

AUSTRALIA'S SPORT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY



PLAYWELL

Everyone has a place in sport

November 2023

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PLAY WELL



“We know Australians value sport — it’s part of the fabric of who we are — but sport also needs to change. It needs to be more open and inclusive, and we need to ensure that we are providing more opportunities for all Australians to be involved in sport in whatever role they choose.

The Play Well Strategy is the result of a collective effort of passionate people from across Australia who are all committed to creating a more active and healthier Australia through sport. I am excited about where this strategy can take us.”

Kieren Perkins OAM
CEO, Australian Sports Commission (ASC)

Play Well — Australia’s Sport Participation Strategy (Play Well Strategy) has been developed to create great sporting environments and experiences, where individuals of all ages, backgrounds, genders and abilities can come together to access the benefits of sport.

Everyone has a right to participate in sport. Sport is a powerful vehicle for personal growth, community building and positive social change.

Harnessing knowledge and experience from across the sector, we commit to making positive changes, to break down barriers and empower individuals to explore, create and connect through sport. We are redefining participation to be more than just competing. It is about creating safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces where everyone can belong and thrive.

This strategy belongs to us all and we invite you to join us to help make Australian sport safer, more welcoming, inclusive and fun.



**OUR
CONNECTION
TO COUNTRY**



Australia's Aboriginal Peoples' culture is the oldest continuous living culture on Earth. It provides Australia with a unique and powerful place in the world, something that no other country can claim. Both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are the First Peoples of Australia.

Like Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy, we welcome and will support our First Nations Peoples into the sport system. We will connect athletes, coaches, administrators and our people to this culture, which will create a more equal opportunity for a stronger Australia as a sporting nation.

We will promote and implement our principles of reconciliation and self determination to help create culturally safe environments that support First Nations Peoples to participate in and enjoy all roles in sport.

We commit to continually learning and seeking to improve our knowledge and appreciation about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their histories, so that it enriches and enhances our sporting culture.

Sport is an important vehicle for building community identity and social cohesion. By increasing awareness of our First Nations Peoples cultures, we will unearth an environment in which we can have two-way knowledge sharing with mutual respect, coupled with an understanding, so that it becomes a common practice.

The Play Well Strategy outlines how we will work and consult with the Strategy Leadership Group to explore the role culture plays in building quality sporting experiences and ensure that sport reflects the diversity of Australian society now, and into the future.

There is a great strength for all Australians with a sporting culture that understands our collective histories and that seeks to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their living cultures and celebrates their achievements.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge dual Olympians Nova Peris OAM, Patrick Johnson and Danny Morseu for their work above, which has been taken from Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy. We also thank the HP2032+ Sport Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group for allowing us to use this wording in the Play Well Strategy, ensuring that our connection to country is united from community sport to high performance sport. Nova Peris OAM is a descendant of the Gija people of the East Kimberley and the Yawuru people of the West Kimberley, and the Iwatja and Gagudju people of West Arnhem Land. Patrick Johnson is a proud Kaanju man from far north Queensland. Danny Morseu is a Torres Strait Islander, born on Thursday Island in far north Queensland.

We acknowledge Brad Hore OLY, Olympic boxer, former AIS scholarship holder and Indigenous artist for developing the First Nations artwork for the Play Well Strategy.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of this nation, the traditional custodians of the lands, waters and seas on which we live. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging. Through the Play Well Strategy, we are committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas. We recognise the outstanding contribution they make to sport in Australia and celebrate the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.

“Sport participation is important to me because as a young person growing up in a rural community, I grew up close to country in Mildura, it provided a pathway to connect with my peers, it built my confidence, it gave me a lot of the skills that I use now in my leadership roles and as a coach.”

Jacara Egan, National Manager, First Nations Wellbeing and Healing, Headspace Muthi Muthi and Gunditjmarra

“There is no time better than now for sport development to outgrow and advance past exclusion barriers to participation. This strategy is for all of us, so we all feel welcome and accepted in sport whether that's as a participant, a volunteer or as an administrator. No-one should feel like sport isn't for them. By transforming our sporting culture, we can change the way that people young and old engage with and enjoy sport.”

Courtney Fewquandie, General Manager, First Nations Football, Football Australia, Butchulla and Gubbi Gubbi





**BUILDING A
STRONGER
AUSTRALIA**



PARTICIPATION IN SPORT BUILDS A STRONGER AUSTRALIA

A world-leading sport system delivers outcomes well beyond the fields, courts, courses, pools, places and spaces where sport is played.

Participating in sport improves our physical and mental health, social connection and cohesion, national productivity and economy. Sport participation matters for the significant role it plays in enriching the lives of all Australians and their communities.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<p>Australians believe that sport is good for them and their communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 97% of Australians believe sport and physical activity is good for health and wellbeing - 88% of Australians believe sport and physical activity is good for bringing their communities together. 	<p>Australian children involved in sport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have improved cognitive development - are better at learning and retaining information - stay in school longer. 	<p>Young people who are members of a local sporting club are more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate greater trust in other people - possess a stronger sense of belonging to their community - form more close friendships - achieve greater levels of life satisfaction, happiness and health - possess a greater desire to give back to their community through volunteering. 	<p>Australians who are involved in sport, benefit from a range of personal outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved resilience - improved mental health across life course - social connectedness - higher likelihood of meeting physical activity guidelines and continuing physical activity long term. 	<p>Sport plays an important role in helping Australians of all ages and abilities to achieve the physical activity levels required to reduce the risk of chronic diseases and illness.</p>	<p>Every dollar invested in sport returns seven dollars in benefits to the nation.</p>



THE CASE FOR CHANGE

The following problem statements were identified through the consultation and design process.

1.

Delivering community sport is getting harder with more resources desperately needed. The Australian sport workforce needs to grow its capability, capacity and diversity to meet the changing expectations and demands of the community. Intertwined within the complex compliance landscape and a lack of organisational alignment, sporting organisations are also duplicating their efforts in supporting community sport and are hindered by rigid operational systems in their efforts to deliver safe and enjoyable sporting experiences.

2.

Many people lack confidence and skills when it comes to engaging in sport. The sport landscape is largely inflexible, and its traditional structures increasingly do not meet the expectations of today's society. This makes it challenging for people to find opportunities that cater to their needs and preferences as players, volunteers or employees.

3.

As community demographics and populations continue to change, the availability of open space, potential funding sources and optimal management practices will continue to be challenged. The problems are multifaceted and diversified across the country. Challenges around population growth and urbanisation, lack of coordinated planning and management principles, changes to participation preferences, cost to construct and manage facilities, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, and demand exceeding supply, are placing pressure on existing facilities and sporting infrastructure.

4.

The current sport ecosystem faces coordination challenges, leading to duplicated efforts and often confusion regarding roles and responsibilities. There is a need for more consistency in approaches and the adoption of transparent, evidence-based decision-making to improve efficiency and accountability.

