



**Australian Sports
Commission**

**Strategic Plan
1998 - 2001**

CONTENTS

-
- [Introduction](#)
 - [Backdrop](#)
 - [The Social and Economic Environment](#)
 - [The Challenges](#)
 - [Our Mission](#)
 - [Vision](#)
 - [Values](#)
 - [Strategic Directions for the Commission](#)
 - [Objectives](#)
 - [Performance Indicators](#)
 - [Strategies](#)
-

Introduction

This Strategic Plan covers the period 1998 - 2001. It sets the broad framework within which the Commission will pursue its primary objectives and it identifies the strategies for achieving these objectives. It describes the context and environment against which these strategies have been formed.

The Plan builds upon earlier plans developed in line with the Commission's mission *to enrich the lives of all Australians through sport*. Key functions of the Plan include:

- signalling the plans and directions of the Commission to its stakeholders;
- identifying areas in need of particular attention to ensure continued success;
- guiding internal management and operational planning activities including:
 - priority setting,
 - resource allocation,
 - performance monitoring processes, and an accountability framework; and

- setting key goals against which the Commission will report to the Parliament and its stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan is a public statement of the Commission's shared vision, values and directions. It has been developed from:

- the ideas, suggestions and experience of our staff;
- regular consultations with external stakeholders; and
- the outcomes of workshops conducted by the Confederation of Australian Sport which identified key issues Confederation members considered to be affecting the development of sport in Australia.

Backdrop

The Commission will participate in some of the greatest sporting challenges in its history during the course of this Plan. It will assist in the preparation of Australian athletes for the 2000 Olympics and guide Australian sport into the post-2000 environment.

Fortunately, the Commission enters this planning phase on a sound footing with current programs and services delivering solid results. Of the 127 individual medals won by Australians at the Atlanta Olympics, 76 per cent were won by Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) or ex-AIS scholarship athletes. Our results in the Paralympics and in non-Olympic sports have been equally encouraging. These successes have been achieved in cooperation with national sporting organisations, the Australian Olympic Committee, the Commonwealth Games Association, the Australian Paralympic Federation, state and territory departments of sport and recreation and their respective institutes and academies.

The Commonwealth Government has committed significant financial resources to the 2000 Olympic Games for infrastructure development and organisation and, through the Commission, for athlete preparation. The Commission obviously has a strong interest in ensuring Australian athletes perform to their full potential at the 2000 Olympics. This does not mean that non-Olympic sports will be ignored - the Commission will ensure its wide range of program support is maintained.

We are confident we have in place the appropriate framework for elite sports, including program delivery and partnership development. The AIS has now reached a stage of maturity and sophistication that it is without peer as an internationally regarded elite training centre. However, there is no room for complacency. A continuous process of review and adjustment must be maintained to maximise results.

Through our partnerships with national sporting organisations, the states and industry bodies, we have assisted in the development of a highly successful network of community sport through innovative programs effectively delivered within a national framework. This has resulted in a very high number of active participants, a solid community base and an increasingly better educated workforce in the sports industry.

A major strength of Australian sport is the nationally integrated system developed in recent years and the competency of the delivery agencies, both public and private. This is reflected at all levels of sport from physical education in schools through to management of large national sporting organisations.

While there is no uniform standard of competency across Australian sport, we have an effective national system compared to most nations. This is one of the key reasons a relatively small country with limited resources achieves at the highest level of international competition while building strong community sports participation. This is not to say there is no room for improvement. There clearly is and the Commission sees the continuing development and refinement of this national sporting infrastructure as one of its highest priorities.

Sport has a unique place in Australia's national identity and social infrastructure. It is a major preoccupation for much of the Australian community, yet there is no element of compulsion involved. Sports are played and watched because people want to play and watch them. Sport plays a positive and

important role in the social development of the nation. Sporting champions provide role models and heroes that help unite Australians and raise the national consciousness. Studies clearly demonstrate that sporting success increases national pride and makes people feel better about themselves.

Sport also contributes major economic benefits to the nation. Some of these benefits include:

- the provision of paid employment opportunities for more than 115,000 people in full-time sports-related jobs;
- \$9.3 billion in sales of goods and services; and
- a 2.2 per cent contribution to Gross Domestic Product.

It is reported that if an extra 10 per cent of the Australian population undertook regular, moderate and effective exercise an estimated \$500 million could be saved from the health budget each year. The Commonwealth government invests nearly \$95 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.

The establishment of the AIS and subsequently the Australian Sports Commission by the Commonwealth Government has been crucial to the existence and development of a national sports agenda. Future developments in Australian sport could see the business of the Commission change significantly during the next two or three years. The Commission will play a more strategic role, concentrating on core business while examining its program delivery through critical partnerships and linkages with private and public sector organisations.

