

**National Sports Plan  
PO Box 176  
Belconnen ACT.**

### **Parks and Leisure Australia response to the National Sports Plan July 2017**

Parks and Leisure Australia is the peak industry association for professionals working in the Parks and Leisure sector in Australia representing over 2500 individual members, and more broadly a sector that employs in the tens of thousands. Our members are “the people behind the places” promoting the good use of leisure time. They are professionals who work across policy, planning for and the provision of, services, facilities, programs and research in the sport, recreation and parks and leisure sector. While consisting mainly of Local Government employees there are also members who represent Universities, a range of State Governments departments, schools and other providers within this sector.

Parks and Leisure Australia wishes to take this opportunity to provide comment on the National Sports Plan and the questions associated with the survey.

In a press statement release by Minister Hunt he said; *“We come together to play sport at local ovals, fields, courts, parks and beaches. We jump out of bed on a Saturday morning for junior sport and flock to the footy, netball and countless other sports to support our sporting champions.” Participating in sport also makes us healthier both physically and mentally and it is the basis for so many friendships.*<sup>1</sup>

Parks and Leisure Australia would like to remind the Minister and the Australian Sports Commission that our membership is made up of many organisations that have ownership and responsibility for the provision and ongoing management of local ovals, sports fields, courts, parks and beaches etc. These are the areas where both grass roots sport and recreation activities take place, including the provision of a range of facilities for elite sports and athletes.

We note that some elements of the survey are already incorporated into the Australian Sport’s Commission Corporate Plan 2016/17 and congratulate the ASC on many of these initiatives.

Parks and Leisure Australia provide the following key points for consideration by ASC as part of the feedback to the National Sports Plan. Further detail can be found in the Attachment.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ausport.gov.au/news/asc\\_news/story\\_659356\\_national\\_sports\\_plan](http://www.ausport.gov.au/news/asc_news/story_659356_national_sports_plan)

**Participation**

- PLA believes that ASC should strengthen its support and promotion of social level competitions
- Develop sports and activities on a pay as you go basis to cater for those who work shifts /odd hours /away from home regularly
- Times of play need to be adjusted to cater for climate change and different working hours.
- More opportunities are required to allow some sport codes to be played indoors.
- Work in partnership with local health agencies, medical services, neighbourhood houses, etc to promote the benefits of physical activity and to deliver programs

**Prevention**

- Acknowledge the need to support local government to resource Regional and Municipal Public Health Plans, which they now have legislative responsibility for
- Supporting campaign targeting the 6 market sectors identified in the Future of Australian Sport Megatrends report

**Performance**

- While the medal tally is a matter of National pride it is only for the elite few. Past investment for maximum return appears on the surface to have failed. Support to a wider range of elite athletes in broader sports is a more equitable approach.

**Integrity**

- Putting community first and championing good sportsmanship, providing safe, fair and inclusive environments for all involved.  
significantly reduce betting promotion (which has become dominant and wide ranging on TV)

**Major Sporting Events**

- Federal support should be equitable across states and territories as opposed to those with highest populations/best facilities

**Governance**

- National: code governance, policy, financial management, code/product development, elite pathways, national competition, SSO affiliate services, infrastructure planning (grass roots to elite)
- State: review - could be streamlined where duplication exists at national level or services could be delivered or sport administered at a national level, manage State Sporting Associations, provide funding to help develop facilities and participation opportunities, provide resources for clubs
- Local government: provide some financial assistance to facility development and maintenance, provide support to clubs (financial, governance, etc)
- Community: local level governance, competition, infrastructure and member management, facility management, community/social hubs

### **Infrastructure**

- Acknowledge local government as the largest provider of sport and recreation infrastructure, but where the cost of capital upgrade and maintenance exceeds income and therefore creating a funding pool that better reflects this need by also acknowledging that better quality, safe and fit for purpose facilities are fundamental to Provide greater levels of funding to major facilities (the proportion of funding in many States and Territory's has not increased at the same rate as facility costs have)

