

Lessons for communities from the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index

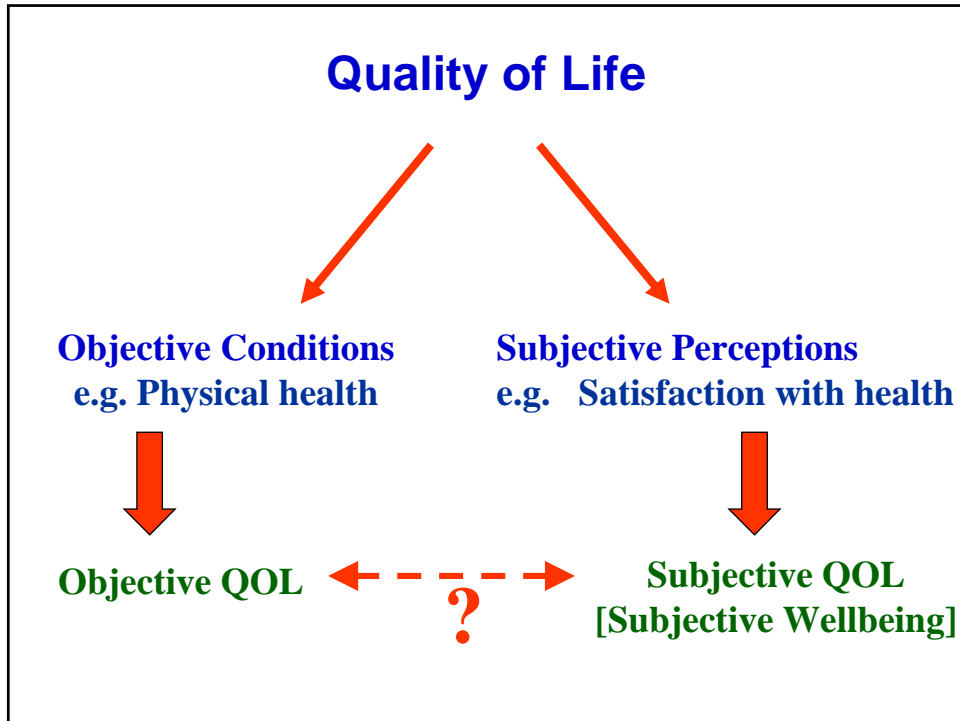
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<http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol>



TAFISA Mission Statement

-----**Sees Sport for All as a major
contribution to individual, social,
community and national life quality**



Subjective Wellbeing

**A normally positive state of mind
that involves the whole life
experience**

How do we measure it?

Personal Wellbeing Index

How satisfied are you with your-----?

- Standard of living
- Health
- Achieving in life
- Relationships
- Safety
- Community connectedness
- Future security
- Spirituality/Religion

Average = Subjective
Wellbeing

Why is subjective wellbeing important?

Positive emotions build a range of personal resources as:

Physical resources (health, longevity)

Social resources (friendliness, social capital)

Intellectual resources (intellectual curiosity, expert knowledge,)

Psychological resources (resilience, optimism, creativity)

In 2000 we linked with our
industry partner, Australian Unity

Purpose: to create a quarterly index of
subjective wellbeing for the Australian
population.

As an alternative to the traditional
economic indicators such as GDP

Our data are drawn from the
Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Surveys

