

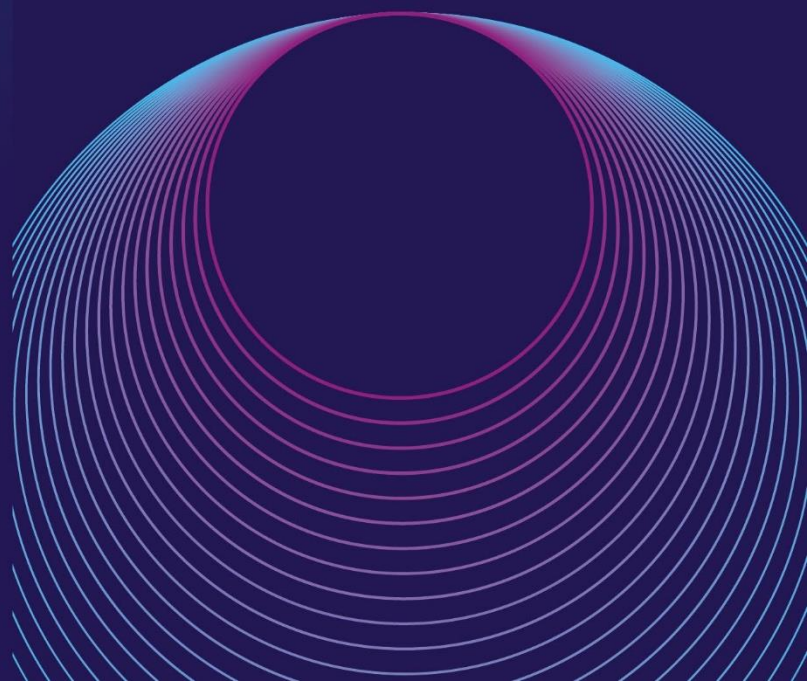
PROXIMITY

Australian Government Sports Ecosystem Rapid Review

Many Players, One Team

December 2022

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Executive Summary

This rapid review of the Australian Government sports ecosystem was focused on the five key sport entities in the Australian Government's Health and Aged Care portfolio: the Office for Sport (OfS) within the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Sport Integrity Australia (SIA), the National Sports Tribunal (NST), and the Australian Sports Foundation (ASF).

The focus of the review was to ensure Australian Government entities in the portfolio are well placed as we move into the green and gold decade of major sporting events (during which Australia will host over 16 major international sporting events culminating in the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games); and to clarify roles and responsibilities across the sports portfolio, including who is responsible for coordination and the delivery of strategic policy advice to the Minister for Sport.

This review was commissioned in the context of coming out of a challenging period for sports participation and sports administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent weather disasters, new leaders in some of the key sports entities in the portfolio, recently established and changed responsibilities for some functions e.g. with the establishment of SIA, a new government now only six months old and the ongoing changes in staffing arrangements.

With the challenges and disruptions not only faced now, together with the challenges for sport confronting all jurisdictions over the next decade, it is important the Commonwealth and its sports entities show leadership in key areas of its responsibility, including allocating dedicated effort and resources to high priority projects. The effort required to maximise outcomes from the major sporting events program over the next ten years may need dedicated effort and resources drawing on not only the Commonwealth sports entities but across government and industry. In this context it should be noted that Australian Government direct investment in sport for the financial year 2022-23 is about \$450 million¹, relatively small in context of sports' economic value for Australia—the sports sector supports 128,000 full-time jobs and contributes more than \$14 billion to gross domestic product (GDP).

The Australian Government plays a leadership role in sport from grassroots participation to elite levels. Increasing participation, achieving sporting high performance, safeguarding the integrity of sport, and supporting sport and sports industries to grow are key objectives. There are many other government priorities to which sport also contributes – inclusion, diversity, health and wellbeing of individuals and community development to name a few and these objectives feature in the Government's priorities for of sport.

Within this context it is of benefit to revisit where and how the portfolio entities individually and together can contribute to these challenges and priorities. Clarifying roles and responsibilities and performance expectations is required and importantly how the entities in the portfolio work effectively together to achieve shared objectives and support the Government and Minister for Sport.

In terms of foundations, the structure—given only recent changes (2020) with the establishment of the SIA and NST—is sound, and work has commenced on reviewing the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* to ensure it is fit for purpose and does not present any barriers to the ASC achieving its objectives. In the October 2022 Budget, the Government announced the NST will operate as an ongoing permanent tribunal, following a successful pilot. There is work in train to develop a new national sports strategy and much activity is occurring in relation to the Australian Government's role and contribution to the

¹ *Budget paper No 1 Budget October 2022-23* indicates \$624m will be provided in the budget for 2022-23 across portfolios for sport and recreation. This includes time limited grant funding and programs which sit in other portfolios. The \$450m relates to Health portfolio funding for sport.

challenging major sporting events decade culminating with the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

There are key sources of information and principles to guide leaders and entities with clarifying the roles and responsibilities across the sports portfolio, including who is responsible for coordination and the delivery of strategic policy advice to the Minister for Sport. Underpinning enabling legislation of the sports entities, budget papers, corporate and business plans all provide guidance for the roles and responsibilities of each organisation.

