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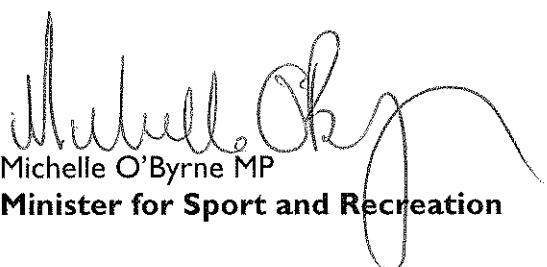
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Dear Mr Adams

Thank you for your letter of 26 September 2008 inviting submissions to the review into Australian sport.

As Sport and Recreation Minister, I enclose the Sport and Recreation Tasmania submission to the review, which also includes input from the Tasmanian Institute of Sport from the perspective of elite sport.

Yours sincerely



Michelle O'Byrne MP  
**Minister for Sport and Recreation**

# **Sport and Recreation Tasmania**

## **Submission to the National Review into Sport**

### **Introduction**

Sport is part of Australia's way of life. It is important for our national identity and connectedness. Sport provides a mechanism to learn new skills, increase health and well-being, facilitate social inclusion and boost productivity.

At the elite level, success brings enormous national pride, provides young people with role models and engenders a community feeling of well-being.

It is important to note that there is no elite sport without a well developed, high quality, and well coordinated community sport system in Australia.

### ***Term of Reference 1***

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

The current status of Australia as a sporting nation has been achieved through investment in a system with a strong reliance on the core values of ingenuity, passionate commitment and flexibility, coupled with an uncompromising desire to win.

Without significant new investment into the elite sporting system, Australia's status as a world sporting force will continue to decline. We can no longer just rely on being more resilient or innovative than our competitors. Australia's competitive edge has now diminished as the rest of the world duplicates our ways. While it is unrealistic to expect to reach the same level of investment that our main competitors enjoy, it must be acknowledged that without a considerable injection of new funds, the gap between Australia and its main rivals can only widen and impact on our successful sporting culture.

#### **Areas of duplication within Australia's sporting system and recommend ways to build a better system**

There is little evidence of duplication within the system. There is a lack of appreciation that the provision of effective elite training environments across the country requires similar support systems to be available in numerous locations.

These environments provide athletes with access to the best support network that will maximise their potential. A flexible and multi-point system nationwide provides the best chance of success across the range of sports.

It is necessary to increase elite training environments into the future, in a variety of geographical access points, in order to best capture and nurture precious sporting talent. This can only be achieved with greater investment in the development of more infrastructure and resources. The

current system has no capacity to further expand and to respond to changes in population demographics and to the expectations of current generations such as 'Gen Y' for example.

The high levels of collective funding provided through the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)/Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), which each sport's high performance program is reliant upon, create an imbalance between establishing optimal program models, and operating models that meet the approval of ASC/AIS and thus give access to the most resources.

Where the latter scenario drives decisions, it has the potential to create barriers to athlete development and continued participation within a sport. This can compromise the achievement of high level performances. Sports need to be given greater financial independence to determine the best high performance program structures that they believe will give their athletes and coaches consistent international success. The Tasmanian Institute of Sport contributes to the national elite sport network, working in partnership with national and state sporting organisations in sports that Tasmanians have consistently excelled in on the international stage.

Frustrations occur when the long-term commitment to maintaining these elite developmental programs become uncertain due to the influences of the funding bodies that the sports are reliant upon. The national system needs to determine and then provide the major sports of significance in Australia with more certainty with regard to their core programs for considerably longer than the current four-year cycle.

Linking funding to these sports based on the Olympic medal return is too short-term. Funding can be seen as a reactive, punitive mechanism. There are times when a struggling sport needs to have a greater, rather than lesser, investment in order to re-establish its competitiveness.

This approach has created a program gap for sports in every four-year cycle through delays experienced in the ASC providing confirmation of funding. The current situation reflects this, with funding decisions for high performance programs unlikely to be known until mid 2009. This leaves only a three-year period to prepare for the 2012 Olympic Games and provides an advantage to our international competitors that have better funding structures in place.

Greater investment is needed to address the declining coaching resources of this country, which threatens to affect elite performance standards. The coaching pathway, from grass roots to elite, needs to be better supported to attract, retain and further develop the best coaches.