The Social and Economic Environment

The ASC Strategic Plan is under constant review to ensure its objectives and strategies continue to fulfil the Commission's mission. To develop our strategic approach we have assessed the environment in which sport will operate as we enter the next century.

Society in the western world is changing from one of strong government regulation, a high level of intervention and hierarchy in social organisations and an acceptance of the community as a whole, 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 and is witnessing significant change to its society. Faced with difficult economic times and demographic change (people living longer and having fewer children) it is likely the provision of meaningful and healthy leisure activities will take on greater significance.

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.;
- environmental sport; and
- less aerobic sport (as the population ages).

New and modified sports are emerging and spectator sports changing to meet television requirements.

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. Increased competition for players not only

between organised sports but also between organised and non-organised sport may lead to a reduction in the elite talent pool.

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.

Technology and economic change are making markets more global. The commercialisation and globalisation of sport has seen a number of sports experience considerable change through the evolution of national and international leagues. The resulting tension between traditional sporting bodies and new entrepreneurial sports agents are forcing a process of adaptation to new social and economic circumstances. Many sporting organisations are now at a cross roads where they must determine how to progress without ceding control to commercial third parties.

On the government front, it is obvious that all levels of government will be operating under tight fiscal constraints and with a philosophy of competition, choice and self-help. It is essential for organised sport to demonstrate its capacity and will to sustain itself in this setting and to work with government while reducing its dependency on it.

We have suggested major changes to the way Australia's sports system (and in particular national sporting organisations) may operate in the future. At present national sporting organisations are seen by the Commission, and themselves, as the central axis for the development of sport and the delivery of services. There is every possibility that this may change as other systems for delivering sport evolve.

The Challenges

Enhancing the Management Capabilities of Sports Delivery Agencies

The Australian sports delivery model is very successful and is internationally regarded; but we must not be complacent. Other nations will challenge us as they increase funding, learn from the Australian experience and become more innovative. We must continue to improve beyond 2000, not remain where we are.

The major challenge for the Commission is to use the period between now and 2001, to introduce innovative policies and programs to raise sport's operating base and stay ahead of the opposition. The Commission must provide leadership, direction and coordination.

In partnership with sports delivery agencies, structural reform of sports management will be addressed to ensure sport continues to progress in the post-Olympic environment. Improved education for all levels from national sporting organisations to club volunteers will also be pursued.

Australian sporting organisations need to build on the Australian tradition of participatory sports management, while responding in a contemporary way to media globalisation. The Commission will assist national sporting organisations to strategically position themselves in the new commercialised and globalised sporting environment.

The Commission will continue to have formal agreements with sports. They will be innovative and dynamic agreements building on the strengths of the existing process while requiring greater attention to effective management and financial self-sufficiency.

High Quality Integrated Support Programs

The Commission's programs are well targeted but need cross-program linkages to allow clients to move easily from one program to another. To ensure the best value for money the Commission needs to set clear priorities in this area.

We need to identify gaps and duplication, internally and externally, and take remedial action where necessary. This may lead to key alliances being developed between providers with mutual interests to ensure sports work in a complementary way.

Ongoing Improvement in International Sporting Performances

The Sydney Olympics will set the benchmark for future Australian sporting achievements. We wish to avoid a major letdown after 2000 as has happened to some other Olympic host nations. We aim to achieve continued success at the elite level to build on Sydney and to put in place the systems to bring this about.

We will constantly pursue a goal of maximising Australian athlete performances. Through its elite sports programs the Commission will continue to be innovative and set international benchmarks for professional, technical and management performance, and work practices. The AIS will devote itself to being a national centre of excellence, providing specialised resources and expertise for all aspects of athlete development.

Encourage More People to Play Sports

Our environmental assessment has highlighted the need to provide more meaningful participation experiences. The Olympic Games will also generate interest in a broad range of sporting activities.

The challenges are to:

- assist the community to become more self-reliant in managing their sporting activities;
- provide opportunities for activity which will enhance the quality of life of all Australians irrespective of gender, age, disability, geographic or ethnic background; and
- ensure sport is prepared for an influx of new participants, demanding new and meaningful experiences.

We need to place greater emphasis on the promotion of participation opportunities. Under the newly developed national participation framework, Active Australia, we will seek to ensure the sports industry maximises the opportunities presented by this integrated community-based approach to sport and physical activity. We will take a national approach, working in partnership with all levels of government, communities and the sports industry to develop and deliver shared programs.

Diversify and Increase the Sport Resource Base

Maintaining the current levels of funding into the next millennium is a major challenge for the Commission. We acknowledge that sport needs to contribute to Government budgetary settings and become increasingly self-sufficient. We also recognise the need for continued public sector funding if sport is to be maintained at a satisfactory level beyond 2000.