In addition, there is other legislation about the roles of leaders in the Australian Government, including for Australian public servants and statutory office holders. For example, the *Public Service Act 1999* prescribes the role of the departmental secretary to, among other things: be the principal official policy adviser to the Minister; maintain clear lines of communication within the Agency Minister's portfolio; and ensure the Agency Minister's portfolio has a strong strategic policy capability that can consider complex, whole-of-government issues. The Office for Sport is required to support the secretary with these responsibilities for sport functions. Also, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and *Public Service Act 1999* provide further guidance for leaders.

Sport administration at the Australian Government level operates within a complex environment and while there is legislation, guidance and other sources of information outlining roles and responsibilities, it is not always clear cut. Sometimes responsibilities are not clearly defined in legislation; or on occasions descriptions are too broad and at other times very prescriptive. There are many priorities to address and trade-offs to be made about the allocation of effort and resources and the sports landscape is rapidly changing. In addition, sport contributes to government priorities in other portfolios such as foreign affairs, trade, tourism, education, science, health and infrastructure. In this context there are competing priorities, overlap and potential for duplication of effort. This review identified many of the activities, functions, roles and responsibilities administered across the portfolio and grouped them under which entity is responsible, accountable, should be consulted or kept informed.

Each of the leaders of the five sports entities in the Health and Aged Care portfolio have strong passion and commitment to contribute to the Government's and Minister's priorities and deliver outcomes to grow sports participation, protect the integrity of sport and excel at the elite level and meet current emerging challenges of the sports sector. These objectives cannot be achieved without being clear about roles and responsibilities and clearly articulating performance outcomes required of each of the entities. More importantly, like any other organisation, or indeed sectors, the value of any organisation is more than the sum of its parts—it is about what can be delivered working together. The strength and influence of the sports entities will be achieved through this unity and will provide for example, not only improved support for the Minister, but it will also present a united front to stakeholders, encourage joint problem solving and leverage effort and scarce resources. This is not to compromise the independence of the organisations but to identify areas where it is more productive to work together.

This approach does require some effort and changed behaviours (in some cases), as well as putting in place effective systems and processes to improve the coordination of work and integrated, timely advice to the Minister. Improved information flows (both across the sports entities and with the Minister's office), communications, sharing of information and intelligence (where possible) and adopting a joint problem-solving approach to challenging issues should be areas of focus. Recommendations have been put forward in this review to support the commitment and willingness of the sports leaders to work collaboratively, to deliver shared outcomes and deliver strategic policy advice to the Minister and meet the demands and challenges of the next decade.

State of play – Facts and Figures



Staffing ASL

ASC: **494**

OfS: **54**

SIA: **156**

NST: **8**

ASF: **23**



Operating budget (govt and other)

ASC: **\$498m**

OfS: **\$4.2m**

SIA: **\$49m**

NST: **\$1.3m**

ASF: **\$4.7m***

Donations to sports via ASF (2021-22):

\$76.8m

Funding to sports via ASC (2021-22):

\$164.9m



Tokyo Olympics: **46 medals** (17 Gold, 7 Silver, 22 Bronze)

NSOs adopted Anti-Doping Policy: **91**

NSOs adopted Integrity Framework: **84**

Sports audited for WADC compliance: **97**

ASC support for pathway initiatives: **\$23m**

ASC support for **886** women leaders in sport



Contribution to Australia's GDP: **0.8% (\$14.4b)**

ROI from economic, health and education benefits of sport: **\$7 for every \$1 invest**

Contribution to Australia's employment: **1.5% (128k)**

Adults with an interest in sport: **90+%**

Adult participation: **13m**

Child participation: **3.5m**



Participation rates

Children (0-14): 43% (45% boys, 42% girls)

Overall (15+): 41% (49% males, 32% female)

Older Australians (55+): 30%

Australians with a disability (18+): 25%

Indigenous Australians (18+): 31%

Barriers to participation overall (15+)

1. Poor health or injury
2. Not enough time (decreasing)
3. Sport is no longer a priority (increasing)
4. Increasing in age