**Geographically representative
sample**

N = 2,000

Telephone interview

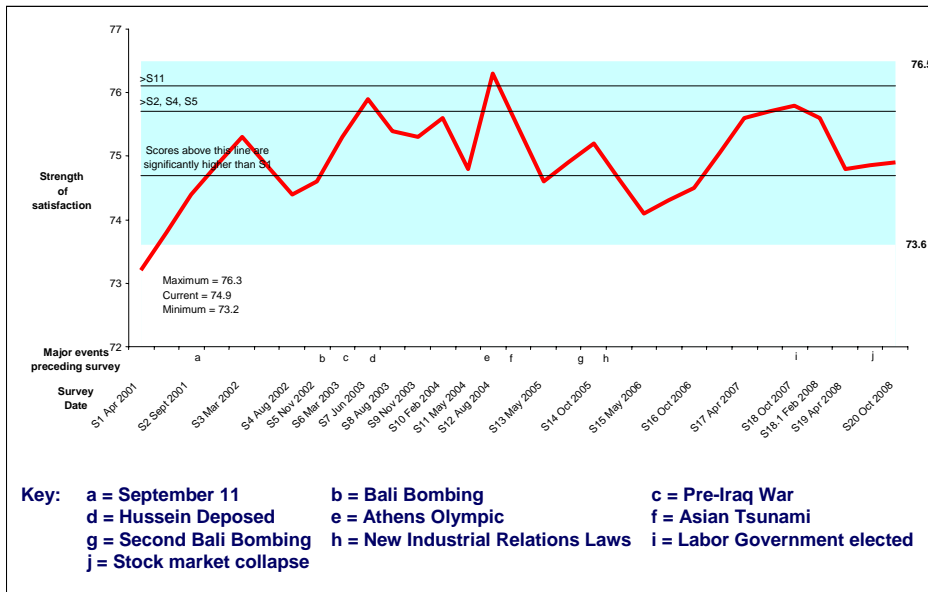
#1: April 2001

#20: October 2008

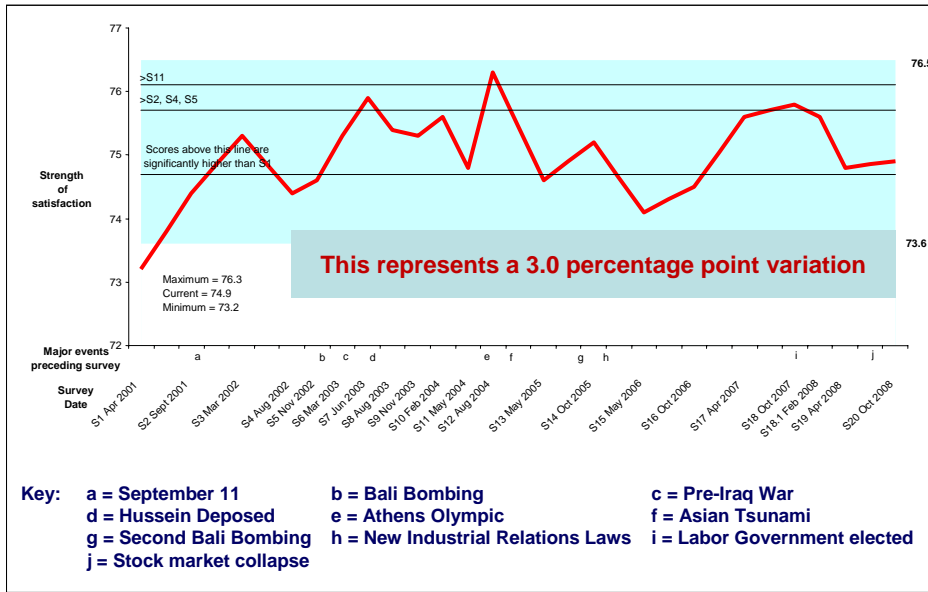
We code all data to lie on a range from



Personal Wellbeing Index



Personal Wellbeing Index



Why is happiness held so steady?

