



Why investing in physical activity is essential

This case study is part of the series highlighting why grassroots sports and physical activity funding is essential to build and develop communities that encourage participants to increase their physical activity levels.

In 2018 the Federal Government committed over \$150 million to drive national sports participation and physical activity initiatives to get Australian's moving.

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) was a recipient of the Better Ageing funding program and developed a physical activity program called Silver Salties.

Silver Salties is fed through all surf life saving clubs and is a physical and social program for people aged over 65 years and connects them back to the surf club and gets them socialising and active.

"It has been fantastic and life changing for some people. At that age group a lot of people are newly retired or looking at retirement so they've got more time on their hands and they are looking at finding things to do and reconnecting with their community," SLSA Silver Salties Ambassador Laura Thurtell said.

Since the program began the Silver Salties program, surf clubs across the country have seen people reconnect with the surf club.

"40 clubs nationally have signed up to the program, 1100 people are participating in programs. There are 21 programs that we offer, they range from swimming programs to water aerobics, chair aerobics, yoga and tai chi, walk and talk and then we have social programs forming as well," Thurtell said.

The Silver Salties program has allowed surf clubs to create safe and encouraging groups and spaces for the participants to continue being involved in their surf club.

"Some ladies joined the Cronulla surf club Silver Salties and we set up a table out the front of the surf club one morning and we just talked to people who were walking past on their own.

"Then approached them and said would you like to join a group of people that do this in the mornings, come for a walk, make new friends and then we go for a coffee afterwards.

"Some of those people joined the group and made new friends that live in the area." Thurtell explained.

Without the government funding, SLSA wouldn't have been able to create and implement their Silver Salties program and provide the ageing population with a safe and welcoming environment to continue their physical activity journey. This case study again demonstrates the need to continue investing in community sports and physical activity.