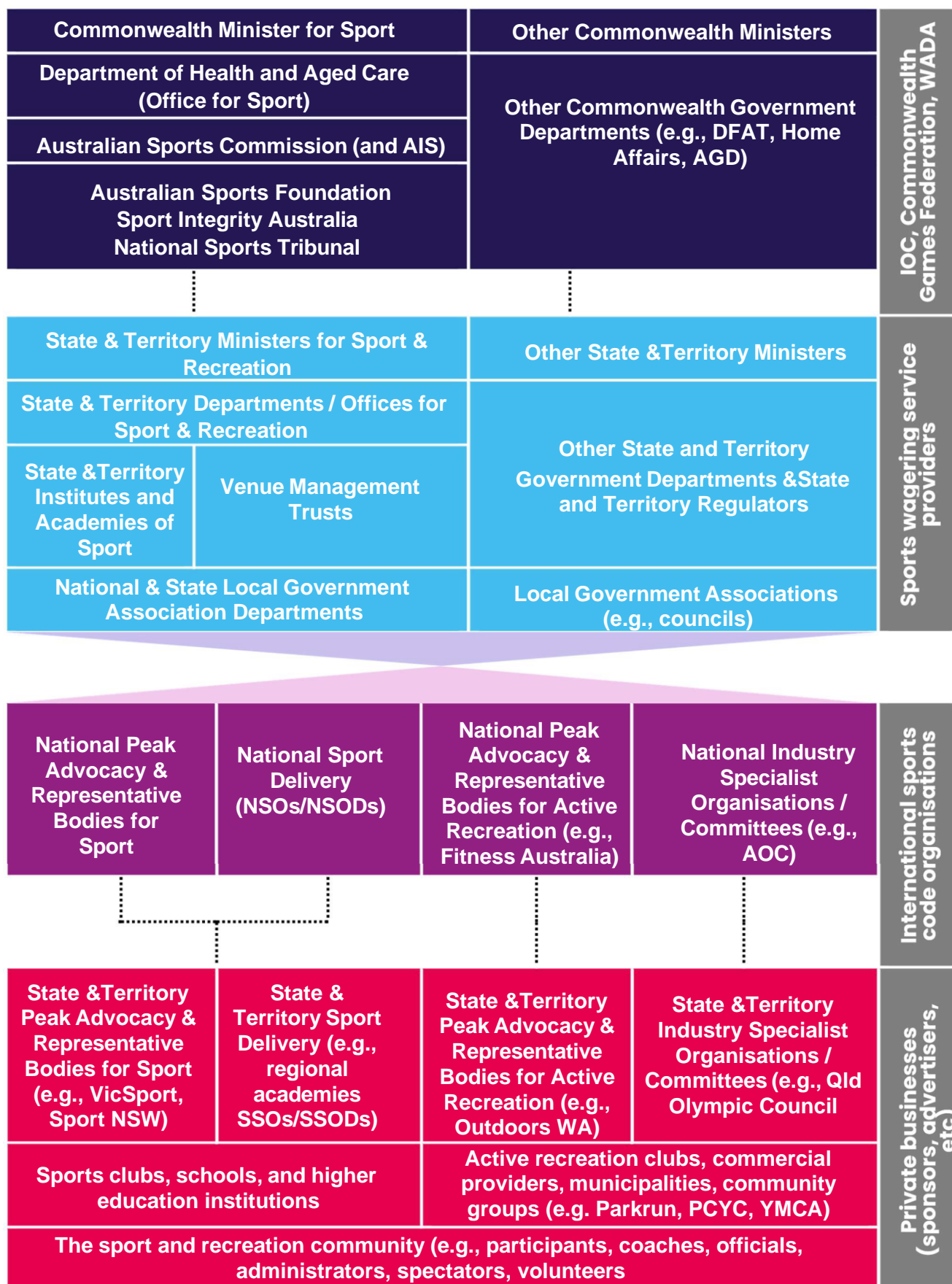


Barriers to participation children (0-14)

1. Low-income background
2. Living in remote or regional Australia
3. Speaking a language other than English at home
4. Having 3+ siblings

*Operational expenses which are self-generated and covered through donations received.

Australian sport sector



As can be seen in the above diagram the sports sector in Australia is complex and covers a wide range of organisations administering activities from grassroots participation in organised sport and less formal physical activities through to the high performance and professional athletes competing on the world stage. These organisations deliver and facilitate sport services such as administration and training, governance and support of sport and physical participation activities across the country, regulation of activities and keeping sport fair and inclusive. There are also other organisations involved in the sport industry including manufacturing and distribution of equipment and technology and providing sports medicine and health services.

An analysis² commissioned by the OfS estimated that the Australian sports industry generated approximately \$32.2 billion in sales in 2016-17, resulting in a contribution to GDP of approximately \$14.4 billion and supporting approximately 128,000 full-time equivalent jobs. For context, this is approximately 0.8% of GDP and 1.5% of total Australian employment.