Similarly the level of support provided to athletes needs to be sufficient to assist in allowing the right athletes to train effectively and perform consistently at optimum level.

Greater cooperation, collaboration and interchange of technical expertise across the national elite sport network can assist with resource sharing. Currently there is little capacity to make significant gains in resourcing technical expertise necessary for the system to remain competitive. Greater resourcing would mean a more integrated and formal structure.

## **The relationship between Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), State and Territory Institutes, academies of sport and regional academies**

There has been a gradual decline in the relationships between ASC/AIS and the State Institutes and Academies of Sport (SIS/SAS) since 2000. This has been influenced by differences in the imperatives and accountabilities of the respective bodies. This can also be linked to insufficient dedicated resources within the network that are needed to develop and maintain effective relationships across the range of key high performance areas.

There are points of difference between ASC/AIS and the collective SIS/SAS, which has seen the National Elite Sports Council, the forum for these key organisations, struggle to achieve unity on participating in joint processes for planning and establishing future high performance plans for national sporting organisations.

The role the AIS plays as the federally funded national institute, competing for athletes and coaches against the states and territories, has been central to issues that have developed over this time.

Underpinning Australia's international performances is a strong reliance on domestic competition between the states and territories.

This is critically important due to the remoteness of the nation compared to other competitors and the costs involved in accessing international-standard competition. This inherent competition culture also spills into the AIS/SIS/SAS network, which taints the willingness to genuinely collaborate and to maintain a strong national focus in the delivery of each national sporting organisation's high performance programs.

Decisive leadership is required to establish the alignment of the respective national sport pathways and to provide clarity on the roles that each key partner needs to play. A framework that clearly establishes the goals and objectives of the national high performance system needs to be developed and agreed to by all stakeholders.

### **Opportunities to ensure maximum return from talent identification programs**

The current investment in talent identification and development (TID) is not well aligned to existing pathways for athlete development. While it has been argued that TID needs to find new and innovative ways to identify and nurture talent, this should be in balance with what systems are already in place. The weakness of a fractured and unlinked TID approach that does not acknowledge or support existing talent in traditional sport pathways, is that highly talented athletes can be overlooked and miss significant opportunities for fast tracked development.

Greater emphasis is needed by TID in recognising that more efficient and effective development will occur when identified talent is linked to established systems rather than resourcing alternatives.

## ***Term of reference 2***

### **Better place sport and physical activity as a key component of the Government's preventative health approach**

#### **Towards a fitter, happier and more productive Australia**

Participation in community sport provides many individual, social and health benefits. When people are physically active they are healthier, happier and more socially inclusive. Community sport provides opportunities for social interaction and can enhance community identity and promote community integration. In 2007-08 the Tasmanian Government announced an ongoing commitment of \$1 million in funding to address barriers to participation. The majority of this funding is allocated to a wide range of eligible organisations under the SRT administered Community Recreation Grants.

Both organised and non-organised sport and recreation participation, active transport and incidental activity all help lead to a fitter, happier and more productive Australia.

Community sport provides a supportive environment for people to increase their levels of physical activity. In addition to health benefits, involvement in community sport also provides individual and social benefits including community engagement, self-esteem, wellness, leadership skills, interaction and inclusion.

#### **Developing a clear national physical activity strategy that takes into account community sport and other forms of physical activity**

The provision of a clear national physical activity strategy that takes into account community sport and other forms of physical activity will provide the impetus for engagement between Commonwealth and State government portfolios (including sport and recreation, health, education, transport, infrastructure and planning), along with key community sport, recreation and physical activity bodies, local government, business and the community sector.

Such a strategy, properly resourced, should lead to a greater awareness and appreciation of the importance of physical activity and community sport.

A fitter, healthier and more active nation will dramatically reduce our reliance on the acute care hospital system, and increase workforce productivity. Both are critical to the nation's economy and consequently our long-term prosperity.

The need for regular detailed data on physical activity is critical for developing strategies to encourage people to be more active.

At present in Australia there is no data on the levels of physical activity in Australia for people under 15.

If we are going to be able to accurately tailor programs for younger people and to gauge the effectiveness of programs there needs to be better data provided and perhaps the opportunity lies

at the national level by carrying out this surveying on the back of other national surveys done in the health area.

