

National Sports Plan
PO Box 176
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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.*¹

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.

¹ 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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