



The Australian Sports Commission

- *Beyond*

2000

The Australian Sports Commission - Beyond 2000

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FOREWORD

The Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics will be a watershed in the development of Australian sport. They provide a unique opportunity to showcase our sporting prowess and the sophistication of our sports delivery systems to a worldwide audience.

While we are confident that the Olympics will provide a pinnacle of Australian sporting success they are by no means the end of the line. The Olympics can, and must, be used as a springboard to even higher levels of sporting achievement and to further enhancement of our sports system.

Beyond 2000 we want Australian sport to be a dynamic growth industry with increased levels of quality participation, state-of-the-art practices in elite athlete development, and an outward, business-like and professional attitude towards management and development. Australia has led the world in sports development in recent years in both elite sport and sport for all. Our systems and programs are now being copied around the world and to stay ahead we must lift our delivery system to an even higher plane.

The government shares this view and has commissioned a White Paper on the future of sport and recreation in the post-2000 environment. The Minister, the Hon Jackie Kelly MP has established a Sports 2000 Task Force to provide advice on how the Australian sports system can 'stay in front' and ensure that we remain a great sporting nation well into the next millennium. The Task Force report will feed into the government's sport and recreation policy in the post-Olympic period.

The Australian Sports Commission welcomes the government's initiative. We have been working for some time within the Commission to identify areas where we believe we can make improvements in the national sports system and, to this end, the Commission has developed this discussion paper on *The Australian Sports Commission - Beyond 2000*. The paper is largely confined to the legislative responsibilities of the Commission; for example it does not dwell on issues concerned with recreation or physical education. While it has not been developed as a result of a specific consultative process it does take close account of the issues expressed to the Commission over recent years in our discussions with national sporting organisations and other industry bodies at national, state and local level.



As we move into the post-Olympic era, the ASC wants to be primed and ready to take on its role with vigour and determination and to further enhance the Australian sports delivery system. The Commission would welcome reactions to this discussion paper as part of the policy development process.

PETER T BARTELS

**Chairman
Australian Sports Commission
June 1999**



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INTRODUCTION

The Australian Sports Commission is charged with the twin responsibilities of achieving the highest level of performance in Australian elite sport together with improving the quantity and quality of community participation in sport and physical activity. These are major challenges as we move beyond 2000. They require an overall national approach to developing and coordinating sport in Australia. The Commission has this responsibility and must ensure there is an effective national sports infrastructure with the appropriate resources to service a cooperative national sporting system effectively. This does not come easily. Neither is it an inexpensive activity.

It must be recognised that there is a continuum in sports development. If we wish, as a nation, to remain successful in sport at the elite level, it is vital that we have a broad and effective base together with effective pathways for young athletes to maximise their potential. Beyond this, however, it is equally important that this same base provides a foundation for health and fitness within the wider Australian community.

Our Australian sports delivery system is highly regarded internationally. It is underpinned by firm federal government policy and funding (by successive governments), a strategic and planned approach by the Commission, effective delivery agents, an integrated approach from grass-roots participation to the elite level, and by world-class programs, products and expertise. The ASC's strategy and structure are designed to provide overall and effective leadership of this system.

Obviously in the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics, the Commission's activities have been directed, to an unusual degree, towards those major events. They provide a strong reinforcement of the need for all agencies in Australian sport to work cooperatively. By capitalising on the impetus and opportunities created by the Games, the Commission should be able to develop Australian sporting programs and expertise further, as well as strengthen its sporting infrastructure to support the expanded level of activity which we believe we will confront post-2000.

Australian sport's current success, however, does not guarantee future success. Standing still means that, internationally, we will soon be overtaken as many countries replicate our systems, construct their own institutes, pour more public funds into sport through lotteries, develop more professional competitions and events, form international leagues, entice our best athletes into their competitions and draw champion athletes from developing countries into their fold. To stay ahead, our sports system must be dynamic and achieve better returns on investment from all levels of the sports delivery system.



BACKGROUND

The Social Environment

Society in the western world is changing from one of strong government regulation with a high level of intervention to one increasingly marked by a belief in individual freedom with strongly entrenched individual rights, more fluid social organisations, a withdrawal of government regulation and intervention and a belief in individual initiative. Australia has not been immune from this shift. We must face these changes positively.

Leisure is predicted to be the growth industry of the 21st century. This could cause notable changes in the sports Australians play and the way they play and enjoy them. We are already seeing growth in:

- many indoor ball sports
- sports in which participation is relatively quick and easy
- various 'free range activities' like abseiling, rock climbing etc, and
- less aerobic sports (as the population ages).

New and modified sports are emerging and spectator sports changing to meet the requirements of television. With people living longer and having fewer children it is likely the provision of meaningful and healthy leisure activities will take on greater significance. There will also be demographic changes with an older population putting pressure on health services.

There is some evidence to suggest that Australians are moving away from organised sport, citing a lack of time, increasing cost, loss of interest and injury concerns. They are taking up what are perceived as more attractive, less organised recreational opportunities.

Also, some community-level consumers do not wish to contribute to national and state sporting organisations as they see them as less relevant to their interests. Sport may be increasingly commercially developed by entrepreneurs with little attention to the once dominant amateur ideology.

An interesting paradox is that perhaps half of the sports on the Sydney Olympic program would not seem to fit the model of 'growth sports' of the 21st century. Only three Olympic sports appear in the top 10 participation sports in Australia. The influence of the Olympic 'role model' effect in encouraging increased participation will therefore have to be carefully managed. In short, Australian winners in 'sunset' sports are likely to have only a transient role model impact on new participants unless those sports are able to offer better services to their members.

Technology and economic change are making markets more global. With this has come the commercialisation and globalisation of sport where a number of sports are experiencing considerable change through the evolution of national and international leagues. The resulting tension between traditional sporting bodies and new entrepreneurial sports agents is forcing a process of often painful adaptation such that many sporting organisations are now at the crossroads where they must determine how to progress without ceding control to commercial third parties.

The professionalisation of Australian sport will be aided by world trends in sports marketing and 'entertainment'. The more than difficult task confronting Australian sport should not be underestimated. There is a vicious cycle which seems to some to require competition leagues to be televised before they will attract sponsorship, yet the sport requires funding (from sponsors) before it can develop player standards and the competition league to the stage that it is entertaining enough to draw sufficient television ratings. National sporting organisations (NSOs) and others will increasingly require help to break this cycle so that they can progress leagues to a stage where they are, for want of a better word, 'professional'. Even this will not guarantee professionalism of players, and indeed in some sports it may not even be desirable, in a social sense, as competitors may be idle and unproductive for many months between competition seasons.

Another emerging issue faced by sports organisations and individuals over the last decade has been the substantial, and often wasted resources, both financial and administrative, being expended in litigation. While mechanisms such as the Court of Arbitration for Sport have been put in place to address this, litigation remains a feature of sport as it moves into the next millennium.

In this environment, the authority, in particular, of the NSO to control the destiny and development of its sport will increasingly come under threat. Alternative providers will continue to emerge and endeavour to offer attractive participation packages to attract athletes. The sporting organisation that tries to maintain its supremacy merely by the monopoly it holds on international competition through its international federation may be doomed to failure. The successful sporting organisations of the next century, whether they be NSOs or other providers, will be those which are managerially competent, strategically focused and athlete oriented.

Sport as Health

Equally, it must be recognised that beyond the pride generated in the community by Australian sporting success at the elite level, the most significant justification for government involvement in sport is the health benefits. Australia is facing a crisis in the health of its population. There is evidence (such as the 1995 *National Nutrition Survey*¹ and the 1997 National Health and Medical Research Council Working Group report²) to suspect that fitness levels are declining. Similarly, research released at the 1998 Australian Conference of Science and Medicine in Sport indicates declining fitness and increasing obesity in Australian school children.³ The government must act to reverse this situation.

The *National Health Survey* identifies four main avoidable health risk factors — smoking, obesity, excessive alcohol consumption and physical inactivity. Significantly, more Australians are at risk of ill-health from inactive lifestyles than from each of the other risk factors. It has been estimated that up to a third of deaths from coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes could be avoided if targeted levels of regular physical activity (30 minutes of moderate activity daily) were achieved by all Australians.⁴

A 1999 study for the Australian Sports Commission and the Department of Health and Aged Care by a group of health experts has estimated that the current cost to government of physical inactivity alone is some \$400 million per annum. It is reported that if an extra 10% of the Australian population undertook regular, moderate and effective exercise, an estimated \$500 million could be saved from the Commonwealth health budget each year. The Commonwealth government invests nearly \$120 million in sport and recreation each year. Research shows returns from this investment in terms of health, social cohesion and economic benefits far outweigh expenditure.⁵

Sport and physical activity are competing against many other activities for individuals' disposable time and money. ABS statistics rate 'sport and outdoor activities' fifth behind 'audiovisual', 'talking on the telephone', 'socialising' and 'reading' in terms of time spent on main activities, but it is facing increased competition, for example from the home computing revolution.⁶ Paradoxically, sport is also facing increased competition from itself, as more commercial, professional and 'made-for-television' sports increase the pressure on individuals to be spectators and 'lounge lizards' rather than participants. In short, the sport and health challenge is not getting any easier. New strategies and resources, post-2000, will be required.

Most of the 6.5 million club members in Australia, as well as the many recreational participants, undertake sporting activities at the local club or community level and their activities are self-funded. Indeed, the main call upon the taxpayer is to educate our youth in the worth of basic sporting and physical activity skills as part of a full and rounded education, and to provide community sporting and recreation facilities. The health of our community requires a consistent national approach to ensure the health and social benefits of physical

activity are recognised. The Australian Sports Commission sees sport as the beneficial department of health through its preventative, not curative, processes.

