2021 ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOOL SPORT UNIT



NSW GOVERNMENT

School Sport Unit
Arts, Sport and Initiatives
Student Support and Specialist Programs Directorate
School Performance North

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YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 was certainly not the year that any of us had planned for, with COVID-19 outbreaks and the extension of restrictions across the state significantly disrupting all School Sport Unit (SSU) programs.

Strong support and leadership during these challenging times was provided by Dr Sylvia Corish, Executive Director, Student Support and Specialist Programs and Jordi Austin, Director, Arts, Sport and Initiatives.

Notwithstanding the many challenges arising due to COVID-19 this year, the SSU team, however, worked tirelessly to continue to provide sport and physical activity opportunities for students across NSW during this turbulent time. Various programs and resources were adapted to support students and school staff in the provision of opportunities to be “more active, more often” whilst learning from home.

Thank you to all schools, teachers, parents/carers and students for your continued understanding, patience and support of the SSU as we navigated challenges like never before. I also wish to acknowledge and congratulate all school sport organisers for ensuring that the health and wellbeing of their students remained at the heart of all decisions.

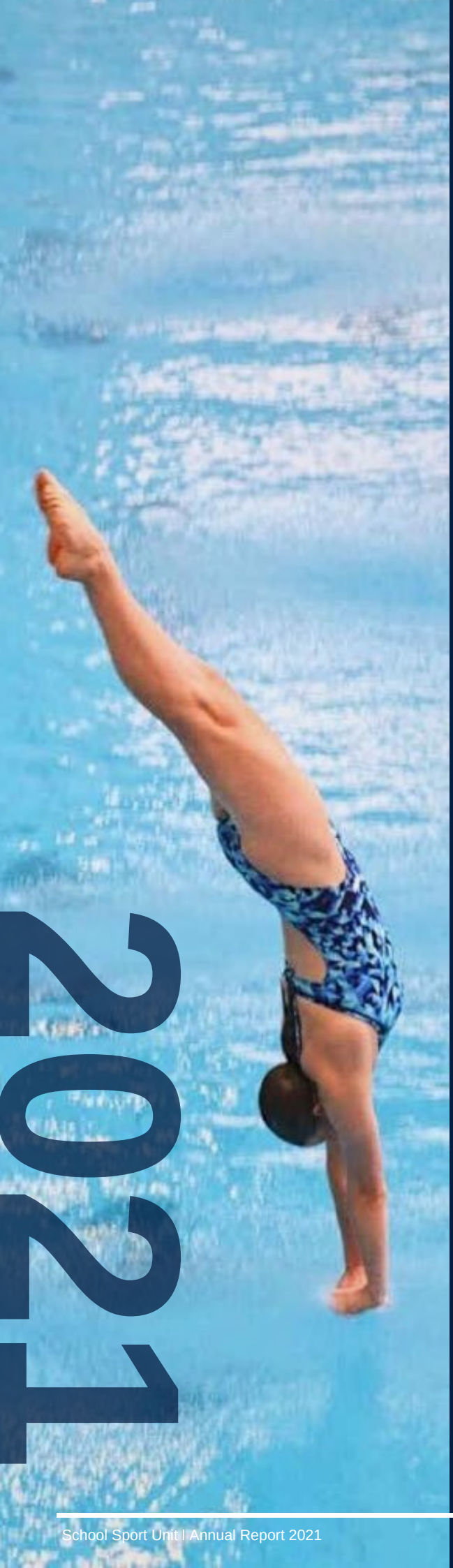
Despite the adversities, I am incredibly proud of all that has been accomplished this year. I encourage you to read through this report, showcasing our highlights of the year, including program-specific achievements.

We look forward to returning to a sense of normality in 2022, with the re-commencement of all SSU programs.



Peter Banks

Leader, School Sport Unit



ABOUT US

The School Sport Unit (SSU) is part of Arts, Sport and Initiatives within the Student Support and Specialist Programs Directorate, School Performance North, NSW Department of Education.

The SSU provides carefully planned, adaptable and enjoyable physical activity experiences for all students in NSW public schools. These programs are encouraged by devoted principals and delivered by highly skilled, motivated teachers who positively shape young people to become engaged in their communities and to lead happy, rewarding lives through a lifelong connection to sport and physical activity.

Our vision

To be the benchmark for equitable and inclusive provision of school sport and physical activity initiatives in Australia

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT

- Representative School Sport Pathway
- NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge
- Disability and inclusion
- School Swimming and Water Safety
- Policy and guidelines
- Teacher Resource Hub

OUR IMPACT IN 2021

1,260
Classes/teams

23,271
Participants

1,495,610
Kilometres travelled

In Race Around Australia

291,000+
Views of the GetActive episodes

110,000
Students from
1,400
Schools
Enrolled in the School Swimming and Water Safety program

369,352
Website users

2,264,475
Page views

$10,000
Distributed to each school sport zone

18,500
Page views of the Sport safety guidelines

+ 23%
Followers on Facebook

+ 365%
Members of Yammer community

500+
State Championships and Association trials held

420,698
Students

14,210
Staff

1,493
Schools and departmental offices

Participated in the PSC 10 week Challenge

1,900+
Students
725
School staff
Participated in opportunities for students with disability

