

# Discussion paper

## 1. Introduction

Sport and recreation fosters the social cohesiveness and unity that reinforces our sense of being Australian.<sup>i</sup> As an industry, sport and recreation is in a unique position to; act as a catalyst for building social capital; improve people's health and wellbeing; enhance educational attainment; and act as a diversionary activity from crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>ii</sup> Sport and recreation facilities and informal and formal public open space can provide the environment and spaces for people to improve their quality of life.<sup>iii</sup>

Given the potential impact sport and recreation can have on society, it is imperative that the industry prepares itself and plans for the challenges that are over the horizon. This document sets out some of the key strategic issues facing Western Australia and the subsequent challenges for the sport and recreation industry.

## 2. Sport and recreation industry characteristics

The sport and recreation industry has arguably one of the greatest breadths, diversities and reaches of any community industry. WA boasts 5,000 sport and recreation clubs serviced by about 100 State Sporting Associations (SSAs). Sport and recreation involvement ranges from grass roots participation through to elite performance; individual pursuits to team efforts; from the mum or dad volunteer coach to the high performance conditioning coach; and volunteer organisations through to highly professional and profitable ventures.

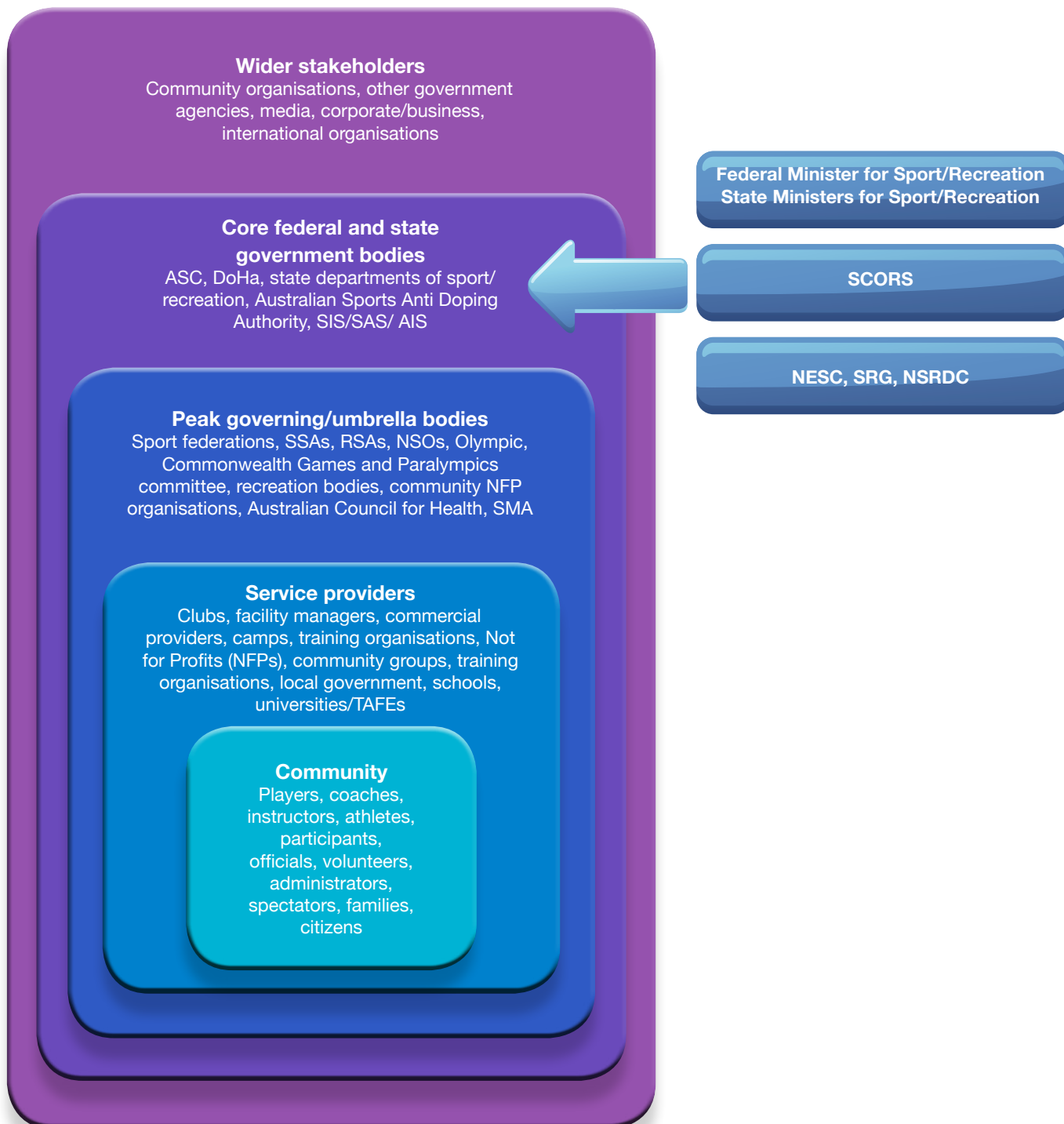
Sport and recreation is also big business in Australia generating an estimated net income of approximately \$8.8 billion,<sup>iv</sup> and Australian households spending more than \$6.3 billion on sport and recreation.<sup>v</sup> Sport and recreation delivers benefits not only to those directly involved in delivery of services or participation, but to the wider community. The core benefits that flow to communities with high levels of participation in sport and active recreation include:

- health benefits;
- social capacity and cohesion;
- economic benefits;
- education and lifelong learning; and
- pursuit of excellence.

Community-level sport and recreation promotes physical activity, which provides benefits in terms of reduced health care costs and improved labour productivity. Gross health costs could be reduced by \$1.49 billion per year through participation in sport and recreation and productivity gains through a healthier workforce could be worth up to \$12 billion per year. In addition, the input of volunteer labour into the sport and recreation system is valued at around \$4 billion. Furthermore, the international success of Australia's elite athletes has measurable positive impacts on wellbeing.<sup>vi</sup>

The sport and recreation industry encompasses a broad range of stakeholders and impacts on numerous sectors across both government and the broader community (Figure 1). It encompasses the activities of many organisations – community-based, public and private sector – that contribute to the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits associated with the provision of sport and active recreation opportunities.

Figure 1:  
**Sport and recreation industry stakeholders**



### 3. Snapshot of participation in Western Australia

- Between 2001 and 2009, total participation in WA increased by four per cent, compared with 10 per cent growth nationally (note that WA participation rates are higher than the national average). Strongest growth has been seen amongst females with a five per cent increase (six per cent nationally), compared with three per cent for males (three per cent nationally).<sup>vii</sup>
- In 2009, for total participation (those who participated in physical activity at least once over the past 12 months), WA is performing above the national average, with the second highest participation rate nationally at 85 per cent of the population.<sup>viii</sup>
- In 2008 regular participation<sup>1</sup> was at 49 per cent in WA – equivalent to the national average. However the regular participation rate for WA males was the lowest nationally at 44 per cent.<sup>ix</sup>
- In 2009, the rate for overall participation in organised physical activity<sup>2</sup> was 39.6 per cent. This was slightly lower than the national average of 39.8 per cent.<sup>x</sup>
- Walking was the most popular form of physical activity for Western Australians in 2008 and 2009 followed by aerobics.<sup>xi</sup>
- Around one in five Western Australians swim, one in eight cycle and one in 10 run.<sup>xii</sup>
- Walking (other), aerobics/fitness, swimming, cycling, running and golf are the consistent top six sports for Western Australians in 2008 and 2009.<sup>xiii</sup>
- In 2008, 3.71 million Australians (17.5 per cent) were estimated to be obese – 1.76 million males (16.5 per cent of all males) and 1.95 million females (18.5 per cent of all females).<sup>xiv</sup>
- In 2008, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of Indigenous children aged 4–14 years were physically active for at least 60 minutes every day in the week prior to interview. A further 12 per cent were active for at least 60 minutes on four to six days in the week prior to interview.<sup>xv</sup>
- In 2008, less than one-half (41.2 per cent) of the primary school boys and 27.4 per cent of primary school girls surveyed participated in a daily 60 minutes or more of physical activity.<sup>xvi</sup>
- Indigenous children living in remote areas of Australia were more likely to have been physically active every day than those living in major cities (84 per cent compared with 65 per cent).<sup>xvii</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regular participation refers to participation in sport and/or physical activity for three or more times per week.