Homeostasis

Just like we hold body temperature steady

Subjective wellbeing homeostasis

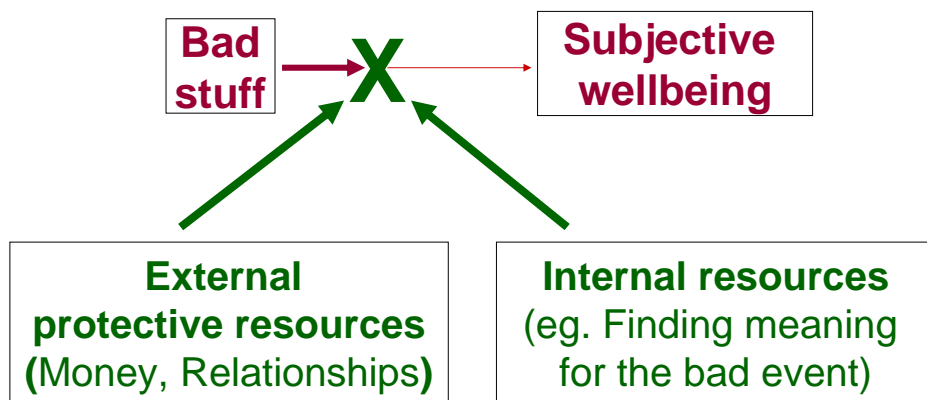
What determines whether we can defend ourselves against homeostatic defeat?

Resilience

(the power to defend wellbeing against sources of threat)

is a balance between resources and the level of challenge

Homeostasis is maintained by using resources for defence



Protective resources allow people to defend homeostasis and their happiness

Homeostasis can fail



The result of subjective wellbeing loss is **depression**

Exercise, sport and life quality

TAFISA
Mission Statement

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This statement seems to imply

1. Involvement in sport is necessarily good
2. More sport is better
3. More involvement is better

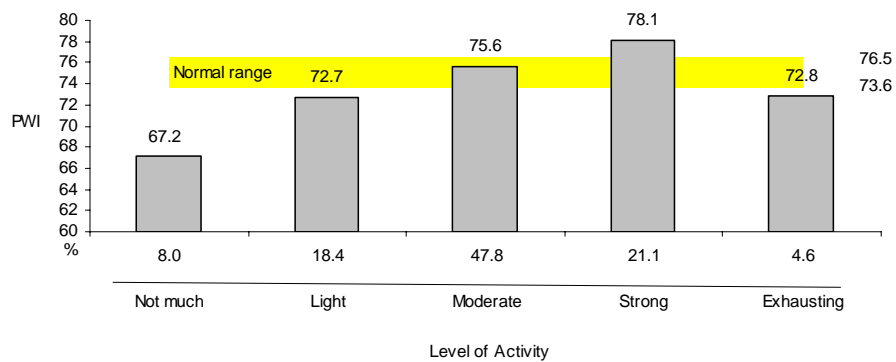
Is this true in relation to Subjective Wellbeing?

Is more exercise better?

Survey 19 (2008)

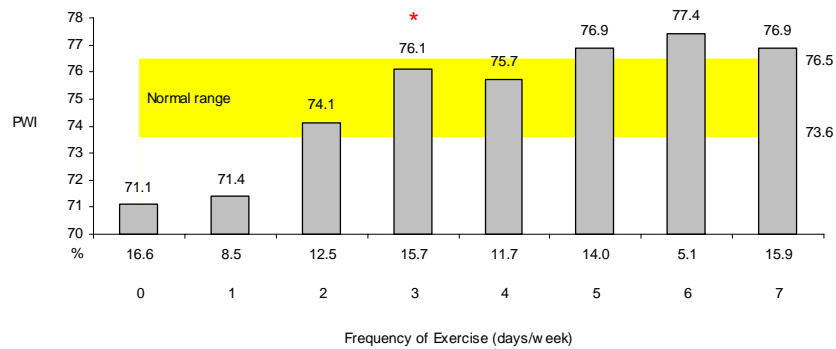
“On an average weekday, how much physical activity do you get? There are five choices –”

- Not much at all
- Light activity
- Moderate activity
- Strong activity
- Exhausting activity



Is more frequent exercise better?

“In an average week, how many days do you exercise for health or recreation?”