### **A national model of physical activity in which community sport is a key component**

Individual states and territories all currently deliver various strategies to support increased physical activity and community sport.

Those jurisdictions share physical activity information and resources on a largely informal basis. A more formal process could lead to greater collaboration and resource sharing.

It is important the Commonwealth and respective state and territory governments encourage and support community sport and physical activity providers to be inclusive and welcoming. Many people face barriers to participation, including the elderly, women, people with a disability, those of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

It is vital that mainstream providers have the understanding, ability and resources to include people of all backgrounds and to work to increase participation levels amongst those currently under-represented.

Tasmania has conveyed support for the National Plan for Paralympic Sport and Sport for People with a Disability, while noting the focus of the plan was strongly on elite and needs to be equally on grass roots or participation.

Significantly more resources than currently available will need to be provided to state and territory governments for facilities and infrastructure and to address barriers to participation. Local governments should be better resourced for facilities and infrastructure and to address barriers to access.

Moreover, sport and recreation providers need more funding to increase awareness, develop disability or inclusion plans, increase the skills of administrators, coaches and officials, and to develop, promote and implement appropriate opportunities.

Tasmania provides support to the Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Association for People with a Disability (TASRAD) to increase opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity. Tasmania is in the process of developing a sport and recreation framework for people with a disability.

Tasmania provides support to Womensport and Recreation Tasmania, and works collaboratively with the Australian Sports Commission to promote initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation and leadership skills.

In addition, the Indigenous Sport Program aims to increase the number of Aboriginal people participating in sport. Tasmania also supports the Aboriginal Outdoor Recreation Program to encourage and provide opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginals to participate in culturally relevant outdoor recreational activities in order to increase their cultural identity, self-esteem and community capacity.

Tasmania is committed to developing a vibrant and innovative sport and recreation sector that provides participation opportunities for all Tasmanians. To achieve this, we value and are committed to excellence in performance, programs, collaboration and partnerships to achieve our goals, lifelong participation in sport, recreation and physical activity and effective research and planning as the foundation for future development.

## **A centralised point at the Commonwealth level to coordinate the nation's activity to create a more physically active community**

The development of a centralised point at a Commonwealth level to coordinate physical activity could be looked at as part of a national effort. At this time it is not being driven by any particular instrument.

The ramifications of Australia's increasingly sedentary society could also be analysed in terms of the human and economic costs. Measures could be taken to ensure that community sport is well funded and resourced to perform its vital social role.

There would be benefits in coordinating research, national priorities, infrastructure, funding and programs without being restrictive about the nature of community or local level projects. This would enable resources to be used to maximum effect.

This will involve the provision of consistent sustainable funding over time to achieve long term community development outcomes.

There have been instances where a pilot project has been established and is starting to achieve outcomes only to have the funding expire.

## **The role of the education sector in growing community sport and physical activity**

Schools have an opportunity to shape the lives of our young people in terms of encouraging physical activity and healthy habits that will stay with them for life.

It is important that the education system in Australia looks upon physical activity as being as important as literacy and numeracy and sets appropriate benchmarks and measures.

Apart from the individual, social and health benefits, it is clear that physical activity leads to improved academic performance. There are many studies that support this. The West Australian Department of Sport and Recreation produced a document in November 2006 entitled *Improved Learning Through Physical Activity*. It details 30 studies that have shown how physical activity enhances academic performance.

The issue of physical education, physical activity and sport in schools needs a national approach and should be addressed as part of a national curriculum.

Teaching children fine motor skills is critical to equip them for sports later in life.

As part of a national curriculum agenda, teaching these fine motor skills needs to be considered for all kindergarten and primary school age children.

## **Better Use of Education Sporting Facilities**

The broader use of education department owned sporting facilities in Australia is important for providing opportunities for people to participate in sport and recreation activities.

In Tasmania the Opening the Gates Report points to the opportunities for broader community use of education owned sporting facilities. In many instances these facilities are not being used after school hours and on weekends and broader use would help to enhance the level of physical activity in the community and address the shortage of grounds and facilities.

There also needs to be better coordination when sporting infrastructure is being developed to ensure that it suits community needs, is multi-purpose in nature and that duplication is eliminated.