5.

The current sport system is too rigid in its structures and embedded practices. Sport can be more accessible and culturally safe to provide opportunities that meet people's needs and preferences. Continued action is required to increase diversity and inclusion and to ensure fair outcomes for everyone involved in sport.

6.

Positive culture encourages people to be involved and gain the many individual and community benefits of sport. However, when not managed well, sport can become an unsafe, exclusive, intimidating and unhealthy environment. Poor culture can deprive individuals of the safety they need to engage with and bring their full selves to sport. It can also create exclusive, intimidating and unwelcoming environments that lead to decreasing rates of involvement. Consequently, individuals and communities miss out on the benefits that sport can provide.

140th of 146 countries

Australia ranked poorly with some of the least active teenagers in the world, in a study commissioned by the World Health Organisation.

“Sport participation needs to change to ensure it is reflective of Australia’s changing society. It is imperative that we do not leave anyone behind.”

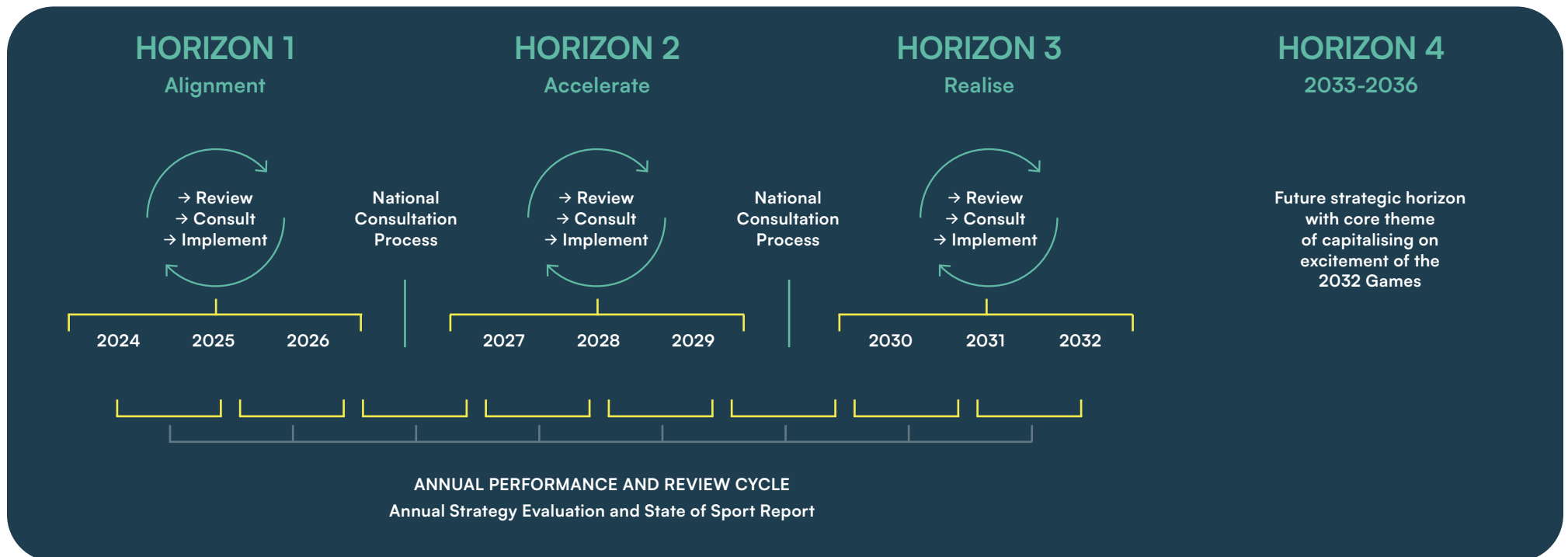
Michael Walker PLY,
Principal Advisor, Universal Design, Victorian Health and Human Services



STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

The strategy is structured into four phases. The first three phases are dedicated to working towards a unified system leading up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. These phases involve close collaboration with stakeholders and partners, with ongoing adjustments to the strategy to provide flexibility and responsiveness. The fourth phase leverages the momentum generated by the 2032 Games and builds on the achievements of the initial three phases to create a lasting impact on sports participation in Australia.

This document focuses on the key initiatives that have been developed for Horizon 1 (2024-2026) and has been termed Alignment. It speaks to an alignment of priorities, resources, effort and investment. It is acknowledged that many organisations will have existing strategies and initiatives in place and it is anticipated that these strategies become aligned by 2026.



DEFINITIONS





OUR DEFINITIONS

We know definitions are crucial for greater clarity and shared understanding. These definitions are also aligned with Australia’s High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy.

Term	Definition
Access	Ensuring all people — regardless of backgrounds, characteristics, dimensions and experience — have the opportunity to use or benefit from something.
Belonging	The feeling an individual has when they feel recognised, respected, valued and part of something bigger than themselves.
Diversity	All of the individual attributes and experiences that make us unique, including demographic diversity, cognitive diversity, background and lived experiences. Demographic diversity may or may not be visible and can include (but is not limited to) gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, ethnicity, caring or family responsibilities, religious beliefs, cultural background and socio-economic background.
Equity	A process or adjustment, such as tailored support or distribution of resources, that considers an individual or group’s unique needs to generate equal outcomes and provide fair access to opportunities.
Experience	When a person interacts with the sport system, regardless of their role in sport and the social, emotional, physical and mental impacts of that experience on them.
Inclusion	Proactive and intentional behaviours that create safe and welcoming environments where people can fully contribute and feel a sense of wellbeing, connection and belonging.
Inclusive design	Considers the full range of diversity including demographic, cognitive, background and lived experience in the design process to ensure all systems, environments programs and services are usable and empowering to as many people as possible. Inclusive design provides all people with an equitable opportunity to thrive.
Participant	Refers to an individual who is engaged in some way in a sporting activity or event, either competing, coaching, officiating, volunteering or supporting.
Open source	Refers to a process where content is made freely available and accessible to the public. This allows anyone to view, modify and distribute the content, fostering transparency, community-driven development, and the sharing of knowledge.
Resources	The total level of resources available to the participation system, including from government, corporate and philanthropic sources, to enable the implementation of the Play Well Strategy.
Universal design	The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or any other factors. Universal design can be applied to all fields of design, including product design, interactive design, architecture and urban planning.
Workforce	People engaged in or available for paid or unpaid work (volunteering) within the sport ecosystem.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPED





The Play Well Strategy has been co-designed by the sport sector for the sport sector. We acknowledge and thank the Project Steering Group (PSG) for their ideas, critical thinking and advice to support the development of the strategy.