2,379
Teachers
Participated in e-learning courses

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT

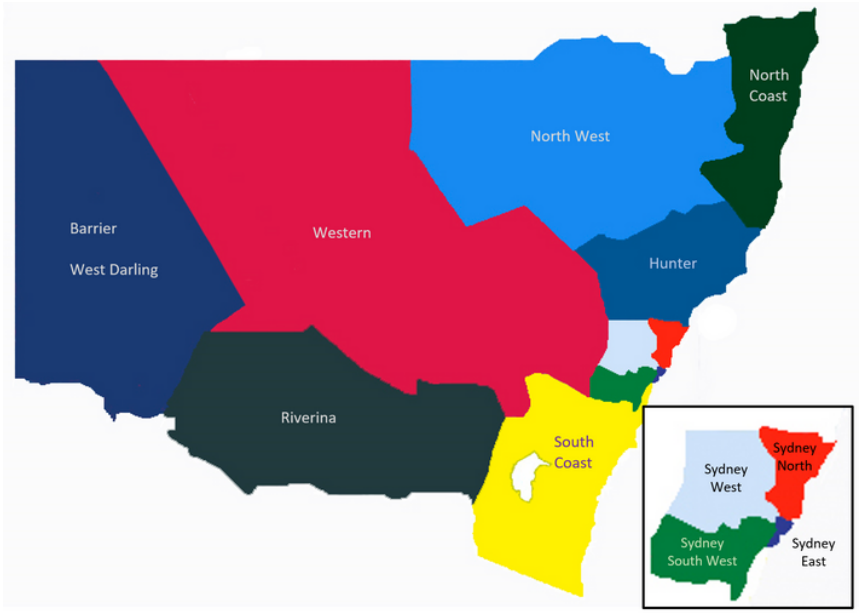
Our programs are research-informed, evidence-based and reflective of current best practice. As a result, schools are supported to work towards achieving the NSW Department of Education's goal to ensure all students are engaged and challenged to continue to learn, and every student, every teacher, every leader and every school improves every year.

Program/ support	Document	Connection
 **Representative School Sport Pathway**	**Personal Development Health and Physical Education K – 10 Syllabus**	Students are supported to develop their talent, self-management (S), interpersonal (I) and movement (M) skills through this pathway.
	High Potential and Gifted Education Policy	Students are provided with enriched and advanced learning opportunities to extend high performing, high potential and gifted students beyond their current level of mastery to reach their full potential in the physical domain.
 **NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge (PSC)**	**Wellbeing Framework for Schools**	Schools are supported to create teaching and learning environments in sport and physical activity that enable students to be healthy, happy, engaged and successful. Students are provided with an opportunity to connect and succeed.
	Personal Development Health and Physical Education K – 10 Syllabus	The 10 week Challenge and Race Around Australia allow teachers to participate in fun and challenging activities that address PDHPE outcomes in the healthy, safe and active lifestyles strand.
	Physical Activity and Sports Studies Syllabus **Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation Syllabus**	The PSC Sport Leadership Program supports public schools in developing leadership opportunities for students through sport and physical activity. The Leadership Program also provides opportunities for Stage 5 and 6 students to achieve learning outcomes in the Physical Activity and Sports Studies course and Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation course.
 **Disability and inclusion**	**Disability Strategy: a living document**	Students involved in our Disability and inclusion programs are known, valued and cared for. Students with disability: • enjoy a wide range of experiences • learn to their fullest capability • achieve demonstrable learning, wellbeing and independence outcomes, in a safe, supportive and healthy environment • receive an excellent physical education, with expertise available to support access to sport and physical activity in a way that is relevant to them • build friendships, interact with other students, and feel a sense of belonging.
	Personal Development Health and Physical Education K – 10 Syllabus	Adjustments are made to the teaching and learning program in the Multi-Sport days to enable students with a range of abilities to access syllabus outcomes/content and demonstrate achievement of these outcomes.
	Wellbeing Framework for Schools	Students are provided with an opportunity to connect, succeed and thrive in sport and physical activity.
 **School Swimming and Water Safety**	**Personal Development Health and Physical Education K – 10 Syllabus**	With student access to learn-to-swim lessons restricted in 2020 and 2021, the SSU identified that it was imperative for students to learn key water safety measures. A series of learning sequences with engaging animations and learning tasks was created for schools to deliver multiple water safety messages in the classroom and remotely. These sequences addressed outcomes, inquiry questions, content and skills from the PDHPE syllabus.

