



THIS GIRL CAN

THIS GIRL CAN – VICTORIA YEAR 4 CAMPAIGN REPORT (2021)

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, our This Girl Can – Victoria campaign has inspired more women than ever before.

The campaign has been embraced by women looking for inspiration to get active or get back into physical activity – despite the challenges of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

This report outlines how women responded to the ‘new normal’ during the coronavirus pandemic,

with over 340,000 women inspired to get active at home or in their neighbourhood as a result of This Girl Can – Victoria.¹

The campaign celebrates everyday women giving it a go and getting active no matter what their skill level, what they look like, or how sweaty they get.

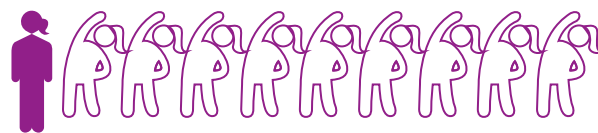
VicHealth has encouraged and motivated women right across the state to become more active, through 4 years of this behaviour-change campaign.

¹ La Trobe University, 2021, Campaign Evaluation Report August 2021 (unpublished).



WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE IN 2021

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, we knew that Victorian women weren't sufficiently active, with only half getting enough physical activity each week. We knew the other half participated in less than 30 minutes of physical activity 5 times per week. 1 in 10 women in Victoria did no physical activity at all in a typical week.ⁱⁱ



1 In 10 Victorian women
do no physical activity
in a typical week

VicHealth research in 2020 suggested that during the coronavirus pandemic, women's physical activity levels were more severely impacted than men's, with half of Victorian women exercising less than before coronavirus and 3 in 4 women stopping sport. Only 2 out of 4 men's sports routines were impacted negatively.ⁱⁱⁱ



In 2020, **women's physical activity levels were more impacted** than men's

But there were positive signs – 39% of women turned to exercising at home for the first time during the pandemic, including 19% who hadn't been active before. 40% of women who started exercising at home for the first time continued to do so in late 2020 and early 2021.^{iv}

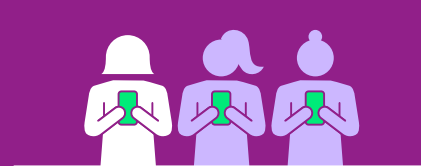
The research also showed:



2 out of 5 (30%) of women turned to exercising at home for the first time during the pandemic^v



Almost 80% of women want to see more women with a range of body shapes included in physical activity advertising^{vi}



Two-thirds of women aren't motivated to get active by fitspiration videos featuring toned and taut influencers and fitness instructors^{vii}

As a result of these insights, we looked to deliver a campaign that would encourage women to get back into physical activity and continue some of the new forms of activity they started in 2020.

ⁱⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, 4364.0.55.001 *National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18: Physical Activity Victoria*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2021, VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study, Melbourne (unpublished)

^{iv} La Trobe University 2021, At Home Exercise Campaign Explorer Report, Melbourne (unpublished)

^v La Trobe University 2021, At Home Exercise Campaign Explorer Report, Melbourne (unpublished)

^{vi} Intuitive Solutions 2020, How women feel about activity and exercise marketing, a report prepared for VicHealth, Melbourne (unpublished)

^{vii} Intuitive Solutions 2020, How women feel about activity and exercise marketing, a report prepared for VicHealth, Melbourne (unpublished)



Objectives

This Girl Can – Victoria launched in 2018 with the aim of motivating and empowering women to be active. The campaign inspires women to get active in whatever way they choose. It empowers women to feel comfortable in their bodies and in public spaces. This is about women getting active without worrying about being judged for their ability, what they look like, or where they come from.

This Girl Can – Victoria smashes outdated stereotypes about what women can and can't do in sport, in the gym, and in their neighbourhoods. It not only motivates and inspires women to get out there and be active, but it also creates opportunities for women to get active, in whichever way they choose.

As a behaviour change campaign in its fourth year, the overarching objectives have not changed. If anything, the coronavirus pandemic has shown the importance of sticking to the original objectives of increasing physical activity and supporting gender equality.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE 1

Increase physical activity

among women in Victoria,
with a focus on less active women.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE 2

Support gender equality

by challenging traditional gender
roles and stereotypes in sport and
celebrating women in this space.