However, the social benefits of sports participation are also significant, if less measurable. Sports participation is generally believed to help young people learn about fairness, success, failure and risk taking, to accept discipline and exercise control, leadership and teamwork. Community sport provides young people with the added value of links into the broader community. Sports involvement promotes social responsibility and is believed to be effective in reducing delinquency, anti-social behaviour, crime and social dysfunction. Sports involvement builds self-esteem and positive self-image — key determinants of personal quality of life. For example, a national report found that girls who play sport have higher self-esteem than those who do not.⁷

Before going any further, it must be said that there is a clear need for further government funding particularly in its contribution to sport at the community level. There is currently an unsatisfactory imbalance in the levels of funding allocated to participation activities compared to elite sport. It is not reasonable to expect the community to meet these costs alone. When it is considered that the intellectual development of this country in terms of education is costing the nation billions of dollars then there is an argument to say that those with internationally acclaimed sporting skills deserve the chance to realise their potential in the same way. Funding for Commission programs under the Active Australia initiative is an excellent investment for the federal government given the health, social and industry development benefits which lead to budget savings and increased tax revenue. Other things apart, government involvement in sport is a vital catalyst for social benefit.

Sport as Entertainment

In the 'sport as entertainment' industry there will also be significant shifts in the global sports environment. Already, professional sports like tennis and golf are moving to fully integrated world tours with graduated tournament schedules for players of various standards. In team sports, players' allegiance to clubs, let alone countries, is being tested by transfer systems and player payments. Many players have become 'citizens of the world' and represent a nation in name only. Continental leagues are likely to gradually replace purely domestic competitions and 'made for TV' events will continue to increase.

As this level of sport becomes further corporatised, the link between sports development and sports excellence is likely to be severely tested. A scenario in which government and the participant is responsible for grass-roots sport development with no 'pay back' from the professional end of sport could well emerge. The ability of international federations to control their sports in such an environment is also likely to be tested. These are challenging times.

Sport and the Economy

Sport has a major impact on the economy. For example, a recent study for the Confederation of Australian Sport by Ernst and Young found that the sport and recreation sector, including sport related household expenditures, in 1995-96, totalled \$7.9 billion. Its contribution to GDP after imputing a value for the \$1.6 billion pa of volunteer contribution to sport is approximately 2%, making it a larger contributor than the motor vehicle industry. Household expenditure on sport in 1993-94 totalled \$5.9 billion including close to \$1 billion each on equipment and fees to participate.⁸

The industry has some 220,000 employees, generates \$358 million in annual goods exports and close to \$1 billion pa (direct and indirect) in taxation revenue.⁹ As a service industry in the 'entertainment' or 'leisure' sector, it is also highly likely to be a growth industry in the next century, returning greater dividends to the economy, foreign exchange and tax revenue. The efficiency and effectiveness of the sport industry can be improved by government assistance and leadership in areas such as education and training in the value of sport and participation, in using information technology, in strategic planning, in export development assistance and in direct financial assistance for a range of developmental programs.

Sport in the International Environment

The global face of international sport will change markedly beyond 2000 and Australia will require dynamic and innovative solutions to stay ahead:

- The level of professional sports competition, at national and international level, particularly in the northern hemisphere, continues to advance rapidly and with it, presumably, player standards.
- National and international leagues in professional team sports, such as soccer, basketball and baseball will continue to 'drain' the best Australian talent into the northern hemisphere from which the 'tyranny of distance' will mean they are less available for domestic and Australian 'duties' than will be the case for many other countries.
- Many of our international competitors, particularly in Asia have constructed the equivalents of our AIS or are planning to do so — this includes Malaysia, Thailand, Japan and China.
- Public funding of sport has been greatly enhanced in some countries through sports lotteries. The United Kingdom, in particular, now has a multi-billion pound reserve to be applied to sports development and the rewards from this investment will soon appear.
- High quality athletes are now emerging from a far broader range of developing countries through a combination of assistance from Olympic

Solidarity and the lure of academic scholarships and sponsorship for the genuine top class athlete. Indeed, a phenomenon that is certainly developing is for many such athletes to rarely reside in the country for which they compete.

- While Australian sports bodies provide an ideal training environment, there is a danger that some athletes will lose the 'hunger' for success that drives many athletes in developing countries. Australian sport will be damaged if we lose the will to succeed against the odds.

In this international environment, Australia's geographic isolation and natural sporting links to the Pacific region will not be an asset. Australia will have to work hard to develop closer links with the sporting powers of Asia and other continents and seek inclusion in events such as the Asian Games. This in itself will provide excellent opportunities for Australia to integrate itself socially, economically and internationally into our geographic region.

The Federal System

The federal government is responsible for representing Australia's interests abroad and invests heavily in presenting an international image of Australia as a progressive, egalitarian society which 'achieves' at the international level across a broad spectrum of interests. Sport is one aspect of Australian society in which the community wants Australia to be seen as an achiever and the government therefore has to make an appropriate investment. It is not appropriate for this task to be delegated to the state government level. Our international athletes compete as Australians, not as Victorians or Tasmanians.

Reacting positively to these challenges is a high priority. Success in international sports is seen as contributing to national identity and pride. We are arguably better known internationally by our success in sport than in any other field of human endeavour. Moreover, Australians identify with their sporting heroes. A 1995 International Social Science Survey found that 92% of Australians feel proud of Australia's achievements in sport, and 84% agreed with the notion that sporting success made them feel proud to be Australian.¹⁰ In this context, the AIS has a 95% awareness level in the Australian community.

This does not mean that the states should not have a role in developing athletes through junior to international level, but if Australia, as represented by its national government, wishes to take credit for enhancing its international image through sport then it must make a commensurate investment. The federal government through its agency the Australian Sports Commission is able to take a national view toward developing our internationally competitive athletes, working with NSOs and other delivery mechanisms to maximise success and achieve economies of scale. The ASC is uniquely placed to take this national role.



In summary, governments have a legitimate involvement in providing assistance to sport and recreation as a desirable 'public good' because of the national identity and 'nation building' role of international sport together with the health, social and economic benefits that stem from a large and growing sports industry and an active participation base in sport and recreation among the Australian community.



A NATIONAL SPORTS SYSTEM: THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

The developments outlined above pose a major challenge for the Commission. Its objectives cannot be achieved without considerable effort. And it must be recognised that we are in an infinitely more competitive environment than ever before. While the Australian system to date has been most successful in making us possibly the leading sports nation (per capita) in the world, there are many areas in which we must improve. Sport operates in an environment of continual change and the Commission must respond to this change to meet its objectives successfully. The Australian community must be shown to benefit from the government's investment in sport taking account of the indivisibility between elitism and participation.

The Australian sports system is a complex interrelationship of a vast range of delivery agents including the ASC (incorporating the Australian Institute of Sport, Active Australia and the Australian Coaching Council), the Australian Sports Drug Agency, NSOs and state/territory sporting organisations, peak and umbrella organisations (eg the Confederation of Australian Sport, the Australian Olympic Committee, the Australian Paralympic Committee, the Australian Commonwealth Games Association), state/territory institutes and academies of sport, professional organisations (eg Sports Medicine Australia, the Australian Society of Sport Administration), professional sporting leagues, state and local governments, clubs, volunteers, the media, sponsors, facility managers and individual participants.

Each of these has its own role and responsibilities. While respecting their individual autonomy, the Commission, however, also has an overarching role to ensure that they have the capacity to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and their overall contribution to the sport delivery network.

The Commission's greatest challenge is to lead Australia in coordinating and harmonising all these diverse but complementary interests so that there is a broadly consistent national approach to identifying the needs and delivering the programs to meet those needs at both the elite and community level. While working with the wider sports community, the Commission needs also to build alliances with other agencies such as the health sector and local government.

In this environment, the Commission must set the policy direction and coordinate delivery mechanisms to ensure achievement of the outcomes identified above. The Commission should concentrate on dispersing resources and funding, offering policy advice to the government, providing strategic direction to develop Australian sport, securing the proper evaluation and accountability to the government for the funds entrusted to it and, in turn, from those bodies it funds in the national delivery system.

While its status as a statutory authority will continue to require it to meet the accountability standards applicable to a government body, as well as government reporting requirements, it is important for the future effectiveness of the national system that the Commission operates in the most efficient and flexible, least-intrusive and 'rule-bound' manner, able to make decisions quickly in the light of intelligent assessment based on sound information.

The Commission could be portrayed as a holding company, managing the policy development, strategic planning, program formulation, financial management and common servicing for a series of subsidiary agencies which are responsible for delivering services in accordance with the policies, and under agreed performance criteria and indicators of the Commission.

This management model would recognise that the core businesses of the ASC — elite performance and increased participation — are philosophically linked but operationally separate. The Commission sees great advantages in the linkages between the two core activities, among them:

- maintaining a clear developmental pathway from physical education in schools to international performance
- facilitating 'whole of sport' approaches and avoiding disruptive demarcation disputes
- developing policies and strategies common to elite and participatory sport (eg anti-harassment policy)
- sharing corporate overheads and thus reducing costs
- using common service areas such as sports policy development and sport information services
- facilitating cross-fertilisation of staff expertise, joint ventures and workshops etc
- offering a strong marketing and international image as an integrated sports delivery network, and
- guaranteeing flexibility for the ASC Board to react to the changing circumstances of sport at either elite or participatory level.

By operating in this manner, the ASC is able to recognise and factor in the unique circumstances of each sport. It will also ensure continuance of a commitment to excellence and will seek international 'best practice' in all of its activities across all of sport.

