

A man and a woman are jogging on a sandy beach. The woman is on the left, wearing a brown short-sleeved top and light-colored pants. The man is on the right, wearing a white tank top and dark pants with a red stripe down the side. They are both looking forward and appear to be in motion. The background shows a clear blue sky and a green, hilly coastline.

Recreation Framework 2011+

A report for the Department of Sport and Recreation WA

Prepared by
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Executive Summary

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Centre for
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Centre for Sport and Recreation Research (CSRR)

CSRR provides an independent perspective to look at the horizon and beyond, to identify issues that will:

- impact sport and recreation decision making
- benefit from sport and recreation association

CSRR operates by drawing together multi-discipline teams to undertake research that informs decision makers.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The research and activity underpinning the content of this report builds on the May 2006 strategic analysis of the active, non competitive, recreation sector. For purposes of that analysis, recreation was defined as those non competitive physical activities that take place in our community for leisure purposes. Based on industry feedback, a nine point Recreation Reform Agenda was established for progress in the period 2006 - 2009.

In July 2009 the Department of Sport and Recreation WA (DSR) identified the need to revisit the process. In August 2009 DSR commissioned the Centre for Sport & Recreation Research (CSRR), Curtin University to undertake an independent study to build on the work which had guided DSR's commitment to recreation priorities over the preceding three years, with the aim of building a relevant and contemporary agenda for 2010 and beyond.

The objective of the process was to provide:

1. Reference points for the different stakeholders;
2. Focus for activity and effort;
3. Support for an evolving strategic platform.

The Process

In consultation with DSR prior to the commencement of the study, it was determined that much of the value of the research would be inherent in the process of information gathering i.e. the dialogue and conversations with stakeholders, rather than in the end document. An iterative approach to data gathering, assimilation and reflection was therefore agreed upon.

DSR nominated six groups to participate in the research. The participating groups comprised representation from the recreation peak bodies (Parks and Leisure Australia (WA), Outdoors WA, LIWA Aquatics and Fitness Australia) and two recreation affiliated groups (Tracks and Trails and WA Sports Federation). After discussion, the CSRR representatives recommended that DSR constitute a seventh group due to their influence and commitment to recreation in WA.

Whilst initially envisioned as a two-step process comprising a survey followed by a workshop for the purposes of validating the data and agreement on new agenda items, what resulted was an iterative process of data gathering, conceptualisation and consolidation by the group of representatives. The total process comprised three parts (Parts A, B & C) spanning a period of fifteen months (Table 1).

Table 1 Recreation Framework process

Part	Content	Time
Part A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• distribution and analysis of a survey• follow-up workshop to validate the data• initial report and recommendations	Aug 2009 Oct 2009
Part B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflective interviews• revised recommendations	Nov/Dec 2009
Part C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• two workshops to action revised recommendations• final outcomes	Oct/Nov 2010 Dec 2010

The Journey

Starting with the results of the survey provided by 230 respondents, the initial part of the project (Part A) did not reveal a specific new agenda for recreation reform. Indeed, many of the themes identified for focus in 2010 and beyond echoed those of the original 2006 Agenda. However, this was not interpreted as a lack of achievement to-date, but rather the items still having relevance - although perhaps with a different emphasis resulting from an ever-changing context.

However, what did emerge from the initial activity was the need and desire to formulate some form of recreation policy framework (Part B), acceptable to all the key recreation industry organisations, and which could form the starting point of a united focus for addressing items of relevance in 2010+.

Although tentatively scheduled to re-convene (for Part C) in the first half of 2010, adjustments occurred in the structure and personnel of some of the recreation sector organisations represented. It was therefore deemed prudent to wait for the key people to settle into their respective roles and organisations before commencing further exploration.

Preparatory work eventually commenced in August 2010 resulting in two workshops (October and November 2010) scheduled to complete the journey. The outcome of the total process was the formulation of the Recreation Framework 2011+, endorsed by the group at a final meeting on 14th February 2011 (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Recreation Framework 2011+

Project Partners: LIWA Aquatics; Fitness WA; Outdoors WA; PLA (WA); Tracks and Trails WA; DSRWA

