

ACTSPORT Inc.

Election Policy Recommendations



2008

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1 INTRODUCTION

ACTSPORT is the peak body for the sport and recreation industry in the ACT Region. The organisation has 65 ACT peak sporting and recreation member organisations as well as a number of associate and corporate members and it represents the views of more than 100,000 people or one third of the ACT population.

Sport and Recreation is an important industry in the ACT and is a major engine for the local economy. The joint Economic Impact Study of the ACT Sport and Recreation industry by ACTSPORT and the ACT Government conducted in March 2004 clearly demonstrated our industry’s impact on employment growth and gross state product.

The National Public Health Partnership’s publication *Getting Australia Active* finds that a more physically active population would lead to improved health benefits which could reduce Australia’s disease and injury burden (Bauman, Bellew, Vita, Brown and Owen 2002).

Increased physical activity is noted to be particularly beneficial in:

- cardiovascular disease prevention;
- diabetes prevention and control;
- the primary prevention of some cancers;
- injury prevention and control; and
- the promotion of mental health.

With this in mind ACTSPORT is asking the government to look at the industry as a strategy in reducing the cost of the health system

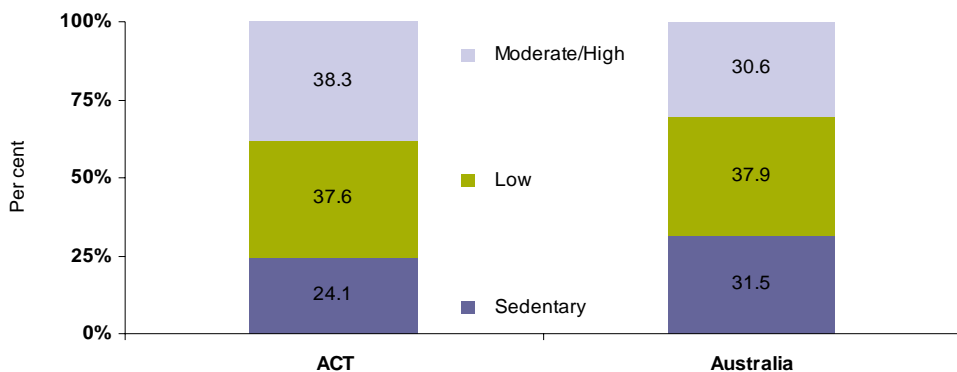
2 PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND RECREATION

2.1 THE IMPACT ON HEALTH

While the ACT’s participation in sport and physical activity is high we should not be complacent as these participation rates do not indicate the frequency and extent of participation. The frequency of a person’s participation in sport or physical recreation is a better indication of the commitment the ACT community has to organised sport and physical recreation.

An ABS survey conducted in 2001 suggests that the majority of Canberrans are doing little or no exercise. Nearly 62 per cent of adult Canberrans are either sedentary or undertake very little exercise. Only 38 per cent are undertaking sufficient activity to achieve improved health outcomes. While the proportion of active adults is higher than the Australian population as a whole, there is no room for complacency (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Adult exercise level, ACT and Australia (2001)



Data source: ABS National Health Survey Cat. No 4364.0 (2001).

The Economic Impact Study also estimated the direct health expenditure savings which could have accrued if the proportion of Canberran's who were sufficiently active increased (see Table 1).

Table 1 Savings in ACT's 1993-94 health expenditure by increasing adult Canberran's level of physical activity

	43% active / 57% inactive	48% active / 52% inactive	62% active /38% inactive	100% active / 0% inactive
CHD	0.20	0.42	1.09	3.37
Stroke	0.19	0.40	1.07	3.85
NIDDM	0.04	0.07	0.19	0.54
Colon cancer	0.02	0.04	0.10	0.31
Breast cancer	0.02	0.05	0.13	0.38
Depression	0.09	0.19	0.48	1.40
Total	0.56	1.17	3.06	9.85

Source: ACIL Tasman estimates.