In this context, the Commission has embraced the government philosophy of contestability, whereby all the Commission's endeavours are weighed against the principles of effectiveness and efficiency. Direct delivery by the ASC of its

component programs should be kept to a minimum. The Commission, therefore, intends to outsource program delivery wherever it is more efficient and effective, and indeed has already done so in most areas of corporate management, as well as in participation programs and coach and officials accreditation. Where outsourcing would result in reduced efficiency, the ASC should nevertheless 'test the market' from time to time to see that its delivery mechanisms remain 'state of the art' and its cost levels are competitive.

In dealing with athletes, coaches and sporting agencies, the Commission's philosophy should be to:

- add value to their products and programs
- improve their capacity, knowledge and managerial performance
- build strategic relationships with states and others based on mutual interests in improving sport, rather than institutional relationships that emerge simply because these organisations exist, and
- service them by delivering high quality programs.

The ASC recognises that the cost of contributing to internationally successful performance is high yet cost-containment must be a continuing challenge to the ASC Board and management, as well as NSOs. To contain costs, some of the practices and procedures which have been put in place in the build-up to Sydney 2000 will need to be reviewed.

The Commission is aware that while the post-2000 federal sports budget must change with the termination of the Olympic Athlete Program (OAP), that same budget represents a marked decline from the pre-2000 budget levels. In light of this, the Commission will need to closely target its funding assistance, raise more off-budget funds through strategic partnerships and marketing, assist NSOs to be more self-sufficient by raising funds from sponsors, members and the community, and, importantly, must persuade government that the challenges facing Australian sport require appropriate government support.

Under this broad management philosophy, the Commission's approach to managing its key responsibilities is addressed in the later sections of this paper.

Action Agenda:

1. The Australian Sports Commission, as distinct from its component program areas, will be enhanced as the central coordinating and funding agency for federal involvement in sport and the principal agency for policy development, strategic planning and applied research.
2. The Commission will concentrate on strategic issues from a national perspective and provide leadership and coordination while devolving program activities to the national network of delivery agents.
3. Within its statutory environment, the Commission will operate in the most efficient and flexible, least-intrusive and 'rule-bound' manner, able to make decisions quickly in the light of intelligent assessment based on sound information. It will outsource program delivery wherever it is more efficient and effective and will continue its cost reduction activities, particularly with regard to administrative costs.

For all of the above to succeed will require more rather than less government funding post-2000.

THE NATIONAL ELITE SPORT SYSTEM

The Commission, through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), is but one arm of a national elite sport delivery system which involves the NSOs, the state/territory institutes and academies, umbrella groups such as the Australian Olympic Committee and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association, and sponsors. The Commission should have clear and unambiguous links with the range of delivery agents and a high level of cooperation and understanding.

Delivery – National Sporting Organisations

The ASC sees the NSOs as the centrepiece of both growth in participation and the elite sport delivery system. Indeed, the ultimate success of a sport should, in the last resort, depend on the operations of its NSO. The Commission aims to improve the management and operation of Australia's NSOs through provision of financial and other support, thereby enhancing sporting performance and improving participation in sport. The Commission will continue to refine its current delivery system so that NSOs are better able to manage their sport, aided by a more streamlined government process.

There needs to be greater emphasis on the ASC stimulating and supporting change in the way sport is structured, organised and operated. The Commission should take a coordinating/facilitating role by assessing the relevance of problems/initiatives/proposals, identifying the resources required to address them and facilitating the connection of resources to the particular problem. Central to all of this must be the unchallengeable principle of accountability. Where any organisation is seeking funds, the ASC must secure full accountability for the spending of them.

As a result, continuing reviews of all NSOs will be undertaken to assess their development plans and strategies through to 2004 and regularly thereafter, to justify the level of assistance requested from the ASC. These reviews should be conducted under a strategy which recognises that to reach higher levels of international success while expanding the sports participation base will require a targeted approach. All NSOs are, therefore, expected to have upgraded strategic plans for the 2001 to 2004 quadrennium that reflect the need for them to be more dynamic and business-like and focus on quality outcomes through leadership, planning, information and analysis, training and education, sound processes, client focus and increasing self-sufficiency. The plans will form the basis of ASC reviews of assistance to sports, and will include agreed key outcomes against which the Commission will provide funding.

The OAP is explicitly performance based, with funding geared entirely to performance indicators and outcomes. Much of use has been learnt through the operation of the OAP. While this program will be terminated in 2000, its principles should continue to be applied, but to all sports, not just those on the

Olympic event schedule. The OAP and the Commission's Sports Assistance Scheme should be integrated into a new high performance program based on OAP performance principles but including non-Olympic sports.

The following are three recommended changes in the way the ASC might provide funding to develop and maintain elite sport beyond 2000, consistent with the Commission following a policy of devolution of responsibility to NSOs:

- following consultation with sports, criteria for reviews of NSOs will be clearly set out and discussed with them
- as a principle, the Commission will urge NSOs and other delivery agencies to increase their level of self-sufficiency by seeking to maximise their off-budget revenue, and
- when funds are provided by the Commission, each NSO will be expected to report against the related performance indicators in its annual report and audited financial statement according to its own budget timetable.

Although contributing to agreed outcomes, there should be flexibility in how the outcomes are produced, thus enabling the sport, in consultation with the Commission, to make its own decisions on program delivery. Where outcomes are below agreed measures, sports may be put on notice that funding could be reduced or cease unless performance is rectified within a set timeframe. Such reductions will not be automatic. Indeed, if the sport provides an acceptable improvement strategy, the ASC may well help by providing additional funds to implement it. Funding for NSO elite activities should be provided only on a national basis for the competitive activity of their major senior and junior teams, or for coaching, camps and international competition, or for sport science support. Funding to NSOs for participation activities would be for particular needs on a case-by-case basis to improve specific participation outcomes.

The Commission's intention is eventually and progressively to provide one-line appropriations to all NSOs. In the short term, it may be necessary to stage the introduction of this approach. For instance, for sports assessed as weak in any area, funding for that area may be quarantined, applied selectively and monitored regularly. For those sports without a strong record of effective management, funding may be provided against agreed heads of expenditure and acquitted accordingly, but with the intention of developing their competence to receive a one-line appropriation when they improve. Against this appropriation, sports would be expected to provide detailed annual reports and financial statements which can be fully assessed by the Commission. Sports that receive less than, say, \$50,000 from the Commission each year may receive one-line appropriations and have less detailed outcomes to achieve and report on.

NSO reporting and accounting processes to the Commission should be made electronically through SportNet. The annual report and financial statements of an NSO, duly audited, will be the basis for acquittal of Commission funding. Where performance indicators are met, funding will continue at an agreed level.

As a matter of principle, NSOs should be required to fund their own management. Therefore, ASC funding to support NSO's management activities would be limited on the basis of need. However, a special initiatives fund should be established to assist sports in specially identified areas (such as management, information technology, financial management, performance initiatives etc) to help them overcome particular short-term difficulties in meeting their objectives or performance indicators outlined in their strategic plan. As a general rule, sports would receive special initiatives funding for one project at a time and be required to complete that project before further projects are funded.

There are, however, some generic issues which affect all sports, such as the implications of taxation reform, anti-harassment in sport guidelines, racial vilification laws and information technology (eg SportNet). It would be cost-effective and expedient to address these issues through seminars and forums where whole-of-sport solutions can be examined. Where possible, the Commission will seek to develop whole-of-sport solutions to generic sport issues, in conjunction with NSOs where it is cost-effective to do so.

The changes outlined would require Commission staff to have a facilitating role, apart from ensuring that sports meet their basic compliance requirements. They would assist sports to identify and rectify deficiencies across all elements of sport activity. The skill mix and staffing levels of the Commission would need to be determined in the context of the new operational framework and/or greater use made of consultants who have the specific experience to facilitate agreed outcomes.

There is a recognition that the ASC should devote more attention to assisting sports in technical areas, such as coaching, training techniques, injury prevention, rehabilitation and recovery. These are vital elements for international success and are just as important as management competence. The Commission would intend, therefore, to work with NSOs and other delivery agents to provide a higher level of detailed technical assistance to help sports record individual athlete performance, assess coaching programs and help them maintain performance leadership in areas of technical expertise and coaching etc. This will link directly with monitoring and evaluating international performances.

The combination of upgraded strategic plans, special initiatives grants, generic funding and the Management Improvement Program (outlined later in this paper) are all designed to increase the professionalism of NSOs and their contribution to developing sport as an industry.

It must, however, be recognised that there are some sports which may have reached a level of development at which the Commission cannot continue to add value or where added value may not be cost-effective. As a result, some major NSOs may have funding reduced or reviewed on the basis that they have reached a level of expertise or resourcing beyond which Commission funding has a rapidly diminishing value.

Under the Commission's hosting events program it is envisaged that the Commission's role will relate more specifically to developing and promoting sport. The ASC would only fund events which were to be of benefit to a sport at the senior international or top junior international level. Events for which assistance is sought would need to be incorporated in strategic plans each year. More explicit recognition of ASC support and assistance will be required from event organisers, and will be accompanied by better policing by the ASC of that recognition.

It is envisaged that the Commission would not fund commercial events organised, underwritten or funded by state/territory event agencies, or events designed to achieve a profit (although in such cases it may provide a loan).

Likewise, it is recognised that there are now new funding avenues available to many elite athletes. Commission funding for direct athlete support, therefore, might in future be provided only to athletes in need of such funding where similar support is not being provided through state and territory institutes and academies of sport, the Australian Olympic Committee, various foundations or sponsors.

Both these measures would save expenditure which could be devoted to other, higher priority, areas.