The Commission has been successful in developing a range of off-budget initiatives. It must continue to pursue options including:

- additional commercial sources of funding;
- greater use of the Australian Sports Foundation; and
- export opportunities involving closer economic and social ties with our neighbours.

It will also continue to search for greater efficiencies and productivity in its own operations and examine opportunities across the whole organisation where a more commercial approach for some areas, could generate greater revenue for the Commission and for Australian sport generally.

Most sports are now managed professionally and vigorously seek corporate support. However, many continue to rely on government support for player development, equipment, facilities, coaching, dissemination of information, publicity and administrative costs. The Commission needs to find effective ways to guide sport to greater self-sufficiency. It also needs to increase the industry's contribution to broader socio-economic goals such as health and foreign exchange targets.

Information and Research Management

The Commission undertakes research and analysis of the value and impact of sport in Australia to:

- identify trends which impact upon the effectiveness of our strategies and their delivery; and
- to enhance the performance of elite and potential elite athletes and coaches.

To encourage continued government support we aim to achieve widespread recognition of the social, health and economic benefits regular participation in sport and active recreation provides for individual and community development.

In response to a changing environment, we need to adopt a more strategic approach to anticipating and directing change through developing our abilities and skills. We need to be well prepared to address the needs of our clients and take advantage of opportunities and new technological developments.

To remain at the forefront of world sport we must maintain our lead in sports science research and development as well as leading the way in providing quality servicing procedures. We must then continue to strongly promote the practical application of these research and development outcomes by the Australian coaching and athletic community.

We need to increase our analytical capacity to enhance our systems for information support and to make better use of knowledge acquired through research. To complement our capability to develop and market this data, we will look to form mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances.

Improve the Internal Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Commission

The Commission recognises the need to constantly review and tailor its services to meet the changing needs of its stakeholders through the creation of a client-focused organisational climate and structure.

We aim for a culture of responsiveness and flexibility so staff can identify changing priorities and quickly and effectively adapt to them. Staff are empowered to make, and be accountable for, decisions within their own areas. This is done without excessive formality and with a minimum of delay while ensuring efficient use of resources.

The Commission has developed a reputation as a highly professional and competent organisation. It has a management ethos of achieving results based on a commitment to excellence. We accept the challenge of continuing to build a strong and professional organisation by increasing the efficiency and productivity of the Commission through appropriate training and professional development strategies addressing the needs of staff.

In meeting these challenges, the Commission will adopt a national approach which accounts for the requirements of the wider sporting community. In developing this approach the Commission will continue to work closely with:

- state and territory departments of sport and recreation;
- state institutes/academies of sport through the National Elite Sports Council;

- the Australian Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games Association;
- the Confederation of Australian Sport; and
- other peak and umbrella bodies.

Our Mission

To enrich the lives of all Australians through sport.

This will be achieved through :

- development and maintenance of an effective national sports infrastructure;
- improved participation in quality sports activities by Australians; and
- excellence in sports performance by Australians.

We are working towards this Mission by :

- providing leadership through the development of a national policy framework;
- coordinating and contributing to the national delivery network; and
- developing and disseminating quality services, programs and products.

In achieving its mission, the Commission acknowledges the important complementary relationship between elite and community sport in Australia.

Vision

Determining a vision for sport in a future environment requires widespread consultation, imaginative analysis of trends and issues and forethought. The Commission's role in achieving this vision is both direct (in terms of its own programs) and facilitative (in terms of its partnerships with other stakeholders). Our vision for the national sports system is:

- a robust, self-sustaining and strongly Australian sports industry playing an appropriate role in national development, while retaining a focus on its clients, from the beginner to the world champion;
- continuing international sporting success, both in and beyond the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics;
- elite sports delivery networks that produce continuing improvements in the:
 - managerial competency of national sporting organisations and the network of institutes/academies,
 - the sports information and technology, sport science and sports medicine networks, and
 - the quality of the coaching, officiating and competition support provided to our athletes;
- quality participation programs that are taken up by an increasing number of Australians with better health outcomes and quality of life for all Australians; and
- an Australian sporting industry that makes a substantial contribution to GDP through employment, tourism, construction, manufacturing and foreign exchange and one which promotes a concept of excellence to the community and a positive image of Australia internationally.

Values

In our relationship with our stakeholders:

- We respond to the needs of our clients.
- We consult with stakeholders and endeavour to reach common understandings.

- We are open and transparent in the process of allocation of resources.
- We listen and communicate openly.
- We accept full accountability for our decisions and actions.

In working with each other and in maximising our performance:

- We strive for excellence through cooperation and teamwork.
- We make the most of every opportunity to be innovative and to be leaders in our field.
- We listen and communicate openly.
- We accept full accountability for our decisions and actions.
- We value the well-being and diversity of our staff.

