Future Directions

An aspirational and inclusive approach to the delivery of sport and active recreation in NSW

2019-2022
Steering Group

Sport NSW acknowledges the valuable contribution and advice from the Steering Group:

- Tracey Holmes, Chairperson, Independent
- Darren Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, Sport NSW
- Dr Phil Hamdorf, Executive Director, Sport Development Group, Office of Sport
- Wayne Green (to August 2018), Director Policy & Sector Strategy, Office of Sport
- Philippa Taylor (from August 2018), Director Policy & Sector Strategy, Office of Sport
- Anthony Brooks, State Manager, Government, Diversity & Infrastructure, AFL NSW/ACT
- Craig Beed, Member Engagement & Operations Manager, Hockey NSW
- Emily Luke, Executive Officer, Ice Hockey NSW
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- James Ellender, General Manager, Marketing & Strategy, Belgravia Leisure
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- Michael Ilinsky, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Life Saving NSW
- Martin Burney, President, Outdoors NSW
- Peter Montague, Recreation Planning and Programs Manager, Inner West Council
Sport NSW
Chairperson’s Message

Sport NSW is the peak independent industry body for sport in NSW. We represent the interests of more than 80 State and Disability Sporting Organisations, 30 Local Councils and 20 industry bodies.

We have been appointed by the NSW Minister for Sport and the Office of Sport to deliver a plan for the entire Sport and Active Recreation Sector (the Sector). Entitled Future Directions, it is, in short, a plan by the Sector for the Sector and this is the first time such a responsibility has been bestowed upon Sport NSW.

Future Directions is an important initiative to address the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities within the changing landscape of sport and active recreation in NSW. Future Directions adopts an aspirational and inclusive approach to how sport and active recreation will be delivered in NSW and how the Sector can be elevated in the government’s decision-making processes. Thus, increasing opportunities for the people of NSW to be healthier and to live in more active communities.

During the development of Future Directions, we sought input from a wide cross-section of participants in the Sector. We thank each of them for taking the time to share their thoughts and contribute their ideas on how to enhance sport and active recreation in the State.

I would like to extend special thanks to the Steering Group. These representatives, also drawn from a broad cross-section of the Sector, volunteered their time to provide exceptional guidance on the contents of Future Directions. I would particularly like to acknowledge and thank Tracey Holmes for providing her leadership and unique insights as the Chairperson of the group.

I encourage State and Disability Sporting Organisations, Active Recreation organisations and all levels of Government to support Future Directions and consider how they can integrate the proposals into their own plans and operations.

Joseph La Posta
Chairperson
Sport NSW
About Future Directions

Future Directions outlines an aspirational and inclusive approach to the delivery of sport and active recreation in NSW for the next four years. It takes a high-level whole-of-sector view to improving the Sector across four themes:

- Collaboration
- Capacity
- Innovation
- Engagement

This strategic basis underlines the holistic nature of Future Directions. For this reason, the document identifies many proposals under each theme; some will align with the intent captured in a document listed above, others will be unique to Future Directions. The proposals are written in a way to allow stakeholders to ‘see themselves’ represented and understand how they can integrate them into their future planning.

Throughout Future Directions there are regular references to active recreation. Active recreation is multi-faceted and ranges from the simplest forms of physical activity, such as walking the dog or recreational swimming, through to the outdoor recreation pursuits of rock-climbing or whitewater rafting – and everything in between. For simplicity, the term ‘active recreation’ covers the full sphere of active and outdoor recreation activities when used in this document. Similarly, the use of the term ‘sport’ refers to both organised and occasional/unstructured participation.

Future Directions proposes an initial four-year window of 2019-2022 to commence implementation and importantly sets a mechanism by which Sport NSW, as the peak, independent industry body, can track the progress made by the Government, the Sector and itself against the proposals.

Future Directions has been developed by Sport NSW and will be used by everyone involved in sport and active recreation (referred to as the Sector) in NSW. Rarely are there references to, or distinctions made between any particular group, be that in regard to gender, ethnicity, ability/disability or geographical location. This has been a deliberate focus as the contents of Future Directions are seen to be equally appropriate and applicable to all elements of the Sector.

Future Directions will sit alongside several other objectives and strategies either in place or being developed by the government in New South Wales. These include the Premier’s Priorities – namely improved education results and tackling childhood obesity – as well as:

- Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Women in Sport Strategy – Her Sport Her Way
- Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans 2018-2023 (Nine NSW Regions)
- State Sport Infrastructure Strategy
- District Sport Facility Plans (Five Districts of Greater Sydney)
- High Performance Strategy – Future Champions
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Sport 2030 (Sport Australia – Australian Government)
Acknowledgements

Future Directions was prepared from July to November in 2018 and included a significant consultation process where well over 200 people from all parts of the Sector contributed either through online surveys, focus groups, industry meetings or one-on-one discussions. Sport NSW would like to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to contribute.

In particular, special thanks to:

- The Hon Stuart Ayres MP, Minister for Sport, for entrusting Sport NSW with the responsibility of preparing the plan.
- The Office of Sport including the regional offices in Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour and Dubbo as well as Andrew Hamilton, who was specifically assigned to assist Sport NSW.
- The project Steering Group (shown in full on the inside front cover) chaired by Tracey Holmes.
- State and Disability Sporting Organisations, active recreation organisations and Local Government Authorities that responded to the survey, participated in the consultation process and participated in the data analysis research project.
- All organisations who contributed to the case studies included in the report.
Executive Summary

Future Directions is an aspirational and inclusive approach to the delivery of sport and active recreation in NSW prepared by the peak independent industry body in the State, Sport NSW. It is written by the Sector, for the Sector. Through a range of proposals, Future Directions challenges all stakeholders in the Sector to think differently, take action and effect positive change.

Future Directions acknowledges that the Sector is at a critical juncture where more of the same will not be enough to ensure a successful future for sport and active recreation. Funding to the Sector is seen as an overarching issue of pressing need. Further, the early development of Future Directions highlighted four key themes as essential to effecting positive change. These areas are explored briefly below, including the highest priority proposals, and in greater detail throughout the remainder of the document.

NSW Government Funding

NSW Government funding to the Sector is an issue that cuts across the four key themes embedded within Future Directions. There are opportunities for the Sector to make a significant contribution to NSW Government priorities, in particular tackling childhood obesity. For the Sector to do more in terms of increasing participation opportunities, developing the next generation of elite athletes or enabling people to lead healthy lifestyles using sport and active recreation as the vehicle, it requires an appropriate level of NSW Government funding.

On behalf of the Sector, Future Directions is proposing significant reform in NSW Government funding arrangements for the Sector. This should be by way of a substantial increase in ‘core government funding’ through the Sports Development Program (a two-to-three-fold increase plus indexation to CPI annually thereafter at a minimum). Funding reform should guard against a widening government funding wealth gap for the organisations in the Sector and should also include changes to existing grant programs to increase the certainty of funding rather than subjecting organisations to regular grant application processes.

Collaboration

When true collaboration exists, the positive outcomes generally have people asking why it wasn’t done earlier – a perfect example is in the Suncorp Super Netball League, where unprecedented collaboration between AFL clubs and netball franchises built unique environments and successfully engaged with fans.

Opportunities exist for greater collaboration between the Sector and different levels of government, and between sport and active recreation organisations and the non-government and commercial sector. As the industry peak body Sport NSW is in an ideal position to be the conduit and will look to take a more active role in promoting collaboration.

Priority Proposals:

• The NSW Government to reform funding to the Sector by way of a significant increase in core funding, indexed to CPI, via the Sports Development Program to align with the levels seen in other state jurisdictions.

• The Sector to be prepared to meet any new and appropriate NSW Government requirements arising from funding reform such as improved data collection and strong organisational health.

• For the Office of Sport to ensure a genuine partnership exists with State Sporting and Disability Organisations to reform and enhance the collection of consistent and common key data sets, as well as utilising data from alternative sources (ie. LGAs and other government departments) to enable the calculation of major, influential metrics such as the economic, health and social impact and value of the Sector. Metrics must align with NSW Treasury methodology.