WHAT WE DID IN 2021

Following the launch of new creative in 2020 highlighting the importance of how activity makes women feel, the fourth year of the campaign continued this focus.

Our research showed that when women shift from thinking about how they look when they exercise to how they feel when they move, it helps to moderate the fear of judgement and foster more enjoyable and sustained activity patterns.

As a result of extreme disruption to the 2020 campaign due to the coronavirus pandemic, we faced a unique situation where the majority of our creative showcasing new ambassadors had not been widely distributed. Any creative that featured activities that were not permitted under public health guidelines could not be used, such as community sport, group fitness or where the women were not physically distancing.

As such, we were able to continue to focus on this message around the feeling of getting active, without worrying about 'creative fatigue.'

We were able to apply many lessons from 2020, including offering more content focused on exercising at home to suit the varying levels of coronavirus restrictions through the life of the campaign.

The campaign paid media activity ran from 28 February 2021 to 27 June 2021, featuring a mixture of TV, billboards, online video, social media and search advertising. As Victorians began to move more freely throughout the state, This Girl Can Week returned in 2021 from 22 to 28 March to provide greater support for women to return to exercise or try something for the first time, with online and in person opportunities.

We worked with physical activity providers to hold free This Girl Can Week events to signal a return to sport and active recreation and partnered with Federation Square to bring This Girl Can Week to the heart of Melbourne's CBD.

Federation Square's This Girl Can Week included free in-person, beginner-friendly physical activity classes and daily online on-demand and live-streamed classes.

The 2021 campaign was impacted by coronavirus restrictions for its final 4 weeks and its target audience also impacted by restrictions limiting their opportunities to undertake physical activity and recreation.

In response to this snap lockdown, VicHealth boosted 'at home workout' content on social media and ensured all creative was in-line with public health advice.

Restrictions were progressively eased, commencing on 3 June for regional Victoria and 10 June for metropolitan Melbourne. Physical recreation and sport (including community sport) opened in metropolitan Melbourne on 17 June, subject to density quotas.



Campaign elements

In year 4, the campaign elements were as follows:



Advertising – on TV, outdoor (retail shopping centres), online (video and search), social media (Facebook and Instagram) and in regional newspapers.



Ambassadors – a focus on ambassador stories that highlighted the ‘felt benefits’ of physical activity. There were 21 new ambassadors recruited in 2020, whose stories were not widely shared in the Year 3 campaign due to coronavirus restrictions. To many of our audience, 2021 was the first time they were seeing some of these stories.



Media engagement – sharing our ambassadors’ stories with national, regional, suburban, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and other targeted media outlets.



Social media – continuing to build and engage a community of women on Facebook and Instagram using #ThisGirlCanVIC.



Campaign supporter program – enabling stakeholders to use the campaign to promote their own activities, along with helping them to create welcoming and inclusive environments for women and girls.



Digital – Communication to women – an email program to reach and inspire women to be active, showcasing our ambassadors’ stories.



This Girl Can Week – building on the success of 2019, This Girl Can Week returned, after being cancelled in 2020. It offered opportunities to increase women’s participation with many stakeholders offering free or low-cost beginner and women’s only sessions across Victoria.



Federation Square Activation – The campaign partnered with Federation Square in 2021 to bring This Girl Can Week to the heart of Melbourne’s CBD. The partnership also included the creation of 24 Fed Square hosted classes, with in-person, live streaming and on demand video options.

EVERYDAY WOMEN AS AMBASSADORS

The campaign speaks to women aged 18 and over who are less active, through the voices and stories of our ambassadors. Our ambassadors are everyday women from all walks of life, right across the state. They include:

- younger and older women
- mums and non-mums
- women from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- women with disabilities
- women from across the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, non-binary and gender diverse (LGBTIQA+) community
- women from a range of socio-economic backgrounds
- women living in both metropolitan and regional Victoria.



THE RESULTS

Campaign impact in 2021

Despite the continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the fourth year of the campaign has been a great success.

We've inspired more women than ever before to get active!

In 2021, just over 340,000 women were inspired to get active as a result of seeing the campaign. That's approximately 1 in 6 Victorian women aged 18–65.