Strategic Directions for the Commission

Objectives

Three long term objectives guide the Australian Sports Commission and are incorporated within the visions expressed in this strategic plan. They are:

OBJECTIVE 1.

The development and maintenance of an effective national sports infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 2.

Improved participation in quality sports activities by Australians.

OBJECTIVE 3

Excellence in sports performance by Australians.

Performance Indicators

The level of achievement of the objectives will be measured by the extent to which:

- initiatives aimed at enhancing the organisational and management competency of agencies involved in the delivery of sport and recreation are developed and implemented;
- access, equity and opportunities for people from targeted populations is improved through the development of effective initiatives and programs;
- the public and key delivery agencies are better informed about opportunities and issues related to participation in sport as a result of the implementation of public education and communication strategies;
- strategic alliances developed with other agencies has improved the quality and range of participation opportunities;
- preparation and support programs available to elite Australian athletes and teams are improved up to and beyond 2000;
- sporting performances by Australian athletes and teams in international competition are improved up to and beyond 2000; and
- integration/coordination of sports services and funding between the AIS and State/Territory Government sport agencies is improved.

Strategies

To support the Commission's objectives the following seven major strategies have been identified together with supporting sub-strategies.

Provide national leadership and direction in enhancing the management capabilities of sports delivery agencies by:

- working in partnership with national sporting organisations to develop a framework and coordinating mechanism to improve management practices and broaden the skills base;
- continuing to develop educational, training and employment standards for sports personnel (coaches, administrators, volunteers etc.) in conjunction with stakeholders;
- strengthening the technology and communication structure supporting sport;
- developing mechanisms to improve the transition from school to senior sport;
- increasing the capacity to identify and coordinate the effective provision of and access to sporting services; and
- providing advice to the Government on policy issues effecting the development of Australian sport.

Provide high quality national integrated support programs for athletes and sporting organisations by:

- maintaining close cooperation, partnerships and the optimum utilisation of resources with state and territory institutes and academies in the provision of elite sports programs;
- providing national leadership in setting and achieving best practice performance standards in program delivery;
- developing increasingly sophisticated consultative and partnership arrangements with state and territories, professionals and experts, clients and provider organisations and in our international relationships;
- promoting stronger professional capacity and improved networks with external expertise; and
- providing a flexible organisational structure which draws upon the strengths of a program structure and promotes cross-program linkages.

Promote ongoing improvement in international sporting performances by:

- implementing programs that continue to strengthen Australia's international sporting success and reputation, especially at the Olympics and Paralympics, and which set the base for continued success beyond 2000;
- monitoring the accomplishments of all sports through the implementation of an ongoing performance-based evaluation system;
- targeting specific sports and disciplines with potential for international success;
- continuing to provide world class training and support facilities;
- increasing the focus on scientific research and technology development and disseminating information through a national network of sports science providers;
- monitoring and delivering superior science based coaching and training practices;
- developing a flexible approach to retaining/recruiting specialist administrative, coaching and scientific personnel;
- matching the best high potential athletes/teams with the best multi-disciplinary support teams; and
- the further sophistication of talent identification and development mechanisms.

Encourage more people to play sport through the implementation of all the sports elements of Active Australia by:

- identifying and implementing those Active Australia programs relevant to the Commission;

- developing strategic alliances with other agencies (including the departments of health and education and local governments) for the delivery of programs; and
- fostering cooperation between all agencies in the continuing development and delivery of the Active Australia philosophy.

Examine avenues to diversify and increase the sport resource base by:

- identifying market directions and opportunities to financially secure sport in Australia;
- patenting, exploiting and utilising new sporting technologies developed within the Commission;
- accessing the global market to promote our technological, service and program expertise;
- strengthening existing and securing new international linkages;
- seeking to increase corporate and private donations to sport through the Australian Sports Foundation;
- promoting improved sports management practices, including the provision of encouragement and assistance to sports, to develop a broader funding base; and
- ensuring Commission programs and services are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner.

Further develop our information and research management capabilities to assist in meeting our responsibilities as national leaders in the development and support of sport by:

- developing a leadership/coordination role for sports research in Australia;
- having the capacity to gather and use information which is targeted at achieving and monitoring improved outcomes and performance standards;
- undertaking relevant and current sports sector analysis to establish the social and economic 'value' of sport;
- developing a better understanding of our clients and their needs through a program of client surveys; and
- instituting a national sports IT network for the dissemination and management of information and research.

Continue to improve the internal effectiveness and efficiency of the Commission, increasing its responsiveness to its stakeholders' requirements by:

- operating in a manner reflecting the principles within the Commission's enterprise agreement;
- ensuring the Commission structure and processes are aligned to achievement of the Commission's objectives and priorities;
- further developing and improving financial management systems in line with best financial practice;
- further developing an effective IT infrastructure; and
- planning and managing physical assets to support service delivery.