• Sport NSW to enhance its advocacy role, leading on behalf of the Sector to improve and enhance the relationship between the Sector and the whole-of-government more consistently through an increased understanding of the priorities of government.

• Sport NSW to lead discussions between sport and active recreation organisations to identify opportunities to collaborate with an increased focus on regional areas and working with the Office of Sport on implementation of the Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.
Capacity

Capacity in the Sector is driven by two overwhelming elements being facilities and people – including the environments in which those people operate.

Facilities refer to anywhere physical activity can take place, from playing fields and courts, to cycleways, waterways, hiking trails and leisure centres. Recent substantial investment into facilities in NSW must be considered as only the beginning of the process.

From a people perspective capacity is influenced by education, training, governance and culture. It is delivered via a huge volunteer network which numbers in excess of 400,000 as well as a 30,000 plus workforce. Future Directions highlights ways in which the capacity of the Sector can be enhanced.

Priority Proposals:

- The NSW Government to incorporate sport and active recreation organisations into government planning processes to ensure facilities are multi-purpose, inclusive, maximise participation opportunities and are sustainable.
- The Sector to consider how they can develop a competitive edge by partnering with other organisations either in the sport and/or active recreation sectors to develop initiatives that grow their participation base, expand their product offering, reach new markets and/or improve facility utilisation.
- Sport NSW to investigate the development of shared services models across the Sector to streamline:
  a. Administrative tasks and functions.
  b. Athlete development.
  c. Training and education of officials and administrators.

Innovation

How people consume sport and active recreation is changing and the Sector’s self-reliance is increasing. Investment in innovation is paramount. Whether it be innovative ways of dealing with the repetitive, compliance style tasks through large scale digitisation of processes, to using technology to consolidate or centralise participation and administrative environments to build economies of scale, everything must be on the table.

Grassroots sporting clubs delivering the traditional offering are unlikely to be able to accommodate the ever-expanding demands of an increasingly diverse and time poor customer base. Innovative approaches will be required to encourage participation.

Priority Proposals:

- The NSW Government, through the Office of Sport, to continue its relationship with the tertiary sector particularly the SPRINTER partnership (The University of Sydney) and consult the Sector on subjects where research is required.
- The Office of Sport to expand its in-house research and data analysis capability to utilise the data collected and advanced data analytic techniques to identify trends and opportunities across the Sector.
- Sport NSW and the NSW Government to investigate the development of a universal sport registration system and a universal Sector insurance scheme.
- The NSW Government, through the Office of Sport, to scope how an innovation fund could function that provides financial assistance to Sector organisations looking to develop innovative versions of their activities.

Engagement

The sport and active recreation sector is no different to any other sector when it comes to maintaining the interest and engagement of its audiences and participants. In a world where distractions abound and alternatives for leisure time are both significant and increasing it is incumbent on organisations in the Sector to build loyalty, connection and a sense of belonging. The physical benefits of activity on the body and mind can be enhanced when experienced with others, creating new communities and helping people to feel included. Mechanisms to engage people range from social media and other technology platforms to schools and community groups.

Priority Proposals:

- NSW Government to fast track the development of new joint-use projects to enable school facilities to be used by the community for sport and active recreation.
- Sector organisations to recognise the critical role they play in community outcomes, inclusion and building social fabric by providing ongoing training, education and assistance to volunteers to ensure that community sport and active recreation remains of critical importance to the health of society.
Context and the changing landscape

Over the past 40 years, economic success and a growing population has greatly enhanced Australians’ quality of life. Australian families enjoy access to a well-functioning health system, good schools, a strong social safety net and options for recreation and leisure that our grandparents could only dream of.

Australia’s population is projected to change and continue to grow. With immigration likely to represent 50% of the growth, it’s likely that Australia’s population could reach 39.7 million in 2054–55, up from 25 million in 2018.

Improvements in health mean that Australians will continue to live longer and remain more active presenting great opportunities for older Australians to keep participating for longer, and to look forward to more active and engaged retirement years.

Yet globally, physical inactivity (or lack of movement) is the fourth leading risk factor to global mortality (World Health Organisation n.d.).

Sport in the national context

Sport and Active Recreation has an inherent place in the Australian culture and plays a significant role in the lives of Australians.

The Australian Sports Commission (2016) states that 92 per cent of Australian adults are interested in sport. Over 11 million people participate in sport and eight million attend live sport events each year. Whether they are participating or even if they like sport or not, most Australians see the value in sport.

Driven by a top-down approach, many programs are part of national initiatives whereas encouraging more people to be more active is driven by locally led programs. A true two-way relationship is needed.

NSW Sport and Active Recreation

The Sector creates significant benefits driving a range of economic, health, educational, social, cultural and community benefits as well as teaching life skills and enhancing Australia’s national and international reputation.

A summary of the Sector in NSW:

**Economic:**

$10 billion
The sport and active recreation sector contributes $10 billion annually to the NSW Gross State Product.

30,000+
30,000+ people are employed in the sector representing 30% of the national sport and active recreation workforce.

3.5 million
3.5 million: The number of domestic and international visitors coming to NSW for a sporting event each year.

**Participation:**

79% adults
79%: adults (15+) participate in physical activity at least once a week.

59% adults
59%: adults (15+) participate in physical activity at least three times a week.

55% children
55%: children (0-14) participate in physical activity at least once a week outside school.

21% children
21%: children (0-14) participate in physical activity at least three times a week outside school.

**High-performance:**

466
466: number of high performance athletes.

**Social:**

10,000
10,000 community based clubs.

100+
100+ State Sporting Organisations and State Disability Sporting Organisations.

415,000+
volunteers.
The Sector is at a critical juncture

With multiple options for participants, participation highest across non-structured activities, and competition within the Sector for: funding, participants, media coverage and access to facilities, the Sector has become somewhat fragmented with many levels of government and non-government support. This support, by its innate structure, has been largely uncoordinated. There are inefficiencies across the Sector with unclear delineation between national, state and local responsibilities, a lack of agreed goals and measures of success and together with duplication in administration, the longer-term sustainability of the Sector is an area of concern that the Sector itself needs to address.

The difference in size between organisations in the Sector is significant yet there is little difference in their scope and all are expected to meet similar deliverables for national programs especially high performance.

While some sports are successfully growing and commercialising (particularly AFL, NRL and Cricket), many others are struggling to maintain exposure and sponsorship, contributing to a widening wealth gap between the commercial, largely male, sports and the broader sports community.

Like other sectors, the Sector is represented by peak industry bodies such as Sport NSW, Outdoors NSW and the Aquatic & Recreation Institute. While their scope is large, unlike several other sectors, resource constraints impact their effectiveness.

On the international stage, competition is continually intensifying and improving. Many other nations have replicated Australia’s innovations, tapped into our expertise and made strategic investments, and as a result have become strong competitors in international sport.

Research into the Sector highlights that Australians are increasingly time poor, have limited budgets, are consumed by new digital ways of interacting and socialising, and are being inundated with new forms of entertainment.

While passion for traditional sports is stagnating, and preferences and consumption are changing, innovative formats of traditional sports with an ‘entertainment’ aspect are on the rise.

These trends are rapidly transforming the environment in which the Sector operates and are placing significant pressure on the Sector to change. However, the nature of the Sector itself means that only a minority are aware, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not the solution. Different sports and different subsets of the Sector may be required to take a bespoke approach moving forward.

There is evidence in other States of rapid progress being made (Value of Sport - The economic impacts of Sport in Victoria) and unless the Sector harnesses its potential and has a plan that aligns with the challenges it faces, the Sector is at risk of transitioning from being part of a nation of active sport participants to being part of a nation of passive sport consumers.

However, if the Sector can adapt and seize this opportunity, it can position itself as a leader in influencing New South Wales government policy and be a powerful vehicle for creating generational change.
1. NSW Government Funding

NSW Government funding to the Sector is an issue that cuts across all themes embedded within *Future Directions*. There are opportunities for the Sector to make a significant contribution to NSW Government priorities, in particular tackling childhood obesity. For the Sector to do more in terms of increasing participation opportunities, developing the next generation of elite athletes or enabling people to lead healthy lifestyles using sport and active recreation as the vehicle, it requires an appropriate level of NSW Government funding.