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT

Program/ support	Document	Connection
 School Swimming and Water Safety	What works best	Students are supported in learning water safety and survival skills as well as competitive strokes. During the 10-day program, the qualified school swim teachers embed the themes of the 'What works best' document throughout the teaching and learning program.
	Wellbeing Framework for Schools	Students are empowered to make safe choices in, on and around water. Students are provided with opportunities to succeed and celebrate their learning achievements in a positive learning environment.
 Policy and guidelines	Sport and Physical Activity Policy	Schools are provided with the requirements related to mandatory weekly participation in sport and physical activity that allow students to lead a healthy and active school life. The policy supports teachers and school leaders in the planning and delivery of high-quality, safe sport and physical activity.
	Sport Safety Guidelines and Requirements for all Sport and Physical Activity	These documents assist schools in developing appropriate risk assessments for sport and physical activity to ensure students are provided with high-quality programs in a safe and supportive learning environment.
	Wellbeing Framework for Schools	The Wellbeing Framework states that physical wellbeing is associated with the extent to which we feel physically safe and healthy. The policy and guidelines provided by the SSU support school leaders and teachers to create an enabling school environment that is a safe and healthy place for students.
 Teacher Resource Hub	School Excellence Framework	The 'Interconnection between physical activity and wellbeing in schools' professional learning presentation assists schools to create a strategic and planned approach to developing whole-school wellbeing processes that support the wellbeing of all students so they can connect, succeed, thrive and learn. Through the situational analysis process, looking inward, outward and forward, schools that complete the School Health Check training are supported to pursue excellence in the wellbeing themes of this Framework.
	What works best	Thinking while Moving (TwM) professional learning workshops and e-learning courses support teachers in delivering evidence-based teaching practices that are proven to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. TwM reflects the themes of classroom management, wellbeing, explicit teaching and feedback from 'What works best'.
	NSW Syllabi (English. mathematics, PDHPE)	TwM allows teachers to support students in achieving English and mathematics outcomes while participating in physical activity.
	Sport and Physical Activity Policy and Personal Development Health and Physical Education K – 10 Syllabus	The professional learning workshops and e-learning courses support schools in meeting the requirements of the Department of Education's Sport and Physical Activity Policy to plan and deliver high-quality, safe sport and physical activity programs that address movement skills and performance outcomes.
	Wellbeing Framework for Schools	Physical activity is associated with a wide range of benefits from infancy to old age. Health benefits at a young age include favourable skeletal development and improved physical and psychological wellbeing. The teacher professional learning (TPL) courses offered by the SSU support teachers in creating quality learning opportunities in sport and physical activity to enable children and young people to connect, succeed and thrive.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHOOL SPORT PATHWAY



12 Associations providing opportunities for over **700,000** students across NSW

The Representative School Sport Pathway is the largest and longest-running high potential and gifted program in the Department of Education - being available to students in NSW schools for 132 years.

The pathway provides opportunities for students to progress from school to district/zone, Association, state level, then on to national and international competitions. Over **100** state-wide championships and trials across **28** sports occur annually throughout NSW.

Throughout the first semester of 2021, the representative school sport calendar of events was met with significant operational challenges due to COVID-19. The passion, dedication and commitment to providing representative sporting opportunities from all staff involved in the planning and facilitation of these events at all levels, ensured that they all ran smoothly and as planned. During the second semester, the impact of COVID-19 saw most trials and events postponed and eventually cancelled.

The Representative School Sport Pathway plans to host a full calendar of events across NSW in 2022.

Program achievements:

- Provided representative sporting opportunities for over **700,000** students across NSW.
- Engaged over **1,100** Principal, executive and teacher volunteers to lead and manage programs and teams across the **12** Associations.
- Selected Associations led the planning for implementation of additional zones to increase student participation opportunities.
- All Associations continued the shift to online processes for convener nominations, state-wide/ knockout competitions and Association representative registrations.
- Prepared individual Association Annual Reports using a consistent format.
- Developed data collection methods to inform program reporting and planning.
- Produced a range of resources to support teachers undertaking sport roles in schools.

ASSOCIATIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Students aged 8 to 19 years from affiliated public schools are provided with the opportunity to compete and progress through the Representative School Sport Pathway.

SOUTH COAST

- Hosted five successful state championships - NSWCHSSA Baseball, NSWCHSSA Golf, NSWCHSSA Rugby, NSWPSSA 11 years' Rugby League and NSWPSSA Girls' Hockey.
- Facilitated Association conference catering for over 50 delegates from 18 Zones to review current communication channels and the implementation of best practice operational processes and procedures for 2022. This initiative was underpinned by the school sporting zone support funding that was provided by the SSU earlier this year.
- Successfully launched contact-free apparel sales at Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Championships.

223 Schools
53,830 Participants

SYDNEY EAST

- Established a new zone, Inner West PSSA, in response to the exponential growth of the number of students within schools in the Western Suburbs PSSA. This initiative will provide greater opportunities for students to engage in sporting activities.
- Undertook a comprehensive review of data collection and analysis throughout 2021, focused on the engagement of staff and students within the range of activities undertaken within the scope of the Representative School Sport Pathway to shape future direction.
- Developed extensive surveys which sought information from students/parents/carers/spectators and Association office bearers to provide insight into the development and coordination of the Representative School Sport Pathway.

230 Schools
79,860 Participants

NORTH COAST

- Won three State Hockey Championships - NSWPSSA Girls, NSWCHSSA Girls and NSWPSSA Boys.
- Successfully hosted the inaugural NSWCHSSA Boys' Australian Football Championship.The North Coast team placed fifth, with two students being selected in the NSWCHSSA merit team.
- Expanded the implementation of an online student, school and office bearer registration system to streamline operations and enhance security.

232 Schools
40,802 Participants

HUNTER

- Successfully hosted two state championships - NSWPSSA Tennis at Broadmeadow and NSWCHSSA Girls' Basketball at Maitland.
- Won five state championships - NSWCHSSA Girls' Basketball, NSWCHSSA Girls' Football, NSWCHSSA Boys' Football, NSWCHSSA Boys' Rugby (joint winners) and NSWCHSSA Under 16 years Girls' Touch Football.
- Implemented an online registration platform to streamline the process of collecting consent forms.

