

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## 2.1: National Sport Policy Framework

1. There is no agreed definition of what 'success in sport' means for Australia, either at the elite or participation level and thus no clear objectives or plans.
2. The lack of a national policy framework and defined measures of success for elite sport and mass participation mean that funding is appropriated without clear and agreed objectives.
3. Since previous Australian governments began providing significant support to sport, the clear focus has been winning Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games medals, while participation or 'grass roots' sport has been comparatively under-funded. This has resulted in neglect of the fundamental basis of sport in Australia—participation by children and adults in recreational-based sport at community levels.
4. The delivery of sport involves all three tiers of government and a variety of agencies in each sector, including sport and recreation, health, education, infrastructure and Indigenous affairs. But there is inadequate co-operation between all these stakeholders, leading to inconsistent and ineffective delivery.
5. The lack of fundamental data on most aspects of the sport sector substantially inhibits an evidence based approach to the development of policies and strategies.
6. There is a clear need for a nationally agreed plan for sport which encompasses all relevant areas of government and engages all tiers of government.

## 2.2: Roles and Responsibilities

7. Various levels of government have developed roles in high performance and participation sport often responding to jurisdictional priorities and without reference to national strategic priorities.
8. As a consequence there is not universal agreement on the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in high performance and participation sport.

9. All stakeholders in sport, both government and non-government, have increasing participation as a key goal, yet there is little or no co-ordination among these bodies to achieve that goal.
10. Many aspects of the current elite system have clearly worked well to produce outstanding international results over the past 15 to 20 years.
11. Despite these positive elements there are system failures, and, it seems likely that better results may have been achieved with a better system.
12. The Panel observed these failures in the current elite sport system:
  - a lack of co-operation and at times direct competition between key government providers—the Australian Institute of Sport and the state and territory institutes and academies of sport—even within the same sports.
  - a lack of adequate feeder programs to support the Australian Institute of Sport and the state and territory institutes and academies of sport.
  - a lack of sufficient involvement by sporting organisations in their own programs.
  - an ‘institute-centric’ approach, which largely ignores the potential of other organisations to contribute to high-performance programs.
  - fewer talented athletes flowing to the finishing schools due to:
    - i. the decline of sport and physical training in education.
    - ii. the decline in active play for children.
    - iii. the decline or stagnation of participation in sport at all levels.
  - Australian Government and state and territory government funding over recent years has not kept pace with the increasing costs of high performance sport.
13. The goal of increasing participation has generally been seen by stakeholders primarily in the light of the ‘sporting pyramid’: that more participants mean more talent available for elite programs.
14. Little attention has been paid by stakeholders at all levels to the importance of increasing participation to bolster the sustainability of sporting organisations or as a mechanism to address health issues in the population.
15. Sport has potential to contribute in a major way to improving the health and well being of the community. This potential is underestimated by all levels of government and as such is under resourced and addressed in an ad hoc manner.

16. Government funding targeted at increasing participation has primarily been provided to national sporting organisations and state sporting organisations—a top down approach. A more holistic approach which includes investment at a local level is needed.
17. Government funding has, at all levels, been primarily provided to sporting organisations on a sport by sport basis, virtually ignoring the multi-causal nature of the issue.
18. There is a dearth of robust data on participation in sport and the agenda is confused with obesity, the roles of unstructured and structured physical activity and participation sport versus elite sport—all relevant and at times competing issues.

### 2.3: Cultural and societal impacts

19. That the shifting nature of Australian society, particularly demographic and lifestyle changes, are having an impact on the sports and physical activity sector and this impact will increase over time.
20. Many sporting organisations have not embraced more recreational forms of their sports, missing opportunities for membership, volunteers and revenue.
21. The changing age profile of the Australian population is not well catered for by the sporting sector, with a focus from both sporting organisations and governments on elite sport.
22. The ageing population provides opportunities for volunteerism in sport, with potential benefits to the aged, children and sporting clubs.
23. The ongoing migration of the population from regional to metropolitan centres provides challenges to both areas which are yet to be satisfactorily appreciated or addressed by sporting organisations and governments.
24. Immigration is changing the demographics of the population. New populations will require different approaches, including a shift away from more traditional Australian sports.
25. Indigenous sport programs are not well coordinated within governments or between levels of government, leading to confusion and ineffectiveness.
26. Significant amounts of government support, at all levels, for Indigenous programs is not focussed on long term capacity building.

## 2.4: Capacity of Australia's Sporting Organisations

27. The capacity of Australia's sporting organisations to expand the delivery of sport and physical activity opportunities needs urgent attention.
28. The number of women in sport leadership positions is disproportionately low to their representation in the population.
29. Australia needs a system which supports the efforts of volunteer coaches, administrators and officials at all levels of sport.
30. Coaches play a particularly important role in developing children's sporting abilities and mentoring their overall development and therefore particular attention needs to be given to recruiting and retaining volunteer coaches.
31. Elite athletes are not sufficiently supported after they retire from their chosen sport with the result that, in many cases, their talents and experience are not being passed on effectively.

## 2.5: Infrastructure

32. Facilities for sport are not meeting demand and in the case of field sports, the drought is making this problem worse.
33. In general, local governments do not have sufficient resources to address sporting needs.
34. Existing facilities in schools, universities and defence installations are underutilised.
35. There is insufficient data on supply of and demand for facilities to make informed decisions and local planning is patchy.
36. Australian Government funding for sports facilities has been ad hoc and not based on a strategic assessment of competing community needs.
37. Community sports facility funding is not co-ordinated across Australian governments.

## 2.6: Education and Sport

38. Physical activity enhances academic and other educational outcomes.
39. There was no formal accountability and reporting to the Australian Government on the previous requirement to include two hours of physical activity per week in school hours as a condition of Australian Government education funding.

40. There are inadequate numbers of teachers trained to deliver physical education in our schools.
41. Local sporting organisations have difficulty in gaining access to school and other educational facilities.
42. The Active After-school Communities program needs to be reviewed by the Australian Sports Commission before a decision is made on its future.

## 2.7: Investing in the future of Sport

43. There is a strong correlation between international sporting success and public funding for sport.
44. Australian Government funding for sport is just one component of a large, complicated and evolving industry. Any diversification of sport industry funding will inevitably involve considerable consultation amongst stakeholders, often with competing interests, in a multi-tiered industry.
45. There is significant capacity for improved co-ordination and allocation of government funds between agencies and levels of government. It is the responsibility of the Australian Government to lead in this area.
46. Additional funding is required to meet current facility and infrastructure needs, including the adaptation of high-value infrastructure to climate change. This, however, cannot be achieved without significant co-operation and strategic planning between jurisdictions.
47. Sports at all levels derive significant revenues from fast food and alcohol advertising. Limitations on sponsorship of sport will significantly affect the industry.
48. There is a clear role and responsibility for sporting organisations to deliver social messages such as responsible consumption of alcohol and healthy eating.
49. The Australian Sports Foundation is an important mechanism. Changes to the operation and governance of the Australian Sports Foundation could improve its applicability to a wider group of Australians.