Throughout *Future Directions* reference is made to greater levels of collaboration between the Sector and the NSW Government. As part of that partnership, reform of government funding to the Sector is long overdue.

To illustrate, State and Disability Sporting Organisations in NSW currently receive ‘core funding’ from the NSW Government Sports Development Program ranging from $5,000 to $60,000 depending on the category of the organisation. These amounts have not changed since 2000. If the amount had been indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) over the last 18 years the range today would be approximately $8,000 to $95,000, but there has been no such movement.

Sporting organisations in other state jurisdictions are receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in core government funding to operate and build capacity in their sports while in NSW the Sector treads water. This creates significant challenges when sporting organisations in the jurisdiction with the largest population in the country are also the lowest funded amongst their interstate counterparts, making NSW one of the least likely to be able to afford to improve or innovate.

This is not to say that government money hasn’t flowed to the Sector. The Active Kids voucher program will inject well over $300 million over its first four years while hundreds of millions of dollars have been allocated to sporting infrastructure funds regionally, for Greater Sydney and also as legacies of large-scale sporting events. This is welcomed investment which enables greater levels of participation, however it does not assist the organisations charged with running sport and active recreation in the State.

On behalf of the Sector, *Future Directions* is proposing significant reform in government funding arrangements for the Sector. This should be by way of a substantial increase in ‘core Government funding’ through the Sports Development Program (a two-to-three-fold increase plus indexation to CPI annually thereafter would be a minimum). Importantly this should not result in a widening government funding wealth gap for the organisations in the Sector and should also include changes to existing grant programs to increase the certainty of funding rather than subjecting organisations to regular grant application processes.

If new levels of collaboration and innovation, as outlined throughout *Future Directions*, are to be achieved it is important for the Sector to be well resourced. In turn the Sector should be prepared to meet new and reasonable government requirements such as improved data collection and strong organisational health. Ultimately this will produce a win-win scenario as a stronger Sector produces improved outcomes, but it all starts with an increase and reform of funding.
Proposals

NSW Government to:

a) Reform funding to the Sector by way of a significant increase in core funding, indexed to CPI, via the Sports Development Program to align with the levels in other state jurisdictions.

b) Review and reform existing grant programs to provide greater certainty of funding to the Sector whilst reducing the need for regular grant applications.

c) Manage the widening wealth gap which may arise from increases in NSW Government funding across organisations in the Sector.

Sport NSW to:

d) Facilitate the consultation process with the Sector to assist the NSW Government with undertaking funding reform.

e) Regularly update and benchmark funding data from all state jurisdictions in order to lobby and advocate on behalf of the Sector.

Sector to:

f) Engage in Sport NSW’s consultation process to assist the NSW Government’s funding reform.

g) Be prepared to meet any new and appropriate NSW Government requirements arising from funding reform such as improved data collection and strong organisational health.
The consultation process for Future Directions revealed that the Sector wants the collection and analysis of data to improve. Sport NSW administered a survey as part of the consultation process and found significant differences in the quantity, frequency and type of data sets being collected and not being collected within the Sector.

In recent times the Office of Sport has regularly requested data from State and Disability Sporting Organisations, but there has been little co-ordination of these requests meaning that organisations have been asked for similar data from different departments within the Office of Sport, sometimes concurrently.

In the active recreation sector data exists, but its collection and collation is at best ad-hoc. Future Directions provides the catalyst for this to change and for active recreation to be included and more integrated.

Data collection and analysis should be a two-way collaboration between the Sector and the Office of Sport. Determining a comprehensive master list of data sets and collecting these regularly (at least once a year) will enable high quality analysis. Data sets should be collected from sport and active recreation organisations covering all participation metrics, facilities, volunteers, internal business metrics and investment levels.

This data must be consistent across the Sector, with every organisation collecting and providing the same information. This is where the power of data analytics can then be harnessed allowing for deeper insights and intelligence to be produced to enable the Sector to appropriately and effectively position itself to take advantage of a continually changing landscape.

The Sector does not know its value in entirety nor how to appropriately present that value to State agencies or the commercial sector. A genuine partnership to refine the collection of key data sets will enable the ongoing calculation of major, influential metrics. Robust and accurate data on the value of the Sector from an economic, health and social perspective will produce the kind of metrics which can be used at all levels of government to illustrate the true value of the Sector.

Already individual organisations are investing in this kind of analysis in an attempt to identify these metrics for their own sports and active recreation organisations. Recent examples include:

- In October 2018 Football NSW released The Community Impact of Football in NSW which reported the total annual community impact of football in NSW at just under $520 million.
- Golf NSW conducted similar research in 2017 entitled Community Impact Study: Golf in NSW which identified a community impact of golf in the State of $12 billion per annum.
- In 2018 The Value of Community Sport Infrastructure conservatively estimated the value of community sport infrastructure in Australia at $16.2 billion.

These examples already include areas of duplication and inconsistency; without a clear and consistent approach a variety of measures will proliferate and be difficult to compare. Data analysis will be replicated, and resources wasted. With the power of data analytics growing, the Office of Sport should lead a coordinated process on behalf of the Sector.

Data analysis should use sophisticated business intelligence tools and incorporate data from other areas, such as local government or State agencies to produce consistent metrics, validated by NSW Treasury, that can be broken down by individual sports or organisations. This will ensure consistent presentation while reducing the cost burden on individual organisations.
Proposals

NSW Government to lead the process with the Office of Sport to:

a) Ensure a genuine partnership exists with State Sporting and Disability Organisations to reform and enhance the collection of consistent and common key data sets, as well as utilising data from alternative sources (ie. LGAs and other government departments) to enable the calculation of major, influential metrics such as the economic, health and social impact and value of the Sector. Metrics must align with NSW Treasury methodology.

b) Streamline the data collection processes with the Sector to reduce duplication of requests and, where possible, automate the delivery of key data sets.

c) Expand the relationship with the active recreation sector so that it mirrors the relationship with State Sporting and Disability Organisations in the data collection and analysis process.

d) Ensure that the impact and value of the Sector is shared with government and the Sector and that individual organisations have open access to their analysed data.

The Sector to:

e) Genuinely and effectively engage in partnership with government to reform and enhance the collection of consistent and common key data sets, especially in the active recreation sector, to enable the production of economic, health and social, impact and value statements.

f) Engage with the Office of Sport to access their own individual sport or activity’s economic, health and social, impact and value statements.

Sport NSW to:

g) Support the Office of Sport’s enhanced data collection and analysis partnership with the Sector.

h) Encourage the Sector to genuinely engage in the Office of Sport’s enhanced data collection and analysis partnership.

i) Assist the Sector to build its knowledge and capability on data collection and analysis.
The Sector’s interests are represented by Sport NSW to the NSW Government’s public service executive agency – the Office of Sport. There is an opportunity for Sport NSW to expand its role and represent the Sector’s interests to the whole-of-government.

Research for this report indicated that organisations in the Sector function in isolation and only align with a few State agencies. Further, the Sector does not always understand the NSW Government’s agenda, and, outside the Office of Sport, the NSW Government or local government do not know how to approach the Sector to consult and discuss policy matters.

Collaborative relationships with the whole-of-government are essential to the successful implementation of government policy (local, State and Federal) and improved outcomes for the whole Sector. The Sector must also look beyond its own needs to examine how it can help to solve public policy issues and work towards whole-of-government initiatives such as the Premier’s Priorities.

Section 2.1 outlined the need for data collection and analysis to be taken to a new level to enable the production of consistent and influential metrics which can be used to communicate the impact and value of the Sector. Armed with these improved data metrics, the Sector can better illustrate its value to all levels of government beyond the Office of Sport, warrant a seat at the table in discussions and build deeper levels of engagement.