249 Schools
63,186 Participants

ASSOCIATIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

RIVERINA

- Outstanding success at state championships - NSWCHSSA Boys' Australian Football (Riverina-South West first, Riverina-Murray third) and NSWCHSSA Netball (second). Nine players (Boys' Australian Football) and two players (Netball) selected for NSWCHSSA merit teams.
- New record established by Binya Public School, winning gold in the prestigious Earl Magee relay at the NSWPSSA Swimming Championships. This performance broke a 17-year-old record.
- Initiated the 'Riverina Medal' to recognise an individual athlete for outstanding performance/contribution at NSWPSSA and NSWCHSSA Championships.

162 Schools
22,491 Participants

SYDNEY NORTH

- Won four state championships - NSWPSSA Boys' Basketball, NSWPSSA Girls' Basketball, NSWCHSSA Boys' Touch Football and NSWCHSSA Girls' Touch Football.
- Successfully hosted two state championships – NSWCHSSA Girls' Softball and NSWCHSSA Boys' Volleyball.
- Successfully implemented contact-free apparel and ticket sales for Swimming and Cross Country Championships to meet COVID-19 guidelines and increase efficiency.

227 Schools
107,265 Participants

SYDNEY SOUTH WEST

- Established a new zone, Macarthur, to commence operating in 2022, in response to the exponential growth of the number of students within schools in the largest zone, Razorback. This initiative will provide greater opportunities for students to engage in sporting activities.
- Increased provision of events for multi-class athletes at Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Championships, leading to increased student participation. Primary and secondary Association multi-class liaison officers were also appointed.
- Broadened affiliation numbers of infants-only schools to support access for eligible students into the Representative School Sport Pathway.

201 Schools
87,217 Participants

SYDNEY WEST

- Won three state championships - NSWCHSSA Girls' Softball, NSWCHSSA Girls' Cricket and NSWPSSA Rugby League.
- Hosted the NSWPSSA Girls' Football Championship at a state-of-the-art football facility. Access was granted to high quality fit for purpose playing areas, which also allowed for the modified playing format introduced at state level in 2021.
- Successfully implemented contact-free ticket sales for spectators attending Swimming and Cross Country Championships to streamline the entry process.

262 Schools
104,011 Participants

ASSOCIATIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

WESTERN

- Successfully hosted three state championships in Semester 1 – NSWCHSSA Girls' Cricket, NSWCHSSA Netball and NSWCHSSA Girls' Touch Football.
- Placed first in the NSWCHSSA Secondary Girls' Volleyball Championship and NSWCHSSA Girls' Squash Championship.
- Initiated an online nomination system for all office bearers and implemented online meeting platforms to ensure best practice.

192 Schools
26,347 Participants

NORTH WEST

- Successfully hosted four state championships - NSWCHSSA Boys' Basketball, NSWCHSSA Girls' Volleyball, NSWPSSA Rugby League Opens and NSWCHSSA Boys' Touch Football.
- Facilitated the inaugural Come-and-Try Athletics day for students with disability, providing opportunity for 139 students and 65 staff to participate.
- Initiated an online student, school and office bearer registration system to streamline operations and enhance security.

151 Schools
18,123 Participants

NSWPSSA

NSW Primary Schools Sports Association comprises affiliated schools from Government, Independent and Catholic systems, allowing access to cross-sectoral programs.

- Successfully conducted ten state championships under stringent COVID-safe protocols throughout Terms 1 and 2. State merit teams were selected, photos and state apparel distributed.
- Collaborated with the School Sport Unit to implement a representative pathway for Girls' 12 years and Under Australian Football. The success of this program will see it continue in 2022, with a planned selection process for the School Sport Australia Championship.
- Developed and launched contact-free apparel distribution, providing all stakeholders with confidence and security in purchasing.

2,308 Schools
393,169 Participants

NSWCHSSA

NSW Combined High Schools Sports Association comprises affiliated public secondary schools.

- Successfully conducted 52 state championship and state trials' events for secondary students under stringent COVID-safe protocols throughout Terms 1 and 2.
- Introduced Girls 7's Rugby Union pilot program. The success of this program will see it continue in 2022.
- Effectively adapted sporting grants program designed to improve student access and participation through a digital platform.

560 Schools
326,984 Participants

NSW ALL SCHOOLS

The NSW All Schools comprises students and teams representative of the NSW Department of Education, NSW Combined Independent Schools and Catholic Schools NSW. NSW All Schools is responsible for selecting fully representative NSW teams to participate in School Sport Australia competitions. The NSWCHSSA administers the NSW All Schools teams that compete at School Sport Australia Championships.

NSW PREMIER'S SPORTING CHALLENGE

To promote increased participation in sport and physical activity, leading to healthier, more active lifestyles, the Premier's Sporting Challenge (PSC) is a multi-faceted program offering a range of initiatives to students and teachers across the state.

2021 saw continued high engagement in the PSC challenges, including the 10 week Challenge (10wC) and new initiatives, Race Around Australia (RAA) and Activ8 your Workplace. Resources for PSC challenges had greater digital focus, partly in response to COVID-19, but also to make the challenges more engaging. There was also a greater use of the 10wC tracker app, largely due to students learning from home.

