

Independent Sport Panel Review

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Advocating the social, health and economic importance of community sport and active recreation

This Response is on behalf of the ACT Community Sport and Active Recreation Industry

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[COMMUNITY SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION RESPONSE TO THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN SPORT]

ACTSport is the peak body for community sport and active recreation in the ACT, we represent the not-for-profit community organisations with a combined membership of over 238,000 participants. The industry's aim is to continually increase its capacity to improve and build on its sustainability.

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Executive Summary

ACTSport is the peak body for the sport and active recreation industry in the ACT which represents 74 organisations responsible for the delivery of organised physical activity to more than 238,000 Canberrans. Sport and Active Recreation is a key aspect of Canberra's lifestyle with 88.6% of Canberrans undertaking regular physical activity¹ and as a result is an important industry in the ACT and a major engine for the local economy. The industry's aim is to continually increase its capacity to improve and build on its sustainability.

The organisation is also a member of the Australian State Sports Federations Alliance and has been actively involved in the input from a national perspective to the Panel and other agencies. The views within this response, take into account information gathered at the various forums and is presented from a local ACT perspective.

The ACT is a unique jurisdiction with no local government layer, concentrated population, different baseline demographics from the rest of the nation and an industry that is expected to produce outputs on a par with major capital cities. Many of the recommendations will have an immediate impact on the industry and its capacity to deliver. With these factors in mind the ACT industry also has an environment where it needs to cooperate and, at times compete with, the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Institute of Sport creating benefits and challenges to government and the not-for-profit sector. This is at its highest impact in relation to service delivery as referred to in the report in chapter 1.2.

Our industry response also looks at the issues for funding to community level sport. Over recent years funding at the Territory level in the ACT has been under significant pressure. This is only going to become more of a challenge for delivery organisations access to funding with external pressures brought on by elements such as the GFC and other growth factors. A focus on increasing the capacity of delivery organisations is the key, although this needs to include a planned investment across facilities, operations and participation.

It is the view of the industry that many of the recommendations will not be achievable without parity of funding at the State and Territory level and with clear responsibilities of investment into the various aspects of the system by all governments. To assist in the funding priorities across government's data collection is a priority for best practice and good business planning. The industry supports this recommendation via the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport and building on existing *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS)* Frameworks as this will enable reliable, valid, repeatable and comparable data collection to be relative at a Club and State level and feed into National outcomes that would further strengthen the recommendation.

In conclusion all of the recommendations accepted by the Federal Government need to be underpinned by a strong national policy framework reflected by complimentary policies at the State and Territory level and driven by industry medium term strategic plans to roll in facility, resources, planning and capability outcomes system wide.

¹ 2008 ERASS Data, State and Territory Tables for Australian Capital Territory pg 1

1. Defining Our National Sports Vision

ACTSport with the ACT Industry supports all four recommendations in Defining Our Sports Vision. In particular for the ACT it is imperative that a costed national sports policy framework is agreed upon at the Council of Australian Governments level to enable the Territory Government to better plan and strategically work with the industry to improve capacity.

The Industry believes that this is only achievable with;

- Measurable national objectives for whole of sport priorities for funding,
- National success indicators for both high performance and participation outcomes, and
- National objectives for social inclusion and preventative health outcomes.

The industry in the ACT believes that the State and Club level organisations have the key responsibility to link high performance with the greater community outcomes of participation, social inclusion and preventative health as they are the delivery agents to the Australian community. In order for these not-for-profit organisations to effectively achieve these outcomes a national sports policy framework needs to include;

- Financial and non financial strategies to provide greater participation outcomes, and
- Clear roles and responsibilities within the sport system for all levels of government and their relationship with various agencies both government and non-government in assisting the delivery of agreed outcomes.

As with any commercial business data is imperative to that businesses ability to construct and evolve sound strategies and plans to best deliver to its community. The ACT Industry strongly supports a national data collection strategy as current data collection does not adequately meet the needs for national, state or club level organisations to effectively plan for the future.

Our high performance athletes at all levels from community to international provide an important service as role models to many Australians. Without stringent and world leading anti-doping best practice in deterrence, detection and enforcement supported by education for all participants in the national sports system these role models will not be seen as the pinnacle of Australian achievement.

In addition to the work in anti-doping this response believes that more focus needs to be placed on agencies such as the Australian Drug Foundations work in responsible drinking and other wider community based social behaviour issues and sports role in affecting change via its networks.