Action Agenda:

4. All NSOs are expected to have upgraded strategic plans for the 2001 to 2004 quadrennium that reflect the need for them to be more dynamic and business-like and focus on quality outcomes through leadership, planning, information and analysis, training and education, client focus and increasing self-sufficiency. These plans will form the basis of ASC assistance and will include agreed key outcomes against which the Commission will provide funding. Reviews of NSOs will be clearly set out and discussed with them.
5. The OAP and the Sports Assistance Scheme will be integrated into a new high performance program based on OAP performance principles but including non-Olympic sports.
6. NSOs and other delivery agencies will be encouraged to increase their level of self-sufficiency.

- 7.** Each NSO will report against the related performance indicators in its annual report and audited financial statement, duly audited according to its own budget timetable, providing additional specific information, as required. Where performance indicators are met, funding will continue at an agreed level.
- 8.** ASC funding for defined activities will be provided as a one-line appropriation to sports which meet their performance indicators and are assessed to have competent management. NSO reporting and accounting processes to the ASC will be made electronically through SportNet.
- 9.** Sports that receive less than, say, \$50,000 from the Commission each year will receive one-line appropriations and have less detailed outcomes to achieve and report on.
- 10.** Funding for elite activities of NSOs will be provided only on a national basis for the competitive activity of their major senior and junior teams, or for coaching, camps, international competition and sport science support. Funding for participation activities will be provided only to meet specific, agreed outcomes.
- 11.** As a matter of principle, NSOs will be required to fund their own management. Therefore, ASC funding to support management activities of NSOs will be limited on the basis of need. However, a special initiatives fund will be established to assist sports in specially identified areas to help them overcome particular short-term difficulties in meeting their objectives or performance indicators outlined in their strategic plan.
- 12.** The Commission will seek to develop whole-of-sport solutions to generic sport issues, in conjunction with NSOs where it is cost-effective to do so (eg SportNet).
- 13.** The Commission will work with NSOs and other delivery agents to provide detailed technical assistance to help sports assess and maintain performance leadership in areas of technical expertise and coaching etc.
- 14.** Some major NSOs may have funding reduced or reviewed on the basis that they have reached a level of expertise or resourcing beyond which Commission funding has a rapidly diminishing value.
- 15.** The Commission will not fund commercial events organised, underwritten or funded by state/territory event agencies, or events designed to achieve a profit (although in such cases it may provide a loan).
- 16.** Funding for direct athlete support will only be provided to athletes in need of such funding where similar support is not being provided through state and territory institutes and academies of sport, the Australian Olympic Committee, various foundations or sponsors.



Delivery – The Australian Institute of Sport

The AIS, through its training programs and sport sciences, is subsidiary to and responsible to the Commission. It has been the major instrument whereby the policies of the Commission in respect to training elite athletes have been carried out at a national level.

The AIS scholarship program, as a program of the ASC, should be seen as a 'provider' of services to sport and athletes under the policy direction of the Commission. In its athlete training role through the AIS, the Commission should work in partnership with NSOs to ensure that the program constitutes an appropriate part of the NSO's national plan.

The Commission's aim is to help identify those athletes with the potential to excel and through available funding develop the athlete in the most effective and appropriate way taking account of all the other systems available and the various alternative delivery networks.

The AIS scholarship program should be viewed as one of several possible providers of services to the ASC under terms and conditions decided by the ASC in consultation with relevant NSOs. Its services include athlete scholarship programs, 'cutting edge' servicing and research in the sport sciences, and support for strengthening the capabilities of NSOs and other delivery agencies.

In many cases, exposure to AIS scholarship programs is an important element in achieving international success, but the ASC does not suggest that it is the most appropriate developmental opportunity for all sports or for all athletes. Maximising the potential of athletes on AIS scholarships is undertaken in partnership with the relevant NSO to ensure that the individual athlete has the most appropriate pathway to his/her goals. The AIS will continue to focus on servicing the needs of elite athletes, but it should also increasingly focus on research, development and national coordination of elite athlete delivery services in consultation with NSOs and the National Elite Sports Council.

The AIS should maintain its position as the premier national elite training institution in the country. The reality is that to be internationally competitive in the fierce world of sport in 2000 and beyond, athletes must be provided with a high level of services. AIS programs, not necessarily centred in Canberra, are delivered under a principle of 'world's best practice' across all areas and disciplines, including coaching, sport sciences, information technology, facilities and equipment.

All AIS programs must continue to be characterised by:

- world class coaching
- internationally leading technical quality
- clearly defined highest quality training and competition

- comprehensive leading edge sport science and medicine services specific to each sport
- access to state-of-the-art training facilities, equipment and information
- attention to pastoral, welfare, educational and vocational aspects of athletes' lives
- management on a day-to-day basis by the relevant AIS Head Coach, and
- frequent high level contact with the NSO to ensure the program retains its unique contribution to the sport's high performance objectives.

December 2000 will see the end of the current Olympic cycle. It is clear that resources will not allow continuation of the full complement of AIS scholarship programs and activities. It is timely to re-address the status of all existing AIS scholarship programs and potential new sports. This should be done along the lines of a 'zero base' exercise, ie with no NSO presuming it has automatic status in the AIS.

As part of the overall review of NSOs, during 1999 there will be a comprehensive review of all AIS programs and aspiring new programs so that recommendations can be made to the ASC Board on the future role and functions of the AIS beyond 2000. Not all sports can expect an AIS program, while some sports will require a network of programs across the country. Once established, it is assumed that all of these programs will be retained for at least four years, though they will be subject to 'continuous improvement'.

The criteria for reviewing all AIS programs will be clearly set out and provided to NSOs. All programs should:

- meet the definition of the AIS core business which is *'to enhance the international sporting performances of Australia's elite athletes through training/coaching and application of the highest level sport sciences while enhancing their personal, educational and vocational development'*
- have a clearly defined role in the national high performance structure of the sport and make a unique contribution to that structure, including specific performance outcomes expected of the program by the Commission and the NSO
- have a clearly defined athlete cohort consistent with the stated objectives of the program. The athletes should be characterised as contributing significantly to Australia's international sporting success
- demonstrate that, wherever it is located, the program will be of such quality that it will attract the majority of the most-qualified athletes from all over the nation

- maintain a record of performance against agreed performance indicators, and
- be consistent with the ASC facilities development strategic plan.

Under the above criteria, the Commission's 'zero base' review will examine the case for scholarship programs for each sport on their individual merits. The Commission is conscious, however, that the 'mix' of sports must reflect the broad community view on the relative importance of international success in various sports. That is, the Commission appreciates that the community more highly values success in particular sports (eg the cricket Ashes) and while this is necessarily subjective, it is nevertheless an issue which must be addressed.

The ASC is aware of the increasing professionalisation of Australian sport. Sports such as Australian football, rugby league, cricket, golf, tennis and rugby union could be seen to have attained professional status (at the highest levels), while others such as basketball and soccer may be approaching that level. It could be argued that these sports increasingly have the capacity to fund or part-fund their own scholarship programs. Therefore, their call on ASC funds may, in the future, be difficult to justify. At the least, major professional sports which retain AIS status should continue to be required to contribute to the programs financially on a dollar for dollar basis, although in such cases the NSO may have responsibility for management under a contract with the AIS.

Action Agenda:

17. The AIS, in all its diverse forms, will be viewed by the ASC as one of several possible providers of training services, including athlete scholarship programs. It will remain the pre-eminent training institute in the national system but its emphasis will be on 'cutting edge' servicing and research in the sport sciences, and support for strengthening the technical capabilities of NSOs and other delivery agencies.
18. Its programs will be determined under terms and conditions decided by the ASC in consultation with relevant NSOs.
19. As part of the overall review of NSOs, during 1999 there will be a comprehensive review of all AIS scholarship programs and aspiring new programs so that recommendations can be made to the ASC Board during 2000 on the number, nature and venue of AIS scholarship programs. Once established, it is assumed that all of these programs will be retained for at least four years, though they will be subject to 'continuous improvement'.
20. Major professional sports which retain AIS status will be required to contribute to the programs financially on at least a dollar for dollar basis. In these cases it may be agreed that the NSO has an overall management role for the program under a contract with the AIS.

Delivery – State and Territory Institutes and Academies of Sport

In 1981 when the AIS was established it was the first and only sports institute in Australia. It was established to service the nation as a whole. Because of its success, similar though smaller institutes were eventually established in each state and territory. For many years these were in competition with the AIS for athletes and there are still tensions between the state institutes and the AIS and among themselves, mostly concerning the recognition or 'branding' of athletes. This has been a most unhealthy situation, inimical to the most efficient use of resources nationally.

State institutes provide significant and much-needed funding and program support for elite sport. They operate good quality programs and provide an alternative opportunity for some athletes who may be unable to join centralised AIS programs. At the same time, they all to some extent suffer from the same requirements of centralisation for which they have criticised the AIS. They do not always allow all athletes to 'train at home'. Country athletes have, and will continue to have, to move to state institutes in capital cities.

In more recent years there has been an improved level of cooperation within the network of institutes. It is further recognised that there is a need for a strong comprehensive national network to service elite athletes. In an ideal world, Australia would have one sports institute operating across the country in each state and with regional feeder systems from country areas. This would still recognise national centralised programs where they were in the best interests of individual sports, but possibly in different locations across the country and with administration provided through state institutes.

It is accepted that the concept of a national institute, for some, may be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, the Commission recognises that state institutes have developed over the past decade and for many NSOs are now an integral part of their sports development and elite pathways. The Commission believes that a strategy leading to eventual complete integration of all such institutes/academies with the AIS to form one national institute should be developed and implemented over time. Short of this ideal, the Commission is firmly committed to a strong national network incorporating all state institutes and the AIS. This could be achieved by clear and agreed program responsibilities within the context of a unified national plan developed in consultation with NSOs.