<sup>2</sup> Organised physical activity refers to a sport or physical activity organised by a club or group.

#### 4. Outlook for WA

The timing of the development of *Strategic Directions 5* (SD5) is even more pertinent given that a major review of the national sport system has been conducted<sup>xviii</sup> and federal, state and territory governments are in the process of establishing a national policy framework for sport and recreation. It is important to look at the broader social, environmental, economic and political context in which our industry operates. Since *Strategic Directions 4*, Western Australian society has undergone numerous changes which have impacted on the way in which the sport and recreation industry operates. It is important to understand the current context in order to guide the future directions and be prepared for future challenges and opportunities in our industry.

Figure 2 provides a snapshot of some of the key strategic influences in WA today and into the future, while **Appendix A** provides a more detailed overview of the social, political, economic and environmental context in which we are operating.

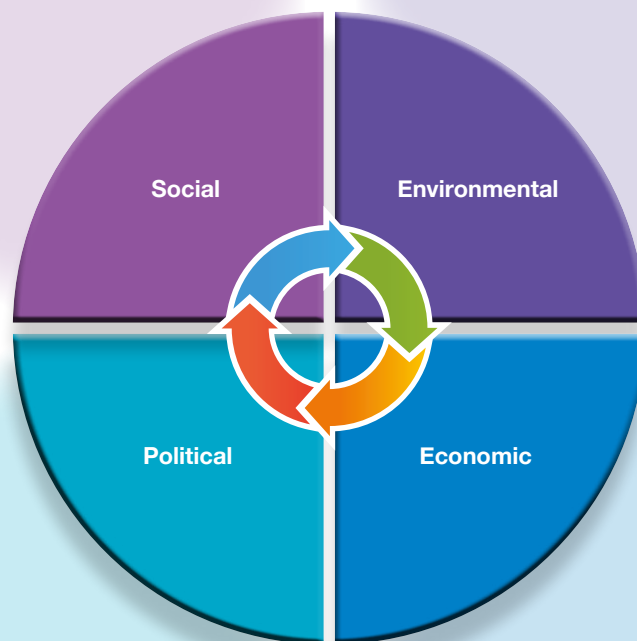
Figure 2: **Outlook for WA**

**Social**

- Changes in western culture have led to children spending less time outside than previous generations.
- ‘Digital divide’ – inequal access to information and communications technology among some parts of the community. As the Internet becomes more widespread, groups without access may not have the full opportunities to participate in social, economic and political life.
- Unprecedented growth in prisoner population, which presents significant challenges to the justice system and the broader community.
- People from more than 200 different countries live, work and study in WA, speaking as many as 270 languages and identifying with more than 100 religious faiths.

**Environmental**

- Population growth and urban expansion will require significant Public Open Space (POS) policy, research, planning, facilities and programs now and well into the future.
- By 2031, WA will be home to an estimated 2.87 million people.
- The issues associated with climate change, sustainability and natural resource management are significant challenges.
- State-wide sustainability of sport and recreation infrastructure and POS; water use and efficiency; and recreational access to water catchments.