1 in 2 (52%) Victorian women aged 18–65 reported that they recognised the campaign. This was an uplift on the result reported in the 2020 COVID-19 impacted campaign and consistent with the result reported in 2019 (54%). The recognition levels were achieved despite significantly lower level of investment available for the 2021 campaign compared to 2019, with a 50% reduction in paid media spend. This suggests the channel mix, similarity of execution style and content has been successful in continuing to reach the target market.

Campaign message is resonating

Over 4 years, the campaign has built a strong messaging foundation, with 76% of women able to identify an on-strategy message as their key takeaway. This is a significant jump from previous years, with 61% on-message in 2020, dipping as low as 53% in 2019.

Committed to change

Of the women who did something active as a result of the campaign, 58% reported they are committed to continuing this change throughout the rest of the year, and an additional 34% said they were somewhat committed to maintaining their activity levels.

VicHealth conducts 'pulse' surveys to check in with the evaluation cohort at regular intervals between campaign periods. When surveyed 4 months after the evaluation survey, 81% of women who did something active as a result of the campaign had continued being active.



THE RESULTS



In 2021, over

340,000

women aged 18-65 were inspired to get active as a result of seeing the **This Girl Can - Victoria** campaign

Four months after the campaign ended,

81%

of women who did something active had kept it up



1 in 6

Victorian women aged 18-65 got active after seeing the **This Girl Can - Victoria** campaign

Impact with diverse audiences

This Girl Can – Victoria represents cultural diversity in Victoria by featuring women from a range of cultural backgrounds, including: Filipino, Indian, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Turkish, Polynesian, Greek, Spanish, French, Pakistani, Chinese, Taiwanese, African and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

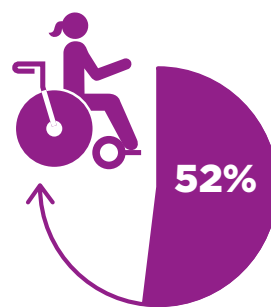
The campaign is resonating with women from multicultural backgrounds. We observed the same levels of action amongst CALD women (52%) compared to non-CALD women after seeing the campaign (52%).

Just over 1 in 2 (52%) of women with disability recognised the campaign, up from 46% in the covid-affected 2020 campaign. This figure is also on par with women without disability.

Impact across the state

There was no statistical difference between regional and metropolitan Melbourne, suggesting the campaign is resonating across the state. There was also no statistical difference between levels of socioeconomic areas.

52% of culturally diverse women said they got active as a result of seeing the ad as well as **52% of the non-culturally diverse women**



52% of women with disability recognised the campaign

OUR RESEARCH

Campaign development

Our campaign planning and development continue to be built upon:

- use of the FLOWPROOF Model* to inform planning, implementation and evaluation
- utilisation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour* as the underpinning theory to guide the campaign
- pre-formative research (segmentation research and focus group testing)
- formative research (focus group testing and stakeholder consultation)
- use of a Program Logic* to guide campaign development and evaluation.

A systems-based approach

The success of This Girl Can – Victoria campaign over 4 years can be attributed to the systems-based approach we took to creating change.

We worked directly with sporting clubs, physical activity providers, local councils, and sporting organisations to make the environment as welcoming to women as possible.

This Girl Can – Victoria is shifting the way women see themselves (and others) being physically active and building a community of supportive and empowered women across Victoria.

While a key objective of the campaign is to motivate and empower women to be active, the campaign also focuses on influencing the places and spaces where women go to get active, to ensure they feel welcome, included and supported to give something a go.

This is why:

- we've worked with sporting organisations to create social, flexible, fun sports programs
- we created the 'Getting more women active' resource to upskill activity providers
- we've created an online community of women supporting women.





Our evaluation process

VicHealth has a strong focus on creating and strengthening the evidence base for health promotion action to improve people's health. This means that rigorous research and evaluation are at the centre of all our work.

For This Girl Can – Victoria, the evaluation encompassed process, impact and outcome evaluation, and included qualitative and quantitative methods. VicHealth appointed the Centre for Sport and Social Impact at La Trobe University to evaluate the campaign.