### **Funding**

- That the Federal Government explore how they can better fund community sport and recreation including addressing the aging infrastructure
- Without community sport, there will never be high performance sport; a greater proportion of funds should be directed to community sport
- PLA does have some concern the Sports Plan would inevitably be dominated by the sporting codes (well organised and represented) to the detriment of the needs of casual physical activity
- Lead a review to deliver equitable athlete pathways to ensure the most talented athletes, not just the most affluent, represent state and country

Parks and Leisure Australia thanks the ASC for the opportunity to comment on the National Sports Plan and hopes that the comments we have provided are useful in further development of the Plan.

Yours Sincerely

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National Sports Plan PLA Australia Response		
Key Heading	Survey Questions	PLA Comments
Participation		
	How should sporting organisations evolve the way their games are played or the products/variations they offer to ensure we get and keep more Australians active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Sports such as Cricket, Netball, Rugby, AFL and Football have all introduced variants to the game that allows for individuals with different levels of skills to participate on an even keel. This should continually be refined</li> <li>• Continue to offer support and promotion of social level competitions</li> <li>• Offer some activities on a pay as you go basis to cater for those who work shifts / odd hours / away from home regularly</li> <li>• Times of play need to be adjusted to cater for climate change and different working hours.</li> <li>• More opportunities are required to allow some sport codes to be played indoors.</li> <li>• The cost of many sports are now becoming out of reach for many and must be reviewed with the consideration of applying a subsidy.</li> <li>• ASC continue to identify and publish trends in participation, however need to identify measures to drive greater levels of education of these trends and identify strategies/opportunities to adapt to these trends.</li> <li>• modify rules to suit less agile/less fit, allow referees etc to be more flexible in interpreting rules accordingly.</li> </ul>
	How do we make sport and physical activity part of everyone's daily routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidy to the costs to participate must be explored.</li> <li>• Programs that take into consideration skill levels and abilities must be offered</li> <li>• Educate the benefits of Physical Activity from R to 12 by imbedding the benefits into the curriculum</li> <li>• Identify initiatives that address known "drop out" trigger points for people who were once physically active</li> <li>• Identify and address barriers to participation</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationalise sports vouchers scheme (grass roots)</li> <li>• Concern re introducing PA throughout this Sports Plan – whilst PA should be encouraged (walking, cycling, gym, children’s play etc) should it fit under (and potentially be over whelmed by) a Sport Plan which is NOT intended/presented as a need to get everyone more active/less obese etc. – is it trying to be all things to all people or just protecting its own desires? Concern the Sports Plan would inevitably be dominated by the sporting codes (well organised and represented) to the detriment of the needs of casual PA activities.</li> <li>• Offer place based activities (i.e. activities locally)</li> <li>• Provide better mechanisms of advertising what is available locally</li> <li>• Work in partnership with local health agencies, medical services, neighbourhood houses, etc to promote the benefits of physical activity and to deliver programs</li> <li>• Work in partnership with workplaces to encourage people to be physically active at lunch time and to walk / cycle to work wherever possible (this also involves the provision of infrastructure such as showers)</li> </ul>
	How can sports better reach under-represented groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored programs developed and promoted.</li> <li>• A reward system could be developed</li> <li>• Nationalise sports vouchers scheme (grass roots)</li> <li>• Continue to identify and implement initiatives that address barriers to</li> <li>• Educate re the benefits of Physical Activity from kindergarten to Yr 12 level</li> <li>• Incentivise participation (medicare rebate) – paid back in preventative health budget savings</li> <li>• for many even the word ‘sport’ is a deterrent, implying competition, regular commitment etc. – whereas casual PA has potential to be more acceptable/attractive if marketed well.</li> <li>• Provide fun and low-key introductory activities at locations that are trusted and frequented by under-represented groups (e.g. schools for</li> </ul>