In the meantime, the Commission sees the AIS as the centre of a national elite sport delivery network, working with state institutes/academies of sport (SIS/SAS) in support of national aims. The government's sports policy recognises the demographics of the nation and the social and economic circumstances of many young athletes. Athletes should attend programs which best suit their sporting aspirations and personal circumstances.

The AIS has a unique international focus, including maintenance of international levels of performance standards together with exposure to international competition. All AIS scholarship sports should continue to focus on national senior or junior squads. They must contribute to a national pathway for the relevant NSO. States will have a similar focus in respect to some athletes and it is recognised that, in some sports, they will be supporting athletes to the highest level. Some sports will benefit from a decentralised approach, supported at state level. The states, however, must have a primary focus on fostering younger athletes at local and regional level as feeders or contributors to national programs. They should be maximising the potential of athletes to move into the international arena. They can thus contribute to a sport's national role in a manner which accords with NSO pathways. Only state institutes can fulfil this role.

They also have a very important complementary role as part of a national network in talent identification, Athlete Career and Education, sport sciences and information services as follows:

- **Talent identification:** This is best decentralised. The AIS may coordinate, support and partially fund talent identification programs in the states, recognising that talent development leading from this identification process will be through state institutes, up to state/national representative level and to elite development through the national network of each NSO.
- **Athlete Career and Education Program:** Career and education, beyond the development of specific sports skills, is a critical aspect of elite athlete development. Given that Australia's elite athletes may be located in various places in the country, the ACE Program should continue to operate in a national coordinated manner, but under revised criteria. These criteria are:
 - while the AIS may retain overall coordination for the ACE Program, it will only fund the servicing of AIS scholarship holders
 - the general principle will be that state institutes should be responsible for providing and funding such services to the athletes under their supervision and for employing ACE personnel in their jurisdiction, and
 - professional sports should likewise fund such services to their athletes, although they may be delivered through the ACE Program.
- **Sport sciences:** An integrated program of services in the sport sciences is to be available from each SIS/SAS for the developing athlete. The program should be funded by the SIS/SAS and will follow the principles of the national program for each sport and incorporate, for example, national testing protocols where appropriate. Otherwise, SIS/SAS might deliver services to NSOs on a cost-recovery basis.

- **Information services:** The state-based sport information networks are responsible for direct delivery of information services to coaches and athletes. These services are supported by the Commission's National Sport Information Centre and by electronic information delivery services which the AIS/ASC has in place to ensure that access to information is coordinated on a national basis.

This will require a massive commitment by state institutes and academies and, indeed, state governments, for funding and operation within a national system. The Commission's task is to coordinate this national system, in conjunction with NSOs, to ensure that it operates effectively and without duplication.

In this context, the critical issue for the Commission is to clearly define the relationship between the AIS and other service providers, including the state institutes/academies, which are being funded or part-funded by the ASC to provide elite athlete services. In each case there should be unambiguous contractual commitments which specify the services to be provided in return for ASC funds and the expected role of the NSO and the service provider. The option for the NSO to have more choice in deciding on service providers reflects this new philosophy which allows sports greater opportunity to determine their needs and decide who best to provide the appropriate services. This is in accord with the purchaser/provider model and the government's policy on contestability.

A corollary of this devolution process is the ASC's focus, outlined elsewhere in this paper, toward improving NSO management practices to position them to attain required outputs. If NSOs are purchasing outcomes from a range of providers, including the AIS and SIS/SAS, there are two immediate implications:

- the Commission will require the AIS and SIS/SAS to work more closely together to ensure that collectively they are meeting the needs of the NSO, and
- the NSO's management responsibility will be increased because it is dealing directly with a larger range of providers. Its accountability will thus be enhanced.

The Intensive Training Centre (ITC) programs should continue to be an integral part of the AIS. It is recognised that, while individual ITCs have varied in quality, the ITC system has been successful. It allows Commission funding to be used to fund coaches at state level (within the network of a particular sport) who can work closely with local coaches who feed athletes through to the ITC program, as well as funding national coaches to whom ITC coaches in turn will be feeding athletes. They thus become an important link between state and national programs.

Each ITC must accord with the pathway agreed between the Commission and the NSO. They need not necessarily be based at state institutes. NSOs should be given more responsibility for deciding where they buy the services for their ITC program, eg from state institutes, their own clubs or private providers.

Commission funding for elite programs would be provided through NSOs in accordance with their national strategic plans, which also outline an agreed role for SIS/SAS. ITC programs must be nationally focused and feed into national programs supported by the AIS, and they must be established under contractual agreements with NSOs and the ASC.

The NSOs should be given responsibility for deciding whether it is a priority within their sport for an ITC program and, subject to agreement under the guidelines of the new high performance program, would be part-funded for this ITC program. The ASC would agree to ITC programs only when they are nationally focused and when the NSO agrees to their need and the most appropriate delivery agency.

Action Agenda:

21. All AIS scholarship sports will maintain an international focus on national senior or junior squads. The AIS program must be an integral part of the NSO national plan and contribute to a national pathway for its NSO. State institutes/academies will also contribute to the national role where this is in accord with the NSO's plans. They have a major additional and complementary role to identify, foster and develop younger athletes at local level. As feeders or contributors to the national squads, the state/territory networks have important roles to play in talent identification, Athlete Career and Education, sport sciences and information services.

22. The NSOs will be given greater responsibility for deciding whether it is a priority within their sport for an ITC program measured against other priorities. Subject to agreement under the guidelines of the new high performance program, the NSO may be part-funded for this program on a cost/benefit basis. The ASC will agree to ITC programs only when they are nationally focused.

Delivery - Sport Sciences

The ASC recognises that in the highly competitive arena of international sport, the difference between success and what many perceive as 'failure' is measured in fractions. Planned and systematic use of sport science is integral to elite success. The ASC's philosophical approach to sport science is to deliver programs and services which are athlete focused, coach driven and performance based.

The AIS Sport Sciences Division should concentrate on the highest level of specialist servicing and treatment, and on applied research, consistent with the goal of producing internationally competitive athletes. The emphasis should be on both developing 'cutting edge' research to identify more specialised methods to enhance performance and to continue developing the highest level of specialised servicing and treatment of athletes. These would then be incorporated into the services for each sport. The AIS Sport Sciences should clearly continue to develop, coordinate, deliver and/or arrange delivery of a broad range of services to all AIS scholarship athletes irrespective of the location of the AIS program. It may do so in conjunction with state institutes.

There would be major benefits if an integrated program of services in the sport sciences was available from each SIS/SAS for the developing athlete. This program should be funded by the SIS/SAS and follow the principles of the national program for each sport incorporating, for example, national testing protocols where appropriate.

It is acknowledged that certain areas of the sport sciences have high unit costs in terms of equipment and expertise required to service athletes. It is expensive to replicate these services and the AIS should continue to be the common, central provider of services in those areas. The high cost of research and servicing in some disciplines (eg biomechanics, physiology) in the sport sciences dictates that economies of scale will have to be achieved by focusing these activities, and their associated expertise and resources, within the AIS. While it would continue to assist in the routine servicing of athletes in national teams through national training centres, the AIS would in this way become more of a specialist centre, developing an enhanced focus on high-level applied research. Routine servicing of athletes not on AIS scholarships will be carried out by outside providers (eg state institutes) in accordance with the requirements and national plans of NSOs.

The Commission would continue to develop its sport science and sports medicine expertise, services and products in a manner which meets the needs of current athletes while improving the medium-term capability of the sciences and scientists to assist athletes around Australia by:

- a high level of service to current athletes
- applied research and product development, and

- training and education of operatives in the Australian sport science industry.

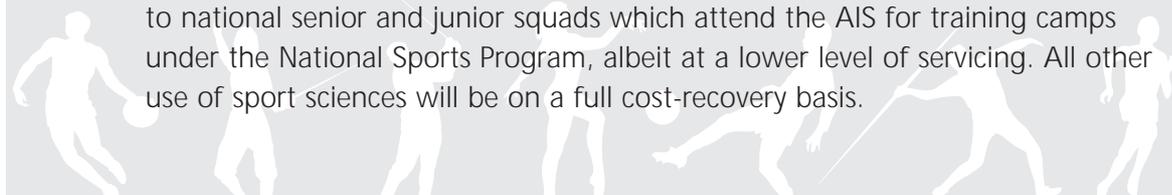
It should not, however, be providing services to athletes who could obtain a similar level of services from alternative providers, unless those services are provided on a full cost-recovery basis. The AIS will provide services in the sport sciences to AIS scholarship athletes and to national senior and junior squads which attend the AIS for training camps under the National Sports Program, albeit at a lower level of servicing. All other use of sport sciences will be on a full cost-recovery basis.

In summary, beyond 2000 there should be a shift in the relative proportion of the Sport Sciences Division's three businesses — athlete servicing, education and research — with more emphasis being placed on research and development. Priority would be given to research and development which improves sport's elite performance and enhances the capability of the sports industry, including its export potential.

Action Agenda:

23. The high cost of research and servicing in some disciplines (eg biomechanics) in the sport sciences dictates that economies of scale can be achieved by focusing these activities, and their associated expertise and resources, within the AIS. The AIS will become more of a specialist centre, with routine servicing of athletes not on AIS scholarship carried out by outside providers (eg state institutes) in accordance with the requirements and national plans of NSOs.

24. The AIS will provide services in the sport sciences to AIS scholarship athletes and to national senior and junior squads which attend the AIS for training camps under the National Sports Program, albeit at a lower level of servicing. All other use of sport sciences will be on a full cost-recovery basis.