Summary (so far) In terms of Subjective Wellbeing

1. More intense activity is not better
2. More frequent activity is not better

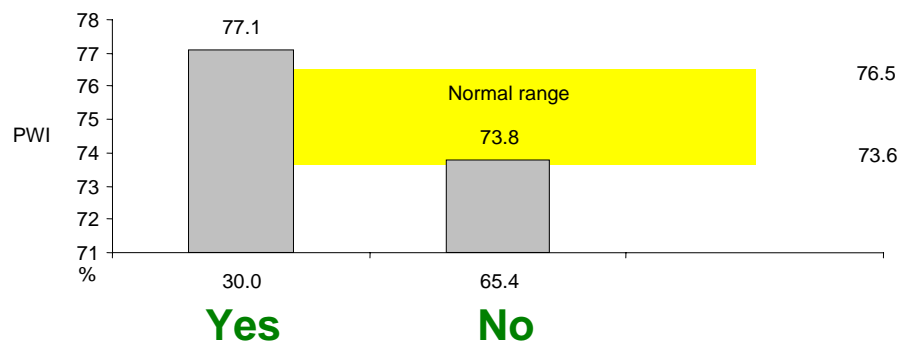
It is starting to look as though we have
to be careful about the messages we
send to young people

Joining team sports

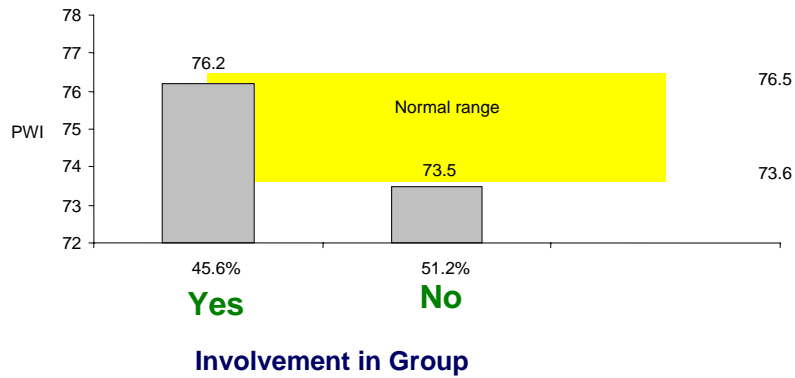
Two questions

1. Is the coincident increase in Subjective Wellbeing a function of the exercise or the social connection?
2. Is involvement in team sports always good for Subjective Wellbeing?

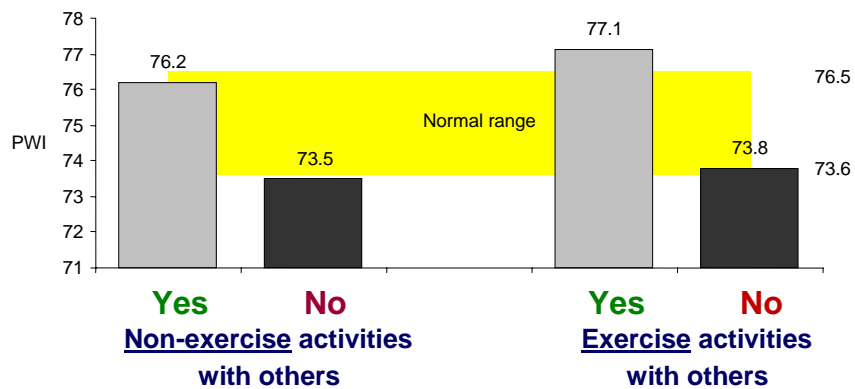
“Are you involved in any team sports or exercise with others?”