Assmaah Helal

Chief Operating Officer
Creating Chances

Maia Tua-Davidson

National Manager, Welcoming
Clubs, Welcoming Australia

Phil Jones

CEO, Paddle Australia
(PSG member from Sept 2023)

Stuart Hodge

CEO, Sport NSW

Courtney Fewquandie

General Manager, First Nations
Football, Football Australia
Butchulla and Gubbi Gubbi

Matt Fulton

CEO, SportWest

Pierre Comis

CEO, Special Olympics
Australia

Sunil Menon

Head of Community
Melbourne City FC

Cathy Kiss AM

Manager, Community Recreation
and Aquatics Planning,
City of Melbourne

Meghan Mayman

Executive Officer
Regional Sport Victoria

Priya Khanna

Strategy Manager
Golf Australia

Professor Tracy Taylor

Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor
Research and Innovation
RMIT University

Jacara Egan

National Manager, First Nations
Wellbeing and Healing,
Headspace / AFLW coach
Muthi Muthi and Gunditjmarra

Michael Walker PLY

Principal Advisor Universal Design
Victorian Health and Human
Services Building Authority

Richard McInnes

Former CEO, Water Polo Australia
Executive General Manager, Sport
and Community Capability, ASC

Kieren Perkins OAM

CEO
ASC

Dr Phil Hamdorf

Chair, Disability Sports Australia
Chair, Skate Australia

Shaun McEachin

National Lead Sport Development
Squash Australia

OUR JOURNEY





OUR JOURNEY OF CO-DESIGN

Co-design was a central element in development of the Play Well Strategy. It has allowed us to address the unique challenges and opportunities in our sporting landscape and foster greater engagement and participation in sport across the nation.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Desktop review of global strategies and relevant literature



PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Oversight group from diverse range of backgrounds and expertise
Three face to face workshops and regular process meetings



PUBLIC SURVEY

Public survey with 6,600 responses providing valuable insights into the sporting landscape



NATIONAL ROADSHOWS

8 workshops held across Australia with almost 500 people attending



PRIORITY AREA WORKING GROUPS

40+ experts working to build priority areas of the strategy



CO DESIGN SESSION

Workshop with key industry stakeholders to finalise key elements of the strategy



REFINEMENT AND FINALISATION

Test key elements of the strategy with stakeholders across the country

THEMES AND INSIGHTS





CO-DESIGN THEMES AND INSIGHTS

Clear themes emerged from the consultation process.
People say they participate in sport for the following reasons:



HIGH

MODERATE

BUT they also face a variety of barriers and challenges ...



There are limitations to the sport ecosystem’s ability to respond to some of these challenges. A consistent and coordinated approach across the system is crucial to achieving the best possible outcomes.

This strategy presents an opportunity to drive collaboration and coordinated action.

1. Percentage of survey respondents reporting the barrier or challenge. National Sport Participation Strategy, Public Consultations Survey Results.







Our vision: Everyone has a place in sport.

Our mission: We will create safe, welcoming, inclusive and fun sporting experiences.

We will achieve this through six priority areas

1.	Empowering people and organisations	Building the capability of people and organisations to meet the needs of everyone involved in sport.
2.	Driving lifelong involvement	Foster a sporting environment that enables positive lifelong involvement in sport.
3.	Activating places and spaces	Creating, improving, activating and better managing places and spaces to ensure everyone can have safe and enjoyable sporting experiences.
4.	Building connections	Creating a connected and collaborative sport ecosystem that supports all organisations to provide quality sporting experiences.
5.	Equitable access	Prioritising equity and choice to ensure all Australians can access sport.
6.	Transforming culture	Transforming the culture of sport in Australia to create an environment where everyone can access safe, inclusive, welcoming and fun experiences.

These priority areas will be pursued across each of the key elements of the sport ecosystem

 <p>People The people that participate in, facilitate and deliver sporting experiences.</p>	 <p>Places The places where sporting experiences take place.</p>	 <p>Partners The organisations which do, or can, support the delivery of quality sporting experiences.</p>	 <p>Programs The activities that make up sporting experiences.</p>
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All enabled by

 <p>Diversity and inclusion Ensuring diversity and inclusion are central to the delivery of each activity.</p>	 <p>Technology and digital Embracing technology and a digital first philosophy.</p>	 <p>Yarning Listening to the community and taking a proactive approach to advocating for sport.</p>	 <p>Data and measurement Developing data and measurement approaches and practices.</p>
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Delivered through a deliberately collaborative approach to implementation, supported by annual planning and review.



HOW WILL THE STRATEGY BE USED?

Who is the strategy for?

The Play Well Strategy has been co-designed with the sector for organisations which enable people to participate in sport.

It is built on cooperation and transparency, with a clear goal of providing the road map for the delivery of great sporting experiences for everyone involved in sport.

The Play Well Strategy identifies key projects and activities that the Australian sporting community has told us are needed to deliver these experiences and ensure that everyone has a place in sport.

How will it be used?

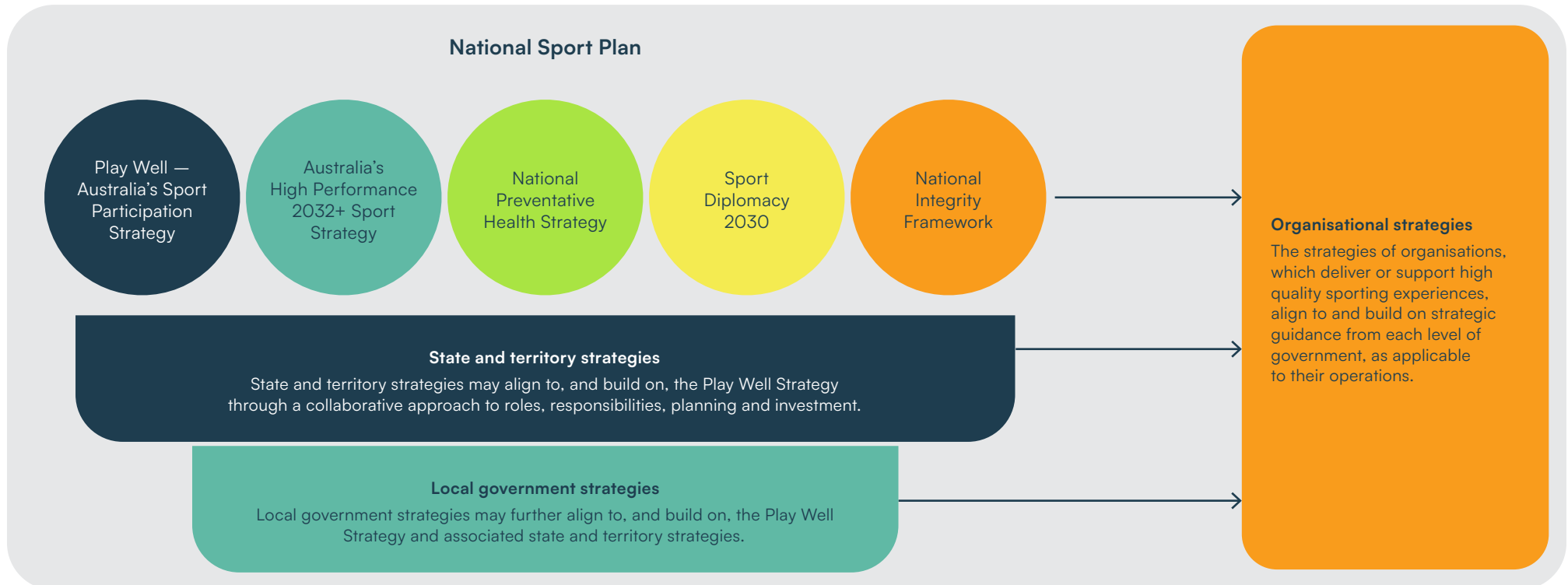
The Play Well Strategy provides a common language, shared priority areas and maps out the sporting ecosystem in Australia to create alignment in the approach to increase the number of Australians involved in sport.