### Proposals

**Sport NSW to enhance its advocacy role by:**

a) Leading on behalf of the Sector to improve and enhance the relationship between the Sector and the whole-of-government more consistently through an increased understanding of the priorities of government.

b) Expanding its Sector forums into regional areas and incorporating Local Government Authorities into all forums.

c) Ensuring a ‘whole-of-Sector’ position is provided on the economic, health and social impact and value of the Sector when represented on committees implementing government policies and initiatives.

d) Ensuring that NSW Government policy in regional areas is linked to the Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans.

e) Being included in NSW government open-space and facility planning processes.

**NSW Government to:**

f) Support the role played by Sport NSW as the Sector’s advocate.

g) Consistently engage Sport NSW to seek guidance on the most appropriate avenues to engage the Sector to discuss and present government policy.

**The Sector to:**

h) Support Sport NSW through membership, regular and consistent attendance at forums and attendance at government policy discussions.
2.3 Collaboration within the Sector

Due to factors such as cost pressures, facility availability, technology and participation trends, collaborative relationships between organisations in the Sector have started to emerge. Feedback indicated that sport could learn from active recreation and vice versa and that collaborative relationships within the Sector will allow the exchange of new and different ideas.

The Sector must help itself to project the best image to other sectors within the community. A more united and integrated collaborative relationship will enable the Sector to play a more significant role in influencing and implementing government policy.

Like other sectors, the Sector is represented by peak industry bodies such as Sport NSW, Outdoors NSW and the Aquatic & Recreation Institute. Increased collaboration between such peak bodies would benefit the Sector as a whole as resource constraints currently impact their effectiveness.

Collaboration between parties who compete for the leisure time of participants will, in many cases, require new thinking. However, the benefits could be substantial and, in some instances, even provide a lifeline for sports or activities that suffer from a lack of participation or investment.

Initiatives could include:

1. Similar sports collaborating to improve participation opportunities, including with active recreation providers.

2. Sports with different seasons collaborating to improve outcomes.

3. Sport and active recreation organisations sharing facilities to improve utilisation.

4. Collaborating in off-field or out-of-competition areas such as back office administration or shared services models.

5. Aligning planning processes across individual sports at national, state, association and club level.

6. Similar sports collaborating with active recreation organisations to improve outcomes.

7. Industry peak bodies collaborating for Sector wide outcomes.

8. Inclusion of appropriate and relevant outcomes from the various Sport Australia and Office of Sport plans as they are published into the strategic plans of all organisations in the Sector. These currently include:
   - Sport 2030
   - Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans 2018-2023 (Nine NSW Regions)
   - High Performance Strategy - Future Champions
   - Women in Sport Strategy - Her Sport Her Way
   - State Sport Infrastructure Strategy
   - District Sport Facility Plans (Five Districts of Greater Sydney)
   - Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2018-2022
   - Physical Activity Strategy

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Proposals

Office of Sport to:

a) Provide opportunities for formal and informal collaboration within the Sector through its implementation of the Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.

Sport NSW to lead increased collaboration through:

b) Leading discussions between sport and active recreation organisations to identify opportunities to collaborate with an increased focus on regional areas and working with the Office of Sport on implementation of the Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.

c) Establishing and enhancing existing local sports associations particularly in regional areas and incorporating representation from local government authorities.

d) Obtaining and sharing case studies of successful collaboration within the Sector.

The Sector to:

e) Engage with the Office of Sport to support the Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans by incorporating strategies into individual organisational planning.

f) Support Sport NSW by participating in discussions on increasing collaboration between organisations in the Sector and ensuring representation on local sports associations.
Collaborative relationships with NGOs, the commercial sector, not-for-profits, charities and universities are often overlooked by the Sector, but offer the potential to learn about successful practices and innovations from other industries. The Sector needs to demonstrate a willingness to look outside its sphere for expertise, ideas and funding, including innovations in data, digitisation and technology. The university sector offers real potential in terms of engaging the student population (to source future staff) as well as research.

While the need to strengthen and diversify revenue streams is not new, the Sector has not developed or implemented appropriate responses. It could learn from outside organisations and explore philanthropic, content marketing and third-party arrangement opportunities.

The Sector's links with philanthropy are largely untapped. Organisations within the Sector could develop their value statements, diversify product offerings and tap into funding opportunities by learning from philanthropic organisations and presenting themselves as worthy philanthropic causes to government and the community. The Australian Sports Foundation was established to enable sport and recreation organisations greater access to philanthropy. A case study on page 15 illustrates its potential.

Furthermore, collaborating with sectors that have benefited from content marketing and third-party arrangements would expand the Sector's knowledge base and generate revenue streams.

Proposals

Sport NSW to foster collaboration that will:

a) Improve connections with sectors outside the Sector particularly universities.

b) Obtain and share case studies with the Sector as examples of digitisation, innovation and technology.

c) Engage the student population as staff and researchers.

d) Facilitate constructive relationships with the Australian Sports Foundation and its Charitable Fund.

e) Assist the Sector to identify opportunities to diversify revenue streams.

The Sector to:

f) Support Sport NSW by participating in discussions on increasing collaboration with other sectors including universities.

g) Provide case studies when and where requested by Sport NSW.

h) Review and incorporate philanthropy in its planning processes.
Case study

Fundraising at Equestrian NSW

The Australian Sports Foundation allows sporting organisations to fundraise and tap into the philanthropy market in a simple and professional way. It allows for donations made to be tax deductible to the donor, with a wide range of projects and causes able to be set-up – from supporting individual athletes to raising money for the club’s facilities upgrade.

In 2016, in memory of a talented rider following a tragic event, Equestrian NSW set-up a sport development project on the Australian Sports Foundation platform – the Olivia Inglis Eventing Scholarship – for young eventing riders.

The primary tool used to generate exposure and raise awareness of the cause and the project was Facebook and the hashtag #RideWithOlivia.

The Facebook campaign reached 23 million people worldwide, with people posting a photo of themselves riding, along with the hashtag and shared it with their followers. The social media campaign really accelerated when many high-profile international riders lent their support to the campaign.

The project has raised over $160,000 since its inception. Equestrian NSW found that utilising the digital platforms like Facebook was the most effective fundraising tool and a great way to increase engagement both within and outside of the riding and equestrian community.
3. Capacity

3.1 Embedding sustainable facility and infrastructure planning

Access to the appropriate number and quality of facilities is one of the greatest challenges facing the Sector at the current time. Without ‘fit-for-purpose’ facilities the Sector can not meet demand. In this respect, ‘facilities’ are considered in their broadest sense given that from an active recreation perspective it can refer to access to walkways, cycle paths and tracks, national parks and waterways. Access to facilities must also be available to all genders, ages and levels of ability and disability.

Since 2017, the Office of Sport has made significant progress in data collection and planning for the future of facility and infrastructure development for the Sector.

The forthcoming release of the State Sport Infrastructure Strategy and the District Sport Facility Plans (along with the previous Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure projects) represent groundbreaking documents for NSW and will result in advanced and comprehensive data sets being produced.

It is imperative that these initiatives are only the beginning. As referenced in sections 2.1 and 4.1, highly coordinated data collection and analysis provides the greatest opportunity for the Sector to prove its impact, value and need.

The detailed data collected on all facilities in the Greater Sydney region should be broadened to include all of NSW as soon as possible. The database created should then become an open-source platform, hosted by the Office of Sport for the Sector and all levels of government. Data on every facility should be updated as upgrades take place to provide users with access to up-to-date information.

The Investment Framework identified in the Office of Sport’s State Sport Infrastructure Strategy should become the key tool for all sport and active recreation organisations and local, state and federal governments to guide facility development. The framework rates infrastructure projects in terms of Health, Economic Contribution, Sustainability, Liveability and High Performance to assess the overall benefit of the project.

The sustainability element of the Investment Framework should be a focus. Given changing environmental conditions, innovative ideas and new technologies to reduce waste and increase the sustainability of infrastructure must be embraced.

An open-source data repository of all facilities in the State will allow equitable access to information for the Sector. A robust and transparent assessment process, driven by the Investment Framework and coupled with the improved data and analytics referred to elsewhere in this report, will provide the Sector and government with a comprehensive model which will lead to investment decisions based on fact.

