



Media Release

November 2017

AUSSIE PARENTS SPEND OVER ONE BILLION HOURS FACILITATING THEIR CHILDREN'S SPORTING ACTIVITIES

New report reveals the impacts sporting activities are having on parents and children

A new study released today by Real Insurance has revealed the enormous sacrifices Australian parents make for their children's sporting activities including devoting over one billion hours (1.09 billion hours) on average every year in transporting them to and from sporting venues, being involved in their children's sporting activities and waiting at the sidelines - this equates to 848 hours per family every year.

Looking specifically at time spent transporting their children to and from sporting activities, the *Australian Active Kids Report* found that parents spend three hours on average during the weekdays and 2.6 hours during the weekends driving to sporting engagements which equates to over 414 million hours per year for all Australian parents.

According to the report, almost two in five Australian parents have children who are involved in sporting activities several times a week (39.3%) with a further 45.2 per cent committed to sporting activities at least once a week.

In addition to this, parents are also spending \$2,180 on average per year on their children's sporting activities – a substantial household outgoing and a cost that more than three quarters of parents believe to be very expensive (76.0%).

Head of Corporate Affairs and Real Insurance spokesperson Tatiana Day said, "For children in Australia, being involved in sporting activities is a vital part of growing up, and this report reveals the extraordinary lengths parents will go to in order to support their children's activities.

"The new report shows the tremendous distances parents are travelling and the costs incurred to ensure their children fulfil their sporting ambitions."

Financial sacrifices are made to support children's sporting activities by two thirds of Australian parents (64.5%), and they often budget for these extra costs by spending less on themselves or their partner (64.4%). Interestingly, the costs associated with playing sports have forced three in five parents to limit the amount of sporting activities their children can participate in (63.0%).

Whilst seven in ten Australian parents think children aged six years and younger should start playing sport for recreation (70.0%), two thirds of parents have noticed the pressure this can have on children (66.4%), with over 60 per cent of parents agreeing that the focus on competitive sports is making children stressed these days (63.4%).

Sporting activities are one way to keep children healthy and active, however they can cause pressure in families, with two in five parents agreeing they struggle to keep up with expectations set by schools and other parents (44.9%). Furthermore, three in five parents agree that everyone is a bit obsessed with children's sporting activities these days (61.1%).

Dr Lisa Barnett from the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) at Deakin University said, "Keeping up with extra-curricular activities takes as much commitment from parents as it does for children, and the report truly demonstrates the extent of this.

"We know sport has multitudes of health and social benefits for kids but this study shows that parents need to weigh this up with associated travel and costs. A great solution would be more sporting activities that are lower in cost (or free) and closer to home".

It appears most parents are not only dedicated with their time, but also with their attention. Three quarters (75.4%) of Australian parents agree that while their children are playing sport, parents are 'watching what's going on and supporting'. Parents have also turned their children's sporting commitments into a chance to make some new friends as over half of parents (56.8%) say they socialise with other parents while at the game, with under a third (30.7%) admitting to browsing social media.

"Parents understand the benefits their kids get from sport and this is why many make the effort for their children but it is also just as important to realise that children can get health, social and motor skill benefits from unorganised play. Taking the kids to a park or playground or letting them visit their friends on their bikes will increase their physical activity levels and give other positives such as independence and connection to their own community." concluded Dr Barnett.

Additional findings from the *Australian Active Kids Report*:

- Australian parents spend 848 hours on average per year transporting, waiting and being involved in their children's sporting activities; this equates, on average, to 8.6 hours during the weekdays and 7.7 hours during the weekends.
- Parents travel 3.4 billion kilometres and spend over \$2.1 billion per year to facilitate their children's sporting activities.
- Parents estimate spending an average of \$533 for extra training or coaching, \$409 for sports camps and tours or away games and \$337 in joining clubs for all their kids in their household each year. Parents also annually spend an average of \$297 for competition fees, \$206 for equipment, tech and safety gear and \$172 for clothes.
- The majority of children's sporting activities are identified as 'team sports' (53.6%) and 'competitive sports' (31.4%) by the parents.
- The majority of parents agree at least to some extent that they feel they always 'rush from one place to the next' in taking their children to and from sporting activities (61.1%).
- More than half of parents agree that they find themselves in the situation where more than one child has sport commitments on the same day (57.6%); of these, over 50 per cent handle this by taking a 'divide and conquer' approach with their partner (56.4%), and one-quarter (26.2%) rely on other parents to assist with drop off, pick up and supervision.
- Close to three in five parents are happy to be involved in their children's sporting activities (57.7%), while a further third of parents agree they are happy to get involved but it can get overwhelming and/or tiring (35.4%).

- Many parents admit the commitment to their children's sporting activities can feel like an obligation (45%), can get boring (40%) and can make them resentful (32%).

Supporting data is available on the Real Insurance website:

<https://www.realinsurance.com.au/news-views/active-kids-report>

ENDS

Media Enquiries:

Sandrine Atallah
Account Director
Hill + Knowlton Strategies
p: 02 9286 1288 m: 0421663399
heather.doherty@hkstrategies.com

Ben Ingram
Account Executive
Hill + Knowlton Strategies
p: 02 9286 1246 m: 0401 554 097
ben.ingram@hkstrategies.com

About Real Insurance

Real Insurance is an award-winning Australian insurer, with a goal to protect the quality of people's lives. Real Insurance has been named as the top Risk and Life Insurer in Roy Morgan's 2015 annual Customer Satisfaction Awards and was also awarded the 2014 Highly Commended Trusted Brand Award in the Life and Funeral Insurance categories, as voted for by Australian consumers. The company has been in the Australian market since 2005 with product offerings in car, home, life, income, pet, funeral, travel and bike insurance. Real Insurance is a trading name of Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd and The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd.

About the 'Real Insurance Australian Family Travel Survey'

In order to explore the behaviours and concerns of Australian parents when travelling with their families, CoreData surveyed 1,000 Australian parents across the nation in October 2017, all with at least one child aged 18 or under.

Hard quotas by state were also engaged to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples (NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200).