2.2 THE IMPACT ON ECONOMY

In the year ended June 2001 the ACT's sport and recreation sector had a total output (which is equal to revenue and other income) of more than \$340 million (see Table 2). The sources of this income varied and included income from admissions, subscriptions and membership fees, grants and distributions, sales of goods and services, fundraising and government funding.

Industry value added, the primary building block for Gross State Product (GSP), is a significant proportion of this income. The Economic Impact Study estimates that the sport and physical recreation sector directly contributed more than \$105 million to the ACT's GSP in 2000-01. The majority of this contribution was from wages and salaries paid to the sector's employees (see Table 2).

While impressive, these direct contributions to employment, output and GSP are only a part of sector's contribution to economic activity in the ACT. The sport, fitness and recreation sectors also generate a significant amount of export revenue for the territory. Some of this export revenue is included in the statistics reported above. For example, ticket sales revenue from interstate and international visitors attending professional sports events such as the Canberra Capitals, Brumbies and Raiders matches is included. Similarly, export revenue generated by professional sports teams through sponsorship, radio and television rights would be included in the Sports and Physical Recreation Clubs, Teams and Sports Professionals industry.

Table 2 Direct contribution to ACT output, wages and salaries and Gross State Product, 2000-01

	Income \$m	Wages and salaries \$m	Industry value added (GSP) \$m
Health and fitness centres and gymnasias	10.8	4.2	5.2
Other sports and physical recreation venues, grounds and facilities	12.9	2.5	2.9
Sports and physical recreation services administrative organisations	58.0	11.6	14.9
Sports and physical recreation clubs, teams and sports professionals	21.4	8.4	9.7
Sports and physical recreation support services	109.9	29.2	36.4
Subtotal	212.9	55.9	69.1
Hospitality sports clubs	83.1	20.7	30.7
Sport and physical recreation goods retailing	47.5	5.5	6.2
Total	343.6	82.0	105.9

Source: ACIL Tasman estimates based on ABS catalogues and budget papers, annual reports and personal communications.

The ACT sport and physical recreation sector directly contributed more than \$105 million to the ACT's GSP in 2000-01

2.3 THE IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

The Sport and physical recreation sector is a significant employer in the ACT. In June 2001 the sector directly employed more than 3,271 people.

In addition to this direct employment the sector attracts interstate and international visitors to Canberra through its activities. This sports related tourism generates jobs for Canberrans. The Economic Impact Study estimates that the export related employment generated by ACTSPORT members' events is in the order of 175 people per annum. Thus more than 3,400 people are employed directly, by the sector, or indirectly via ACTSPORT members' events. This estimate of the sector's contribution to ACT employment is conservative as it excludes any indirect employment generated by sports related tourism associated with professional events such as the Brumbies and the Canberra Capitals.

2.4 VOLUNTEERISM IN ACT SPORT AND RECREATION

The sector is assisted by a large number of unpaid volunteers in addition to these employees. In April 2001, for example some 30,400 Canberrans supplied their services in one or more roles as a "non-player". Over a year these voluntary contributions to the sector total 2,300,000 hours of work. The value of this donation of time to community in 2000 was \$44.3 million. Looked at another way sport and recreation volunteers contributed an additional 0.36 per cent to the ACT's GSP in 2000-01. The majority of the non-playing contributions to organised sport are voluntary, that is Canberrans who provide their services for no pecuniary reward (Table 3).

The value of volunteerism time to community in 2000 was \$44.3 million

Table 3 Paid and unpaid non-playing involvements in ACT sport and physical activity, April 2001

	Coach/ teacher/ instructor		Referee/ umpire		Committee member/ administrato r		Scorer/ timekeepe r		Medical support		Other	Total non- playing involvement s		
	'00	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Paid Involvements	3.1	20.1	2.4	32.9	1.7	16.8	0.6	6.5	0.4	16.7	0.8	34.8	9	19.2
Unpaid Involvements	12.	79.9	5	68.5	8.4	83.2	8.7	93.5	2	83.3	1.6	69.6	37.9	80.8
Total Involvements	15.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.
Involvements	4	0	7.3	0	10.1	0	9.3	0	2.4	0	2.3	0	46.9	0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity*, Australia, Cat. No. 6285.0, 2002

3 POLICY PLATFORM

3.1 INDUSTRY PLANNING

Sport and Recreation is an industry that has the potential to increase the ACT's Gross State Product. The achievement of this potential requires the development of an industry plan that must be based on sound research and reliable data. The undertaking of an Economic Impact Study is an essential precursor to the development of a "whole of government" plan.