Two-way planning processes between the Sector and government (in particular the Office of Sport) are essential and will enhance opportunities to maximise participation. The Sector must be educated on how to develop appropriate infrastructure business cases, in line with the Investment Framework, and ensure infrastructure planning is included in its overall planning processes.
Proposals

NSW Government to:

a) Complete the data collection process undertaken in the Greater Sydney region for all regions in the State with the assistance of local government authorities.

b) Create an open-source platform containing the details of all sport and active recreation facilities in the State.

c) Integrate the State Sport Infrastructure Strategy principles into the Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.

d) Incorporate sport and active recreation organisations into government planning processes to ensure facilities are multi-purpose, inclusive, maximise participation opportunities and are sustainable.

e) Ensure that the Investment Framework from the State Sport Infrastructure Strategy is continually reviewed, updated and enhanced to ensure that it remains current, is shared with the Sector and becomes the standard tool to guide facility development.

f) Develop and implement training programs to guide and educate the Sector when developing appropriate business cases in line with the Investment Framework.

g) Ensure that effective two-way planning processes with the Sector are in place to maximise participation opportunities.

Sport NSW to:

h) Act as the Sector’s representative in government infrastructure planning processes in particular ensuring that active recreation has greater access to facilities in the broadest sense.

i) Host forums with the Sector to facilitate infrastructure discussion and presentation of updates, incorporating government and Office of Sport representation.

The Sector to:

j) Plan for state wide infrastructure development that aligns with government policy and local and national sport and active recreation plans to enable a single infrastructure plan for each sport and active recreation organisation.

k) Engage expertise at the Office of Sport prior to commencing an infrastructure business case to ensure compliance with requirements.
3.2 Strategic Partnerships

Collaboration can be deepened through strategic partnerships within the Sector, and between organisations outside the Sector to increase participation, diversify product offerings, increase delivery capacity, gain a competitive edge and reach new markets.

Organisations within the Sector are honest enough to admit that there is competition for a participant’s time and investment. However, the data analytics case study and a growing population provides enough evidence that there is an opportunity for all organisations to increase participation.

The relationship between Netball and AFL clubs in the Suncorp Super Netball League illustrates how strategic partnerships can benefit organisations within the sports sector. This is a partnership between two sports that has a long history at the community level and has evolved through varying levels of participation. It provides an example for other sports to discuss how they can replicate such an initiative which spans from the grass roots to the elite level.

The pressure for funding and open space (particularly in Sydney) is seeing more sports played at integrated precincts. This trend will only increase and organisations must be prepared to look at innovative ways in which they can maximise facility utilisation by partnering with other sport or active recreation providers.

There is evidence of strategic partnerships with organisations outside the Sector enhancing project delivery. Sport NSW has successfully partnered with the Australian College of Physical Education on facility use and engagement of students on a range of projects. Equally there are numerous examples of sports that have engaged students as volunteers, interns and additional workforce to support major events.

Whilst there are examples of relationships between sports and the disability sector a coordinated approach is missing. Investment in the disability sector via the National Disability Insurance Scheme offers the opportunity for sports to fully embrace this sector to increase participation, while bringing about societal benefits.

Proposals

Sport NSW to:

a) Obtain and share case studies as examples of sports partnering with other sports, active recreation organisations and the disability sector.

b) Encourage organisations within the Sector to improve the sharing of their success stories by presenting examples of partnerships in their forums.

c) Expand their discussions with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to understand how the Sector can increase participation for people with a disability and unlock additional funding opportunities.

The Sector to:

d) Consider how they can develop a competitive edge by partnering with other organisations either in the sport and/or active recreation sector to develop initiatives that grow their participation base, expand their product offering, reach new markets and/or improve facility utilisation.

e) Support Sport NSW requests for information as part of their expansion of discussions with the NDIA.

NSW Government (NDIA) to:

f) Embrace the approach by Sport NSW and actively participate in discussions and support outcomes.
3.3 Volunteers, Careers & Standards

Community sport is one of the single largest areas in society for the involvement of volunteers and without the time committed by volunteers, sport at the grass roots level simply would not exist in its current form. The wider active recreation elements of the Sector also rely to different degrees on volunteers.

The burden on volunteer administrators, coaches and officials is growing and requires a coordinated approach to simplify processes, improve training and support, and utilise technology.

As an example, the specific requirement of coach and official accreditation is one which the Sector can improve significantly. Basic coaching and officiating principles are consistent across most sports yet almost all sports require a Level 1 accreditation delivered by their own sport. To retain and encourage volunteer coaches and officials the recognition of prior learning or involvement must be improved to prevent people turning away because it is ‘too hard’.

A career in sport and active recreation is a reality for many; this career path could be better defined. Universities and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector offer high quality and specific training across the broad spectrum of roles in the Sector, from coaches to lifeguards, exercise physiologists to event managers and personal trainers to abseiling instructors.

However, the Sector suffers from a ‘here and now’ mentality. If workers are only required for particular events, seasons or tasks the opportunity to upskill the individual is lost. A greater awareness of people development will support ongoing education and create opportunities for workers to remain employed in the Sector.

Organisations should look to share human resources to reduce the impact and reliance on volunteers as a means of delivering an organisation’s services. This process will lead to more well-rounded and experienced employees with the capability to forge a career in the Sector. This would be a step-change in the Sector and would require new levels of co-operation, but it also offers a way to dramatically improve efficiency.

Engaging with education and training providers to ensure that the skills being taught align closely with Sector needs will create a stronger employment pathway. Sport NSW should build on its relationships with universities, tertiary colleges and the VET sector industry skills bodies in this regard.

Currently, Adventure Activity Standards apply to the active and outdoor recreation sectors and some sporting organisations in several states. These will be superseded by National Activity Standards. Developing an audit process to monitor compliance with these Standards is a natural evolution to follow their launch.

Continued development of best practice operating standards is an important step for the active recreation sector.

Proposals

Sport NSW to:

a) Advocate on behalf of the sports sector for reform in coaching and officiating principle courses to recognise prior learning and involvement and streamline level 1 accreditation.

b) Investigate the development of shared services models across the Sector to streamline:

i) Administrative tasks and functions:
   • Amongst like sports.
   • Between sports with different seasons.
   • Within each sport and amongst a sport’s regions, associations and clubs.

ii) Athlete development in the areas of:
   • Skill development.
   • Motor skills.

iii) Training and education of officials and administrators in:
   • Coaching.
   • First aid.

c) Represent the Sector to education and training providers to ensure that the skills being taught closely align to the needs of the Sector.

Sporting organisations to:

d) Support Sport NSW by advocating for coaching and officials accreditation reform.

e) Review operations with a view to developing shared services models that reform the operating environment and streamline the focus areas outlined in (b) above.

Active recreation and other sporting organisations that fall under the Adventure Activity Standards:

f) Are encouraged to adopt and adhere to the national standards when they are launched in 2019.
3.4 Organisational Culture

Organisational Culture is a subject that is only discussed when an organisation experiences operational challenges. Yet by then it is too late and the impact on performance is often significant.

Organisational Culture focuses on how people believe they are expected to behave. It explains why an organisation is functioning a certain way and how well the organisation can sustain its effectiveness over time. The key is integrating culture to help foster high performance and long-term success.

Organisational Culture can best be understood through the image of an iceberg. Culture is the part that is under the water – it is hard to see, not obvious and yet it represents 90% of the critical mass of the ice mountain and dictates how the iceberg responds to ocean currents.

Cricket in Australia presented a case in point in 2018. Much of the fallout of the ball tampering incident was tied back to Cricket Australia’s organisational culture where they were challenged, amongst other things, for ‘losing touch’ with the average cricket player and spectator. Consultation on Future Directions was taking place as the cricket matter unfolded and the issue resonated with all levels of the Sector.

Sport holds a unique place in the Australian psyche which is built from the ground up and fostered at the community level from a young age. Administrators spoke of a widening gap between grass roots sport and the State and National Sporting Organisations which oversee them. There is a growing need for the culture of Australian sporting organisations to reflect participation first, where the masses lie, and for greater alignment to exist between the levels of administration.