Key evaluation and research elements to date have included:

Quantitative research – Campaign impact and outcomes were assessed via an online survey of the target audience. A total of 8,643 women have now been surveyed to understand the impact of the campaign at different points in time (4 baseline surveys ahead of any campaign activity and post-campaign surveys from 2018–2021). In 2021, 1036 women responded to the post-campaign research survey, conducted from 24 May – 11 June 2021.

An additional survey of 1521 women was conducted in 2020 to further understand women's participation in physical activity or exercise at home during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic period from March 2020 – November 2020.

In total, we have surveyed 10,164 women about their participation in physical activity over the last 4 years of this project.

Qualitative research – in-depth phone interviews with 40 women in year 1, to explore emerging themes from the target audience. Interviews (with 24 Victorian women) were conducted in year 2 to develop a greater understanding of women's engagement with and experience of sport, exercise and physical activity.

Process evaluation – reports on each campaign element were collected from the relevant agencies throughout the campaign delivery, to feed into the process evaluation and to inform future campaign activities. VicHealth also surveyed ambassadors, supporters and stakeholders to gather insights. A regular monitoring process during the campaign phase supported real-time insights and gathered both anecdotal and data-driven evidence.

* See Glossary on page 15.

LESSONS LEARNT ALONG THE WAY

As outlined above, the campaign built on the success of previous years, by continuing to deliver a contemporary, localised and relevant campaign. Below we have outlined some of the key learnings of the behaviour change campaign.

Contingency planning

With the lessons of 2020 still front of mind as we planned for 2021, additional measures were built in to ensure the campaign's flexibility.

We had a contingency plan in place for our paid advertising, with an understanding of the ramifications should coronavirus restrictions alter what creative could be used. This proved useful, with restrictions coming into effect in May 2021. We were able to swiftly alter our creative to reduce time off-air.

We worked with our Campaign Supporters to offer hybrid This Girl Can – Week activities, with both face-to-face and online activities offered.

It remains essential, particularly in the new COVIDsafe world that physical activity providers are equipped to deal with a potentially shifting delivery model, as Victoria looks towards post-pandemic recovery.

PR

It was valuable to have new research into how women exercised at home during the coronavirus pandemic. This provided a fresh, newsworthy angle for the 2021 campaign, coupled with a strong call to action for women to explore our Get Active @ Home page and This Girl Can Week activities.

Paid Media

Not all women saw the campaign in the same way. The different results across the various cohorts underscore the value of a multi-channel strategy for the campaign.

The 'mix' of channels used to promote the campaign is important in achieving a reach of all the different cohorts of women across Victoria. Campaign evaluation demonstrates an 18% uplift in recognition when women view the campaign across multiple channels compared to 1 channel only.

Social media advertising achieved the broadest reach, with 31% of Victorian women reporting having seen the campaign on social media. These investments have been particularly successful in reaching younger cohorts (women aged 18–34).

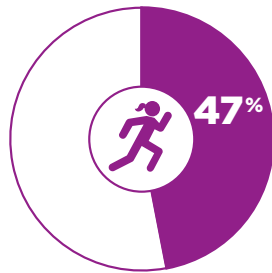
This Girl Can – Victoria campaign results by views and channels

1-3 TIMES



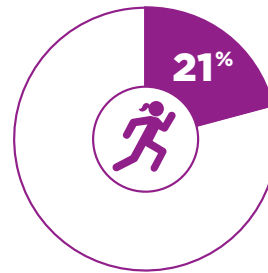
Among women who saw the campaign 1-3 times, **25% went on to do something active**

8+ TIMES



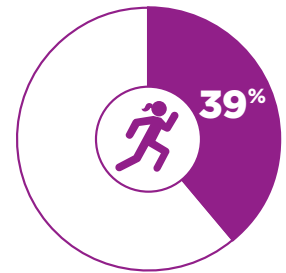
Among women who saw the campaign more than 8 times, **47% of them were active as a result**

ONE CHANNEL



Among women who saw the campaign through one channel, **21% of them went on to do something active**

MULTIPLE CHANNELS



Among women who saw the campaign through multiple channels, **39% of them went on to do something active**

Organic Social Media (unpaid)

Our highest engagement on organic social media (without paid advertising) came from the user-generated-content (UGC) and highlighting the importance of diversity and inclusiveness via our posts. Women responded well to posts that encouraged body positivity and becoming active in a way that felt safe and enjoyable for them.