The Play Well Strategy will be reviewed regularly. Key actions and priorities will be added each year to ensure we remain flexible and can adapt to the changing needs of the industry.

The Play Well Strategy will link to other strategies, including Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy as below:

“We need to ensure the strategy isn’t something that sits on a shelf gathering dust. We want it to be adopted and applied by the sector with a clear approach to measure our progress.”

Priya Khanna,
Strategy Manager
Golf Australia



SUSTAINABILITY





OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is relevant across all components of the sport ecosystem.

It is important for:

- The PEOPLE that participate in, facilitate, and deliver sporting experiences, ensuring that they are supported by a sustainable ecosystem so that they have lifelong involvement in sport.
- The PLACES where these experiences take place, ensuring that they are resilient to growing financial pressures and the changing climate, and that environmental impact is minimised with existing spaces used where possible.
- The PARTNERS which do or can support the delivery of quality sporting experiences, and for the sector to align with and support organisations who are committed to sustainability.
- The PROGRAMS that make up sporting experiences, ensuring programs have the financial sustainability to continue to be delivered, are environmentally sustainable in their delivery and can evolve to suit the needs and wants of participants.

Sustainability is embedded throughout the Play Well Strategy with a particular focus on delivery which will be undertaken through a recurring planning and implementation process.

Examples of how sustainability will be addressed in Horizon 1 include:



Environmental sustainability examples

Activating places and spaces

- A National Sport Infrastructure Plan, led by a National Sport Infrastructure Network that will embed consistent facility standards across the sector.
- Unlocking alternative and non-traditional active spaces for community use.

Empowering people and organisations

- Developing environmental sustainability plans for the sport sector.



Financial sustainability examples

Empowering people and organisations

- Exploring innovative operating models across sport to improve performance and enhance efficiency.
- Developing financial sustainability plans for the sport sector.

Driving lifelong involvement

- Supporting people to engage with and contribute to sport beyond active participation.

“In the context of the Play Well Strategy, sustainability has numerous meanings.

We must facilitate the sustainability of the support provided by millions of people who are the heart and soul of Australian sport. We must optimise our sport delivery methods to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisations which deliver sport, and finally, we must understand and value the impact the sporting community has and can have on environmental sustainability and broader social impact issues.”

Richard McInnes

Executive General Manager
Community and Sport Capability
ASC

ENABLERS





OUR ENABLERS

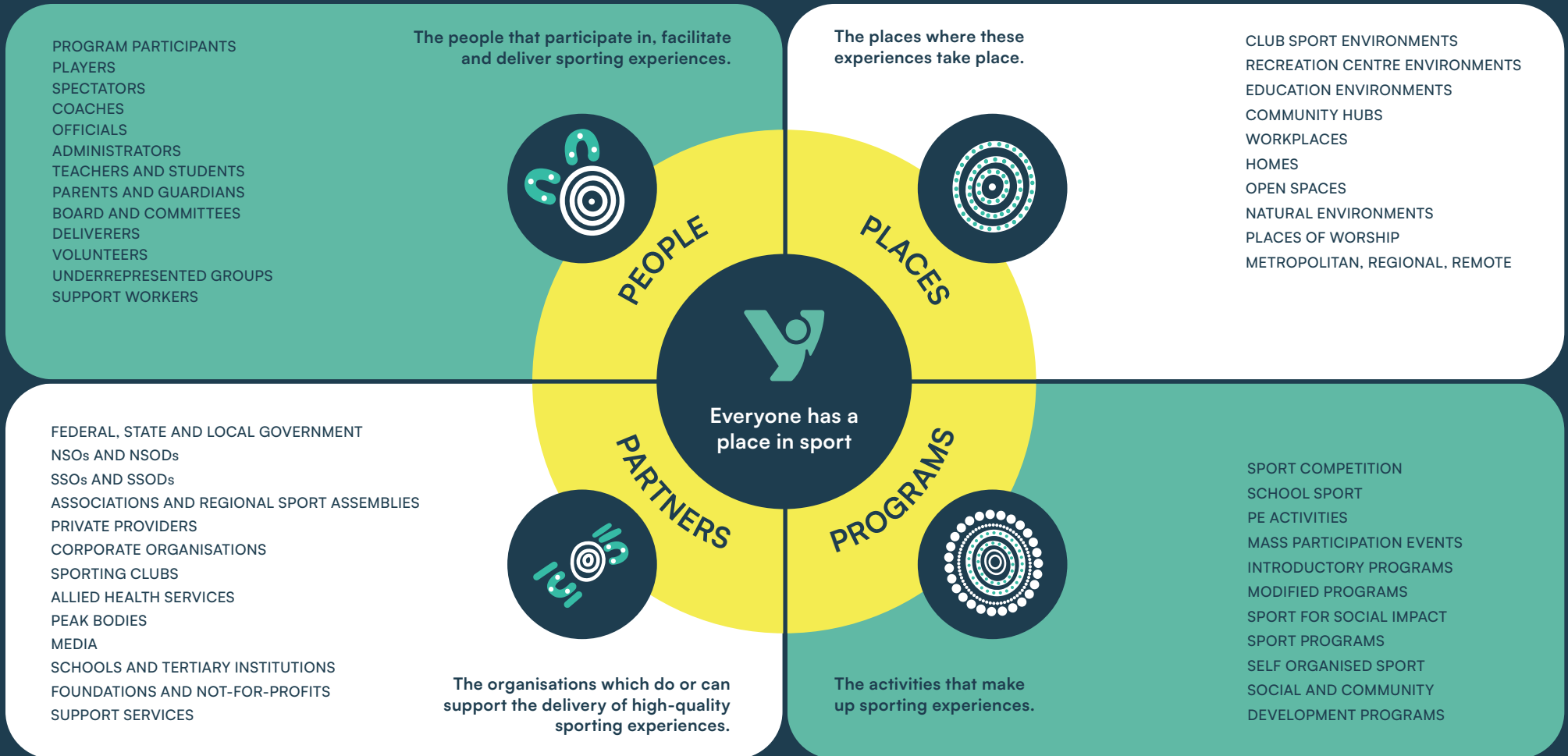
Activities and initiatives related to the priority areas will be supported by:

Term	Definition
Diversity and inclusion 	Considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• diverse perspectives — embracing diversity including age, gender, ability, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation or where people live to ensure a wide range of perspectives and ideas are considered• inclusivity — creating an environment where all voices are heard and valued and people feel safe, respected and included• equity — ensuring equitable opportunities for participation.
Technology and digital 	Ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accessibility — using digital platforms and tools to support sport to be accessible to everyone• convenience — participants can use digital platforms to participate in sport at times that suit them• efficiency — adopting technology to be more efficient and cost effective• data collection — using technology to securely collect and analyse data.
Yarning 	Championing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support and promotion — highlighting participation opportunities to encourage more people to get involved• stakeholder engagement — building and leveraging relationships with advocates to help drive involvement in sport• policy influence — influence policies that support and promote participation.
Data and measurement 	Facilitating: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assessment — regularly collecting data allows for the assessment of the effectiveness of participation efforts• data capture and feedback — uniform data capture and continued use of data to inform decisions, assess implementation and judge effectiveness of outcomes• accountability — publicly sharing data related to participation can enhance transparency and accountability in the process.



SPORT ECOSYSTEM

The Play Well Strategy has been developed with a participant's experience at its core, surrounded by the People, Places, Partners and Programs in which sporting experiences are delivered.





PLAY WELL STRATEGY





OUR IMPACT INDICATORS

Our approach

The Play Well Strategy promises to change the way we experience, deliver and lead the sector, to ensure that everyone has a place in sport.

We know change cannot occur in isolation and is not the responsibility of one organisation. Therefore, if we are to understand and measure the changes that occur within a complex sport ecosystem, our evaluation approach must be different too.

Our journey to systemic long-term change must be recognised as a chain where strategic goals and stakeholders are connected and aligned.

While traditional methods of measuring success, by raw numbers, provides an indicator of national trends, they do not give us the full story. We will ensure numbers are brought to life through stories and that the environments that created change are highlighted. This way we can get a collective understanding of the impact realised across our people, programs, partners and places.

These impact indicators will be supported by a set of quantitative measures for each priority area. Priority area measures will be established in the first horizon of the strategy and developed in collaboration with the sport ecosystem.

What does success look like?

The successful implementation of the strategy will not only be captured purely by metrics. To determine whether we are effective in achieving individual, sector and societal outcomes, we will need to capture both quantitative and qualitative measures across the industry.

Here we describe these as:

- **sector outcomes** — the physical environment, cultural norms and organisational level influences that impact people's behaviour such as organisational practice.
- **individual outcomes** — the knowledge, skills and competence, changes at an individual level, or within an individual's environment, that influence choices like valuing volunteers, understanding the benefits of sport and participation behaviour.
- **societal outcomes** — the population level changes in areas such as culture, systems and behaviours that are profound and have a long-lasting effect on society.

Measuring success

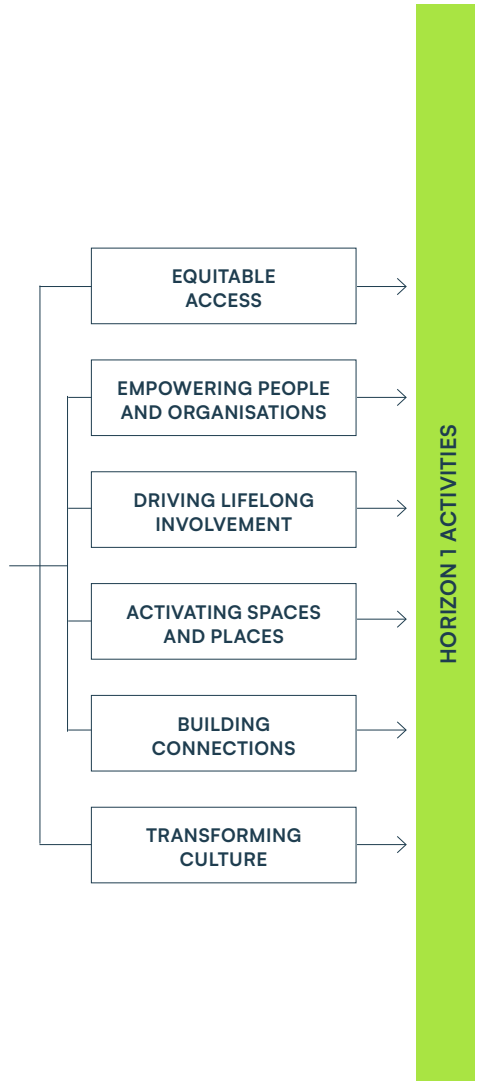
We recognise that baselines and targets are not always available to track and measure progress.

Work is required to establish industry wide metrics and enhance data governance practices surrounding the methods of collection and use of data. The need to increase capability in data literacy, while establishing trust in the quality and integrity of our data is key. Development of a participation data charter and data collection process is proposed as a Horizon 1 activity to foster uniform data capture across states and territories.

An implementation plan will be developed for each horizon, with deliverables clearly articulated under each priority area, matched with appropriate measures of success. Reporting will be conducted each financial year, promoting accountability for the strategy outcomes. This will be supported by an online, transparent document showing progress.



OUR IMPACT INDICATORS



SECTOR OUTCOMES

- Clear roles and responsibilities of the sport participation system across government and sport.
- A connected sector that promotes open-source knowledge sharing and evidenced based decision making.
- Growth of sustainable organisations reflected in governance stability and a sustainable sport workforce.
- Outcome focused investment and reduced duplication of resources and effort.
- Person-centred opportunities to enable involvement in sport.

INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

- More people starting and staying involved in sport across the ecosystem.
- People of all ages and all backgrounds being involved in sport in a way that suits them.
- Improved feelings of enjoyment, safety and connection from sport participation.
- Benefits to physical health and mental wellbeing are realised.

SOCIETAL OUTCOMES

- Sport reflects the diversity of Australian society now, and into the future.
- A healthier, cohesive and prosperous Australian community.
- Safe, inclusive, accessible, adaptable sport for all.
- Improved community understanding of the role and value of sport participation.
- Growth and facilitation of sport participation tailored to participants' needs — playing differently in an unrestrained way.

PLAY WELL PRIORITY AREAS





Activities in Horizon 1 focus on achieving alignment within the sport system.

This includes:

1. establishing a shared language and narrative for participation

2. agreeing on a single strategic framework

3. delivering on shared priority areas

4. enhancing collaboration and aligning resources, effort and investment.

During this phase, we will also recognise existing initiatives and consider how we can align these to create nationwide impact.



“Sport is more than wins and losses. It creates opportunities to connect, gather and support one another.

Everyone involved in delivering sport helps determine if participants have a positive experience and return.