SPORT IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

One of the major objectives under the Australian Sports Commission legislation and current government sport policy is to improve participation in quality sport activities by all Australians. This objective is in no way subservient to the Commission's other major objective, to develop elite sport. Community sport is the base for the national sport system and is dependent on strong local relationships between clubs, schools, local government and the public. Regional, state and national programs, policies and activities through their umbrella organisations and governments also influence the delivery of community sport.

As outlined above, Australia faces a crisis in terms of community health and fitness. Departments of health have not yet come to terms with the need for increased focus on (and funding of) illness preventative measures. Equally, the Commission's own financial contribution has left its participation programs and strategies relatively under-funded.

The role for the Commission is to provide leadership for a national participation strategy, which includes national coordination, marketing, industry development, research and monitoring. This role will return to government an increase in the participation rate and improved capacity of community clubs and organisations to deliver quality programs to the community. Therefore, the Commission should continue to develop national programs and initiatives which influence the delivery of sport and recreation at the wider community level throughout Australia.

This emphasis on community level development ensures:

- a stronger, more viable base for sport
- a coordinated and enhanced sport and recreation delivery system at the local, state and national level
- a foundation for elite sport development, and
- increased community and individual health and social benefits.

The ASC's urgent focus on participation is highlighted by the fact that only 48% of the adult Australian population are physically active and only 28% participate in organised sport and physical activity. This is a significant decline from the participation rate of children, where 61% participate in sport and physical activity. The participation rate of women (43%) is considerably lower than that of men (52%). Statistics clearly show that an increase in physical activity will result in huge savings in health costs alone, as well as providing increases in productivity and an overall enhancement of the quality of life.^{11,12}



Delivery - Active Australia

Active Australia is a major initiative of the Commission which has brought together all of its successful participation programs into one cohesive national participation strategy. This includes programs such as Aussie Sport, Willing and Able, the Volunteer Involvement Program, Women and Sport and the Indigenous Sport Program. These programs have been internationally acclaimed by agencies such as UNESCO and the IOC and many have now been adopted as key development programs in up to 27 countries. The Commission plays a significant international role in such activities as the *Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport*³ (the landmark international communique on women's sport) and in the development of sporting programs for people with disabilities.

The World Health Organisation has identified Active Australia as an exemplar national model for sport and physical activity development, particularly in respect of its cross-government/industry approach. It is perhaps internationally unique in bringing together the three tiers of government, the private sector and the main delivery agencies to set common goals and strategies. The ASC's leadership in developing and managing Active Australia has led to a collaborative approach to participation by a number of agencies including sport and recreation, health, local government and education at the local, state and national level.

The ASC Board recently undertook a review of its Participation Division. It has firmly recommended that the ASC, post-2000, should assume national management and coordination of Active Australia and ensure that it is adequately resourced to undertake this function. It is the Commission's view that Australia is facing a situation of crisis in community participation in sport and physical activity and, as a result, in personal fitness and health. This poses a major challenge for the Commission and, indeed, the government. Many diseases can be prevented or ameliorated by increased physical activity. This assertion is supported by Department of Health statistics. The Commission is the body best placed in Australia to initiate and coordinate physical activity programs to address this issue.

National management and coordination would involve the following strategies:

- secure funds for this program to be a national success
- refine and maintain existing programs for children/young people, people with disabilities, women, Indigenous people and mature age participation in conjunction with key partners and on a needs basis
- establish a national function for collecting and disseminating research, monitoring and evaluation as it relates to participation rates, trends and issues
- promote the Active Australia brand on a national basis over an extended period of time

- ensure a collaborative approach to a national strategy and identify collaborative funding opportunities
- promote and develop industry/community programs and models which assist clubs, schools and local authorities to improve the delivery of sport and recreation
- outsource program delivery through a network of deliverers including state departments, local governments or commercial deliverers according to contractual arrangements with clearly defined outputs and performance measures
- provide grants for participation programs and initiatives to national agencies through a special initiatives fund on an annual application basis, and
- protect and manage the Active Australia brand and intellectual property of the ASC.

The role of the Commission in implementing Active Australia will be to leverage the input from all three levels of government. Formal partnership agreements with state departments of sport and recreation will ensure that a collaborative national approach is achieved. Other partnerships with state education authorities and local government associations will help to broaden the impact and delivery of Active Australia.

This strategy would see the Commission, together with its national partners, focus on program development, research and promotion from a national perspective, thus promoting a national approach and effecting economies of scale. Delivery would take place at state and local level.

The Active Australia initiative, while new, is growing. The aim is to have 500 clubs, 100 local governments and 1,000 schools accredited as Active Australia Providers by June 2000. The initiative will grow exponentially from that point, with an objective of increasing the adult participation rate in community sport by 10% by 2004. This is likely to save some \$400-\$500 million per annum off the national health bill.

Action Agenda:

25. The ASC will assume national management and coordination of Active Australia and ensure that it is adequately resourced to achieve the Commission's objective of enhancing community participation.
26. The Active Australia framework will involve Commonwealth and state/territory health and education departments, local governments and commercial providers. The Commission will concentrate on policy, research and product development; servicing will be devolved to state and local bodies.
27. The ASC will enter into formal joint-funded agreements with state departments of sport and recreation for the national implementation of Active Australia.

Delivery - Access and Equity

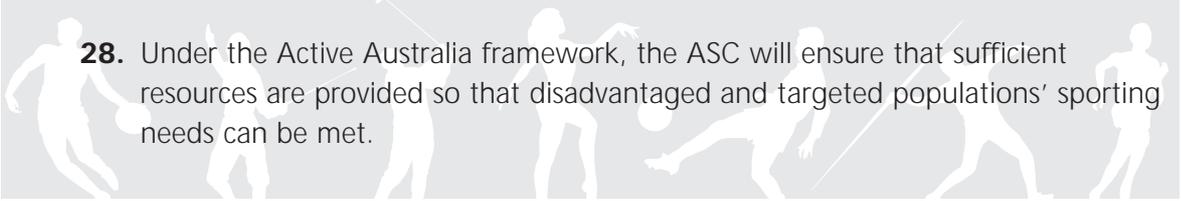
The ASC values widespread access to sport and recognises the need to assist disadvantaged groups in our community obtain meaningful sporting opportunities. It is conscious of the government's sports policy objectives to:

- further assist disability sport
- increase the regional focus of Active Australia
- encourage participation by older Australians
- encourage greater female participation
- deliver efficient sports programs to Indigenous communities, and
- improve delivery mechanisms for socially disadvantaged groups.

The Commission will seek to continue its partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to deliver sport programs and scholarships for Indigenous people. This program is regionally based and 36 Indigenous sport development officers provide community support and training in rural and isolated communities.

Programs for women and children have been the major focus of the ASC's participation initiatives since 1987. These will be maintained and enhanced to meet the needs of community organisations more specifically so that there is a greater level of community action to support programs for women, children and older adults.

Action Agenda:

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- 28.** Under the Active Australia framework, the ASC will ensure that sufficient resources are provided so that disadvantaged and targeted populations' sporting needs can be met.

Delivery - Athletes with Disabilities

People with disabilities are a targeted population who require both participation and elite outcomes. The ASC appreciates that 3.5 million Australians have some form of disability, that quality of life for this group is affected by their capacity for independent living, and that sport and physical activity are in turn linked to the capacity for independent living and quality of life.

Australia's second place in the Atlanta Paralympics establishes the nation as a world leader in the elite end of disability sport. This is linked to programs such as the AIS Athletes with Disabilities Program and the Coaching Athletes with Disabilities (CAD) Program. However, success has not yet been matched by funding commitment.

Opportunities for non-elite participation for athletes with disabilities are hampered by negative attitudes of service providers, lack of awareness of services, difficulty of physical access to facilities, ad hoc service delivery and lack of qualified personnel.

The ASC has developed a vision to:

'encourage and provide opportunities to enable people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity at their desired level and to achieve their personal goals'.

The emphasis of this vision is on including people with disabilities into regular sporting environments. The inclusion philosophy applies to how the Commission operates internally, through specialist assistance provided within the AIS, the Australian Coaching Council (ACC) and the Participation Division, and how it operates externally, through the development of inclusive mainstream programs and services such as the Disability Education Program and the AIS Scholarships Program. The Sports Management Division of the ASC also provides assistance to national sporting organisations for the disabled (NSODs) through the Sports Assistance Scheme and to the Australian Paralympic Committee through the Paralympic Preparation Program. It should be noted that the PPP is scheduled to terminate at the end of 2000.

The ASC should enhance its focus on disability sport, recognising the special needs of athletes with disabilities, but always in accordance with the philosophy of mainstreaming. For this, money is needed.

An important aspect of the Commission's role in sport for people with disabilities is the development of participation pathways, from grass-roots participation and coaching at all levels through to elite performance. Direct community training, coach support and elite athlete assistance are coordinated nationally by the Commission and provide a unique platform for Australia's standing as the world's leading nation in this area. The 2000 Paralympic Games provides a catalyst for further developing and strengthening these national initiatives.

Delivery – The Sports Industry

A further Commission strategic objective is to assist with developing the Australian sports industry. It is a large and growing industry with 220,000 employees, 4,000 businesses, 26,000 clubs, 14,000 sports grounds and facilities, 1.5 million volunteers, \$6 billion pa in household expenditure, \$300 million in annual sponsorship and \$350 million in annual exports. Over 6 million Australians attend at least one sporting event per year as a spectator and many more watch on television, and sport contributes close to 2% of GDP.¹⁴

As a service industry in the growing leisure and entertainment sector, the Commission is aware that sport has a significant role to play in assisting the government meet its macroeconomic goals such as increased employment and exports, improved industry efficiency and attainment of an overall economic growth rate of 4% per annum over the next decade.