The PSC Student Ambassador program was available to all schools. There was a **35%** increase in the number of Student Ambassadors recognised for their assistance and promotion of physical activity and sport initiatives in their school.

456,155
Participants

1,465
Schools

90
Corporate office teams

Registered for PSC challenges in 2021

NEW INITIATIVES

- **Race Around Australia (RAA)**

Continuing from the success of the pilot run in 2020, RAA was offered to all schools as a challenge option for the PSC for 2021. There was keen interest from schools and RAA was run in Term 2 as separate school and staff challenges. A total of **1,260** classes/teams made up of **23,271** participants travelled almost **1,500,000** kilometres in this year's race.

- **Activ8 your Workplace (staff initiative)**

In Term 3, a new program was introduced, The Secretary's Wellbeing Challenge, Activ8 your Workplace, specifically targeting DoE Corporate Staff. This 8-week program promoted a holistic approach to health, using RAA as a focal point. To support participants to reach their activity goals, the PSC team hosted '10@10' - an online, daily 10-minute HIIT workout at 10am. Over **2,000** participants tuned in over the 8-week period. A total of **613** staff participated in the challenge across **58** teams, tracking enough kilometres to travel around Australia 11 and a half times!



NSW PREMIER'S SPORTING CHALLENGE

COLLABORATIONS

Following an evaluation of the PSC Sport Leadership Program, the SSU has engaged the University of Newcastle to develop an initiative to support leadership opportunities for primary school students. This will include professional learning for teachers, a structured program for peer leaders in Stage 3 and support resources to deliver activities with younger students focusing on the development of fundamental movement skills. The effects of the study will be investigated in a randomised controlled trial, and pending the outcome, the program will be available to schools in 2023

iPLAY has been delivered in **174** NSW schools in collaboration with the Australian Catholic University and the University of Newcastle. iPLAY has been shown to increase students' cardiorespiratory fitness levels through an internet-based delivery model. All schools are able to access this program across the state. Additionally, the SSU collaborated with NSW Health and the Department's PDHPE curriculum team to develop the Fast Start resource cards, which are available in the Teacher Resource Hub. Work is also underway with experts in the field to develop and investigate the impact of a fundamental movement skills' assessment tool, an adapted version of Burn2Learn, specifically designed to engage students with disability, and an enhanced Resistance Training for Teens program.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The PSC has a range of strategies to recognise and reward the engagement and achievement in physical activity initiatives by students and teachers in NSW public schools.

- **260,000 PSC Challenge certificates** sent to schools and Department offices to recognise individual or class achievement.
- **3,834 PSC Student Ambassadors** (35% increase from 2020) - students who are recognised as actively assisting their school to promote physical activity and sport initiatives such as the 10wC and RAA.
- **2,500 PSC Student Medals** distributed to schools to recognise outstanding student commitment to sport and physical activity.



DISABILITY AND INCLUSION

The SSU is committed to developing and implementing inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities and pathways for students with disability across NSW. These focus on ability, participation, enjoyment and skill development. Opportunities include gala days, Multi-Sport days, knockouts and Come-and-Try Athletics days, and are available for students with disability who are in Schools for Specific Purposes, specialist support classes, as well as a mainstream setting. The SSU also seeks to strengthen support for teachers and specialist support staff, as well as increasing resources, which are two of the four focus areas identified in the Department's Disability Strategy.

Key achievements included:

- Expanded the Come-and-Try Athletics program, building on the well-established annual Campbelltown event, with six additional days throughout NSW.
- Hosted **10** Multi-Sport days in Term 2, with hundreds of students with disability participating in a range of different sports in a fun and engaging format. A further 18 events were planned in Semester 2, but were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Presented informative webinars to groups such as Special Education Hubs, parent/carer groups and itinerant support staff networks on what the SSU can offer, the classification process and the representative pathway for students with disability.
- Collaborated with Boccia Australia to develop Boccia refereeing and coaching professional learning opportunities, leading to over **120** schools registering for the Boccia state knockout competition.



16
Events held in Semester 1

1,900+
Students participated

725
School staff attended



- Collaborated with universities that are conducting research into the benefits of sport and physical activity for students with disability, as well as an investigation of pre-service teacher training programs.
- Over **120** schools registered for the Boccia state knockout competition, a four-fold increase from the previous year. The creation of a new resource called Boccia Blast was trialled across the state. A virtual school challenge using this resource was introduced in Semester 2, in response to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.
- Introduced the inaugural Ten Pin Bowling state knockout competition, with in excess of **130** schools registering. COVID-19 cancellations saw this event reformatted into an online competition.