We need to support the people who make sport possible as it will give us the best chance of achieving our vision — that everyone has a place in sport. This will help drive participation on and off the field.”

Meghan Mayman
Executive Officer, Regional Sport Victoria

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Activities and initiatives related to the priority areas will be supported by the following.

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Building the capability of people and organisations to meet the needs of everyone involved in sport.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is to facilitate the growth of people and organisations to create a safe and inclusive sport ecosystem that meets current needs and is able to adapt to future requirements. The sport sector will be characterised by sustainable organisations, individuals who understand participant needs and create environments where everyone is safe and feels valued.
Narrative	To deliver on our participation ambitions, we need to empower our workforce (paid and unpaid) and sporting organisations. We need a capable workforce that fosters inclusivity, embraces diversity and helps bring out the best in people in safe and positive environments. This environment will encourage personal growth and development, supported by leaders who understand the need for sport to keep pace with societal changes. Secondly, we require sporting organisations with the capability to deliver safe and welcoming environments while balancing financial and environmental sustainability.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a capable workforce by developing people, resources and leveraging technology. • Strengthen the operational effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of sporting organisations. • Foster an Australian sport workforce that is reflective of our community. • Cultivate an attractive, supportive and safe environment that encourages growth, collaboration and rewarding experiences for everyone working in sport.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
Develop a workforce that can support sport to thrive.	Develop a future-focused workforce strategy to equip individuals, both paid and unpaid, with the necessary skills and capabilities to thrive in the sports industry today and into the future.
Continue to focus on the delivery of the National Volunteering Coalition Action Plan.	Use the foundations developed by the Sport Volunteer Coalition and leverage the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan to celebrate, empower, reimagine and innovate sport volunteering.
Embed the modernised approach to coaching and officiating across sport with a focus on enjoyment and learning.	Embed the modern approach to coaching and officiating, which has been co-designed with the sport sector, to support the development of coaches and officials to provide safe, fun and inclusive environments that focus on the needs and motivations of participants.
Enhance efficiency in sport through compliance process streamlining.	Alleviate the compliance burden on community sport administrators by exploring measures to significantly reduce or eliminate non-critical, time-consuming and often repetitive compliance-related activities. This will assist sporting organisations in creating more efficiency in operational systems and free up resources to deliver quality sporting experiences.
Develop an organisational capacity and capability assessment framework and tool.	Adopt an existing or develop a new sport organisational capability framework and tool to provide a roadmap for sustainable growth, increased capacity, effective delivery models and promoting excellence. This will enable organisations to assess their capabilities, identify gaps and areas for development and access tailored resources, training and education to drive improvement.
Develop financial and environmental sustainability plans for the sport sector.	Strengthen sporting organisations for long-term viability through a focus on both financial and environmental sustainability. Initially focused on developing an understanding of the current 'state of play' across sport, a program of work will be developed to support sporting organisations take meaningful steps to create positive change.
Support sporting organisations through enhanced provision of resources and education.	Empower sporting organisations by providing quality training and development resources. This centralised hub will build on existing initiatives to provide a 'one stop shop' for all the information needed to operate an organisation, supported by easy-to-use toolkits, case studies and training and education resources.
Explore innovative operating models.	Investigate innovative operating to reduce duplication and improve performance and efficiency in sporting organisations.



“The Play Well Strategy will provide a connected and physically active Australia — one that provides equal opportunities for everybody regardless of age, gender or ability to participate in sport and feel that sense of community and belonging.”

Shaun McEachin

National Lead Sport Development, Squash Australia

DRIVING LIFELONG INVOLVEMENT

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Foster a sporting environment that enables positive lifelong involvement in sport.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is to create an ecosystem which provides multiple entry and re-entry points into sport, facilitates seamless transitions between roles and sports and allows everyone to access the benefits of sport.
Narrative	Create an environment that attracts new people, re-engages those previously involved and retains existing participants in sport, regardless of their role or level of involvement. We strive to integrate sport into everyone’s life through greater variety and flexibility of opportunities for involvement, enhancing wellbeing and building vibrant communities where people feel they belong.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support people to have the skills and confidence to engage in a variety of sporting activities and roles.• Create contemporary sport delivery models to provide a greater variety of opportunities for involvement.• Increase the number of people involved in all roles in sport, with an increased focus on retention, re-engagement and the provision of safe and enjoyable experiences.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
<p>Evolve the structure of sport to align with a contemporary Australia.</p>	<p>Review the structure of sport with an emphasis on the development of skills and confidence in the early years. Increase opportunities for children to find the sport and community they like, delay single sport specialisation and ensure flexible formats across all ages, abilities and backgrounds.</p>
<p>Support people to navigate roles and engagement beyond active participation.</p>	<p>Develop an approach to facilitate lifelong involvement in sport by addressing the transition from participant/player to other roles.</p>
<p>Build complementary, diverse and fit for purpose models of sport delivery.</p>	<p>Identify and implement new participation offerings that are safe, fit for purpose and complement existing opportunities. This activity should research, test, and showcase effective models of sport delivery that cater to diverse needs and address existing challenges, including increasing inclusion, volunteerism and participation rates.</p>
<p>Embed a culture of sport in and around schools.</p>	<p>Leverage existing programs such as Sporting Schools to establish a strong foundation for cultivating a 'culture of sport' within and around school communities. This approach will elevate the significance of sport and its value to the broader school community.</p>
<p>Enhance development of physical literacy through early exposure to physical activity.</p>	<p>Enhancing early exposure to physical activity (as a precursor to sport) through the development of partnerships, aligned promotion and connection to physical literacy and health outcomes.</p>
<p>Leverage digital systems to support the delivery of participation experiences.</p>	<p>Explore leveraging existing digital systems to enhance the flexibility and delivery of participation activities in settings like homes, schools, clubs and other environments.</p>
<p>Capture the hearts and minds of Australians and connect them to sport through sporting events.</p>	<p>Develop an approach to harness the potential of sporting events and mass participation events by working with event partners, volunteers, athletes and other key stakeholders, to effectively translate the inspiration generated into a broader engagement with community sport.</p>



“Our places and spaces need to be welcoming, multi-purpose, sustainable and meet the principles of universal design. A diverse range of places and spaces that support participation is vital for our sport ecosystem and good management will ensure high levels of use and fair access.

With demand exceeding supply in many urban areas, and different challenges facing regional and rural areas, all levels of government and sport need to acknowledge there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach. We must work together to provide great spaces to participate.”

