



Who parkruns and why?

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‘parkrun’ provides free weekly 5km timed run/walk events in parklands on Saturday mornings in 14 countries. Since established in the United Kingdom in 2004, nearly 2 million people have participated in a parkrun event, including almost 300,000 in Australia since launching in 2011.

We conducted an online survey to find out who participates in parkrun and why, and whether parkrun has potential for helping people become more physically active. 280 Tasmanian adults completed the survey and this is what they told us.



Who parkruns? The great news is that parkrun appears to attract a wide range of people, including groups of people that for many reasons are less likely to participate in regular physical activity, such as parents with non-adult children, women and those living with overweight, obesity, poorer health, injury or disability.

How much parkrun do people do? parkrun participation ranged from 1-176 events over a registration period of 1-5 years. The average run or walk time of survey participants was just under 30 minutes but ranged from 19 to 55 minutes. The Australian guidelines for physical activity recommend that adults aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity (which includes walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity across a week. That means that parkrun can make a significant contribution to the recommended weekly physical activity goal.

Why do people parkrun? The key factors associated with higher levels of parkrun participation were: enjoyment; perceived social benefits; feeling capable of completing the parkrun course; intentions to participate in parkrun; and participation in parkrun events in other Australian states.



Summary: parkrun shows great promise as a setting for physical activity promotion. It engages people who are less likely to participate in physical activity and it can make a significant contribution to the weekly recommended physical activity target.

Where to next:

Now that we are starting to understand who participates in parkrun and why, further work will aim to explore these findings by delving into these reasons in more detail, and by following different groups of parkrun participants over time to understand participation patterns. We can also use these findings to help design and test strategies to encourage others to participate in parkrun-related physical activity, leading to improvements in health and wellbeing.