The success of sport (for social, economic and health benefits) and reaffirming sport's pre-eminent place in the nation's psyche requires partnerships and cooperation across all jurisdictions, many different organisations (e.g. over 75,000 not for profit organisations), sectors, individuals and communities. It is a complex system and engaging all the players is a challenge across Australia partnership. The Australian Government can play a key leadership role through its policies and oversight of the key entities of the Commonwealth.

While it is a partnership across many different organisations across Australia, the Australian Government also plays a leadership role on the international stage such as Australian Olympic Committee, Paralympics Australia and Commonwealth Games Australia and Minister Wells is the Oceania representative on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Foundation Board.³

² *Exploring the size and growth potential of the Sport Industry in Australia*, Sports Industry Economic Analysis, Office for Sport – Commonwealth Department of Health, March 2020.

³ Representation for Oceania is rotated with New Zealand, with some duties being shared.

Current legislative arrangements for entities of the Australian Government sports ecosystem

Effective leadership and governance are instrumental in addressing the key priorities mentioned above and to ensure we capitalise on the opportunities the emerging decade presents. Australian Government direct investment in sport is about \$450 million. In addition, the 2022-23 October Budget has allocated about \$90 million to contribute the green and gold decade and includes contributing towards to hosting major events such the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, being co-hosted with New Zealand.

A good relationship between Australian Public Service (APS) agencies (non-corporate Commonwealth entities), ministers and their offices is central to effective government. The role of the APS is to serve the government of the day and to assist in developing and delivering the government's policy agenda and priorities. Corporate Commonwealth entities generally have enabling legislation that establishes the scope of their activities and a governing accountable authority such as a board of directors. The entities in the Australian Government sports ecosystem comprise a combination of non-corporate Commonwealth entities, corporate Commonwealth entities and a Commonwealth company:

- Office for Sport (Department of Health and Aged Care) – is an administrative unit in the Department which is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity (sometimes referred to as a department of state), and is legally and financially part of the Commonwealth reporting to the relevant minister;
- Australian Sports Commission – a corporate Commonwealth entity that is a body corporate. The ASC does not engage staff under the APS Act and has its own enabling legislation and an accountable board; a corporate Commonwealth entity is subject to the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act);
- Sport Integrity Australia – is a separate a non-corporate Commonwealth entity that is not a body corporate. It is legally and financially part of the Commonwealth;
- Australian Sports Foundation – is a not-for-profit Commonwealth company established under the *Corporations Act 2001* the Commonwealth controls. It is legally separate from the Commonwealth;
- National Sports Tribunal – an administrative unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care which is administered by a statutory officer. The statutory officer can exercise their role independently while operating within a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

The Office for Sport (OfS), Department of Health and Aged Care

The OfS is responsible for providing the Minister with policy advice across the breadth of sports issues, except for policy advice in relation to integrity matters where SIA has policy authority. There is no legislative authority for the functions performed and OfS as it is an administrative unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care. Consistent with other functions in a department of state reporting to the Minister for Sport, responsibilities include new policy development and implementation, appointments, program administration, development of legislation, supporting Australia's international obligations and engagement, Commonwealth and state relations, and coordinating Australian Government support for the staging of major international sporting events.

- The Policy and Programs Branch is responsible for:⁴
 - managing many sports grants and programs (Female Facilities and Water Safety Stream; Community Development Grants; Inclusion programs; Water Safety programs);
 - providing policy advice on key sporting and physical activity related issues (such as COVID-19 impacts, women in sport, and participation);
 - tracking of initiatives under the national sports plan, *Sports 2030*, including overseeing a 4-year review and developing and coordinating new policy proposals; and
 - supporting the Minister for Sport in relation to international obligations such as sports diplomacy initiatives, international forums such as the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport and bi-annual Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meetings, and MOUs on Sport Cooperation (with Singapore, Japan and Malaysia).
- The Major Events Branch is responsible for:
 - coordinating Australia’s direct financial, operational and policy arrangements (including both security and non-security operations) to support the hosting of major sporting events in Australia, working directly with NSOs and Major Event Organisers;
 - coordinating a whole of government approach to bidding and hosting major international sporting events in Australia, including coordinating funding requirements for these events; and
 - developing a framework to ensure events have a sustainable economic and social impact such as growth in sports participation, facilitating pathways to high performance, ensuring an economic return on infrastructure and other investments provided by the Australian Government’s hosting of major sporting events.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) & Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)

The ASC established under the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* and governed by a board of commissioners appointed by the Minister for Sport. The board determines the ASC’s overall direction, decides on the allocation of appropriated resources, develops policy for delegated decisions and is accountable to the Minister for Sport and parliament. It is responsible for:

- advising the Minister in relation to the development of sport;
- coordinating activities for the development of sport;
- developing and implementing programs that promote equality of access to, and participation in, sport by all Australians;
- establishing, developing, maintaining and managing facilities (such as the AIS)
- initiating, encouraging, and facilitating research and development in relation to sport, sports science, and sports medicine; and
- working with national and international sporting organisations (NSO/NSOD recognition process).⁵

The ASC is working to meet these responsibilities through three strategic outcomes:

- Lead and enable the world’s best sport system;
- Involve more Australians with sport at all levels; and
- Drive innovation in sport.