Sport is inextricably linked to the grass roots and a sporting family which displays a strong culture of respecting the base, while also pursuing success, will ultimately prevail. It is incumbent on all levels of the Sector to consciously pursue an organisational culture which embraces and develops the sport holistically and reflects the community in which it exists. Increasingly this will be a key factor in the growth, development and even long-term survival of a sport.

The Sector can learn from other sectors and not-for-profit organisations as per the case study on page 21.

Proposals

Sport NSW to:

a) Introduce Organisational Culture into its forums in order to begin a conversation on how performance can be positively impacted.

The Sector to:

b) Attend and actively engage in Sport NSW forums and evaluate the benefits of introducing cultural reviews into their overall planning processes.

c) Develop a culture of ongoing, positive capacity building which stretches throughout all levels – from grass roots to elite and community clubs to state organisations.
Cultural Change at Care Options

In 2015 the Aged Care industry underwent major reform by the government. The industry was converted into a consumer directed care system where customers had far greater choice over the types of care and services they accessed, how and when they received them, and most importantly, from whom.

Staff turnover was at an all-time high, the team weren’t motivated, complaints averaged 15 per month, and they were operating at a net profit loss of 1.1%.

Care Options engaged Human Synergistics to deploy their cultural diagnostic tools to explore the operating environment.

The cultural assessment showed that Care Options’ existing culture had positives: people were expected to be supportive of each other as well as friendly and open. However, there was also an emphasis on needing to follow the rules, oppose new ideas, and shift responsibility for decisions.

The result was a pleasant place to work but people weren’t motivated or satisfied. People felt the company could be performing better, but that they couldn’t do anything about it.

The cultural inventory process revealed what was causing the culture to be the way it was. Employees didn’t have influence or involvement in shaping the company. The way jobs were designed reinforced expectations to behave passively. Leaders had opportunities to improve the way they role modelled and communicated their expectations for excellence.

Key Actions:

1. Creation of the Culture Optimisation Group (COG)

   To address the lack of involvement and influence of employees, Care Options made sure they had a voice and the opportunity to put their ideas into action. The cross functional ‘Culture Optimisation Group’ was made up of representatives from throughout the business – including the CEO and frontline Support Workers. They were responsible for getting under the surface of the culture results and generating ideas and actions for improvement.

2. Reorganisation Based on the Insights from the Culture Data

   Results from the diagnostic indicated that the structure was getting in the way of people doing their jobs effectively. A collaborative organisational redesign process involved a range of staff to freely discuss their feelings and ideas and share their hopes for Care Options moving forwards. New recruitments were made with the ideal culture and structure in mind and they were quick to join the journey.

3. Leadership Development: Setting a Constructive Tone

   Leaders have to role model and reinforce the expectations for excellence. Insights from the diagnostic revealed that there were several opportunities for the leadership team to improve how they were performing.

   Bi-monthly group and individual coaching sessions were conducted. The program built leader’s self-awareness of their thinking and behaviour and created actions which shifted their thinking and behaviour to being more constructive.

Results

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<td>Complaints p/month</td>
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4. Innovation

4.1 Research and data analytics

While we don’t know what our environment will be like in 30 years, we do know it will be fundamentally different from today. Research is the foundation for knowledge and decision-making. It sparks new ideas, methods, techniques and innovation across a range of areas. Engaging research is more likely to persuade funding bodies to invest.

Currently, undertaking research in the Sector is at best ad hoc and reactive and at times a desirable ‘add-on.’ The Sector needs to adopt an evidence-based approach not just to its decision-making, but in the embodiment of new practices and programs. This significant cultural shift required must be accepted across all layers of the Sector along with its relationship to all levels of government.

In section 2.1 Future Directions notes the importance of collaboration to collect and analyse data producing meaningful Sector wide metrics in economic, health and social impacts, and in 3.1 to embed data collection and analysis into facilities and infrastructure planning processes.

The use of large-scale data analytics is now common in many industries to investigate trends and predict future demand. As part of the Future Directions process Sport NSW conducted a pilot project with nine State Sporting Organisations providing participation data to consultants – ActiveXchange*. The data was combined with demographic segmentation data, similar to that used by organisations such as Coles and Woolworths, to estimate demand, penetration and risk of drop-out. For more information see the case study on page 23.

This pilot project was primarily undertaken to explore the intelligence and evidence that could be gleaned from a small number of data sets and the results were truly eye-opening for the sports which participated. Research and analysis of this kind should become commonplace within the Sector and there is an opportunity to expand this experimentation further. The Office of Sport should look to utilise the data collection being undertaken, as per proposals elsewhere in the report, and move to a level of analytics which provides the Sector with advanced intelligence on participation trends, demand, retention, facility utilisation and infrastructure planning.

SPRINTER (SPort and active Recreation INtervention and Epidemiology Research group) is a unique research partnership between the Office of Sport and the University of Sydney. This SPRINTER partnership enhances capability and capacity across the sport and active recreation sector, in order to drive quality research and evaluation which informs policy and practice. SPRINTER unites agencies and works at the intersection of data and its interpretation. A key focus is the analysis of the data generated by the Active Kids voucher program. Utilising this data set, plus data available through Ausplay and relationships with other government agencies such as Health, Planning, Education and Transport can provide strategic insights to the Sector.
Proposals

The Office of Sport to:

a) Continue its relationship with the tertiary sector particularly the SPRINTER partnership (The University of Sydney) and consult the Sector on subjects where research is required.

b) Expand its in-house research and data analysis capability to utilise the data collected and advanced data analytic techniques to identify trends and opportunities and other experimentation across the Sector.

c) Collaborate with other government departments to utilise additional data sets for the benefit of the Sector and informing government policy.

d) Build relationships with relevant government departments in other states to keep abreast of research initiatives and opportunities.

e) Consistently share research and data analysis with the Sector.

The Sector to:

f) Support the Office of Sport’s relationship with the tertiary sector.

g) Embed research and data collection as an action item into organisational planning.

h) Undertake administrative reform to enable the collection of common and consistent influential data sets to be used for Sector wide analysis.

Sport NSW to:

i) Facilitate the relationship between the Sector, Office of Sport and the SPRINTER program (The University of Sydney) to expand the research opportunities.

Case study

The confidence to change – the emerging role of data in New South Wales

In 2018 Sport NSW, alongside data specialists ActiveXchange, and underpinned by nine pioneering NSW State Sporting Organisations supplying 450,000 annual member data records has conducted a pilot Market Segmentation project – a ground-breaking Sector collaboration that has the potential to change the sport planning and investment landscape.

The online platform has been developed to support both delivery and commissioning organisations to match the resident profile of suburbs (and Local Government Authorities) with proven demand for specific programs and sports, acting as a match making toolkit to grow active communities. The platform will help different partners to collaborate more effectively, underpinning decisions with independent and up to date intelligence. For the first time demand projections have been built from hundreds of thousands of current member records.

The Sector is inherently data rich but information poor, collecting large amounts of member data but to date the full potential and value of this data has not been realised. This data has sat in siloed systems, meaning market intelligence hasn’t been readily available to help internal and external stakeholders make more informed decisions.

Ultimately the Sector is dependent on understanding two simple but powerful questions, both of which have data at their heart:

1. Why one person is more likely to be active or a member than another person (and therefore how can this, and the drivers of this, be influenced)?

2. Why is one program, club or facility better at absorbing activity and sport demand than another?

Data-based predictive modelling, coupled with up-to-date market intelligence, now simplifies decision making across professional sport, and means less but more focussed – investment can deliver greater outcomes and impacts. Outcomes are systematically tracked so investment goes further each time, often with cross-sector organisations pooling learnings to collectively progress faster. The same principles are now being applied to growing community club and facility membership and engaging the disengaged to create more active communities. A game-changer that’s fast becoming mainstream.

*Note: ActiveXchange was engaged commercially.

Sport NSW  |  Future Directions 2019 - 2022
4.2 Technology and digital solutions

Throughout the consultation process for Future Directions there was a strong view that new and innovative solutions to common practices within the Sector were required in order to adapt to changing times.