Perhaps the rest of the country could learn from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been signed between the Department of Sport and Recreation and Local Government and the Education Department in Queensland that sees these areas of government work together when new sporting infrastructure is developed to eliminate duplication and ensure the infrastructure suits community needs.

Perhaps the Australian Government needs to look at greater collaboration and cooperation with other tiers of government prior to funding decisions being made, particularly with regard to the level of identified need.

### **The role of urban planning in enhancing community sport and physical activity**

Australia's urban planning systems are not conducive to providing the best possible sporting and recreation and active transport infrastructure.

Local government is the main provider of sport and recreation and community facilities but does not have the resources to maintain current provision let alone cater for changing needs and expectations.

The Healthy by Design framework is an example of good urban planning that will promote physical activity. The framework is being developed by the National Heart Foundation with financial and intellectual support by Sport and Recreation Tasmania and the Premier's Physical Activity Council.

Healthy by Design provides guidelines for town planners, and others involved in the development of community infrastructure that supports physical activity, to ensure that urban environments encourage people to be active. Healthy by Design is closely aligned to the national Healthy Places Healthy Spaces project.

Greater co-operation from within government and across the three tiers of government and with local communities during the planning phase for developing sport and recreation infrastructure will enable the infrastructure to best suit community needs by being in the right place, easily accessible and multi-purpose in nature.

### ***Term of reference 3***

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

##### **The Tasmanian experience**

Tasmanian has a strong history of elite representation, most recently including Scott Brennan taking gold at the Beijing 2008 Olympics and Natasha Chokljat competing in the inaugural 2008 Trans-Tasman Netball Competition.

Both began their sporting careers within local Tasmanian community sport organisations. However, Tasmania's ability to generate athletes of this calibre, and provide community sport opportunities to the wider community is under pressure.

The Tasmanian sport and recreation sector is characterised by an array of small to medium sized organisations, which are characterised by an ongoing need for increased resources, rely on volunteers and have stable or declining membership numbers. There are a few larger mainstream sporting organisations, which are well funded, staffed and generally experiencing stable and/or minor growth in participation numbers.

### **Building the capacity of sporting organisations and clubs**

The predominantly volunteer sport and recreation sector is facing many complex issues, including demographic change (population shifts, ageing population), changes in community expectations and needs, increasing governance requirements and legislative implications, climate change, the current world economic crisis and increasing fuel costs.

Any discussion regarding community sport must take into account adequate long-term funding to enable sporting organisations and their affiliate clubs to grow the capacity of their sport in terms of:

- coach training and accreditation
- governance
- ability to engage with the local community, business and (potential) sponsors
- attraction and retention of volunteers
- development of good quality sporting infrastructure and,
- the creation of a harmonious and safe sporting environment for all connected with the sport.

Despite the overall nationwide decline in organised community sport not all sports are experiencing a downturn. In Tasmania a number of sports that are delivering in the areas above are reaping rewards.

Bowls is an organisation that has been able to embrace change and respond by altering its product to meet changing community needs. Changes to rules, clothing, rosters and the product offered have seen an increase in participation that has reinvigorated some clubs formerly in danger of folding.

### **Volunteers and their role in community sport**

Volunteers are the lifeblood of community sport.

They are responsible for almost everything, from coaching, serving on committees, umpiring, running the tuck shop, scoring, to buying equipment.

The Tasmanian Government and the Australian Innovation Research Centre in Hobart are currently working together on a project to measure the economic value of sport and recreation to the Tasmanian economy.

A key component will be putting an economic value on the work that sporting volunteers do in Tasmania. This will be calculated on the amount of money that volunteers would be paid if they weren't volunteers.

To grow community sport we need to ensure that clubs are equipped to attract and retain volunteers and provide succession planning for volunteers.

To do this clubs need to have the necessary training, programs, skills and capacity. This reinforces the need for sports and clubs to be properly and sustainably resourced.

Measures that could also be considered to help increase the level of volunteering in the community might include tax incentives and looking at the possibility of creating more flexible working arrangements that allow volunteers some time to do their work.

Tax breaks might also be considering for businesses that offer their professional services for sporting bodies on a reduced fee or honorary basis.