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		<p>CALD communities, health centres by older adults, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use people who are respected by under-represented groups as role models (not elite sports people, but people that those communities trust and respect)</li> </ul>
	What is the role of non-traditional sport providers in helping to increase participation in sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Come and Try days" need to be encouraged, promoted and more regular.</li> <li>• Meeting community need. Able to respond quickly to demand (eg private providers) – fill the 'pay to play' community appetite, reduce need for volunteers and the demand for traditional sporting infrastructure</li> </ul>
	How do we increase sport participation in the schooling years to maximise physical literacy and establish good habits for life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heighten the value of PA and sport.</li> <li>• Appropriately fund and embed PA in the curriculum.</li> <li>• Non-reliance on the good will of teachers or parents to co-ordinate programs/activities.</li> <li>• Educate and increase food and nutrition literacy in schools.</li> <li>• Identify initiatives to leverage off of, address and balance the "foodies" explosion</li> <li>• Provide before and after programs in schools (at a small cost) focussing on a diverse range of traditional and non-traditional physical activities</li> <li>• Encourage schools / clubs / private providers to offer lunch time physical activities</li> <li>• Stop building portable buildings on sports facilities at schools</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention through physical activity</b>		
	How do we ensure that the key benefits of sport and physical activity such as physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and community cohesion are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and develop the case for sport and physical activity – identifying evidence based social, economic and environmental benefits and use these facts as a basis to lobby/advocate/educate/reinforce etc</li> <li>• Provide access to funding to enable long term implementation of PA based preventative health initiatives</li> </ul>

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	promoted by governments and the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to fund existing preventative health programs (eg. OPAL)</li> <li>• Acknowledge the need to support local government to resource Regional and Municipal Public Health Plans, which they now have legislative responsibility for</li> </ul>
	How should we raise awareness of the benefits of sport to the Australian public?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass media campaign on the scale of the successful Life Be in it campaign which achieved extremely high levels of recall and awareness over a prolonged period. Link individuals to local government and sport / recreation groups</li> <li>• Supporting campaign targeting the 6 market sectors identified in the Future of Australian Sport Megatrends report</li> </ul>
	How do we use the reach and influence of sport to get more people active – especially people with sedentary lifestyles?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and identify their common barriers (cost, access, motivation etc) and develop co-ordinated nation wide initiatives to be implemented across the industry.</li> <li>• Local government is well placed to directly deliver programs and services.</li> <li>• Physical activity needs to be seen as something that is easy to do – start with low cost, low key and easy activities such as walking and cycling.</li> </ul>
	How do we ensure sport delivery bodies (e.g. Australian Sports Commission, State Departments of Sport and Recreation, National Sporting Organisations etc) and health promotion organisations work together as effectively as possible to improve population health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight the current evidence based health issues that sport and PA can assist to address</li> <li>• Engage the broader community of PA stakeholders (private providers, govt, clubs, NSOs, schools etc) and offer them the opportunity to implement initiatives</li> <li>• Agree on shared goals</li> <li>• Use sport as a medium to promote health messages (quit, sunsmart, be active, 5 for 10 etc)</li> <li>• Perhaps hold some sort of summit where leaders of each of these organisations come together to develop a charter around physical activity and they commit to each implementing some of these initiatives</li> </ul>

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		<p>and reporting back every 12 months on their progress (hold them to account)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding of NSOs and State Sporting Associations may be partially dependent on working in partnership with other organisations to improve health</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>		
	Should we be focusing on investment for maximum medal tally success or spreading our spend in support of more high performance athletes in a broader range of sports?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the medal tally is a matter of National pride it is only for the elite few. Past investment for maximum return appears on the surface to have failed. Support to a wider range of elite athletes in a broader sports is a more equitable approach.</li> <li>Broader range of sports – suggest there is no significant medium or long term impact on gold medals driving increased participation. The impact is short term and unsustainable.</li> <li>What is the case for expenditure on gold medals – what are the actual community benefits – suggest need an evidence base to prove long term increased participation benefits.</li> <li>Make more people more aware of all of our sporting codes – more options may increase participation</li> </ul>
	How can the AIS and state-based institutes of sport better support high performance athletes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathways must not be elitist ie only those who can afford the pathways get to access them. This is unethical and inequitable and is a flawed approach, as it's those with the access to wealth, not the most talented athletes that become elite.</li> <li>Assist all sports to fully cost their elite pathway programs, provide equitable funds to support these pathways to ensure the best level of success for all sports not just the most popular ones.</li> <li>Ensure pathways and selection criteria are clearly defined and published in order to better inform current and prospective, athletes, parents and caregivers.</li> <li>Create better alignment with USA University/College athlete scholarship</li> </ul>