⁴ ‘Australian Government Roles and Responsibilities – Sport’ July 2022, provided to Proximity 14 October 2022.

⁵ *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989*, s 7.

These strategic outcomes are supported by the following key focus areas:

- Build the capability of sport and the people involved;
- Advocate for sport and its positive influence on Australia;
- Promote and support inclusive and diverse sporting environments;
- Drive thought leadership and innovation, inspiring the world's best practices; and
- Optimise our facilities to advance sport and inspire Australians to get involved.⁶

Sport Integrity Australia (SIA)

The *Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020* established the SIA to support the CEO administer matters relating to sport integrity, including threats to sport integrity. It is responsible for preventing and addressing these by coordinating a national approach to:

- achieving fair and honest sporting performances and outcomes;
- promoting positive conduct by athletes, administrators, officials, supporters and other stakeholders, on and off the sporting arena;
- achieving a safe, fair and inclusive sporting environment at all levels; and
- enhancing the reputation and standing of sporting contests and of sport overall.⁷

The role of SIA in the sports ecosystem is to protect Australian sport from:

- the use of prohibited substances and methods in sport;
- the abuse of children and other people in a sporting environment (extends to both on- and off-field abuse);
- the manipulation of sporting competitions; and
- the failure to protect people in a sporting environment from bullying, abuse, intimidation, discrimination or harassment.⁸

SIA is working to meet these responsibilities by working closely with law enforcement, border protection agencies, regulatory authorities, wagering service providers academic institutions, and the health sector. SIA is also responsible for being Australia's National Anti-Doping Organisation, providing a comprehensive anti-doping program for the Australian sport community, and partnering with the World Anti-Doping Agency and other international anti-doping organisations to build the collective capability. SIA is also the national platform for information sharing with international partners on competition manipulation. SIA is also developing and implementing the Australian Sports Wagering Scheme to streamline wagering regulation.

Sport integrity means the manifestation of the ethics and values that promote community confidence in sport. **Threats** to sport integrity include: (a) the manipulation of sporting competitions; (b) the use of drugs or doping methods in sport; (c) the abuse of children and other persons in a sporting environment; (d) the failure to protect members of sporting organisations, and other persons in a sporting environment from bullying, intimidation, discrimination or harassment.

The Australian Sports Foundation (ASF)

The ASF, established by section 10 of the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* as a controlled Commonwealth company subject to the *Corporations Act 2001*, is governed by a

⁶ Australian Sports Commission Corporate Plan 2022-2026, p. 15.

⁷ *Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020*, s 3A.

⁸ Sport Integrity Australia Corporate Plan 2022-2026, p. 7.

board of directors appointed by the Minister for Sport and who are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation and for delivering accountable corporate performance in accordance with the organisation's goals and objectives. The ASF is a not-for-profit entity and is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) listed by name in the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (ITAA97). ASF is responsible for raising money from tax-deductible donations from private individuals and corporate donors for the development of sport in Australia. ASF has a subsidiary entity, The Australian Sports Foundation Charitable Fund (ASFCF) whose purpose is to raise money for the development of sport in Australia for any charitable purpose. The ASFCF is also a DGR listed by name in the ITAA97, while it can also receive tax deductible donations from individuals and businesses, its principal purpose is to raise money from philanthropic vehicles known as Private and Public Ancillary Funds.

The ASF is focused on:

- driving substantial growth in the value and volume of philanthropic contributions to sport;
- expanding the number of community sports clubs, schools, and aspiring or representative athletes receiving its financial support;
- raising funds to improve the financial sustainability of Australian sport and to promote Australian Government policy of getting more Australians more active, more often, through supporting programs which increase sports participation; and
- providing a platform and specialist support for athletes, other sports participants, and sports organisations (including schools, councils and community groups) to raise funds from donors.

