

Females behind big boost to Aussies skateboarding and surfing

Sarah Perillo and Christopher Harris, July 17, 2022 2:30PM Kids News

SPORT

Reading level: **Green**

Women are behind a surge* in the popularity of skateboarding and surfing, with an estimated 200,000 females across the nation taking up the sports since the pandemic began.

In its latest snapshot of the nation's physical activity, the Australian Sports Commission* found most Aussies who had taken up skating (119,000) and surfing (196,000) between 2019 and 2021 were female and aged 15 and over.

The report found "exergaming"— using game consoles* like Xbox or PlayStation to do exercise – was also on the rise, soaring* from fewer than 10,000 participants in 2019 to 935,000 in 2021.

Basketball was the fastest-growing team sport with 219,000 extra participants from 2019 to 2021.

Football grew by 196,000 participants, while volleyball increased by 121,000 and cricket 102,000.

The report found physical exercise had now returned to pre-pandemic levels, with women most active.

Ella Smit, 17, from Gippsland, said she fell in love with skateboarding several years ago when watching professionals on the world stage.

"I saw girls skating and doing tricks on TV and YouTube and wanted to give it a go," Ella said.

She watched 14-year-old British skateboarder Sky Brown at the Olympics and was inspired to try the sport.

"I watched her during the Olympics and thought she was really cool," Ella said.

Mother Gabby Smit said she was supportive of her daughter getting involved in a typically male-dominated* sport.

"I've always encouraged Ella to get involved in any sport she chooses to do – as long as she's happy and enjoys it," Ms Smit said.

"I think it's important to get representation* of females in the sport."

Victorian Skateboarding Association president Bernard Griffiths said the addition of skateboarding to the Olympic Games roster boosted participation levels among young people.

"It's great for young people and girls to have role models out there," Mr Griffiths said.

"Parents are also more interested in getting their kids coached now it's seen as a legitimate* sport."



Mr Griffiths said female participation continued to grow every year.

The association ran sessions during the pandemic as a part of its All Aboard program, which encourages women to get involved.

“We ran sessions online with 80 to 100 people in each – every session was full,” Mr Griffiths said.

“A lot of people loved skating during the pandemic to keep active.”

Australian Sports Commission chief executive Kieren Perkins welcomed the bounce back in physical activity.

“Adults are participating in more activities than they did two years ago, and while men and boys are driving the return to clubs, women continue to be physically active more often,” he said.

Did you take up a new sport or activity during the pandemic?

Yes

No

Cast your vote

GLOSSARY

- **surge:** a sudden, big increase in something
- **commission:** official group or peak body responsible for something
- **console:** a piece of electronic equipment for playing computer games
- **soaring:** rising very quickly to a high level
- **male-dominated:** industry or activity controlled or influenced by or mainly involving men
- **legitimate:** accepted, real, official
- **representation:** person or people speaking or acting on behalf of a particular group

EXTRA READING

Extra-curricular kids happier and healthier(<https://www.kidsnews.com.au/health/wellbeing-benefits-of-afterschool-activities-dont-happen-on-screens/news-story/fa5077c9c0fc90a50788dcd90bf056cb>).

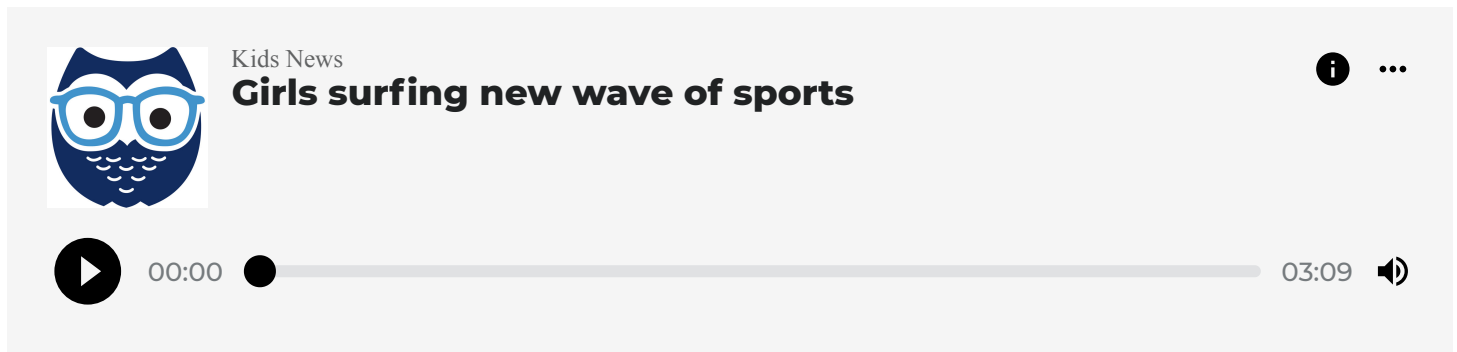
Female skaters ramp up Olympic ambitions(<https://www.kidsnews.com.au/sport/female-skateboarders-ramp-up-their-olympic-ambitions/news-story/1923058e2e68c5d2d1ab3c5475269646>).

eSports in line for Brisbane Olympics debut(<https://www.kidsnews.com.au/sport/esports-could-push-out-aussie-favourites-at-2032-brisbane-olympics/news-story/f39e398e6db39ca4dcac368c5ff3a928>).

QUICK QUIZ

1. How many women have taken up surfing and skateboarding since the pandemic began?
2. What was the fastest growing team sport and how many extra participants started playing?
3. How many participants are now estimated to be “exergaming”?
4. Football increased by how many participants?
5. Which skateboarder at what international competition inspired Ella to try the sport?

LISTEN TO THIS STORY



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Growing participants in sport

List three reasons why you think skateboarding and surfing have become so popular with young girls and women?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think participant numbers in sports, such as basketball and cricket, have increased so much between 2019 and 2022?

State three other facts you find interesting from the Australian Sports Commission’s snapshot of the nation’s physical activity levels.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Time: allow 20 minutes to complete this activity

Curriculum Links: English; Mathematics; Health and Physical Education; Critical and Creative Thinking

2. Extension

Conduct your own survey on what physical activities the boys and girls in your class participate in. Present your results as a graph or list of statements analysing the data.

Time: allow 20 minutes to complete this activity

Curriculum Links: Mathematics; English

VCOP ACTIVITY

To sum it up

After reading the article, use your comprehension skills to summarise in a maximum of three sentences what the article is about.

Think about:

- What is the main topic or idea?
- What is an important or interesting fact?
- Who was involved (people or places)?

Use your VCOP skills to re-read your summary to make sure it is clear, specific and well punctuated.

