



**SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT SPORT PANEL  
OCTOBER 2008**

**Dated 31 October 2008  
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On behalf of Badminton Australia**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Badminton Australia (BA) appreciates the opportunity to make this submission to the Independent Sport Panel established by the Hon Kate Ellis MP Minister for Sport.

BA is a well established Olympic and Commonwealth Games Sport with affiliates in all States and Territories; is a Member of the Badminton World Federation; has approximately 8000 formal registrations and in excess of 100,000 recreational participants; and is a recipient of funding from the Australian Sports Commission, Australian Olympic Committee and Australian Commonwealth Games Association. Badminton also has the capacity to break down cultural barriers with its strong Asian links in particular.

This submission will focus on strategic issues and follow the Terms of Reference as issued by the Minister for Sport.

## **SYNOPSIS**

- Lifestyle changes are currently challenging the traditional view of Australia as an active sporting nation
- International sporting successes contribute to national pride; provide role models; contribute to Australia's image internationally.
- Maintenance of international success needs:
  - Greater financial investment
  - Alignment between Governments and key sporting organisations
  - Integration between high performance and community sport, so that pathways are available.
  - Acceptance that sport is not only about medals but also that it contributes to health, lifestyle, social inclusion and cohesion; and reaches people of all ethnic background, gender, age and physical ability.
- Sport need results to build national pride and cannot do so without significant government support. Equally, is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle as structures physical activity leads to a healthier population and lowering of health costs.
- Badminton is one sport that can open doors to a range of Asian Countries.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Ensure Australia's continued elite sporting success**

#### **Issues :**

- No NATIONAL FOOTPRINT for sport
- Lack of ALIGNMENT between ASC/AOC/AIS/State Institutes of Sport
- UNCERTAINTY of FUNDING from ASC has a negative impact on long term planning at NSO level.
- LACK of FUNDING has a negative impact on ability to nurture and develop talent.
- ASC can be bureaucratic, places significant demands on NSO's who often spend more time "servicing" grants rather than "delivering" results.

- Various branches of the ASC can be detached from one another. ASC seeks evidence of PATHWAYS at the NSO level but does not always have effective PATHWAYS in place itself.
- High performance sporting success needs LONG TERM commitment and funding. ASC keeps NSO's guessing about future funding which inhibits NSO's from planning long term.
- PREOCCUPATION on medals has seen developmental programs neglected and there is a failure to recognize the direct and necessary link between development and high performance. The past focus on SHORT TERM success is now showing the WEAKNESS of this approach

#### **Possible Solutions**

- Establish national authority to oversee all aspects of High Performance from talent identification through to elite.
- ASC to commit funding for a minimum of 4 years and accept that medal successes in many sports will take a minimum of 8 – 12 years to achieve.
- Federal Government to show much greater leadership on all sports issues.
- Greater INVESTMENT in people, including direct athlete assistance programs, and provision for recruitment of significantly more full time coaches.

## **2. Better place sport and physical activity as a key component of the Governmental preventative health approach.**

#### **Issues:**

- Governments mouth the value of physical activity for health but do little to deliver community programs.
- This is highlighted by lack of co-ordination at Government level between Health / Education / Sports arms. This has resulted in a lowering in priority of physical activity at school level.
- Decline in the concept of “volunteerism” and the community based club.
- Governments at all levels cannot agree on respective roles for various layers of government in building grassroots sports. The concept of “buck passing” remains relevant.
- Duplication at Government levels is significant in terms of funding for indigenous populations, disabled and women. Hence ineffectiveness and inefficiencies.
- Provision for community sporting INFRASTRUCTURE is almost non existent and is constantly shuffled from one arm of government to another. Perfect example here of “all care and no responsibility”.

#### **Possible Solutions**

- Federal Government (through a coordinated national authority for sport) needs to show leadership in the INFRASTRUCTURE area. Facilities at local level have to be given higher priority by governments / planners/ developers.
- Education authorities need to prioritise physical activity and sport through compulsory physical education commencing at the primary school level.
- Governments need to incentivise “good health” rather than constantly focus on rebates for “bad health”.
- Federal Government must enforce its policy that funding to education is conditional upon delivery of minimum levels of physical activity in primary schools. Currently this seems to be ignored.