The Commission recognises that development of the sports industry should be in keeping with the government's industry policy framework, Investing for Growth, and include strategies to encourage innovation, boost investment, improve trade performance, increase research and development and maximise benefits from the information revolution. The Commission's activities in this regard will be undertaken in partnership with the industry portfolio, Industry Science and Resources, of which it is a component part.

The ASC will continue and expand its strategies to assist in the growth, improved efficiency and effectiveness of the sports industry. Some of these strategies and programs include:

- the Management Improvement Program — to provide NSOs and others with tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how they manage their businesses
- Active Australia — which, *inter alia*, provides tools to improve management and client focus among the 26,000 Australian sports clubs
- Industry education and training — improving the scope and reach of ASC education programs, such as the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme which accredits some 27,000 coaches per year
- Information technology — enhancing SportNet, the sports information database, and extending its coverage among Australian sporting organisations
- Research and development — providing a major focus, particularly in its sport science and sports medicine activities, to research and development, either in its own right or in partnership with the private sector, with a view to developing world 'cutting edge' technology with export potential

- Export enhancement — in conjunction with Australia Sport International P/L, assisting Australian sporting organisations and businesses to access foreign markets for their products and services while demonstrating Australian capability through the programs which it manages internationally on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and
- Policy advice — providing the minister and the government with advice on matters affecting the further development of the sports industry such as facilities management, implementation of taxation reform, education and training initiatives, capacity for increased off-budget funding of sport, etc.

Action Agenda:

32. Within the government's industry policy framework, Investing for Growth, the Commission will give priority to program development and implementation which enhances the size and efficiency of the Australian sporting industry and its capacity to contribute to economic growth. It will enhance research and development as a major activity of the Commission.

Delivery - Sports Education

The role of the coach is central to developing sport at all levels. A key role for the ASC is to improve the quality and quantity of coaching and officiating available to all Australians at all levels of sport. It also works to raise the overall standard of sport education in areas such as sports management and administration, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, etc.

The Commission will maintain its core programs, namely the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme, National Officiating Program, Coach Scholarship Program, Volunteer Involvement Program, Diploma in Sports Medicine and Diploma in Coach Education.

Responses to NSO surveys show that they highly value ACC technical advice in a range of areas related to the design and delivery of courses for coaches and officials. The ACC is currently exploring ways to make participation in the NCAS more flexible by offering a range of fees commensurate with different levels of service.

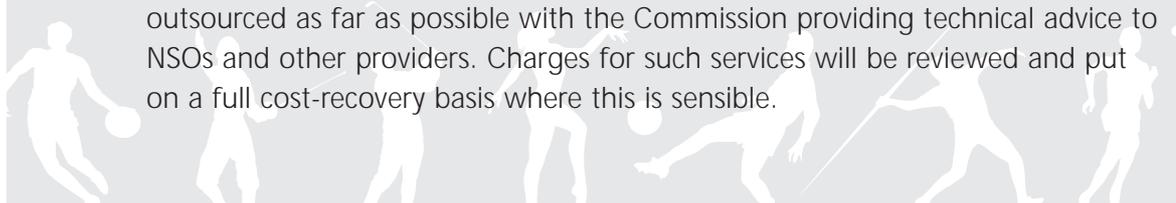
Other than the Coach Scholarship Program, which will be linked with AIS residential sports in the first instance, the delivery of these programs should be outsourced as far as possible with the Commission merely providing technical advice to NSOs and other providers. Charges for such services should be reviewed and put on a full cost-recovery basis where this is sensible (recognising that the ACC already derives over \$1 million pa in revenue from such services).

The ASC has an important role in developing and devolving training and education packages. All such packages, such as the two diplomas, should be reviewed on a cost/benefit basis with all costs being taken into account, and with a view to outsourcing, where appropriate, to licensed providers. A decision on outsourcing should take account of the need to ensure quality products in fields with no other alternative training packages.

Consistent with the concept of developing Australian sport as an industry, the Commission should take a leadership and coordinating role in developing an overall sports industry training and education plan. It should work with the government's key agency in this field, Sport and Recreation Training Australia, to set competency standards and formulate training packages for sports coaching, officiating and management/administration courses offered through the Vocational and Educational Training system. It should work with the various universities which offer undergraduate courses in sports disciplines to ensure their courses are more relevant to contemporary employment skills in the industry.

Action Agenda:

- 33.** Consistent with the concept of developing Australian sport as an industry, the Commission will take a leadership and coordinating role in developing an overall sports industry training and education plan.
- 34.** The ASC has an important role in developing and devolving training and education packages. All such packages will be reviewed on a cost/benefit basis with all costs being taken into account, and with a view to outsourcing, where appropriate, to licensed providers.
- 35.** Other than the Coach Scholarship Program, which will be linked with AIS residential sports in the first instance, the delivery of education programs will be outsourced as far as possible with the Commission providing technical advice to NSOs and other providers. Charges for such services will be reviewed and put on a full cost-recovery basis where this is sensible.



Delivery - International

The Commission has obligations under its legislation, its strategic plan and under government sports policy to foster international cooperation through sport. There are four pragmatic reasons which underline the Commission's outward focus in its approach to international relations:

- servicing the rapidly expanding number of international visitors to the ASC
- generating benefits for Australian sport and Australian athletes
- providing commercial returns for the Commission, and
- meeting government policy and foreign relations imperatives.

With respect to the government's foreign relations and trade objectives, it should continue to promote the nation through our sporting expertise, recognising that these activities should be managed by the ASC and Australia Sport International P/L in a manner that minimises direct use of Commission funds or staff resources.

The Commission will continue its international development activities but with minimum disruption to its core activities. It is expected that virtually all such activities will be funded from external sources (eg AusAID, Department of Foreign Affairs). Apart from meeting the donor's objectives, which are usually associated with foreign diplomacy, our objectives should be to:

- assist development of Australian sports by fostering bilateral arrangements where NSOs agree there are advantages to be gained
- promote the international image of the Commission and its programs
- derive commercial returns for the ASC or NSOs
- strengthen, through our expertise, the sporting performances of countries in this region, and
- assist in securing further international sporting events and building links for eventual Australian participation in events such as the Asian Games.

Australia must accept the lead role in fostering the development of elitism and participation in Commonwealth countries to help keep the concept of the Commonwealth Games alive. It is the Commission's considered view that, unless we take a leadership role in developing sport within the Commonwealth, the Games will be called into question. This is particularly important in light of the fact that Melbourne will be hosting the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

International programs will use the expertise available within the Commission or elsewhere in Australian sport on a fully cost recoverable basis. Management of the programs should be kept to a minimum and contracted out wherever possible. The Commission should endeavour to appoint agents in the field to market Commission programs on the basis of no up-front fees and a percentage of any contract fees negotiated.

Action Agenda:

36. The Commission will continue its international development activities but with minimum disruption to its core activities. Management of programs will be costed and outsourced where possible.

Delivery - Sport and Information Services

Further developing sophisticated information services is essential if the above approach is to be put into effect. The Commission will continue to maintain a focus on the national coordination of information services to reduce duplication and to ensure that there is cost-effective delivery of accurate and up-to-date information to all levels of Australian sport.

Information service delivery will continue to NSOs and to AIS programs. However, the delivery of information to all other levels of sport should be made through the National Sport Information Network based on state government delivery mechanisms and through a range of private and public information service providers. Information technology should continue to be used extensively to deliver information services and collect information. Where cost-effective, outsourcing arrangements should be entered into to develop, manage and maintain information systems.

Information technology is being developed to underpin the national network. SportNet, the national online network for Australian sport, will be developed into a self-sustaining online network in partnership with the private sector to ensure the effective use of information technology to manage and disseminate sporting information.

The Commission needs to ensure that all program reporting and coordination takes place through SportNet to allow NSOs to capitalise on the administrative and commercial benefits accruing from its use. This will also result in the Commission streamlining its own processes in an online environment and placing a greater level of responsibility on NSOs for data collection, data maintenance and online reporting to the ASC.

The Commission will enter into joint-funding initiatives with state governments to further develop and enhance the online environment for sport.

Action **Agenda:**

37. The ASC will continue to maintain a focus on the national coordination of information services to reduce duplication and to ensure that there is cost-effective delivery of accurate and up-to-date information to all levels of Australian sport.

38. SportNet, the national online network for Australian sport, will be developed into a self-sustaining online network in partnership with the private sector to ensure the effective use of information technology to manage and disseminate sporting information.

FACILITIES

When the AIS campus in Canberra was built it represented world's best practice in facilities development. The facilities at the AIS have aged, imposing new cost pressures, while new facilities have been developed elsewhere in Australia. This requires a new and fresh approach to facilities management at the AIS Bruce campus as well as a new approach to the association of facilities and programs nationally.

Facility management should continue to recognise that the 'core business' of the AIS centres is to produce internationally competitive Australian athletes. The Commission will continue to strive to provide top-class training facilities to support AIS programs and the AIS will be able to use the Commission-owned facilities at Bruce or examine alternative facilities arrangements. This will require continued refinement of the site plan, linked to plans for AIS scholarship sports, and a funded program to upgrade existing and develop new facilities.

The pre-eminence of the AIS within the elite athlete development program in Australia, and indeed its international status as a world-renowned athlete development centre, necessitates that its facilities and equipment, wherever located, keep pace with international best practice.