Policy Recommendation: Seek input from all sectors including sport, health, tourism, education, planning and infrastructure, transport, community sectors and adopt an integrated "whole of government" approach to planning.

Policy Recommendation: Funding to be provided for an Economic Impact Study to build on the results of the 2004 study conducted by ACTSPORT and the Government in order to analyse trends over the past two decades which will assist in strategic targeting assistance to the sport and recreation industry.

The success of the Beijing Torch Relay clearly demonstrated the success of a whole-of-government management of a major public event. However, public controversy surrounding such events demonstrates the advantages to keeping this at 'arms length' to government.

"NSW Major Events" has recently been established by the Premier's Department with a three year budget under a Board with extensive Sports, Media, Higher Education, and Tourism experience with Public Service coordination capacity.

Also, at the same time the Government must introduce funding arrangements to enable associations to bid for events a number of years out from the event. This is necessary because the national and international competition to host major events is very competitive and associations need to be able to be given an appropriate level of commitment of support in the early stages of bidding.

Policy Recommendation: Evaluate the model of "NSW Major Events" established by the Premier's Department to develop an ACT model.

Policy Recommendation: Extend tourism funding timelines for supporting Sporting and Recreation Events bid timelines and create a network of inter government agencies that can assist with these applications to enhance the chances of attracting new events to the ACT.

"Whole of government" approaches to planning

Development of a comprehensive sport and recreation industry training plan

3.2 PARTICIPATION

Until 2007, the sports grants program through Sport and Recreation ACT had slowly grown and is an efficiently run program. Except, with the budget cuts from 2006-07, the removal of the bonus scheme, and the operational funding levels not being reviewed since 2002 many not-for-profit organisations operating in the industry are struggling to retain revenue streams that are adequate support to the administration of their organisations. There has been an increase in project funding in particular the funding of sustainable facilities and increases to the SLISS program but, this funding does not help the relief of rising fuel, wage costs and other operational expenses that the industry faces.

Sport, like any industry is under constant pressures of commercial competition from other entertainment and community based industries as well as inflation but, this increase in operational costs for the industry has not been recognised by the government meaning that many organisations since 2002 that have tri-annual agreements will in fact be receiving less value from their funding at the completion of the agreements. Without a review of operational funding industry organisations will eventually be forced to pass on increases in costs to their members.

Policy Recommendation: Restore sports Operational Assistance funding to \$1.3 million and introduce a CPI increase of tri-annual funding agreements currently at \$795,000.

A major barrier to participation in sport and physical activity is injury – or the fear of being injured - and research has shown that this barrier increases with increasing age and increasing weight. With an ageing and increasingly overweight population, it is critically important to minimise the risk of injury to minimise this barrier to participation.

Injuries themselves are a major cost to the health system and the individual. The “Sport/leisure injury hospitalisations episodes in NSW, 2003-2004” report estimated a rate of 190 hospitalised sport/leisure injuries per 1000 population for 2003-2004. Extrapolated to the ACT, this would give approximately 660 hospitalised injuries for the same period. Each hospital ER presentation costs approximately \$1000 and close to \$4000 for an overnight stay.

Research has shown that most sports injuries are preventable through appropriate education of participants, particularly in regard to using safety equipment, moderating levels of intensity and seeking appropriate and timely treatment.

Policy Recommendation: Ensure on-going support for the subsidised delivery of the Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) sports trainer education program. The SMA program trains approximately 500 volunteer sports trainers every year in the ACT. The sports trainers are the backbone of sports injury prevention at the grass roots.