Moving forward, the SSU remains committed to increasing inclusive sport opportunities. Planned events for next year include: **30** Multi-Sport days, **10** Come-and-Try Athletics events, the expansion of Boccia and Ten Pin Bowling knockout competitions and sport-specific gala days in conjunction with NSW PSSA/CHSSA Championships. Preparations have also begun for the potential introduction of representative sports for students with disability in 2022. University research will continue into best practice to deliver sport and physical activity opportunities for students with disability and the creation of more specific TPL opportunities.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABILITY BROKEN HILL VISIT

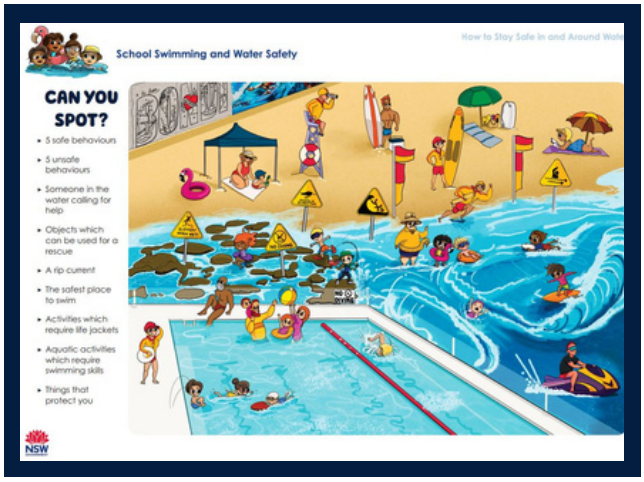
- Visited **9** schools in Week 9, Term 4.
- Hosted **70** Boccia sessions.
- Conducted staff meetings to discuss future events.
- Met with Barrier PSSA president to discuss teacher professional learning sessions for teachers, counsellors and support staff.

SCHOOL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY

The NSW Department of Education funds learn-to-swim and water safety education programs for primary school students to develop water confidence and provide basic skills in water safety and survival. Schools can access programs for their students through different delivery models, designed to meet their needs in the local context. Opportunities are also provided for students in Schools for Specific Purposes and Intensive English Centres.

PROGRAM MODELS

The new School Water Safety Program was introduced as an option for schools to deliver an intensive set of pool-based lessons focusing on water safety. This 5-day intensive program was piloted successfully in Term 1 and 2 this year, with schools attending programs in Metropolitan Sydney. All schools now have the option to deliver this program, remain with the 10-day Learn-to-Swim Program, or elect to run both to better suit the different needs and abilities of students.



'LET'S BE WATER SAFE' RESOURCES

To support a stronger focus on water safety awareness, new classroom learning resources have been developed and are now available for classroom teachers to access and deliver curriculum mapped units of work. These resources include an extensive collection of handouts and a series of five engaging animated videos to deliver key water safety messages.

The resources complement the existing 10-day Learn-To-Swim program and new 5-day School Water Safety program, and are available in the Teacher Resource Hub resources' section on the SSU website.

ENHANCED REGISTRATION

To reduce the administrative load for schools, the registration and reporting system to register for programs and return results has been enhanced. Registrations for the 2022 season (which commences in Term 3) will open in the first week of the new school year.

110,000
Students enrolled in programs

1,400
Schools enrolled in programs

500
Qualified swim teachers employed

SCHOOL SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY

COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS

The impact of COVID-19 on program operations has been extensive. At the start of the school year, Term 1 and 2 programs were limited to the 5-day School Water Safety Program to maximise the number of schools able to participate after the impact of cancelled programs in Term 3 and 4, 2020.

Normal operations and programming were planned to return from Term 3, 2021, however, these were halted due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. With the easing of restrictions, funding has been offered to registered schools to provide the opportunity to run a school-based program, where possible, in their local setting.

2022 PLANNING

Full operations are expected to return as normal at the start of 2022, with both programs available to participating schools, providing broader reach of water safety education with the “Let’s Be Water Safe” resources.





POLICY AND GUIDELINES

The SSU oversees the Sport and Physical Activity Policy and Guidelines, providing advice and support for teachers and schools to ensure high-quality, safe and enjoyable sport and physical activity for students.

A wide range of support is offered to schools to develop appropriate risk assessments, ensure the requirements are being addressed, and help to clarify what schools can and cannot do when offering sports and physical activities. 2021 saw additional ongoing support for schools and teachers in the management of COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to this, significant undertakings have been commenced in the review of the Sport Safety Guidelines and the necessary support provided to schools in meeting the Sport and Physical Activity Policy.

Throughout this year, the Sport Safety Guidelines and the Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) teams have worked closely to develop a teacher rescue award that addresses the compliance requirements for supervising aquatics-based activities. Links to professional learning offered by the SSU have been made across all sports and, where applicable, in the mandatory reading.

Additional updated advice and resources have been developed in support of “competitive diving” – shallow water starts.

Gender diversity in sport was a key topic prior to lockdown and will become a greater focus piece moving forward.



236

Email enquiries related to COVID-19 and managing restrictions

TEACHER RESOURCE HUB

Throughout 2021, the SSU offered a range of high-quality teaching and learning resources and professional learning to support schools in the delivery of engaging and research-informed sport and physical activity programs.

635
Teachers participated in face-to-face workshops

2,379
Teachers participated in online workshops

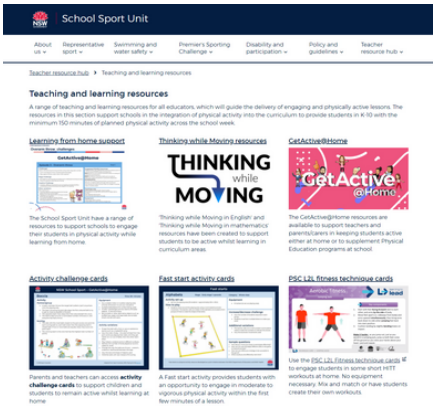
29%
of participants were from rural/remote schools

E-LEARNING COURSES

In 2021, two new e-learning courses were launched: Thinking while Moving (TwM) and Game-based learning in sport and physical activity. As of December 2021, the e-learning courses had engaged **2,150** teachers in high-quality teacher professional learning at a time when face-to-face professional learning was not possible. Of the participants, **35%** teach in rural and remote schools. In 2022, the SSU is planning the release of more engaging and highly informative e-learning courses, including the 'Recognising and responding to concussion' course.