**3. Strengthen pathways from junior sport to grassroots community sport right through to elite and professional sport.**

**Issues :**

- Human and financial resources for effective pathways are limited. ASC funding has had a preoccupation with performance (medals) to the neglect of broader talent programs.
- Where talent programs are in place (and BA is a recipient of support from the ASC for an NTID program) there is no linkage at the ASC between talent and high performance areas. The ASC constantly requests NSO's to define PATHWAYS but has so far been unable to do so itself.
- There is LIMITED financial support for full time resources at the grassroots level.
- Volunteers have been the unique ingredient of Australian sport – however lifestyle changes sees a significant reduction. New approach to volunteers in sport is a critical issue – rewards may be necessary.
- Sporting pathways require better linkage with community groups; with schools; and human resources (coaches) at the community level. There is no effective “coach” pathway in existence within Australian sport.
- Sport cuts across Cultural barriers (Badminton has strong links to Asian Community)

**Possible Solutions**

- Increased financial support to talent programs and effective pathway to high performance.
- Leadership by a National Sports authority.
- Refocus on the value of investing in effective coaching personnel from the community level through to high performance end.
- Incentives for schools to conduct talent development programs linked to NSO programs.
- Provide rewards and incentives to volunteers or run the risk of losing a unique part of the Australian sporting landscape.

**4. Maintain Australia's cutting edge approach to sports science, research and technology.**

**Issues :**

- Australia has lost its “cutting edge” in terms of science / medicine as others have both “copied” and invested more.
- Innovation in terms of research, new technology has been a plus of Institute of Sport structure – but there is a need to invest more otherwise the past gains will be totally lost.
- There is a lack of national co-ordination in this area – States are wanting to do things themselves and sports are being forced to liaise with a range of different (uncoordinated) service providers.
- Sports need greater help to achieve cutting edge e-capability which at present is ad hoc and limited. The interactive nature of the web has to be better utilized by the sports community overall.
- Sports like Badminton have capacity to undertake cutting edge research but no funds make this impossible.

**Possible Solutions:**

- Establish a national resource team dedicated to provide a constant and active interface between sports and the innovation community.

- Bring national co-ordination to the research, science and medicine services available from the Institute of Sport network.
- Invest greater financial sums into the AIS so that it can service the research and innovation requirements of all Olympic sports in particular and not simply a select few. The AIS and Institute network overall has become too narrow in its service role and this is worsening as funding decreases.

**5. Identify opportunities to increase and diversify the funding base for sport through corporate sponsorship, media and any recommended reforms, such as enhancing the effectiveness of the Australia Sports Foundation.**

**Issues:**

- The “rich” get not only “richer” but attract almost all of the available sponsorship dollars because of their capacity to dominate the media market.
- The majority of Olympic sports remain heavily reliant on Government funding and even though most sports are “commercially” minded the corporate dollar is focused on very few sports and usually not Olympic sports. NSO’s need assistance to develop proper marketing plans as the pressures on the current resources, especially for medium and smaller Olympic sports, detract from NSO’s being able to actively seek alternate funding sources.

**Possible Solutions :**

- Sport has to compete for its fare share of the public purse often against more “emotive” claims (health, education, pensioners)
- The opportunity exists for Governments at all levels (but NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED) to develop other sports specific funding opportunities as exists in other countries.  
Some of these include :
  - Greater tax concessions
  - Partnerships with the private sector on building better community sports infrastructure
  - Revenue share from sports better
  - National sports lottery
  - Higher tax on sporting goods with percentage return to sport.
  - Protection of sports right to sponsorship from alcohol.
  - Better return to sport from major events

## **SUMMATION**

In essence the success of sport internationally, and sports ability to provide healthy, recreational and lifestyle contributions is under threat, and will remain so without:

- Greater financial commitment from Governments at all levels.
- Alignment between Governments and key sporting organisations.
- Integration between high performance and community sport to ensure pathways are available and linked.
- An acceptance that sport is not only about medals but is a significant contributor towards healthy lifestyle.
- Strong National leadership
- Acceptance that NSO’s need long term commitment and funding support with a minimum of bureaucratic interference.