**Political**

- Impact of the Economic Audit Committee Report (EACR) and the emphasis on partnerships between the government, business and the community sectors.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) will strongly influence investment by the Commonwealth and states.
- Strong regional investment through Royalties for Regions.
- Local Government moving towards adopting an approach to sustainability, which embraces social, environmental, economic, financial and cultural aspects with a shift to more regionally defined processes and platforms for delivery.

**Economic**

- Two-speed economy
- Growing divide between the rich and the poor
- Impacts of Resource Super Profits Tax not fully known
- Strength of the economy cushioned the impacts of the GFC on Western
- Annual cost of obesity in Australia, including health system costs, net cost of lost wellbeing, productivity and carers cost was estimated to be \$58.2 billion

## 5. The evolution of sport and recreation industry planning

Since the inception of the Strategic Directions process in 1997, a number of significant industry outcomes have been achieved. Figure 3 summarises some of these key strategic outcomes and depicts the evolution of the industry over this time frame.



Figure 3: **The evolution of sport and recreation industry planning**

Significant progress has been made towards achieving many of the challenges outlined in SD4. Some of the challenges and issues identified in SD4 have acted as catalysts for major change within our industry, and these successes should be celebrated.

## 6. Challenges for the future

A number of existing state, national and international reports and strategic plans have been reviewed to identify current issues and concerns relevant to the future development of sport and recreation including:

- organisational strategic plans;
- industry strategic plans;
- research reports;
- policy documents; and
- government commitments.

Further, there are still some challenges from SD4 that remain pertinent. It is timely to consider the relevance of these challenges to SD5 and the practical ability of the industry to be able progress these challenges.

From these documents, the following key issues and challenges have been identified as having the potential to impact on the strategic direction of the WA sport and recreation industry in future years.

### 6.1 Participation

- Maintain the number of Australians participating in sport and recreation.
- Support sport and recreation organisations to enhance community participation and social inclusion.<sup>xxix</sup>
- Break down barriers to Indigenous and CaLD participation in sport and recreation.
- Break down barriers to women's and girls' participation in sport and actively engaging women and girls.<sup>xxx</sup>
- Cater to an ageing population. Demand for services related to seniors, carers and the disabled, which tend to be more complex and require more face-to-face interactions, will increase. Promoting healthy ageing through activity.<sup>xxxi</sup>
- Broaden revenue streams for development and participation programs.
- Sport and recreation needs to address the significant drop off in participation post-school (especially for girls), in the early 30s (especially for men) and to engage people over 50 in sport and recreation, creating a culture of lifelong participation.<sup>xxii</sup>
- Preventative Health Agenda and increased levels of investment from the federal government in the area of Healthy Workers, Healthy Communities and Healthy Children.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- Use of technology to increase or encourage participation.<sup>xxiv</sup> Trends of increasing participation in 'exergames' such as WiiFit, Dance Dance Revolution etc.<sup>xxv</sup>
- Lifestyle sports – new commercial and competitive sports evolved through reinterpretation of conventional sports (e.g. climbing).<sup>xxvi</sup>

- Utilise education as a pathway into sport, recreation and active lifestyles.
- Address potential cost increases in participation (i.e. due to increased costs of power, water, ground hire/competition, skilled persons etc).
- Adapt the traditional club setting to meet the needs of the 'connected' youth market.

## 6.2 Industry development

- Build greater links with health, education, Indigenous and youth portfolios to assist in the delivery of sport and recreation strategies.
- Utilise a whole of government approach to influence policy development and resource allocation to benefit the community in WA.
- Workforce demands with the evolution of work patterns and the impacts on lifestyle balance e.g. shift work and fly in fly out (FIFO).
- Increase awareness of the role of sport and active recreation in social, health, economic and community wellbeing.
- Healthy, sustainable and coordinated recreation sector delivering quality opportunities to get more Western Australian's participating.
- Development of a new sport and recreation tourism and event hosting strategy.
- Build stronger links between schools and sport and recreation clubs by bringing schools and clubs together, supported by state/national sporting organisations and recreation organisations so that resources are shared and kids stay in sport post-school.<sup>xxvii</sup>
- Integrity of sport – multiple factors having positive and negative influences on parents, sponsors, funders and participants. Impacts on the confidence in the sport and recreation setting.
- Demonstrate relevance to broader social outcomes including crime prevention, education and community cohesion.
- Develop a formal evaluation and monitoring framework for the industry.
- Create partnerships to capitalise on the government's increased focus on prevention for better health outcomes.