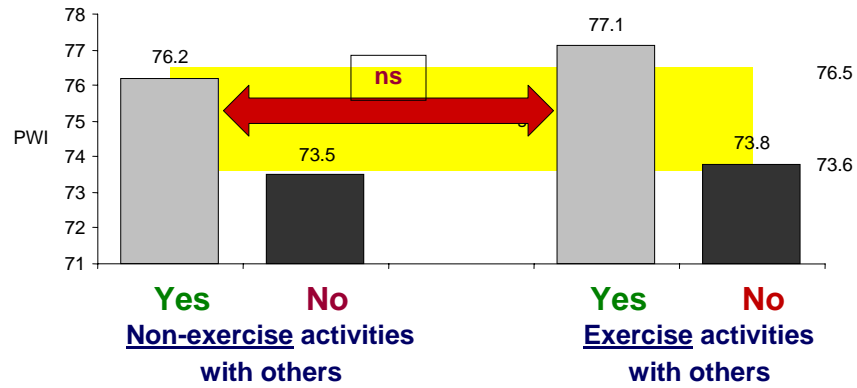
Are you involved in any organised activities with other people that do not involve exercise?



Social involvement vs Exercise



Social involvement vs Exercise



Summary (so far) In terms of Subjective Wellbeing

1. More intense activity is not better
2. More frequent activity is not better
3. **The social aspect of team sports is as important as the exercise**

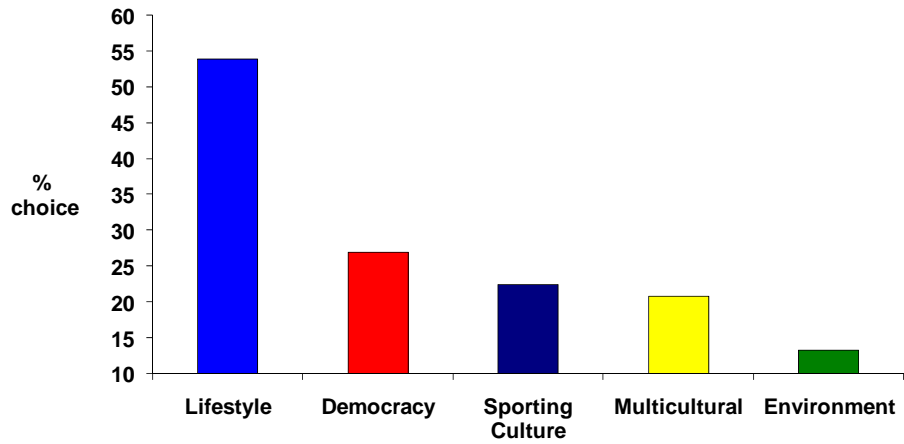
**Are young athletes, who have made sport
their life, placing their Subjective
Wellbeing at risk?**

Survey 8 (2003)

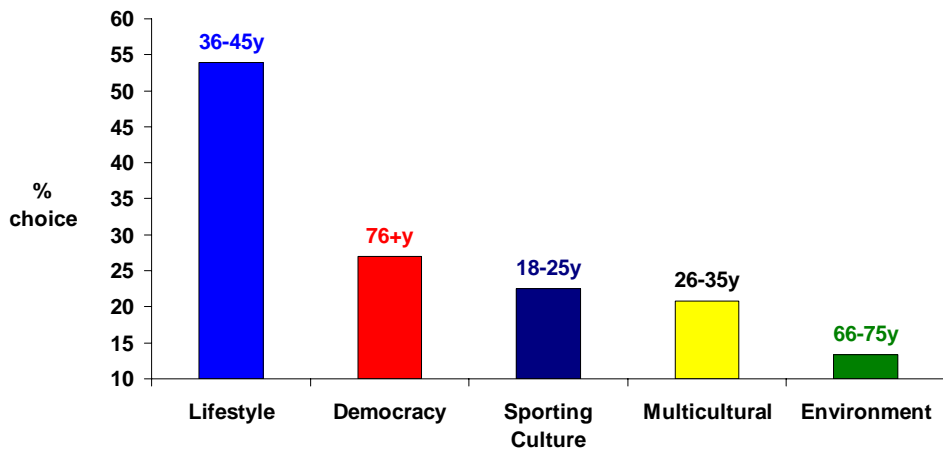
**“Which of the following makes you feel
connected to Australia?”**