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		pathways and provide support for athletes to navigate and access this opportunity. Extend this program at a national level
<b>Integrity</b>		
	What are the best arrangements for the Australian Government's sports integrity capability to ensure Australian sport is effectively protected against integrity threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Putting community first and championing good sportsmanship, providing safe, fair and inclusive environments for all involved.</li> <li>significantly reduce betting promotion (which has become dominant and wide ranging on TV!)</li> </ul>
<b>Major Sporting Events</b>		
	Should governments financially support major sporting events to ensure their viability and delivery and provide opportunities to Australian sports and athletes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where a business case demonstrates that the investment derives the necessary level of social and economic benefit.</li> </ul>
	Should governments financially support major sporting events to ensure their viability and delivery and provide opportunities to Australian sports and athletes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal support should be equitable across states and territories as opposed to those with highest populations/best facilities</li> </ul>
	How do we maximise the value of investment in major domestic and international sporting events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandate that a condition of investment is implementing community activation initiatives with KPIs</li> </ul>

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	How should governments prioritise investment in major sporting events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a business case demonstrates that the investment derives the necessary level of social and economic benefit.</li> <li>• Where the applicant demonstrates the greatest increase in community participation will be derived as a result of the event and its associated community activation initiatives.</li> </ul>
	Should governments invest funding to attract major international sporting events to Australia?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only where the business case demonstrates that the investment derives the necessary level of social and economic benefit.</li> <li>• A condition of attracting major sporting events could be to ensure that Australian athletes must participate as we need to ensure that our elite athletes get the opportunity to participate on home soil (and there could be some wildcard entries specifically for Australians), but that there is also a component built on to any international sporting event that local participation opportunities, e.g. clinics, competitions, etc must be provided for others who want to have a go at that particular sport)</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>		
	What should be the respective roles for national, state/territory and community sporting organisations to grow Australian sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National: code governance, policy, financial management, code/product development, elite pathways, national competition, SSO affiliate services, infrastructure planning (grass roots to elite)</li> <li>• State: review - could be streamlined where duplication exists at national level or services could be delivered or sport administered at a national level, manage State Sporting Associations, provide funding to help develop facilities and participation opportunities, provide resources for clubs</li> <li>• Local government: provide some financial assistance to facility development and maintenance, provide support to clubs (financial, governance, etc)</li> <li>• Community: local level governance, competition, infrastructure and member management, facility management, community/social hubs</li> <li>• Leaseholders are the main providers of sport. Most leaseholders are not for profit incorporated bodies with volunteer committees of</li> </ul>