For example, it is well known that much of the sport and active recreation participation experience is reliant on volunteers. With a widespread view that volunteers are becoming harder to find, technology to reduce the administrative burden is overdue. Furthermore, costs of participation continue to rise, and greater efficiencies are being sought in many areas of the Sector.

Adoption of digital technologies is changing the way tasks are performed and the expectations of participants. Digitisation can make tasks and communications easier, quicker and more reliable, while providing platforms from which to draw insights and feeding the data analysis tools referred to elsewhere in this report.

A strategic priority in Sport Australia's 2018-2022 Corporate Plan is to improve the digital capability of the Australian sports sector. Embracing this initiative is a natural progression to improve the capability of the Sector.

Many sports and active recreation organisations offer online registration options to improve the customer experience and also reduce administration. However, a common theme throughout the consultation process for Future Directions was a request for a universal registration system for sport, whereby children register once and play multiple sports throughout the year.

This presents a myriad of questions and complications, including how to cater for and improve registration for active recreation organisations, but without it being considered it simply remains an idea.

The Sector is similarly united in its view that the level of insurance payments which must be passed on to participants has reached an unsustainable level, driving up the cost of participation and forcing people away. An investigation into the feasibility of a single insurance payment per year which covers all sporting involvement (similar to purchasing a Green Slip CTP policy when registering a car) should be explored. Once again, a myriad of potential issues exist, such as the relative injury risk of various sports, the number of sports played per year, nuances with disability sports and existing national insurance programs.

As part of insurance reform, the claims process should also be addressed to reduce its complexity and make claiming, when required, a simple process. Anecdotally, cumbersome processes have led to claims not being pursued, which misrepresents the full accident / incident history.

Other well supported ideas include large-scale venue booking systems, industry wide online club search functions and pursuing a path towards self-service models. Identifying efficiencies and lessons learnt from innovative practices in other industries, such as agriculture, horticulture and mining, should be considered. Innovation NSW explores these opportunities on behalf of the NSW Government. The Sector should engage with Innovation NSW to investigate solutions.

Proposals

Sport NSW and NSW Government to:

a) Investigate the development of a universal sport registration system.

b) Investigate the development of a universal Sector insurance scheme.

c) Investigate the Sport Australia digital capability plans and further opportunities to achieve economies of scale, particularly through analysis of innovation in alternative industries, which remove the need for repetitive, compliance style tasks and to make administration easier.

The Sector to:

d) Support Sport NSW and Government in their conduct of the above investigations and any outcomes.

e) With the assistance of Sport NSW, scope out how a pilot program could be developed using an opt-in strategy across tiers 2-6 sports to develop and test any universal Sector registration systems and insurance schemes.
4.3 Products and participation opportunities

With a rapidly increasing population, changing demographics and many competing priorities for participants, the demand for sport and active recreation product offerings is changing. To remain relevant, organisations within the Sector must diversify product offerings to cater for participants of all ages, ability and commitment levels.

However, to further complicate the product offering, sports which offer a pathway from participation to the elite level must continue to provide the traditional version of the sport and a well-defined high-performance pathway to ensure that participants are prepared at the necessary standard to excel at the elite level of competition. This is a difficult balance to achieve as the demand for different versions of the sport may differ from the supply on offer from clubs and associations which concentrate on a traditional model.

A shift in participation preferences has seen modified versions of sports for junior participants (such as AFL Auskick and Kanga Cricket) and new versions of traditional sports for all participation levels (such as Rugby Sevens and Beach Volleyball). A further step is shortened versions of traditional sports for a modern market (such as T20 Cricket and Fast4 Tennis), while the older demographic has been targeted with the development of walking Football and Netball.

For example, Hockey’s launch of J-Ball is designed to be played by anyone, on a small field with simple rules and no need for protective equipment. J-Ball is an entry level version of Hockey aimed at giving people a taste, but which could equally be their game of choice for some fun, social, physical activity. For more details, see the case study on page 26.

The active recreation sector faces similar challenges, especially as facilities such as nature trails, waterways or rock faces for abseiling or rock climbing are often not located near high population areas. Accordingly, indoor centres for some traditionally outdoor activities have been developed – even including skydiving.

Every modern adaptation to a traditional format of a sport or active recreation activity requires some innovative thinking and often a level of investment. This is an area where the government could contribute, by initiating a fund where sport and active recreation providers could apply for financial assistance to develop new forms of their sport or activity. It would be an investment in growing participation levels for the flow-on impacts of curbing major social issues, physical and mental health and community building.

There is no easy answer when it comes to attracting new and retaining existing participants, all while continuing to provide a high-performance pathway and nurturing future elite athletes. Just managing the facility requirements to offer different versions of sports is a challenge and may require new levels of collaboration between organisations and greater engagement of bodies such as the Regional Academies of Sport to meet some of the high performance and pathway needs.

However, standing still will be akin to going backwards and therefore organisations within the Sector must continue to innovate to find new ways of attracting participants to their sport or active recreation activity, enabling people to enjoy a different form of the activity as their staple level of involvement, or as an entrée to the full version.

Proposals

**Sector organisations to:**

a) Review current and identify new participation opportunities to provide easier introduction and continued activity in the Sector.

**The NSW Government, through the Office of Sport, to:**

b) Scope how an innovation fund could function that provides financial assistance to Sector organisations looking to develop innovative versions of their activities.

c) Work with stakeholders in high performance pathways to look at taking greater levels of responsibility in nurturing the performance pathways in collaboration with State and Disability Sporting Organisations.
Case study

The Hockey NSW J-Ball Experiment

Sport Australia market research indicates “Australians are increasingly time poor, have limited budgets and are being inundated by new forms of entertainment. With these changes, new preferences are emerging. Australians want greater flexibility, more tailored products and sports that work for them. Together, these trends are rapidly changing the environment in which sport operates and are placing pressure on the sector to change.” Hockey has not been immune to this changing sporting landscape with participation rates continuing to decline nationally from the peaks reported in the mid 2000s. Hockey realised it needed to change its approach and delivery models to adapt to these shifting consumer preferences, essentially developing new offerings to make traditional hockey more relevant.

As a direct response, hockey created J-Ball, a new social game developed from a research project undertaken between Hockey Victoria and La Trobe University. The game was specifically designed to be played by anyone, regardless of their age, gender, fitness or skill level. The rules of the game are simple and easy to learn, even for those that have never played hockey before. The equipment (in particular the hockey stick and ball) have been modified so that there is no requirement for shin-pads, mouthguard or any other protective gear. With six players per team on a small field, almost like ice hockey without the ice, J-Ball is super easy to play and lots of fun.

Whilst J-Ball provided hockey with a modified product designed to meet the changing needs of the Australian public, the feeling was the sport needed to widen its reach beyond the traditional hockey player at the traditional hockey venue. To do this Hockey NSW started exploring the opportunity to partner with organisations that shared similar values and goals but could also improve the accessibility of J-Ball by providing a distribution channel to new people or places.

Hockey NSW will trial a number of different J-Ball versions with a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in term 1, 2019, across both metropolitan and regional areas with a view to fine tuning delivery to ensure maximum engagement. Hockey NSW is currently developing four adaptations of J-Ball aimed at primary and secondary school aged participants as well as adults and 65+. Each version will be specifically tailored to the needs of the age group.

Hockey NSW is incredibly excited about the potential to formalise a partnership with an NGO in order to blend the unique set of skills, experiences and infrastructure of differing organisations to meet the rapidly changing environment of the sport and active recreation sector.
5. Engagement

5.1 Social media

In less than a decade social media has become one of the dominant methods to engage large numbers of people, in a place and at a time when they want to be engaged. Sporting administrators in particular are historically slow to move when it comes to embracing new ways of operating as they traditionally roll from season to season following a tried and tested method. As pointed out in the Innovation section of this report, it can no longer be assumed that people will simply continue to demand the traditional approach.

Social media audiences can be used to assess the size, scope, health and commercial sophistication of a sport or active recreation provider relative to its peers. With increasing pressure on revenues and resources it is more imperative than ever for sports to adopt an evidence-based approach to their strategic decision-making. While this has historically been challenging, with contemporary digital (including social media) communications there is now no excuse with increasingly powerful data collection and analysis tools available, often at little to no cost.