> **The Game-based learning PL was comprehensive and practical. It is one of the best I have ever participated in. The learning is engaging and motivating. It has given me ideas and the confidence to incorporate more games-based activities in my teaching and learning program. I highly recommend this course.**
>
> **- Teacher participant, 2021**



RESOURCES

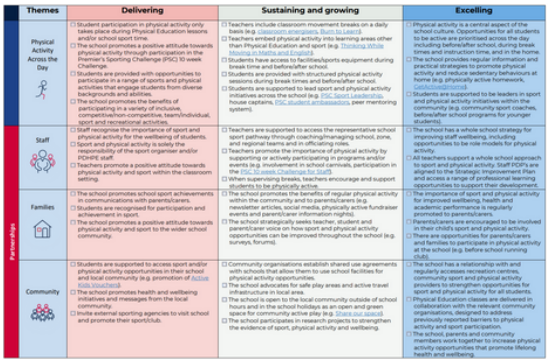
In 2021, new teaching and learning resources were created and released to provide support and guidance to schools to engage students in quality sport and physical activity throughout the school day. This included **60** new Thinking while Moving task cards, **35** Fast Start cards, **30** Activity Challenge task cards and **21** HIIT activity plans.

TEACHER RESOURCE HUB

GETACTIVE@HOME

The SSU also provided schools with GetActive@Home weekly learning sequences to support teachers in providing their students with 150 minutes of structured physical activity while learning from home. The GetActive@Home episodes, developed in collaboration with the Arts Unit, received over **300,000** views. As a key component of the Department of Education's Wellbeing Week celebrations, the SSU released a special GetActive@Home episode to support student wellbeing and promote the benefits of regular physical activity.





Themes	Delivering	Sustaining and growing	Excelling
Physical Activity Across the Day	☐ Student participation in physical activity only takes place during Physical Education lessons and/or school sport time. ☐ The school promotes a positive attitude towards physical activity through participation in the Premier's Sporting Challenge (PSC) 10 week Challenge. ☐ Students are provided with opportunities to participate in a range of sports and physical activities that engage students from diverse backgrounds and abilities. ☐ The school promotes the benefits of participating in a variety of inclusive, competitive/non-competitive, team/individual, sport and recreational activities.	☐ Teachers include classroom movement breaks on a daily basis (e.g. classroom energisers, Bum to Learn). ☐ Teachers embed physical activity into learning areas other than Physical Education and sport (e.g. Thinking While Moving in Maths and English). ☐ Students have access to facilities/sports equipment during break time and before/after school. ☐ Students are provided with structured physical activity sessions during break times and before/after school. ☐ Students are supported to lead sport and physical activity initiatives across the school (e.g. PSC Sport Leadership, house captains, PSC student ambassadors, peer mentoring system).	☐ Physical activity is a central aspect of the school culture. Opportunities for all students to be active are prioritised across the day including before/after school, during break times and instruction time, and in the home. ☐ The school provides regular information and practical strategies to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviours at home (e.g. physically active homework, GoNoodle.com). ☐ Students are supported to be leaders in sport and physical activity initiatives within the community (e.g. community sport coaches, before/after school programs for younger students).
Staff	☐ Staff recognise the importance of sport and physical activity for the wellbeing of students. ☐ Sport and physical activity is solely the responsibility of the sport organiser and/or PDHPE staff. ☐ Teachers promote a positive attitude towards physical activity and sport within the classroom setting.	☐ Teachers are supported to access the representative school sport pathway through coaching/managing school, zone, and regional teams and in officiating roles. ☐ Teachers promote the importance of physical activity by supporting or actively participating in programs and/or events (e.g. involvement in school carnivals, participation in the PSC 10 week Challenge for Staff). ☐ When supervising breaks, teachers encourage and support students to be physically active.	☐ The school has a whole school strategy for improving staff wellbeing, including opportunities to be role models for physical activity. ☐ All teachers support a whole school approach to sport and physical activity. Staff PDP's are aligned to the Strategic Improvement Plan and access a range of professional learning opportunities to support their development. ☐ The importance of sport and physical activity for improved wellbeing, health and academic performance is regularly promoted to parents/carers.
Families	☐ The school promotes school sport achievements in communications with parents/carers. ☐ Students are recognised for participation and achievement in sport. ☐ The school promotes a positive attitude towards physical activity and sport to the wider school community.	☐ The school promotes the benefits of regular physical activity within the community and to parents/carers (e.g. newsletter articles, social media, physically active fundraiser events and parent/carer information nights). ☐ The school strategically seeks teacher, student and parent/carer voice on how sport and physical activity opportunities can be improved throughout the school (e.g. surveys, forums).	☐ The school has a relationship with and regularly accesses recreation centres, community sport and physical activity providers to strengthen opportunities for sport and physical activity for all students. ☐ Physical Education classes are delivered in collaboration with the relevant community organisations, designed to address previously reported barriers to physical activity and sport participation. ☐ The school, parents and community members work together to increase physical activity opportunities that promote lifelong health and wellbeing.
Community	☐ Students are supported to access sport and/or physical activity opportunities in their school and local community (e.g. promotion of Active Kids Vouchers). ☐ The school promotes health and wellbeing initiatives and messages from the local community. ☐ Invite external sporting agencies to visit school and promote their sport/club.	☐ Community organisations establish shared use agreements with schools that allow them to use school facilities for physical activity opportunities. ☐ The school advocates for safe play areas and active travel infrastructure in local area. ☐ The school is open to the local community outside of school hours and in the school holidays as an open and green space for community active play (e.g. Share our space). ☐ The school participates in research projects to strengthen the evidence of sport, physical activity and wellbeing.	