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		<p>management. The sporting industry, government, community place an enormous reliance on these time poor volunteers to administer their clubs and facilities competently but who face unprecedented pressures to meet legal and leaseholder compliance, remain viable (in an environment where traditional sources of income have significantly declined (bar sales) and costs such as utilities have significantly increased. Initiatives that reduce red tape, reduce reliance on volunteers to administer (and allow them to “run the sport”) and to improve viability are critical to the future success of the sports industry at the grass roots level.</p>
	<p>How can sporting organisations (national, state/territory, community) better play a role in getting more Australians active?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to various current societal trends, the shift towards the need for modified forms of sporting codes has been recognised by most sports.</li> <li>• It is important trend data continue to be collected and analysed, and for sports to adapt to these trends to remain relevant to society.</li> <li>• Australian Sports Commission should drive local level (by LGA, and by suburb) participation data collection to enable the development of effective and immediate local level tailored (as opposed to generic) responses to change in order to grow participation. LGAs could be the funders of this level of data collection (therefore sustainable), with the ASC the driver.</li> <li>• Data from ‘one source of truth’ will assist to drive higher levels of cohesion and collaboration re government and community sport and recreation policy, programs and initiatives.</li> <li>• Be more inclusive of people of all ages and abilities</li> <li>• Minimise any incompatible activities / sponsorship, e.g. alcohol and tobacco related</li> <li>• Seriously review the barriers that prevent people from being active and trying their best to address these, e.g. time activities are held, uniform requirements, etc</li> <li>• Keep costs to a minimum</li> <li>• SSAs such as Tennis Victoria to review the way in which they charge</li> </ul>

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		<p>rural tennis clubs to introduce a more equitable system (i.e. charge by the number of courts, not the number of players or the condition of the courts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSAs to be far more active in rural and regional areas to promote their sport, as opposed to just taking affiliation fees and providing very little in return</li> </ul>
<b>Sporting Infrastructure</b>		
	<p>How can we better develop, utilise and maintain sporting infrastructure to support major events and participation growth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many sports are beginning to implement initiatives to better understand the current stocks of local, regional and state level facilities. This should be supported and encouraged.</li> <li>• Local Government are driving initiatives to understand the condition of those facilities under their care and control in order to prioritise capital works. This should also be supported and encouraged.</li> <li>• Greater collaboration may be required between sport and government to collect, analyse and utilise participation data for facility planning purposes.</li> <li>• Acknowledge local government as the largest provider of sport and recreation infrastructure, but where the cost of capital upgrade and maintenance exceeds income and therefore creating a funding pool that better reflects this need by also acknowledging that better quality, safe and fit for purpose facilities are fundamental to driving increased participation.</li> <li>• Also by partnering with local government to support gaps in sport and active recreation infrastructure provision particularly in low SEIFA index communities in order drive increased participation and to provide equitable community access.</li> <li>• Develop better partnerships with schools to include their facilities in the</li> </ul>

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		<p>mix when looking at hosting major events (as flow over facilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide greater levels of funding to major facilities (the proportion of funding in many States and Territory's has not increased at the same rate as facility costs have)</li> </ul>
<b>Sources of funding, including a national good causes lottery</b>		
	<p>Given governments have limited budgets how should they allocate funding across high performance and community sport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable high performance funding across all codes</li> <li>• Lead a review to deliver equitable athlete pathways to ensure the most talented athletes, not just the most affluent, represent state and country</li> <li>• Without community sport, there will never be high performance sport; hence a greater proportion of funds should be directed to community sport. At the end of the day, we want everyone to undertake sufficient physical activity to achieve health benefits and a good quality of life (and reduce the cost to the health system), not have sedentary people sitting on the couch watching a handful of elite athletes perform.</li> </ul>
	<p>Do you support the introduction of a national good causes lottery to increase the funding available for Australian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but only where all levels of government retain their existing levels of funding/investment and don't see this is an opportunity to shift these dollars into other non-related areas.</li> <li>• Concern that a national good causes lottery could be high-jacked by the</li> </ul>

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	athletes and to increase participation in sport?	<p>sporting codes, art bodies etc (that are well organised and represented) to the detriment of the needs of casual PA activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We note that the ASC Corporate Plan highlights the development of a business case for a lottery as part of the 2016/17</li> <li>• Consider the establishment of a national body that represents unstructured physical activity.</li> </ul>
	What other forms of non-government revenue could be used to help Australian athletes and increase participation in sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a community initiative to assist with elite pathways costs eg. Athlete community donations scheme, which athletes can apply to access funds for pathways costs</li> <li>• Greater investment in and wider implementation of (SA) sports vouchers scheme (grass roots)</li> </ul>