2. Reforming the Australian Sports Commission to Lead the Sports System

A strong leader in the national sports system is a key driver of success at a community level. Currently there are many areas of duplication, confusion and conflicts of interest in delivery strategies. The Industry in the ACT supports the reviews call for development of an overarching strategic framework that considers an Australian Government policy. In order to deliver this effectively a leader such as the ASC must develop relationships with government and non-government agencies at a community level to achieve a true sustainable impact. This strategy will allow the national sports system leader and its counterparts at State and Territory level to focus on the framework.

3. Merging Our Institutes of Sport

The Institute and Academy system is an integral part of Australia's success at the international level and from a local perspective this does have an effect for community sport. In the ACT the industry has access to the academy level of delivery which enables those sports that have capacity to benefit from its programs. Any changes as a result of the recommendations in the report should only be put in place if the access for a wider range of sports is the

ultimate outcome. Currently there are numerous barriers to predominately non Olympic sports access to the local academy, with a change of focus in high performance success, many of these barriers would be reduced allowing a far more robust delivery model at the academy level in the ACT.

4. Building the Capacity of Our National Sports Organisations

National Sporting Organisations with greater capacity will enable more effective community delivery at the territory level with many local organisations receiving greater support from their national bodies. In the ACT the importance of recreation as a driver and an entry level for the sports system, has been recognised.

Along with the emphasis on governance, shared functions and a change in the funding parameters the recommendations should be reflected down the system to the state and territory level as a strategy to effect capacity growth across the entire system. Again, these recommendations cannot be achieved without significant investment at the State and Territory level.

5. Putting Sport and Physical Activity Back Into Education

Sport in the Education system should be of the highest priority for all government. In the ACT the education system has strategies and policies in place to address physical activity issues but the Industry at the community level should be engaged further to assist in the delivery of training and exposure to a wider range of sporting activities.

The industry notes a lack of definition of the differences in physical activity and sport in the education system, sport provides greater access to learning of key skills such as jumping, running, throwing and catching that are developed within a structured environment. Physical activity does not necessarily allow for the development of problem solving, communication, decision making and an individual's participation in a group activity reliant on an outcome. These core skills not only set early behavioural patterns for a healthy lifestyle but also develop strong community involvement in children.

More importantly from the ACT perspective is access to facilities outside of school hours. Many of the ACTs' facilities have been affected by drought, urban expansion and planning. In particular investment for indoor facilities is a concern. A national policy for access to these largely unused facilities outside of their core use times will both create more opportunities to deliver sport at a community level but will also provide strong linkages for all stakeholders in and around these facilities and therefore develop sustainable impacts for local communities in the social inclusion and preventative health agendas for all governments.

6. Building Community Sport with People and Places

It is the strong belief of the industry that sport is delivered by the State and Clubs of community sport. These organisations have the direct responsibility to provide grassroots opportunities, training, support and at times facilities for the benefit of all Australians at a community level.

Volunteers play an integral role in this delivery and any recommendations to provide support networks linked into the community based organisations responsible for the management of volunteers is welcomed.

For the ACT, facilities and specifically the planning for future facilities is a high priority. The industry has been heavily impacted by drought and the expansion of urban areas. Without an understanding of future needs and allocations for facilities, community based organisations will not be able to plan effectively for capacity growth or sustainability.

The ACT Government has already done a lot of work around developing facilities to combat these changes and this would only be strengthened by a developed strategic national facilities initiative with appropriate funding.

7. Ensuring Australia's Sport System is Open to All

Community Sport is the driver for the entire sports system, this driver can only succeed to impact on the identified areas of the community by the recommendation with adequate investment and support from all stakeholders. By ensuring the system is 'Open to All' via adequate targeted funding and business support of the organisations responsible for direct delivery, there is a greater benefit to High Performance, Volunteer input and economic returns across the entire community. Many if not all of the delivery organisations are operating in this area currently hence investment will give immediate returns.

8. Sustaining the Funding Base for Sport

The Australian Government has a responsibility to give greater support, leadership and policy direction to the way in which funding is applied to community sport. Many of the recommendations supported by the Industry in the report are directed at increasing community sport delivery as a strategy for greater participation but in order for this to be sustainable State and Territory governments must have considerable support in implementing these funding priorities.

The diversity of funding and investment by the various States and Territories hinder the National Sporting Organisations considerably in their efforts to roll down programs into the community sport system. With a national focus on roles and responsibilities this would be achieved. In the ACT the sports funding budget for program and operational delivery has been under significant pressure in recent years. Without clear direction for the responsibility of funding to community based not-for-profit organisations the sustainability of many of the recommendations may not be achievable.

The sustainability of funding for the system is also dependant on all stakeholders finding methods of supporting investment, the industry is disappointed that schemes such as a National Lottery or other social investment schemes, have not been supported for at least investigation by COAG as a method of achieving sustainable funding by government.