The ASC must look to the long-term sustainability of the AIS facilities and Canberra residence and make appropriate allocations for facility upgrading. However, some programs may be discontinued and the pattern of AIS residences may change. The Commission must continue to operate its facilities, but outsourcing individual elements of facility management should be considered on a cost/benefit basis, taking account of the primary purpose of the facilities for AIS scholarship use. The Canberra AIS campus facilities will, where appropriate, remain open to the public on the basis of an accurate assessment of cost/benefit.

Canberra's AIS scholarship sports must have first priority on facility use, followed by national team usage, other sports (eg camps), the public and commercial use. AIS sport use must continue to be balanced with other use. To ensure operating efficiency, all AIS sports facilities should notionally be proportionately charged to AIS programs in conformity with the principles of accrual budgeting.

Maintenance and upgrading of AIS facilities must be considered on a cost/benefit basis. Clearly the existing facilities must remain functional, which requires an investment in maintenance but, equally, an AIS scholarship program must not be considered to be permanently 'tied' to the Canberra AIS purely on the basis that the particular facility will be under-utilised if the program is

moved to another location. An innovative approach should be found to ensure all Canberra AIS facilities are fully utilised for any new 'mix' of scholarship sports.

The ASC also recognises that there are many fine facilities now around Australia, which have the potential for wider use in running athlete training programs, either through the AIS or SIS/SAS and that utilisation of these facilities is a related issue. Beyond this, the ASC sees the implementation of the government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry report *Rethinking the Funding of Community Sport and Recreation Facilities: A Sporting Chance* as a high priority.¹⁵ In particular, it considers a national facilities audit to establish needs and priorities should be undertaken and emphasis placed on upgrading facility management skills.

Action Agenda:

39. The pre-eminence of the AIS within the elite athlete development program in Australia, and indeed its international status as a world-renowned athlete development centre, necessitates that its facilities and equipment keep pace with international best practice.
40. The ASC will develop a management strategy for the long-term sustainability of the Bruce facilities (and other Commission-owned facilities) and make appropriate allocations for facility upgrading.
41. The Commission will continue to operate its facilities, taking account of their primary purpose for AIS scholarship use. Outsourcing individual elements of facility management will be considered on a cost/benefit basis.
42. The AIS campus facilities will, where appropriate, remain open to the public on the basis of an accurate assessment of cost/benefit.

MARKETING

The main aim of the marketing plan within the Commission is to raise additional funds for the Commission's programs outside of its government budget allocation. The Commission will continue to raise funds through sponsorship and other commercial means to enhance its budget for allocation by the Board to various programs.

Strategies to be adopted to enhance the marketing program include:

- clear identification of Commission properties
- appropriate steps to protect Commission properties
- potential use of agents on a commission basis
- brand values, which will provide for association with certain categories of products
- all commercial arrangements to be established on a clear cost/benefit basis
- cost of marketing to be deducted from returns to individual programs, and
- adequate resources to be provided for servicing sponsors.

Marketing in the above context is defined as developing a commercial association with the ASC/AIS or its programs/products. Revenue can also be raised for the Commission through sale of our expertise in sports management, sports science, international athlete scholarships, sports education, international consultancies, external use of campus facilities etc. The Commission will continue on a limited basis, where appropriate, to provide marketing assistance or direct sponsors to NSOs on a commission basis. Where a conflict might arise with the Commission and an individual NSO pursuing the same sponsor, the Commission will give way and seek to assist the NSO.

A disciplined approach should be taken to pursuing commercial markets and managing any related business. Projects shall be considered on the basis of:

- relation to core business
- likely impact on delivery of core business programs
- cost/benefit analysis, and
- potential to outsource (on basis of receiving a royalty payment).

Revenue can also be raised by association with other elements of the federal bureaucracy where their objectives can be met or partially met through sports programs delivered on their behalf by the Commission. The ASC already has such arrangements with the departments of foreign affairs, health, local government and veterans' affairs. They do not provide revenue for allocation by the Commission to sports programs but can enhance delivery of existing ASC programs. Again, such arrangements should only be entered into after examination of a range of criteria such as outlined above and should be approved in advance by the Executive and, if appropriate due to their size and potential impact, by the Board.

The ASC has been diligent in pursuing off-budget revenue, but it is not a panacea to budgetary restrictions. Independent research findings are that the ASC's fund-raising ability is highly constrained by its operational environment in a market where there is heavy competition for commercial sponsorship.

Action Agenda:

43. The Commission will continue to raise funds through sponsorship and other commercial means to enhance its budget for allocation to various programs. It will continue also to raise funds for individual programs.

44. A disciplined approach will be taken to pursuing commercial markets. All marketing will be on a cost/benefit basis and benefits will be delivered net of the marketing cost. But the Commission repeats, this should not be seen as a panacea for budgetary restrictions.

DRUGS IN SPORT

Australia is recognised as a world-leading nation in the fight against drugs in sport. The ASC condemns the use of performance enhancing drugs and doping practices in sport as contrary to the ethics of sport and potentially harmful to the health of athletes.

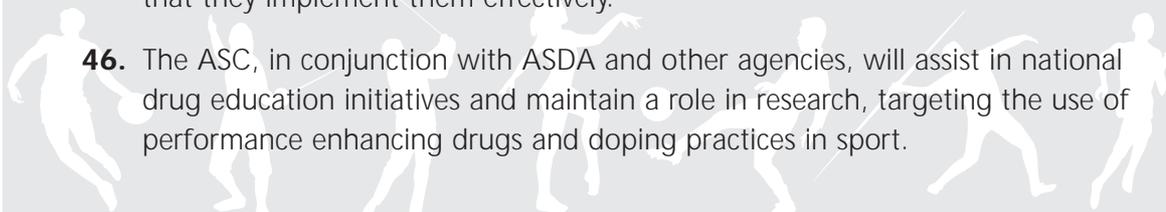
The government has recently reviewed its drug strategy, and developed a coherent anti-drugs policy to give clear direction and roles to the Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) and the ASC. In this context, the Commission has the primary responsibility for a national policy which requires all NSOs to have an anti-doping policy as a condition of funding. The ASC has recently reviewed its policy and those of the NSOs.

Beyond 2000, the Commission will continue to maintain a focus on anti-doping, in accordance with the outcomes of the international summit on drugs in sport and government policy, and continue its research into refining detection techniques.

Action Agenda:

45. The ASC will ensure that NSOs have tabled appropriate anti-doping policies and that they implement them effectively.

46. The ASC, in conjunction with ASDA and other agencies, will assist in national drug education initiatives and maintain a role in research, targeting the use of performance enhancing drugs and doping practices in sport.



CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above that there is an unyielding commitment by the Commission and by the government to the twin concerns in sport of servicing elite performance within the nation and widening the levels of participation. However, the Commission also recognises that in the post-Sydney Olympics environment there will be considerable pressures exerted for a dilution in the funding commitment to sport at a national level. This paper has sought to argue that the opposite should be the case.

As things currently stand on the elite level, the world of competitive sport is becoming an increasingly difficult environment in which to succeed. Money alone will not secure success. However, money properly spent through sophisticated, accountable procedures will undeniably produce improved results at the elite level, generate greater national pride and, at the same time, act as a catalyst for addressing the disturbingly low levels of participation in sport in Australia.

The strategies outlined in this document are consistent with current policy, the current ASC strategic plan, the government's commitment to the ASC's post-2000 budget and the underlying philosophy of the government in terms of the purchaser/provider model and the systems of accrual budgeting.

This paper suggests that the challenges in front of us may well be greater than those we have already encountered and overcome. This is no reflection on the success of the current strategy and system which, on any dispassionate analysis, has clearly been successful. We must, however, take account of the fact that there may well be a lower level of tolerance by taxpayers towards money being spent on sport unless we can demonstrate that the benefits of that expenditure are felt by the bulk of the nation through improved participation, improved levels of health, improved economic benefit and, at the elite end of the spectrum, a greater satisfaction with what is happening on the international scene as a result of government funding.

Australian sport cannot afford to stand still or it will be overtaken by our international competitors, many of whom have enlarged budgets and have lifted their sports management and athlete development programs closer to our own. An even greater truism, however, is the realisation that we cannot afford to go backwards. Great achievements have been attained in the past. However, there is an old axiom in sport as in life. If we apply last year's strategies to next year's challenges we will only get last year's results. On the twin pillars of elitism and participation, it is the task of the Commission to secure better outcomes in the future than have been obtained in the past.

The Commission intends that sport be managed in a more business-like manner according to plans and specified outcomes, taking account of the relative state of development and sophistication of delivery agencies within a vibrant and efficient sports system. This will, in turn, change the ASC role from an interventionist managerial approach to one based more on a facilitative approach. This approach will not see a universal standard of competence, as many sports will accept the challenge and prosper while some will deteriorate because they lack the capacity to meet the challenge.

This facilitating role will be backed up by the Commission undertaking monitoring, coordination and research in its core business areas of elite sport, community sport and industry development. It will become a servicing organisation and to do this effectively will need to be underpinned by an efficient information technology network operating nationally.

All of this will, in turn, impact on the Commission's staff and structure. The management dictum that 'structure follows strategy' will be adhered to. The ASC will convert all of the above into a comprehensive strategy for 2001 to 2004. From this the ASC Board will decide on a new top structure for the Commission and appropriate skills for the Executive and program managers. Below this level, the Commission will be looking for a different mix of skills among staff which will require some job shedding and selective hiring, the end result being a leaner staff structure of fewer but more appropriately skilled people for the new direction, with more flexible job specifications and employment arrangements.

With these strategies and structures in place, the Board will then be in a position to allocate the budget for 2000-01 and beyond in a manner that maximises the outcomes for Australian sport in all its dimensions.

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