The National Sports Tribunal (NST), Department of Health and Aged Care

The National Sports Tribunal (NST) was established by the *National Sports Tribunal Act 2019* (the Act), which commenced on 19 March 2020. The NST initially operated as a pilot, but following the Government's announcement in the October 2022 Budget, the NST will continue to operate as an ongoing, permanent tribunal. The CEO is a statutory appointment, and the Tribunal manages a small registry which provides case management, policy, and administrative support. There are around 80 NST Members across Australia – a group which includes legal practitioners working in sport or administrative law, sports medicine specialists, leading sports administrators, and former athletes – who are responsible for conducting the dispute resolution processes. The CEO is responsible to government and to the Minister for Sport. The NST is a forum for the independent resolution of disputes through arbitration, or through mediation, conciliation or case appraisal, without the exercise of judicial power. It is responsible for the provision of a cost-effective, efficient, independent, transparent and specialist tribunal for the fair hearing and resolution of sporting disputes. Currently over 95% of National Sporting Organisations recognised by the ASC have adopted the NST into one or more of their policies for resolution of disputes in their sport.⁹ There are three divisions within the NST for resolving disputes:

- Anti-Doping Division, dealing with breaches of the anti-doping rules of a sport;
- General Division, dealing with other disputes under the rules of a sport; and
- Appeals Division, dealing with appeals from the Anti-Doping or General Divisions, as well as appeals from decisions made by 'in-house' sports tribunals.

Prior to its establishment, athletes seeking arbitration had to go through their sport's in-house tribunals or other dispute resolution bodies (which many smaller sports did not have the resources to create). Often these matters would be referred to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, based in New York, Sydney and Lausanne or to an ad hoc tribunal.¹⁰

⁹ 'Sport Policies – NST adoption,' provided to Proximity 17 October 2022.

¹⁰ *National Sports Tribunal Bill 2019 Explanatory Memorandum*, p. 10.

Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government entities

Government business (especially where there is a policy or budget implication) should be coordinated through the OfS with input as required from any other relevant entities. The OfS also leads relationships between the Department and any other departments of state (including the relevant state and territory departments). Through the Major Events branch, the OfS also handles relationships with major events organisers (in many cases, NSOs/NSODs). Beyond that, relationships with NSOs/NSODs, community participation and high performance remains the domain of the ASC and AIS, as does advising the government of its research into current trends in sport. All matters relating to integrity, safety and investigations are handled by SIA, with dispute resolution handled by NST. ASF educates, enables, and facilitates philanthropy and fundraising for the ecosystem and advocates for the growth of sport as a philanthropic cause.

Summary of Roles and responsibilities

Office for Sport	Australian Sports Commission		Sports Integrity Australia	National Sports Tribunal	Australian Sports Foundation
Government business (estimates, QTBs, etc)	Relationship with NSO/Ds (in general, recognition)	Relationship with NSO/Ds (high performance)	Relationship with NSO/Ds (integrity matters)	Relationship with NSO/Ds (hearing matters)	Relationship with NSO/Ds (fundraising support)
Major events (organisers, IDC, inter-govt support)	Optimise sport facilities	Sports science/medicine & research	Major events (integrity threats)	Major events (disputes handling)	Major events (fundraising for, and fundraising at)
Government funding (with portfolio agencies)	Participation funding	High performance funding	Integrity and safety initiatives funding	Supporting athletes and other parties	Public-private-philanthropic funding
Advice to Minister (coordinate & gather)	Advice to Minister (NSO/Ds etc)	Promote inclusive & diverse sport environments	Advice to Minister (integrity matters, safety)	Helping NSO/Ds develop consistent policies	Financial support for clubs and athletes
Sports diplomacy & program & grants mgmt	Participation strategy	High performance strategy	Promoting safety in sport	Protecting safety & fairness in sport	Advocating for sport as a philanthropic cause
Ministerial support	Sports industry	High Performance	Safety & Integrity	Dispute Resolution	Philanthropy

Recommendations

The entities that make up the Australian Government's sport ecosystem are committed to supporting the Minister for Sport and the Australian Government priorities for sport. The operating environment, including recent changes in government and key leaders of many of the recently formed entities, recovery from COVID-19, changes in community expectations together with more scrutiny of sports organisations and its administrators and participants, have created challenges for the administration of their roles and responsibilities and to work together to prioritise the many competing demands in an integrated and proactive way.

Overall, the structure of both the legislation and the entities is sound and there are some arrangements which can be put in place to clarify roles and responsibilities, provide clarity on the priorities of the Minister for Sport and strengthen the working relationships between the entities to ensure the Minister is supported with coordinated information and the provision of integrated strategic policy advice. These arrangements are outlined in the recommendations below.

In terms of being very clear to the chief executive officers of each of the entities about the Minister's priorities, the Minister issuing a Statement of Expectations is a way to provide clarity about government policies and objectives relevant to a statutory authority, including the policies and priorities it is expected to observe in conducting its operations. The Statement of Expectations provides transparency and recognises the independence of Commonwealth corporate entities

The entity generally responds with a Statement of Intent outlining how they will meet those expectations. These Statements will provide transparency and provide a solid foundation for the understanding who is doing what. Many ministers and entities across the Commonwealth observe this practice.