Values Statement Improving individual and community wellbeing through participation in recreation.				
Common Strategic Elements The elements to be progressed by recreation and for recreation.				
Planning	Funding and Resources	Workforce	Access	Asset Management
Defined as: The documented approaches that guide the provision of recreational opportunities in WA.	Defined as: The availability of sufficient resources for industry to achieve its strategic goals.	Defined as: People (paid and unpaid) engaged in recreation	Defined as: The range of facilities, services and spaces available for recreation.	Defined as: Effective, efficient and optimized maintenance of natural and man-made assets.
Strategic Statement To guide the long term direction of recreation in WA including identifying gaps and minimizing duplication.	Strategic Statement To enable the development of an efficient and effective recreation industry with initial priority on: - governance - facilities - opportunities/ experiences	Strategic Statement To ensure the workforce has access to training and professional development which supports improving quality service delivery	Strategic Statement To have viable and affordable access to fit for purpose recreation opportunities.	Strategic Statement To ensure assets are responsibly managed for their intended use and throughout their lifecycle.
Custodian Group The Custodian Group comprises representation of the partner organisations. It is strategic in nature. It annually identifies the key areas to work on and requests various working groups to develop scenarios, choices and options for solutions. The Custodians make decisions on these options and uses their collective influence to enact or advocate for change.				
<pre> graph TD Custodians --> Admin[Administrative Support] Custodians --> Access[Access Working Group] Custodians --> Asset[Asset Management Working Group] Custodians --> Workforce[Workforce Working Group] Custodians --> Other[Other Working Groups] </pre>				

Policy: The Custodians agrees our collective approach will be: To engage and support individuals and community participation in recreation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. being informed of the status quo B. identifying and promoting best practice in recreation C. identifying the gaps and needs of recreation WA D. seeking appropriate resources and partnerships E. engaging and support our workforce F. acting as an advocacy group G. capturing and disseminating knowledge. We will achieve this through utilization of the following tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ research and applied investigation ▪ a collaborative approach to the delivery of professional development ▪ engagement and communication within recreation and other related sectors ▪ development of integrated policies ▪ partnering with other agencies. 			
Mandate: We are drawn to work together through the mutual characteristics of SMILE: S ynergy – M aturity- I nterdependence – L egitimacy – E ldership			
Plan 2011 A. Establish the status quo B. Identify and promote best practice in recreation C. Identify the gaps and needs of recreation in WA D. Seek appropriate resources and partnerships E. Engage and support our workforce F. Act as an advocacy group G. Capture and disseminate knowledge	Workforce	Access	Asset Management

The Findings and Outcomes

The findings and outcomes of the October/ November 2010 workshops were two-fold: effective and affective. The effective result was that the group unanimously agreed to a Recreation Framework and supporting propositions, as shown in Figure 1.

The components comprising the Recreation Framework Include:

- The framework content including
 - Values Statement.
 - Common Strategic Elements and Definitions
 - Strategic Statements
- A proposed governance ('board') structure
- 'Board' policy
- Mandate
- 2011 plan to move forward

Of particular interest, and to be resolved, was the nature of the 'board'. General sentiment leaned towards the 'board' role being akin to eldership / custodianship rather than management¹. In the first instance those participating in the development of the Recreation Framework would collectively progress that role with others invited to be involved in various working parties to develop options papers for progressing the Strategic Statements.

The affective outcome, as expressed by all present, was the trust and respect that developed as a consequence of the robust nature of the debate of some fifteen months - a sense of commitment and inter-relatedness was apparent. The participants concluded that the agreed common approach (policy) would provide the focus to succeed and was the primary differentiating factor between the outcome of the 2010 process and previous initiatives. Inadvertently, this result could also be considered a response to the survey response element ranked as the number one factor currently hindering recreational reform namely: *lack of collaboration and participation by some recreational groups including peak bodies and government agencies.*

The Considerations

Going forward with the Recreation Framework in 2011 and beyond the following items warrant consideration:

1. The 'Custodians' will need Executive Support. It is yet to be determined who will provide this. In Part B, the idea of WASF playing this role was suggested. If not WASF, then another body/ person needs to be engaged. It is understood that DSR will support this

¹ 'Custodians' is the term subsequently endorsed for use at the meeting 14th February 2011.

role with funding however, in the interest of remaining a 'player' not a 'driver' in the Recreation Framework process, it is not felt prudent that DSR take on this role.

2. A series of meeting dates need to be set to keep the momentum up. It is suggested that initially the key players (Custodians) meet every month to finalise the plan. Once the plan is finalised then the meetings may be held at a regularity to be determined by the Custodians.
3. The above initial planning meetings should continue to be facilitated to ensure effective and affective outcomes.
4. Time at the initial planning meetings needs to be given to determine what the working groups are to work on and to clarify how the Custodians would like them to operate.
5. CSRR may be used to assist with facilitation and research as appropriate.

The Conclusion

The work undertaken in this project has spanned 15 months. Approximately 250 people have been involved in the workshops and online surveys to develop a Recreation Framework that is acceptable to all, driven by the key recreation sector bodies including DSR.

As well as a clear planning framework, policy statement, Board Mandate and shared terminology, the other features to emerge were a willingness by the various parties to work together and a strong feeling of trust that the process and framework will work.

It is important for the Custodians to continue to meet, initially on a monthly basis, to maintain the positive momentum that has been generated.