Policy Recommendation: Ensure continued support for SMA’s Smartplay injury prevention program that provides information and guidance to individual participants.

One of the ways that Canberra makes a name for its self and generates revenue for the territory via the industry is through the assistance for Canberra based organisations to partake in national league competitions. This also provides a realistic pathway for athletes wishing to pursue sport as a career choice and to eventually represent their country. Without national league teams, individuals will be lost to Canberra and potential teams will also leave, thus reducing the economic benefit that these teams provide to the territory. This also keeps elite level funding for Canberra based teams, rather than providing funding to teams that don’t reside or play here except on the odd occasion.

Research has shown that most sports injuries are preventable through appropriate education of participants

Policy Recommendation: Provide greater financial assistance for coaches, officials and administrators to undertake accreditation training.

Policy Recommendation: National League Team funding restored to \$600,000 p.a.

3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

The drought has caused significant problems for outdoor sports and recreation facilities. At a time when the nation is focusing on increasing levels of physical activity for health outcomes, our sportsgrounds and public spaces are becoming more dangerous to play on because of the drought.

For a number of years, the ACT Government-owned outdoor sporting facilities have managed to “get by” on a budget which was significantly less than what it should have been to produce quality, safe surfaces. Considering the investment in new surfaces, higher levels of use on remaining facilities and other drought strategies the ongoing facility maintenance area is still under-funded, it raises major concerns for the safety of those using these facilities.

Quality facilities are needed to ensure that Canberra is able to maintain its participation rate, thus providing significant health, social and economic benefits to the Territory. The current drought conditions are threatening the quality of grounds, which in turn creates a significant safety concern. The need for a long-term strategic plan for facility maintenance is required so that the government can be proactive in dealing with all maintenance issues.

Policy Recommendation: Support the development of a published long-term strategic facility maintenance plan.

Policy Recommendation: Introduce a discrete and on-going program for planning and funding the construction and renewal of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities across the ACT.

Ongoing funding for the development of the grey water network on a strategic long term basis is critical to the long term viability of many sporting and recreation activities.

This program must be based on a detailed collaborative study of the information about current and projected needs that sports are providing as part of the planning for water restrictions and drought proofing deliberations. And, the use of treated water by sporting groups would be a very useful strategy to encourage greater community acceptance to the use and consumption of the increasingly important resource.

As Canberra continues to grow and rates of participation in sport and recreation are to be maintained, then further development of facilities is required. The *Facilities Study 2003* conducted by Sport and Recreation ACT made recommendations that lead to long-term sustainable facility development based on a need being realised.

Policy Recommendation: Continued implement all recommendations of the *Facilities Plan 2003* and review the plan annually within the Sustaining Sport in a Drought Environment Grant Program.

Policy Recommendation: Further research into the development and funding of the progressive extension of the grey water network and use of treated water.

Canberra based National League competitions provide a realistic pathway for athletes

Policy Recommendation: Continued funding for Improved Horticulture Management and Synthetic Surfaces.

The drought and climate change have also highlighted the urgent need for dialogue with the National Capital Authority to investigate more options for greater community use of the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore for sport and recreation activities. Similar options need to be explored for the development of new sporting facilities including grass fields immediately adjacent to Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra and Lake Tuggeranong.

Funding for the development of the grey water network on a strategic long term basis

Policy Recommendation: Greater Community Use of the Lake Foreshores.

It has become increasingly difficult for community groups to access school facilities. This is largely due to the requirement for the community users to have \$20 million public liability coverage but also due to some schools inability to cater for outside users. Our research of other states and the Federal system indicates requirements for only \$10 million coverage. The ACT Government is the only state or local government that is requiring community groups to have \$20 million coverage and there has not been a single payout anywhere near that cost. Furthermore, most not-for-profit community groups are unable to obtain that level of coverage.

A detailed collaborative study by the Government (Sport and Recreation Services and Education) and ACTSPORT, and its members must be initiated to devise a policy position on the joint school/community planning, management, operation and use of school based facilities.