1. Issue ministerial **Statements of Expectations** to the Commonwealth entities to clearly outline the Government's policies and priorities for sport and the Minister for Sport's expectations of performance of the organisations. The Australian Sports Commission and Sport Integrity Australia should be first priorities.

To be proactive and remain abreast of what is occurring in, and impacting on, the sport industry and the statutory entities, twice a year it would be of benefit to all leaders involved in the Australian Government sport ecosystem to be involved in a strategy session; to align teams, strengthen performance, share intelligence, understand emerging risks, identify opportunities, strengthen relationships and better understand priorities and how each entity could contribute. This would help address any confusion, develop a joint problem-solving mindset and plan and sequence work for the year ahead. It would also avoid mixed messages.

It would be of benefit to jointly conduct a general stakeholder session (this could be annually, or every second year) with key representative leaders from across the sports sector to seek their views of emerging challenges, ideas to grow sports participation and address key priorities. The Minister could attend for a short period. In addition, continuing to facilitate roundtables with key stakeholders focusing on one or more topical issues, such as increasing participation for people with a physical or mental disability or access to sport for regional populations—like the Minister's recent Women in Sport Workforce Roundtable—would signal a more collaborative approach with the sports sector.

Acknowledging the time, effort and cost of developing a regular rhythm of planning and engagement with stakeholders, coordinating and planning which entity could take the lead

would be required. It is more important that leaders and staff from across the entities jointly develop and participate in such forums. As noted in the observations in this review, staff, including senior level staff, were not clear on what activities were being undertaken by their colleagues in other statutory entities, causing confusion, fragmentation of advice provided to the Minister and lack of clarity and consistency when engaging with stakeholders.

There should be a more targeted call to action for senior staff across the entities to commence (or recommence) regular and frequent meetings – purposeful meetings which could be either information sharing or joint problem solving. Normal business meetings of each of the CEOs with the Minister should also occur regularly as required.

2. Improve engagement and collaboration across the Australian Government entities and with the sport sector:

- (a) having twice-yearly meetings around strategic direction between the Minister for Sport and her advisors, Office for Sport leadership, Chief Executives of the Australian Sports Commission, Sport Integrity Australia, the Australian Sports Foundation and the National Sports Tribunal;
- (b) consider jointly hosting a stakeholder forum annually or biennially to do broader horizon or scenario planning across the sector;
- (c) facilitating roundtables with key stakeholders addressing key priorities; and
- (d) commencing (or re-commencing) regular meetings between CEOs / senior leaders of each entity and the Minister as required.

This new, more unified approach can be leveraged into a new sports strategy and plan, to replace the current *Sport 2030* plan, which was due for review in 2022. The operating environment including the significant impact of COVID on organised support and communities, together with emerging challenges identified in this review provides an opportunity for the Government to develop in consultation with many interested stakeholders a way forward to grow sports participation from the community level to facilitating pathways and support for high performance athletes. The sports strategy should also be a mechanism to advance broader Government priorities and community expectations to promote inclusion, diversity, health and wellbeing. The strategy should also capitalise on the Green and Gold Decade to deliver impactful and sustainable outcomes for growing sports participation.

This review acknowledges key pieces of work contributing to the development of an overarching sports strategy have commenced and will continue to be developed by the relevant sports entity. For example, the Australian Sports Commission has focussed on what it can do to capture some of the benefits of the green and gold decade and has also developed a High Performance 2032 Sport Strategy. Similarly, Sport Integrity Australia will lead elements of the strategy to ensure the ongoing integrity of our sports system - our sport system is safe, fair, protects athletes, and addresses current and emerging threats.

3. The Office for Sport to co-ordinate with substantial input from the other Commonwealth sport entities, and in consultation with many interested stakeholders, the **development of a new sports strategy** (currently being addressed).

The green and gold decade has presented an opportunity to consider more strategically what lasting and sustainable benefits can be leveraged for Australia and its communities in hosting major sporting events. Capturing our experience and learnings from other countries, the Office for Sport should coordinate with input from colleagues in the other sports entities and agencies across the Commonwealth, a consistent approach to be clear about the costs and benefits for Australian Government involvement in hosting major sporting events. A framework to assess the return on investment and to capture longer term benefits of hosting major events should form part of this economic analysis to support decision makers such as the Minister for Sport to consider the financial, economic and social implications of hosting sports events.