INTERCONNECTION

Throughout 2021, the SSU has continued to support schools to embed physical activity through a whole-school approach to improve student wellbeing. The 'Interconnection between physical activity and wellbeing in schools' professional learning was delivered to over **100** schools. Schools are supported to implement an evidence-based, whole-school sport and physical activity program to improve wellbeing and to use the Sport and Physical Activity: School Health Check as an evidence-based self-assessment tool. The ongoing support schools receive is tailored to meet the identified needs of the school community.

96% of participants reported an increased understanding of triangulation of data, the QDAI process to structure inquiry and how sport and physical activity can be applied to support student wellbeing through a whole-school approach.

COLLABORATIONS

The SSU continued to work with state and national sporting organisations to adapt existing workshops and to incorporate more online learning opportunities. In 2022, the SSU will continue to adapt the delivery methods of these courses to ensure teachers can gain the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance learning opportunities and physical activity for all students.



ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES IN 2021

During 2021, the SSU team embarked on a range of initiatives to provide additional opportunities and support for students and parents/carers, whilst recognising the work of colleagues. Highlights include:

GIRLS AFL

NEW COMPETITION

Established the inaugural, Girls' 12 years and Under Australian Football Primary selection pathway. This initiative catered for 300 student athletes across NSW. From the six cross-sectoral representative sides selected, a final day of competition was held at Blacktown International Sports Park, where a NSW merit team was selected. This program will be expanded in 2022 to include a two-day culminating competition leading to NSW selection for the School Sport Australia Championship.



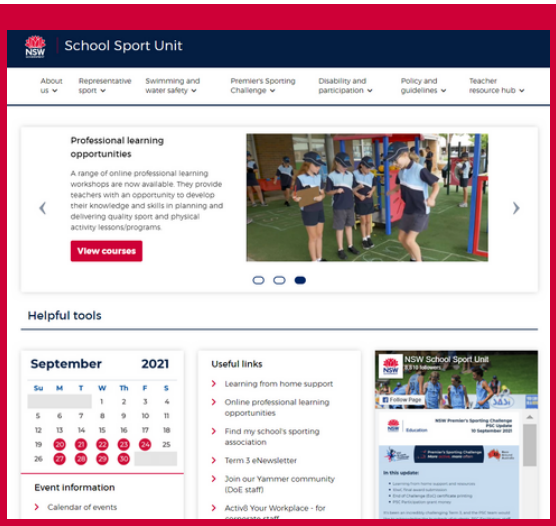
Girls AFL 2021

WEBSITE UPDATE

RE-DESIGN AND RESTRUCTURE

Comprehensive re-design of the website home page and program landing pages, including:

- restructure of site layout
- implementation of drop-down mega menu for large devices and hamburger menu for small devices
- launch of new 'Teacher Resource Hub' section
- updated Swimming and Water Safety section.



SSU AWARD CEREMONY

TEACHERS RECOGNISED STATE-WIDE

The inaugural SSU Award Ceremony showcased and recognised the outstanding contributions made by teachers in supporting/delivering our programs and providing exceptional sport and physical activity opportunities for students in NSW public schools. Recipients of awards were nominated by colleagues and selected by a panel. This event was hosted online in 2021.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

The School Sport Unit, through its programs and support, is committed to emergent areas of equity including increased opportunities for students with disability, as well as improved access and visibility to programs for rural and remote students and their families. Areas of focus in 2022 will include but not be limited to:

PLAN TO RETURN TO FULL OPERATIONS

2022 will see the SSU return to full operations of all programs, including the Representative School Sport Pathway. It is anticipated that approximately **200,000** students and **15,000** teachers from NSW public schools will participate in our suite of programs. In doing so, the SSU remains committed to progressing as a leader in the provision of sport and physical activity opportunities and system-wide support.



INCREASED EVENT LIVESTREAMING

The livestreaming of sporting events across NSW aims to create greater equity of access and enhance the viewing experience by community and family members. Awareness and engagement with SSU programs will increase

EXPANSION OF DIGITAL PRESENCE

Moving forward, there will be an increased focus on optimising SSU's digital presence, specifically through key social media platforms (Facebook and Yammer) and the SSU website. These channels will be utilised to deliver informative and practical content to our target audience (teachers and parents/carers), increasing awareness of our programs and support, as well as encouraging participation in these programs.



CONTACT US

schoolsportunit@det.nsw.edu.au

(02) 9508 5500