- **Our natural environment**
- **Our sense of democracy**
- **Our sporting culture**
- **Our multicultural society**
- **Our life style**

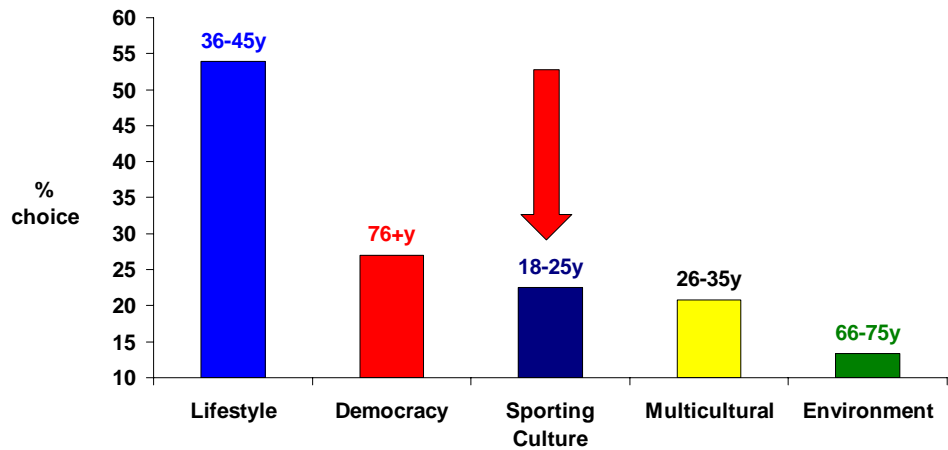
Most popular reason for connection to Australia



Most popular reason for connection to Australia x Age



Most popular reason for connection to Australia x Age



Thinking about the age of peak achievement

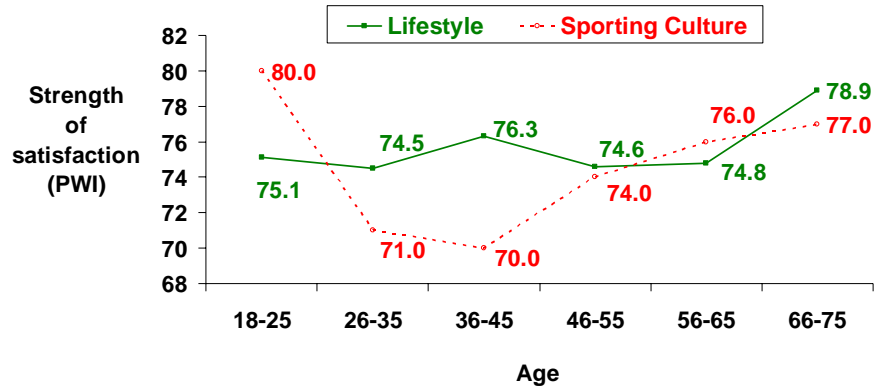
Running, swimming
20-25y

Does scholarly impact decline with age?

[Over, R (1988) Scientometrics, 1988,13,215-223]

Answer - No

Reason for connection to Australia x age



Implications

Top athletes are going to be at risk of losing their wellbeing (depression) after they lose their peak performance

This places a duty of care on the people responsible for managing the sports.

Summary
In terms of Subjective Wellbeing

1. More intense activity is not better
2. More frequent activity is not better
3. The social aspect of team sports is as important as the exercise
4. **We have a duty of care to young athletes after their performance declines**

Summary
In terms of Subjective Wellbeing

1. More intense activity is not better
2. More frequent activity is not better
3. The social aspect of team sports is as important as the exercise
4. We have a duty of care to young athletes after their performance declines

In promoting 'Sport for All' we have to be careful about the messages we send to young people