The better informed an organisation is about the nature of the industry in which it operates and its place within it, the better positioned it is to make informed strategic decisions. Social media audience analysis can provide a robust, holistic overview of the organisation’s audience, allowing for targeted engagement for specific purposes such as registration, ticket sales or sharing of news.

Social media has emerged as a new asset class for Sector organisations looking to further build their value proposition. The key to success is to scale associated audiences large enough and understand them well enough so that they can then be monetised in their own right. This is now an established process within the larger sports, leagues and teams. While use of social media is common place at the community level, it is primarily for information sharing purposes rather than for commercial gain. Both ends of the spectrum (professional and community) could learn from one another to improve overall engagement.

Social media enables the conversation around a potential relationship between a sport and corporate partner to shift from a classic sponsorship arrangement to more of an advertising or marketing driven activation. This allows a sport to tap into a larger potential budget than is typically allocated to often ring-fenced sponsorships.

Only larger or progressive organisations within the Sector have truly harnessed the power of engagement via social media. Social media organisations are developing comprehensive analysis of all Australian sport related social media accounts in an attempt to quantify the size of the market, the trends and the opportunity. The insights now available are changing the way organisations in the Sector are operating in terms of participant, fan and general audience engagement. See the case study provided involving Surfing WA on page 28.

The value proposition and benefits of a quality social media presence and engagement strategy will only grow in the future in terms of business development and management. The key will be to stay abreast of the latest trends and adapt accordingly.

Proposals

Sport NSW to:

a) Provide education and best practice examples on social media use for the benefit of organisations within the Sector.

b) Partner with organisations to provide analytical tools for the Sector in the social media area with a view to merging those tools with additional data analysis for greater insights.

Sector organisations to:

c) Review their current use and develop true two-way innovations in social media engagement and embed improvements into a wider strategy.
Case study

Strategic Applications of Social Media

Shunt Applied Creative are the producers of the STAR Report which currently tracks over 7,500 social media accounts across Australian sport with a combined audience of 200 million sourced from 4,000 rights holders and athletes.

Analysis of the social media market in this way has several strategic applications;

• By better understanding the industry as a whole, and a sport’s place within it, more informed decisions can be made at all levels of an organisation
• Social media audiences act as a useful proxy for the scope, scale, health and sophistication of the industry and its component parts
• Sporting brands can be mapped against a range of criteria to enable a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses against peers

Another advantage of monitoring the industry in a holistic manner is the ability to identify those performing well in excess of a given benchmark. Closer investigation of these sports provides invaluable insights for all administrators as to the commercial and communications opportunities of social media.

Surfing WA are an example of a small State Sporting Organisation who have made a conscious effort to use social media as a key tool for growing their business and brand. Surfing WA recognised that social media was a highly effective communication tool for both competitive and recreational participation target markets and went about thoughtfully curating localised content which could attract substantial national and international audiences.

With limited resources, but effective systems and processes in place, Surfing WA saw social media audience growth from 10,000 to over 100,000 achieved within five years. Importantly this has led to a valuable new revenue stream as brands have partnered with Surfing WA on the back of their audience reach with up to 20% of sponsorship revenue now attributed to their social media activity.
5.2 Community building

Throughout the consultation process for Future Directions, the discussion overwhelmingly centred on the ability of sport and active recreation, and almost any form of physical activity, to build a sense of community. People will always crave the interaction which builds strong communities, with sport and active recreation activities an obvious starting point.

The Sector provides one of the best mediums by which to drive social inclusion, whole-of-family participation and interaction between people from all backgrounds. The saying that sport is ‘the great leveler’ refers to the fact that when participating, everyone is equal, just as they are when volunteering around sport and active recreation activities.

Similarly, schools bring together people from various backgrounds and can be the first real community that people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds belong to. The Sporting Schools program has shown that providers can find it difficult to transition children from participating in a Sporting Schools activity to a traditional club-based participation model. It is time for a new approach.

Schools should increasingly be the starting point for the creation of new sporting clubs. While school teams do compete in some non-school, community sporting competitions, and some sports are using school facilities for training and competition, it is not standard practice. A shift from the current model could strengthen an existing school community through participation and volunteering in sport or active recreation activities.

This does not suggest that teachers or school staff are to be responsible for managing the club or the use of their facilities, rather it should be operated as any other community club by volunteers and/or the sport. However, the framework of the school could be utilised for communication, finances and back-of-house assistance.

Basing sporting clubs at schools and using their facilities more frequently across a broader range of sports also fits neatly with the NSW Department of Education’s Joint Use policy, whereby more and more facilities at schools will be made available for community use after hours.47

Community sporting clubs, active recreation opportunities, leisure centres and outdoor recreation remain critical components of community building and providing the economic, health and social benefits which flow from participation and involvement. They are the starting points for inclusion, activation, teamwork and a sense of community pride. Their importance to the social fabric cannot be overstated and the organisations within the Sector carry a special responsibility to continue to nurture and support them.

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Proposals

**NSW Government to:**

a) Fast track the development of new joint-use projects to enable school facilities to be used by the community for sport and active recreation.

**Sector organisations to:**

b) Develop relationships with local schools to increase participation by investigating the use of school facilities and interest in creating community clubs aligned to schools.

c) Recognise the critical role they play in community outcomes, inclusion and building the social fabric by providing ongoing training, education and assistance to volunteers to ensure that community sport and active recreation remains of critical importance to the health of society.
5.3 Formalising Sector engagement

Sport NSW was established with a purpose of advocating for the sporting sector. It represents the sporting sector on a variety of steering committees, working groups, panels and advisory groups to advance the position of its member State and Disability Sporting Organisations, businesses and local councils.

Section 2 explores the benefits of collaboration across sectors, government and areas within the industry. Sport NSW believes that, where possible, engagement should be formalised to ensure that those benefits continue to flow. Further, engagement should be expanded beyond just Sport NSW representing the Sector to see individual organisations exploring other opportunities which may be beneficial, including:

1. Structured engagement between local government authorities and sporting representatives aligned to either Greater Sydney District regions or regional areas as outlined in the Office of Sport Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.
2. Closer formal engagement and collaboration between the sport and active recreation sectors.
3. Active recreation representation to be broadened on the Steering Groups activating Regional Sport and Active Recreation plans.
4. Sport NSW and the Office of Sport representing the Sector to more State Government departments by proactively approaching and advocating, aiming to determine how the Sector can contribute to better meeting the needs of government.
5. More frequent and structured dialogue between State and Disability Sporting Organisations to exchange best practice.
6. Closer engagement with the university and VET sectors for the purposes of providing opportunities for students as well as greater integration into community sport and active recreation.
7. Improved structured interaction with organisations within the high-performance pathway.
8. Improved engagement with businesses and providers offering services to sport and active recreation organisations.

This list is not exhaustive; however, consultation clarified that the Sector will benefit from more structured and regular engagement.

Proposals

Sport NSW to:
- a) Lead the engagement opportunities listed above.
Office of Sport to:
- b) Represent the Sector to other NSW Government departments.
Sector organisations to:
- c) Embrace the examples outlined above and consider what other opportunities are available.
1, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. NSW Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (2017)
2. NSW Office of Sport Women in Sport Strategy - Her Sport Her Way
3. NSW Office of Sport Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans 2018-2023 (2018)
5. NSW Office of Sport District Sport Facility Plans (unpublished)
7. NSW Office of Sport Physical Activity Strategy (unpublished)
35, 36, 37. NSW Office of Sport (2018) Review of Sport, Active Recreation and Technology
38. Sport and Recreation Victoria (2018) Value of Sport-The economic impacts of Sport in Victoria
41, 42. Outdoors NSW & SkillsIQ (2017) New South Wales nature-based outdoor economy – Key estimates and recommendations
44. NSW Office of Sport Future Needs of Sport Infrastructure Study (unpublished)
45, 46. Human Synergistics International Organisational Culture: Beyond Employee Engagement Whitepaper
47. NSW Department of Education (2017) Joint Use of School Facilities and Land Policy