby union** had a significant increase in annual and non-regular participation rates.
- **Touch football** and **football** had a significant increase in the non-regular participation rate.

Between 2003 and 2012 there was a significant decrease in children’s organised participation in the following sports:

- **Hockey** had a significant decrease in annual, regular and non-regular participation rates.
- **Netball, tennis** and **softball** had a significant decrease in annual and regular participation rates.
- **Athletics** had a significant decrease in the annual participation rate.
- **Cricket, touch football** and **golf** had a significant decrease in the regular participation rate.

For information on general trends in children’s organised participation across sports please refer to the following ABS reports:

Summary of General Trends in Children’s Swimming Participation

Organised swimming participation
Between 2003 and 2012:
- The ABS estimation of the number of children annually participating in organised swimming varied around 439,000 (in 2003) and 503,000 (in 2009).
- The ABS estimation of the percentage of Australian children annually participating in organised swimming varied between 16.6% (in 2003) and 18.5% (in 2009).
- There was no significant change in the annual, regular or non-regular participation rates for children’s organised swimming.

Comparison of regular v. non-regular organised swimming participation
For all four time periods, the regular participation rate for children’s organised swimming was statistically significantly higher than the non-regular participation rate.

Demographic analysis of organised swimming participation
For all four time periods, the ABS estimated that slightly more girls than boys participated in swimming annually and regularly.

The annual and regular participation rate in organised swimming decreased with age. For all four time periods, the 12-14 year old category had the lowest participation rate and the 5-8 year old category had the highest participation rate.
Organised* Participation in Swimming^
Current Participation Status (2012)

Interpretive Notes

• 17.7% of the Australian children’s population participated in organised swimming at least once in 2012.
• Statistically significantly more children participated in organised swimming regularly (70.0%) than non-regularly (30.0%).
• A similar proportion of girls (52.2%) and boys (47.8%) participated in organised swimming annually*.
• A small majority of annual organised swimming participants were aged 5-8 years (56.0%)*.

*As the ABS did not report the survey sample sizes for the demographic (e.g. age or gender) categories it was not possible to conduct a significance test on the demographic subgroups
**Based on the 2012 ABS population estimate for Australian 5-14 year olds
A one sample Difference in Proportions T-Test at 95% confidence level was used to compare regular and non-regular participation rates
**Interpretive Notes**

Between 2003 and 2012, the ABS estimation of the number of children annually participating in organised swimming varied around 439,000 (in 2003) and 503,000 (in 2009).

Between 2003 and 2012, the ABS estimation of the percentage of Australian children annually participating in organised swimming varied between 16.6% (in 2003) and 18.5% (in 2009).

Between 2003 and 2012, there was no significant change in the annual, regular or non-regular participation rates for children's organised swimming.

For all four time periods, the regular participation rate for children's organised swimming was statistically significantly higher than the non-regular participation rate.

**Note:** A two sample Difference in Proportions T-Test at 95% confidence level was used to compare the percentage of Australian 5-14 year olds participating across the four time periods. A one sample Difference in Proportions T-Test at 95% confidence level was used to compare regular and non-regular participation rates.
Annual Participation
Demographic Analysis
Annual Participation by Gender

Interpretive Notes

The data presented on this slide appears to indicate the following:

- For annual organised swimming participation, the proportion of girls to boys was relatively consistent between 2003 and 2012, with a little over half of participating children being girls.

- Over the years, the number of girls and boys participating in organised swimming increased from 2003 to 2009 and then was steady from 2009 to 2012. Unfortunately, with the data provided to the ASC by the ABS, it was not possible to statistically examine whether these changes over time were significant.
The data presented on this slide appears to indicate the following:

- **The annual participation rate for organised swimming decreased with age.** For all four time periods, the 12-14 year old category had the lowest annual participation rate and the 5-8 year old category had the highest annual participation rate.

- **From 2003 to 2012, a little over half of annual swimming participants were 5-8 years of age.**
Regular Participation
Demographic Analysis
The data presented on this slide appears to indicate the following:

- As was the case for annual participation, slightly more girls than boys were estimated to participate in organised swimming regularly.
Regular Participation by Age

The data presented on this slide appears to indicate the following:

- The regular participation rate in organised swimming for each age category was relatively consistent across the years.
- The proportion of regular swimming participants from each age group was similar to the annual participation analysis.

Interpretive Notes
Sport Comparison
# Ranking of Selected Sports According to Annual Participation

The Table represents a ranking of 21 selected sports. Table sorted on 2012 rankings. #1 ranking = sport with the highest participation among the 21 selected sports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 Ranking</th>
<th>SPORT</th>
<th>2003 Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Australian Football</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Track and Field Athletics</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rugby Union</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 Ranking</th>
<th>SPORT</th>
<th>2003 Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Touch Football</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Surf Lifesaving</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Horse activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Surf sports</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual defined as participating in a given sport at least once a year
Regular defined as participating in a given sport at least 27 times a year
Non-regular defined as participating in a given sport at least once but less than 27 times a year
NB. Sports are sorted on annual participation rates in descending order

In 2012 sports with regular organised participation rates statistically significantly higher than non-regular organised participation rates were swimming, football, netball, basketball, tennis, gymnastics, rugby league, horse activities and baseball

In 2012 sports with non-regular organised participation rates statistically significantly higher than regular organised participation rates were cricket, athletics, touch football, surf lifesaving and golf

Note: A one sample Difference in Proportions T-Test at 95% confidence level was used to compare regular and non-regular participation rates.
Between 2003 and 2012 there was a statistically significant increase in children annually participating in organised **gymnastics, rugby league** and **rugby union**.

In this same period there was a statistically significant decrease in children annually participating in organised **netball, tennis, athletics, hockey** and **softball**.

**Note:** A two sample Difference in Proportions T-Tests at 95% confidence level was used to compare the percentage of Australian 5-14 year olds participating in 2003 and 2012.
Between 2003 and 2012 there was a significant increase in children regularly participating in organised **gymnastics** and **rugby union**.

In this same period there was a significant decrease in children regularly participating in organised **netball**, **tennis**, **cricket**, **hockey**, **softball**, **touch football** and **golf**.

**Note:** A two sample Difference in Proportions T-Tests at 95% confidence level was used to compare the percentage of Australian 5-14 year olds participating in 2003 and 2012.
Between 2003 and 2012 there was a significant increase in children non-regularly participating in organised **football, gymnastics, touch football, rugby league** and **rugby union**.

In this same period there was a significant decrease in children non-regularly participating in organised **hockey**.

Note: A two sample Difference in Proportions T-Tests at 95% confidence level was used to compare the percentage of Australian 5-14 year olds participating in 2003 and 2012.