Cathy Kiss AM

Manager Community Recreation and Aquatics
Planning, City of Melbourne

ACTIVATING PLACES AND SPACES

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Creating, improving, activating and better managing places and spaces to ensure everyone can have safe and enjoyable sporting experiences.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is the provision of safe, welcoming, engaging, sustainable and inclusive places and spaces that empower community connectedness and facilitates the growth of sport participation.
Narrative	We will be a world leader in fostering inclusive, community driven sport environments so sport is accessible to every Australian. To achieve this, we will consider what places and spaces we provide, where we provide them, and how they are delivered and managed through inclusive partnerships.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide equitable access to and usage of community places and spaces ensuring they are available and welcoming for all people to engage in sport.• Unlock the multi-use potential of existing assets and maximise their versatility and sustainability through innovative partnerships and collaboration.• Establish processes to achieving optimum management practices including strategic planning, community engagement, policy change implementation and more equitable resource allocation.• Foster inclusive sport partnerships that address the demand for sport opportunities in local communities.• Implement aligned, coordinated and cooperative strategies for the design, upgrade, repurpose and construction of active places and spaces which are sustainable and resilient.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
<p>Establish a National Sport Infrastructure Network.</p>	<p>Establish a National Sport Infrastructure Network with representatives from all states and territories, all levels of government, relevant industry experts, not-for-profits and community groups. This group will guide an aligned and coordinated approach to sport infrastructure planning, design, investment and management.</p>
<p>Develop a National Sport Infrastructure Action Plan.</p>	<p>Led by the National Sport Infrastructure Network, and supported by the industry, develop a National Sport Infrastructure Action Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of a strategic approach for the creation of versatile, accessible and sustainable sports hubs • consistent facility standards and design principles across the sector that leverage universal design principles. • collaborative management practices that promote cooperation between sports and facility users • innovative funding solutions and levers of influence to support facility development, management and sustainability.
<p>Support localised engagement and accessibility.</p>	<p>Work with all levels of government to identify under-utilised facilities that could be repurposed for community sport use. Support sports to use these spaces flexibly, to deliver modified sport programs that cater to the needs and wants of participants.</p>
<p>Enable nationwide accessibility of facilities information.</p>	<p>Establish a nationally consistent information system that provides accessible and up-to-date data on the availability of local infrastructure for formal and informal sport.</p>
<p>Unlock alternative 'active' spaces through partnerships.</p>	<p>Through new partnerships, unlock new, alternative and non-traditional spaces such as school and education sector facilities for community use.</p>



“There is a clear consensus on barriers and constraints and a real energy for challenging and advancing the existing systems and models that no longer fit. Adapting the offer of sport for changing community needs will only bring more participants ‘in’.

If we get this right for all stakeholders, if we work towards the same goals, it’s a real opportunity to frame the future of sports participation in Australia as a place where everyone can belong, contribute and thrive.”

Maia Tua-Davidson
National Manager, Welcoming Clubs
Welcoming Australia

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Creating a connected and collaborative sport ecosystem that supports all organisations to provide high quality sporting experiences.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is to unite and align stakeholders, foster partnerships and embrace evidence-based decision making, to create a sport ecosystem that provides high quality sporting experiences for all.
Narrative	Achieving success requires a coordinated effort and alignment from stakeholders across the sport sector. Recognising the importance of integrity, connection, collaboration and evidence-based decision making, we will foster a cohesive sport ecosystem.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build the value proposition of sport through better understanding of its impacts.• Promote consistency of action by aligning participation strategies and investments with the priority areas.• Foster collaboration between a broad range of organisations to maximise efficiency and collective impact.• Establish clear roles and responsibilities across the sector by enabling coordination and cooperation.• Develop nationally endorsed participation measures for the sector with streamlined data connection and presentation.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
Connect the sport ecosystem through alignment with the Play Well Strategy.	Create alignment between all levels of the sport ecosystem to ensure a single and unified strategic approach between government strategies, sport strategies (for example, NSO/Ds, SSO/Ds, clubs) and organisations providing or supporting sporting experiences. A systematic annual planning and review cycle will be introduced, driving collaboration between government and organisations delivering sport.
Clarify roles and responsibilities.	Define roles and responsibilities between all levels of the ecosystem, underpinned by principles of collective impact and shared recognition, to drive collaboration and reduce duplication.
Develop a national/state investment framework.	Create a consistent approach that informs investment in participation, from government, corporate and other sources. The approach should consider who, what, when, where, why and how we invest to deliver participation outcomes.
Develop a participation data charter and data collection process.	Promote data-driven decision making for smarter investment and priority setting by establishing a consistent and coordinated approach to enhance data capture and sharing.
Build connections to local government.	Develop initiatives to enhance connections with local governments, with an emphasis on strengthening ties with staff responsible for facilitating participation outcomes within local organisations.
Develop a participation research agenda.	Consolidate participation research and develop forward plans using the National Sport Research Agenda to remove duplication and support evidence-based decision making.
Ensure the impact of sport is understood and valued by Australians.	The wide-ranging impacts of sport on individuals and communities are articulated and understood, contributing to the value proposition of sport. Decision-makers are aware of the power of sport to unite communities and improve our wellbeing and prosperity.



“We want everyone to feel comfortable and reflected in sport, to be able to consume it at their own pace and time.

We know there are many changing factors involved in participation, and I hope that we can look back in years to come and say that we made the most of this great opportunity to advance the participation of sport in Australia.”

Sunil Menon
Head of Community, Melbourne City FC

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Prioritising equity and choice to ensure all Australians can access sport.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is to create sporting communities where everyone feels welcomed and embraced. To achieve this, we will create a sporting culture that is inclusive, accessible, adaptable, safe and fun for all, and an environment where the individual has choice and control over how they engage in sport.
Narrative	We will ensure everyone who wishes to, has equitable access to sport. This provides invaluable benefits to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. By prioritising involvement for those with the most barriers, we ultimately benefit everyone.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise access for those with the most barriers to sport.• Improve retention of people in sport through flexible offerings and safe environments that embrace diversity and inclusion.• Strengthen partnerships with diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) experts, not-for-profits, community groups and those who experience the most barriers to sport participation, to guide the sector’s work in providing equitable access.• Provide immersive experiences, resources and education on equity, inclusion and cultural safety, to provide greater access to sport.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
Drive equity in sport.	Advance equity in sport through the National Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy for Sport, targeted initiatives, policy reforms, national resources and awareness campaigns that promote an inclusive and level playing field for all participants.
Investigate solutions to decrease the cost of sport.	Analyse the costs associated with sports participation and develop innovative solutions and policy recommendations that address affordability and accessibility to a diverse range of communities.
Make sport information accessible to all through a centralised resource hub.	Create a centralised resource hub that includes demographic search functionality, editable resources in multiple languages, free imagery and information on how to engage different cultures in sport.
Use evidence-based research and insights.	Develop a clear, consistent narrative across sport, about the benefits to the sector of sport being accessible to all.
Consciously prioritise equity and inclusive design.	Facilitate and formalise relationships between national and state sporting bodies, DE&I experts, community organisations and not-for-profits to guide equitable access and inclusive design of environments, and the products or services in those environments.



“All Australians should have the opportunity to participate in sport for fun, health, social connection, and community belonging.

This strategy gives Australians a voice in shaping sport in ways that bring positive impacts into the lives of the many diverse communities across our country. Investing in our sport system and organisations will not only build current capacity and capabilities, but will set us up to future proof sport for future generations.”