## 6.3 Capacity building

- Financial challenges including a difficult corporate sponsorship environment and the impact of the economic situation on the expenditure of individuals (falling memberships, reluctance to increase membership fees etc).
- Increased need to develop capacity of State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) in line with burgeoning compliance and fiscal challenges.
- Governance and business modelling for SSOs and its effects at community level.
- Alcohol sponsorship – challenge for sport and recreation setting to be proactive in the

wider community issue regarding alcohol consumption.

- Junk food sponsorship.
- The sustainability of a quality volunteer system. There is increasing pressure on the community volunteer base, with growing concern over the retention of skilled volunteers. The sport and recreation sector is aware of the need to better manage and nurture volunteers.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- Improve management collaborative approaches in national and state-level sport and recreation organisations policy and service performance.
- SSAs need support to be able to operate under a business model that displays financial robustness and viability, strategic direction, strong partnerships and branding potential.

#### **6.4 High performance**

- The environment in which high performance sport is operating has changed dramatically. The pressure to perform nationally and internationally is continually growing, which is increasing the competition for athletes, coaches, media, board members and corporate investment. For some WA teams, this has resulted in the dilution of talent and resources.
- Needs to be a whole of government recognition of the relevance of sport and recreation in achieving outcomes in the areas of health, education, community development and economic development.
- Supplement Western Australian Institute of Sport (WAIS) funding to increase WA athlete representation in national teams.
- Challenges in balancing high performance versus community participation needs and priorities.
- WA's performance in national leagues.
- Secure funding to support WAIS programs to the level required to achieve national team representation Key Performance Indicator target.<sup>xxix</sup>
- Major Events including FIFA World Cup, Olympics, Commonwealth Games.
- Doping and illicit drugs continue to be an issue in elite sport with recent reports of doping in events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Tour de France.
- Need to ensure that coach development is planned, supported and funded appropriately.

#### **6.5 Infrastructure**

- The infrastructure needed to support the ever-growing seasons and codes needing to share space and facilities is under strain.
- Work to ensure greater access to school and tertiary education sporting facilities after hours.
- Public Open Space.

- Urban growth.
- Infrastructure to support both high performance and community participation.
- Major infrastructure i.e. stadia.
- Infrastructure sustainability.
- Address the State's ageing infrastructure.
- Capitalise on new state/national level infrastructure in attracting events to WA.
- Governments management of major infrastructure and how we manage new facilities for the benefit of the community and balance with elite.
- Stadia naming.
- Address inequity in federal investment in major sport infrastructure in WA.
- Public/private partnership models.
- Completion and operation of major facilities (e.g. Perth Arena, State Netball Centre) will have significant implications for the State's ability to host major events.

## 7. Where to now?

The process of developing SD5 is equally as important as the end result. Consultations and discussions with the industry are paramount to this process. *Strategic Directions* is an industry document. The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) has a key role to play in providing administrative support, strategic direction and monitoring and reviewing of SD5, while the industry as a whole has a role to play in leadership, ownership and responsibility for SD5 and its challenges.

A Reference Group has been established to help conduct a strategic analysis of the issues and challenges identified through the consultation process. It will then be the role of the group to prioritise challenges and issues and develop a strategy to address these challenges in a collaborative effort. Ultimately, it will be the role of the Reference Group to determine how the SD5 process will evolve. It is envisaged that DSR will play a supporting role as depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 4:  
**SD5 leadership structure**