#### ***Term of Reference 4***

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

The AIS has been established as the national science and medicine centre of excellence and it is critically important that this is maintained.

The AIS must be the leader of sports science research and technology for the national system. Establishing partner relationships with universities and other institutions has added value to this area, but the development of research projects must have some rigour about the value of the applied benefit to high performance sport.

National responsibility for the coordination of sports science and sports medicine services should ensure that there is consistent delivery of high service standards to all athletes.

This was achieved to a reasonable level with the Olympic Athlete Program (OAP), established for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With the removal of this program, there are now some concerns about the consistency of the sports science and sports medicine platform across the system.

Investment in research and technology needs to be tied to achieving real performance outcomes to avoid using up valuable resources on projects that have no applied benefit to athletes and coaches' performance development and knowledge.

Australia needs to maintain its reputation as a world leader in the fight against anti-doping in sport and the role that the Australian Sports Anti Doping Agency plays in leading this fight must be fully supported. There is no doubt a certain element of athletes, as in life will look for short cuts and ways of winning by cheating. Whilst we believe that this is not the Australian way, we must support and invest strongly in ongoing research into the detection of new drug technologies. Only this approach of continually improving the opportunities and ways of catching those that cheat will preserve the integrity of Australian sporting culture.

### *Term of reference 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 Australian Sports Foundation**

There is no question that sport, in particular community sport, needs to look to and beyond government for funding sources and perhaps beyond the traditional approaches to getting things done.

##### *Sponsorship*

Sponsorship of sport in Australia has been extremely beneficial for companies for brand development and recognition and for creating and enhancing company community development activities.

It has also been shown that brand recognition remains with companies long after their association with a sport ends.

Community development activities are now looked upon by progressive companies as critical to their bottom line and they represent great opportunities for sports at all levels but perhaps more so community sport and recreation activities.

There are also emerging opportunities to link community sport and recreation to preventative health and social inclusion messages.

These opportunities are looked upon as 'safe' (they is no risk of bad behaviour tarnishing a sponsorship) and cost effective by corporate partners and important for developing relationships at a grass roots level.

Current examples include Medibank Private's sponsorship of the Active Tasmania program and Connex in relation to the Victorian sport and recreation awards.

We also need to look at how we can grow the profile of women's sport as a sponsorship opportunity.

The traditional men's sports have attracted the bulk of sponsorship money over the years; however Netball for example with the Trans Tasman Netball competition has attracted the support of Fox Sports and more expansion from a media point of view is expected.

Perhaps government needs to look at providing incentives for companies to sponsor sports that have not traditionally received corporate support.

#### *Equipping sports with marketing and sponsorship skills*

Sport at all levels needs to be better equipped with the skills to enable them to approach the corporate world to attract much needed sponsorship money.

Perhaps governments could look at providing more opportunities for sports to learn and develop these skills as they are critical to enabling sports and sporting clubs to be sustainable.

Governments, through Departments of Sport and Recreation, can and do provide networking and developmental opportunities for state sporting organisations so that sports can learn from the experiences of others.

Sport and Recreation in Tasmania recently organised a forum for state sporting organisations that has the potential to provide excellent, sustainable learning outcomes in a whole range of areas including marketing and sponsorship.

Better promotion and further development of the Club Development Network – a program run by the Australian Sports Commission – would also be useful. This is a free, web based program that supports the development and management capacity of sporting clubs.

#### *Other revenue streams*

A lottery to raise money for funding sport in Australia could be considered.

There is a national sports lottery in a number of European nations and in China and New Zealand.

The National Lottery in England has raised millions for elite sport and community sport.

It has enabled extraordinary amounts of money to be put into targeted elite sports such as cycling with outstanding results.

The lottery also provides extensive funding for grass roots community sport through a grants program.

The role of the Australian Sports Foundation needs to be better promoted and better resourced because it does provide a way of attracting much needed money into the sport and recreation sector. However, just providing a complex way around a taxation issue is not proving to be

sufficient in effectively attracting significant investment from philanthropic companies and individuals.

Broader tax incentives for donations to sport or to develop community activities enhancing physical activity in light of the way the Australian Sports Foundation operates might need to be considered.

Similarly, consideration of broader tax incentives for coaches, volunteers and athletes could also be investigated.