Tracy Taylor
Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor,
Research and Innovation, RMIT University

TRANSFORMING CULTURE

Term	Definition
Priority area overview	Changing the culture of sport in Australia to create an environment where everyone can access safe, inclusive, welcoming and fun experiences.
Ambition statement	Our ambition is to create an environment where every individual feels welcome, valued and inspired to become actively involved in sport, leading to healthier and connected communities. Taking a person-centred approach will ensure sport reflects contemporary Australia and is a place where we all belong.
Narrative	To play well, we need to play differently. The culture of sport is a critical driver of quality sport experiences. By establishing safe, empowering and vibrant sporting cultures, underpinned by integrity and safeguarding, we encourage enthusiastic engagement and promote wellbeing.
Priority area objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the role culture plays in building the foundation of quality sport experiences.• Promote a culture of safety and integrity to cultivate an environment of respect and belonging.• Develop a common understanding and approach to embed a positive culture and address negative culture in community sport.• Raise awareness, influence policy and inspire cultural change across all elements of the sport ecosystem through mission alignment, strategic partnerships and educational programs.

Horizon 1 - Activities	Description
<p>Deepen our understanding of the importance and impact of positive culture on sport.</p>	<p>Drawing on existing research, where possible, investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the values and behaviours of positive culture • the barriers to culture change and fostering a positive sport culture • the social, health and economic impacts of positive culture. <p>Create opportunities for continuous improvement and evolution of programs as new information becomes available.</p>
<p>Define the culture of community sport.</p>	<p>Build a collective understanding of the purpose, values and behaviours integral to community sport. Use this collective understanding to design and implement a framework and process, which addresses inappropriate behaviour and instils behavioural change, to provide high quality and fun sporting experiences.</p>
<p>Create a culture change program.</p>	<p>Create a national, aligned 'Play Well' positive culture program that promotes integrity and rewards an environment of fun, safety and belonging in sport.</p>

COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION





A COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The Play Well Strategy Leadership Group and priority area working groups will facilitate a deliberately collaborative approach to bring the strategy to life.

Leadership group

Collaboration, refinement and improvement are crucial in ensuring successful execution of the strategy. A Play Well Strategy Leadership Group will be established to provide leadership and oversight of the strategy's delivery.

In consultation with stakeholders from across the sport ecosystem, the leadership group will:

- set the strategic direction and implementation priorities
- encourage alignment of goals with the strategy
- provide oversight of strategic initiative planning and development
- monitor strategy progress and evaluation outcomes
- make data-driven decisions to enhance strategy execution effectiveness
- foster engagement and participation of the sport ecosystem.

Priority area working groups

Priority area working groups will also be formed to advise on and support delivery of the priority activities.

The working groups will:

- provide technical expertise and advice on planning for and design of priority initiatives.
- seek out and represent diverse perspectives to ensure initiatives meet everyone's needs
- support coordination and alignment across the sport ecosystem to deliver priority initiatives.



PLAN
MONITOR
REVIEW



PLANNING, MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Annual Implementation Plan

Aligned to the Play Well Strategy, an Annual Implementation Plan serves as the blueprint that translates the strategy into actionable steps. It provides a roadmap for executing the strategy's priority initiatives, by setting clear objectives, timelines, and performance metrics.

The plan:

- is clear and drives accountable for delivery
- helps adapt the strategy to changing circumstances
- encourages alignment among stakeholders to ensure everyone is working together
- is a vital tool to help us allocate resources to maximise impact.

Annual Strategy Evaluation and State of Sport Report

Published each July, the Annual Strategy Evaluation and State of Sport Report are critical components of the annual planning, monitoring and review process.

- **Annual Strategy Evaluation** — to gauge activity effectiveness, identify strengths, pinpoint areas needing improvement and track progress.
- **State of Sport Report** — a comprehensive overview of the sport landscape, incorporating valuable insights, trends and benchmarks.

These activities will help us understand the strategy's impact and role within the sport ecosystem. This will:

- promote transparency and accountability of strategy outcomes
- empower informed decision-making across the sport ecosystem
- support refinement of the strategy in response to emerging challenges and the evolving sports landscape.



Annual Performance and Review Cycle

Each strategy cycle will start with an Annual Implementation Plan. The priority area working groups will co-design the plan in consultation with the sport ecosystem, with guidance from the Play Well Strategy Leadership Group.

Throughout the cycle, the leadership group will provide ongoing oversight to support the effective coordination and delivery of priority initiatives.

At the end of the cycle, a holistic evaluation process will be undertaken to adapt and refine strategy planning in preparation for the next stage.

Every three cycles, a new strategy horizon will commence. In preparation for each horizon, a national consultation process will be conducted to support co-design of a refreshed strategic direction and new priority initiatives.





THIS STRATEGY MATTERS

“Success will be achieved via a clear strategy that unites the sector and enables more Australians to understand the physical, social, and emotional benefits that participation in sport provides.

Sport, in my opinion, is the greatest vehicle to achieve these goals — improving population level physical literacy and delivering social impact. As a sector, we need to be united behind a strategy that grows the opportunity for all Australians to experience sport in its many formats and realise its undisputed benefits.”

Pierre Comis
CEO, Special Olympics Australia

“I believe the Play Well Strategy has the potential to become a significant ‘sector influencer.’

This strategy acknowledges the need for transformation within the sport sector to thrive and maintain relevance in the future. As communities evolve in how they engage with and participate in sport, the sector must adapt accordingly. The strategy aims to reshape the concept of sport to accommodate and promote the wellbeing of all individuals.”

Dr Phil Hamdorf
Chair, Disability Sports Australia
Chair, Skate Australia

“The strategy will be an important tool to support the sports ecosystem to take a collaborative approach in designing and delivering activities that are fun, safe and inclusive.

I’m excited to see how this strategy can support members of the community, including young people, and shape how sport can benefit them in the spaces they engage with. The more people who feel like they belong in the community and are provided with meaningful experiences, the more likely they will commit and contribute and eventually inspire others to do the same in and through sport.

Sport can be a driving force, when organised in a meaningful people centred way, to ultimately drive positive social change.”

Assmaah Helal
Chief Operating Officer, Creating Chances

“Australia’s Sport Participation Strategy presents an incredible opportunity for the sector to align and focus on what is needed into the future for Australians to Play Well.

Community sport plays a massive role in building communities. An aligned, national plan will lead to better connections between those involved in sport and result in greater recognition, investment and support for the sector.”

Stuart Hodge
CEO, Sport NSW

“I am enthused by the development of a nationally aligned, industry shaped strategy that will no doubt set the scene for Australia to capitalise on the green and gold decade ahead, with a strong, vibrant and sustainable sport and recreation system.”

Matt Fulton
CEO, SportWest



PLAYWELL
Everyone has a place in sport

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