Policy Recommendation: That the ACT Government only requires community groups to have \$10million public liability coverage to access school facilities. Consider having the ACT Government authorities manage school facilities out of normal school hours in order to provide better and more affordable access.

Policy Recommendation: Develop an agreement between the Education Department and Sport and Recreation Services for the opening up of access for indoor sports to unused school facilities such as basketball, netball and volleyball courts to ease the lack of facilities open to these sports.

ACT Sports House was established in September 1984 in order to bring sport and recreation organisations into a shared services environment. The concept has proved to be very effective with the building nearly fully tenanted at all times since its inception. Many organisations have also utilised ACT Sports House for growth purposes, saving money through subsidised accommodation whilst a tenant and then establishing their own facility at an appropriate time. There is still a demand for ACT Sports House, currently at full tenancy, to provide this type of accommodation so that organisations can focus on their activities and participants rather than on overheads. Any changes to current rent levels would impact negatively upon the tenants and their ability to provide quality community level programs.

Increasingly difficult for community groups to access school facilities

Policy Recommendation: Planning for the construction of a modern, accessible and adequately resourced ACT Sport and Recreation House to be incorporated into the Southwell Park Precinct Planning for use by sport and recreation organisations as office space, meeting rooms, function areas and training.

ACT athletes have a right to receive quality services provided by the ACT Academy of Sport. In order to be effective and competitive, ACTAS must at least maintain parity with its peers in the other states in terms of budget, services, staff and infrastructure.

For a number of years now the ACT Academy of Sport had been funded by a 1% levy on poker machines. Unfortunately poker machine revenue has grown but the level of funding to ACTAS has

remained largely static but certainly decreased in real terms. This makes it difficult to deliver quality services and produce athletes which can be competitive at the national and international level.

This is in marked contrast to their counterparts in other jurisdictions which receive higher levels of funding support and services to enhance their opportunities for success. Over time the range of sports supported by ACTAS has been reduced while the number of scholarships offered in other sports has been reduced. At the same time the Academy's capacity to retain staff and maintaining service delivery levels at the Academy has become increasingly difficult under current funding levels.

The efficiency of the Academy is also severely affected by the fact that its operations are conducted at two separate locations. Over the years the ACT Government and sporting organisations have devoted considerable effort and resources to the development of a Masterplan for the Southwell Park Precinct, which provides for the centralisation of the Academy at this site. This must now occur as quickly as possible. At the same time ACTAS must be provided with continued support for its Asset Management Plan for the acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its operating equipment.

Policy Recommendation: ACT Academy of Sport Funding review along with facilities at Southwell Park as per the Master Plan.

Infrastructure projects such as the Molonglo housing development, road development throughout the new suburbs of North Weston and Molonglo and the gas fired power station at Macarthur will affect many of the open space corridors between suburbs which are presently used by people pursuing outdoor recreation. Current initiatives announced in the recent ACT budget including, increased maintenance funding for the Mount Majura Walking Trail (\$100,000), commissioner for the environment - grassland studies (\$112,000), implementation of climate change strategy - protection of high conservation areas (approx. \$340,000). The current North Weston - Molonglo development will result in significant equestrian trail losses. There is great pressure on unleased land for various purposes within the ACT but much of it, whether administered by Sport and Recreation Services or Parks Conservation and Lands provides a resource of significant value in enabling ACT residents to maintain fitness.

Policy Recommendation: There should be continued adequate consultation between Parks Conservation and Lands, Sport and Recreation Services and ACT Planning and Land Authority so that changes of land use planning take into account the need for developments to be planned to ensure maximum open space areas, and particularly to allow recreational corridor connection space between suburbs to be maximised.

3.4 VOLUNTEERISM

The importance of volunteering to the Australian community was taken to new levels of public awareness during the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Around 1,400 of those volunteers were ACT residents, whom have again shown their enthusiasm to back a major event in Canberra with the Olympic Torch Relay and will be critical to the success of the 2008 Pacific School Games in November.