It is also noted that investigation of other similar sporting systems and their sustainability modelling has not had higher importance in the recommendations.

Conclusion

The Community Sport Industry is a key stimulus to the ACT economy as well as playing an important part in developing Health and Well Being efficiencies to government expenditure. The associations delivering services at the grass roots capture the ability for investment over a wide range of sectors including retail, construction, health and tourism. The industry also holds a unique position in Australian culture where participation at the grass roots is often not regarded as discretionary spending. Investment by government in the various areas supported within this submission will provide gains far beyond the industry itself.

All of the recommendations accepted by the Federal Government need to be underpinned by a strong national policy framework reflected by complimentary policies at the State and Territory level and driven by industry medium term strategic plans to roll in facility, resources, planning and capability outcomes system wide.

ACTSport on behalf of the ACT Sport Industry welcome the recommendations as a whole and encourage the Sport Minister, Kate Ellis to accept and develop a strong national sports policy along with her counter parts, that will assist the industry in providing a wide choice of diverse participation, high performance and international leading outcomes for all Australians.

Summary of Recommendations

| Recommendation | Comment |
|--|---|
| 1. Defining Our National Sports Vision | Need for whole of Government acceptance of policy. Additional focus on the systems positive impact on cultural issues in drugs and alcohol consumption. |
| 2. Reforming the ASC to lead the Sports System | Outcomes of reform to be reflected at the State and Territory levels. |
| 3. Merging the Institutes of Sport | Any outcome needs to positively impact on access by a wider range of sports at the Institute and Academy system. |
| 4. Building the Capacity of Our NSO's | Greater investment by State and Territories to underpin the development of NSO's delivery agencies that are in the most part the SSO's operating at community level. |
| 5. Putting Sport and Physical Activity Back into Education | A clear definition and understanding of the difference between Physical activity and Sport. Strong linkages between sport and the education system to efficiently deliver good training of all participants. |
| 6. Building Community Sport with People and Places | Strong reliance on a national facilities plan and better processes for the planning and development of urban areas to allow for appropriate facilities that are sustainable. Volunteers are the backbone of community sport and any investment to assist delivery organisation to develop and retain these volunteers is welcomed. |
| 7. Ensuring Australia's Sport System is Open to All | Sport has a unique vehicle of delivery to engage all identified communities and in many cases is already doing so, further investment will only strengthen this. |
| 8. Sustaining the Funding Base for Sport | Need to further explore other methods of generating investment by multiple stakeholders including government, commercial enterprises and the community at large in supporting the system. |

ACTSport Members

Full Membership

ACT Athletics Association
ACT Badminton Association
ACT Baseball Association
ACT Broomball Association
ACT Cricket
ACT Cross Country Club Inc
ACT Darts Council
ACT Equestrian Association
ACT Gridiron
ACT Gymnastics
ACT Handball Association
ACT Ice Hockey
ACT Ice Skating Association
ACT Indoor Cricket Federation
ACT Little Athletics Association
ACT Monaro District Golf Association
ACT Oztag
ACT Rowing Association
ACT Rugby Union (Brumbies Rugby)
ACT Touch Association
ACT Water Polo Inc
ACT Waterski Association
ACT Wrestling Incorporated
AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd.
Ainslie Football Club
Australian Kung Fu (Wu Shu) Federation
Australian Judo Federation (ACT Branch)
Bowls ACT
Boxing ACT
Burley Griffin Canoe Club
Calisthenics ACT
Canberra International Clay Target Club
Canberra Off Road Cycling
Canberra Region Junior Rugby League
Canberra Rifle Club
Capital Football
ACT Cycling Federation
Females in Training Incorporated
Folk Dance Canberra
Hockey ACT

Mpowerdome
Netball ACT
One Basketball Canberra
Orienteering ACT
Snowsports ACT
Softball Canberra
Sports Medicine Australia (ACT Branch)
Squash ACT
Swimming ACT
Taekwondo Australia- ACT Branch
Table Tennis ACT
Tennis ACT
The Wise Academy
Triathlon ACT
Volleyball ACT
Yachting Association of ACT

Associate Membership

ACT Olympic Council
ACT Futsal Referees Association
ACT Monaro Golf Club
Alive Health & Fitness
Australian Paralympic Committee –
ACT Branch
Canberra Two Day Walk
Coerver Coaching ACT
Federal Golf Club
Sportspeople
Special Olympics ACT Region
Tuggeranong Netball Association
YMCA Canberra
Yowani Country Club