Our home workout videos encouraged working out in a safe environment and feeling empowered to still get active despite the continued impacts of the pandemic. These videos featured everyday women, a critical component of our content strategy.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders continue to respond positively to the campaign. Grassroots support has maintained growth, with 1300 campaign supporters registered. We worked closely with Campaign Supporters as they emerged from a turbulent year and looked to reopen and rebuild their offerings safely, with a welcoming environment. Over 220 personalised This Girl Can – Victoria campaign materials were approved.

You can access our Year 1 – 3 campaign reports and key learnings on the This Girl Can – Victoria website at <https://thisgirlcan.com.au/about-us/>.

We're really proud of our results over 4 years of this successful behaviour change campaign. As we look towards 2022, we're going to shake things up by launching This Girl Can – Victoria in Spring. This timing will allow us to understand how the campaign performs at a different time of year and will provide strong opportunities for stakeholders to plan This Girl Can activities after the 'opening up' of Victoria following the coronavirus pandemic.

We encourage campaign supporters to use the Campaign Supporter Toolkit and Poster Generator at any time during the year. These can be accessed through the [Campaign Supporter Portal](#). Our social media presence and support for Campaign Supporters will continue to operate throughout the year.

GET INVOLVED

Want to get involved and support the campaign? There are only 4 things to do:

1

Share the campaign far and wide

The more often women see the campaign, the more likely they are to get active. Help us reach and inspire every woman across Victoria.

2

Check out social media

Listen to the community of women and join the conversation with the hashtag #ThisGirlCanVIC

3

Use the campaign to promote your own activities to women locally

Register as a Campaign Supporter at thisgirlcan.com.au

4

Make changes where you can

See our step-by-step guide (gettingwomenactive.com.au) to getting more women to sign up for physical activity (includes checklists and suggested scripts for marketing, customer service, the physical environment and programs and activities).

Find out more

THIS GIRL CAN - VICTORIA

Online

thisgirlcan.com.au

Facebook

facebook.com/ThisGirlCanVIC

Twitter

twitter.com/ThisGirlCanVIC

#Hashtag

#ThisGirlCanVIC

TV ads

thisgirlcan.com.au/watch-the-ad

Ambassadors

thisgirlcan.com.au/meet-the-girls

VICHEALTH

Online

vichealth.vic.gov.au

YouTube

youtube.com/user/VicHealthMedia

#Hashtag

#VicHealth

GLOSSARY

Less active

Based on the number of days in the past week that they have completed a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity (which was enough to raise their breathing rate).

Less active means they have completed this level of activity on only 0–4 days.

FLOWPROOF Model

This is a best-practice protocol comprising nine components:

- formative research
- logic model development/use of theory
- development of objectives including KPIs
- well-resourced (considering resource and partnerships)
- conducting a Process evaluation
- running the campaign
- on-the-ground support
- outcomes
- financial and summative (integrated) evaluation, including cost breakdown and returns on investment.

For more information, see [1606-Mass-media-evidence-review-final.pdf](#) (preventioncentre.org.au).

Theory of Planned Behaviour

A theory which assists in predicting behaviour and intentions from attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

For more information, see Ajzen, I (2012), 'The theory of Planned Behaviour' In PAM Lange, AW Kruglanski, & ET Higgins (Eds.), Handbook of theories of social psychology (Vol. 1, pp. 438–459). London: Sage

Program Logic

A program logic describes how a program is intended to work. It aims to represent the causal links for a program and to link each component of a program to intended short- intermediate- and long-term outcomes.

For more information see the Department of Health's [Guidelines on research evidence and evaluation](#).

Research partner



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR
SPORT AND
SOCIAL IMPACT



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
Level 2/355 Spencer St, West Melbourne VIC 3003
T +61 3 9667 1333 F +61 3 9667 1375

thisgirlcan.com.au

[#ThisGirlCanVIC](https://twitter.com/ThisGirlCanVIC)



VicHealth is committed to health equity, which means levelling the playing field between people who can easily access good health and people who face barriers, to achieve the highest level of health for *everyone*.

VicHealth acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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<https://doi.org/10.37309/2021.PA1034>