Development of a Masterplan for the Southwell Park Precinct, which provides for the centralisation of the Academy at this site

Over 370,000 people donate their time annually which is valued at just over \$44 million

Volunteering effort builds the capacity of communities to support individuals, families, organisations and groups to work together, to feel a sense of belonging, to foster a shared responsibility for community well-being, to recognise and support diversity and to build the skills and resources of all community members. It is undertaken through a very diverse range of organisations ranging from very small, locally based groups through to large organisations.

Volunteers are the backbone of the sport and recreation industry. Over 370,000 people donate their time annually which is valued at just over \$44 million. This contribution must be continually recognised in order to ensure that the volunteer levels will be maintained or increased.

Voluntary contributions to the sector total 2,300,000 hours of work

Policy Recommendation: Continue to provide a recognition program for Volunteers through the 'Thanks' campaign.

Policy Recommendation: Provide greater support to the ACT community that donates time and experience to the industry at an estimated rate of 2,300,000 hours of work per annum.

3.5 ORGANISATIONAL AND PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

The continued growth of the sport and recreation industry, the need for increased business acumen and the fact that the industry is significantly underpinned by volunteers creates a significant need for training. Both formal (quality accredited industry training) and informal training needs to be available for both volunteers and those employed in the industry.

Policy Recommendation: Support the development of a comprehensive sport and recreation industry training plan including the establishment of financial assistance to association that take on traineeship programs.

3.6 PARTNERSHIPS

It is important that the ACT Government has a positive working relationship with the peak industry body for sport and recreation in the ACT, ACTSPORT. The partnership between the two organisations will assist the industry to achieve in all areas.

Policy Recommendation: Continue to support ACTSPORT to provide appropriate industry leadership, development support and services for the wider sport and recreation industry.

Policy Recommendation: To recognise ACTSPORT as the Peak Industry Body for the Sport and Recreation industry.

It is still increasingly difficult for women's sports to compete on the same level as men's for sponsorship dollars. Furthermore, women's sport participation levels remain low, which is of great concern.

Policy Recommendation: Continue to support the tax credit system for licensed clubs who contribute to women's sport in the ACT as well as provide assistance to women's groups seeking sponsorship assistance.

Childhood obesity is at alarming rates in Australia and the Federal Government recently announced significant funding levels to assist in providing physical activity opportunities to combat youth obesity. Some of this money will be spent in schools and other through delivery of after school programs. It is essential that the delivery of such programs is conducted by trained individuals and that the programs are inclusive. Furthermore it is essential that a wide spread of activities are offered in a variety of settings including schools, after school care centres and community centres.

Policy Recommendation: That Sport, Education and Health agencies work together to ensure that the outcomes for *Building a Healthy, Active Australia* is inclusive, measurable and realised.

Not only has the lack of attention to physical activity caused childhood obesity rates to rise significantly, it has also resulted in children having extremely poor motor skill development. Increasing the levels of physical activity will not only have an impact on reducing the health costs but will also assist to ensure that the sports system in the ACT has a viable future. The draft Physical Activity Standards Recommendations are that children and youth should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

Policy Recommendation: Within programs such as the *Minister's Physical Activity Challenge* Continue to support programs that encourage increased levels of physical activity in schools to beyond 60 minutes per day.

Policy Recommendation: Continue to develop links between programs such as the Ministers Challenge to sport and recreational organisations to encourage students continued participation after these programs have finished.

Policy Recommendation: Institute safe measures with programs such as the *YWCA Walking School Bus* that will encourage children (via parents) to walk or ride bicycles to school as an easy way to build up their fitness at minimal cost.

Increasing the levels of physical activity will not only have an impact on reducing the health costs but will also assist to ensure that the sports system in the ACT has a viable future

As the peak body representing State Sporting Organisations in the Canberra Region who deliver both physical activity and recreational opportunities, ACTSPORT represents the views of more than 100,000 people or one third of the ACT population.

For more information visit - www.actsport.com.au