A further requirement, which substantially occurs now, is to develop a standard process and procedures guide to hosting events, with input from several other Commonwealth agencies and support from jurisdictions and other stakeholders, of Australian Government requirements to host such events. This is to avoid “reinventing the wheel” each time a major event occurs (acknowledging there will be differences). Such a toolkit will clarify processes and approvals and budget required in delivering a major event; clarify roles and responsibilities – including what governance arrangements need to be put in place – and who is responsible for what; a checklist of the many issues to consider across Government; and identifying and managing risks, to name a few of key elements to address.

In the consultation process of the review there was little understanding amongst colleagues of all the work being undertaken by the Office for Sport in coordinating the Australian Government’s involvement in Australia hosting major sporting events. It would be of benefit to develop a transparent engagement and communications framework to guide consultation, engage key sporting and other organisations and provide progress updates, identify, and address emerging issues and opportunities and improve transparency to interested organisations. The review team suggests a dedicated team be established to engage industry, other jurisdictions, local government, the philanthropic sector and communities to maximise these opportunities and deliver ongoing social and economic benefits. The review acknowledges there are already processes in place to coordinate Australian Government input and ensure a whole of government approach for Australia staging major sporting events. Improved engagement, collaboration, communication, and transparency with the sports sector will capture opportunities and provide a good understanding of what it takes to co-ordinate such events.

4. Develop **consistent and standard frameworks** for considering Australian Government involvement in **Australia staging major sporting events** and capturing longer term economic and social benefits, including:
 - (a) a **strategic impact and investment framework** for assessing the costs, ongoing benefits and return-on-investment of proposed Australian Government contributions to Australia hosting major sports events. Measuring this, and developing options to capture ongoing benefits for growing sports participation and progressing other Australian Government priorities, will ensure this investment is impactful, targeted, and strategic;
 - (b) a **major events toolkit** so there is a common, acceptable, and collaborative approach to hosting major events that is repeatable and scalable; and
 - (c) an **engagement and communications framework** to improve engagement with key stakeholders, improved collaboration and joint problem solving, effective and more transparent communication of progress and who is responsible for what and providing opportunities for the broader sports community to consider capturing the opportunities such events may present.

The sports landscape is going through substantial changes and challenges. There is now a confluence of many issues attracting attention for sport to address. The impacts of COVID-19 have had substantial impacts, particularly the loss of opportunity for children to be involved in sport. Many historic or embedded issues of unfairness or inappropriate behaviour (and athlete abuse) are now justly attracting scrutiny. Broader issues of discrimination, racism, participation of women, people with disabilities, and access and inclusion for other groups of people are raised regularly. Costs of involvement in sport, particularly for lower socioeconomic groups will impact many families. Protecting the integrity of sport in Australia is a constant challenge and will be an added challenge over the next decade. There are challenges with digitalisation and impacts on physical attendance at sporting events and wagering and advertising are attracting more public commentary. Sport activism and international considerations present further challenges. This is just a small insight into what sports administrators and government decision makers are presented with daily.

Managing and addressing these issues daily within and across Australian Government sports entities requires a multi-pronged approach. Leaders are required to work together to have policies and procedures in relation to relevant issues, being clear which entity will respond to what issue, and of course how views are coordinated across the entities to ensure the Minister for Sport receives integrated, responsive and timely advice.

As noted in Recommendation 2, seeking guidance and discussing how to address such challenges and emerging issues should be covered, rather than being surprised as they are presented. There will of course be issues which come out of left field that couldn't be anticipated. Having clear protocols on how to address the issue in a timely and responsive would be of benefit. Coordination and consultation is the key and agreeing between leaders who co-ordinates will avoid duplication and potential confusion if, for example, the Minister for Sport receives separate advices rather than integrated (which doesn't necessarily mean agreed) advice. Generally, it would be the Office for Sport responsible for co-ordination across entities, however on many occasions the issue may sit wholly within one entity which would be required to take the lead.

Establishing an issues management protocol to identify and manage external issues is a must to minimise reputational risk and trust in the Australian Government sport ecosystem. The flow of critical and timely information about nascent or developing issues needs to be

formalised to minimise the risk of issues being missed or organisations being on the back foot. The ‘no surprises rule’ is universal— this is not about public servants providing political handling strategies—it is about keeping the Minister and each other informed of bad news which should travel faster than good news, and if and how the sports entity is addressing the issue.

5. Standardise issues management processes and protocols with **clear communications protocols** developed jointly between the sports entities and the Minister’s Office. Coordination of information across the sports entities to be agreed between leaders as suggested above.

With the changes and developments proposed above, along with the intensity of effort required over the upcoming green and gold decade, consideration should be given to reviewing functional priorities in the Office for Sport. As suggested by the current deputy secretary who has responsibility for the Department’s corporate services and oversight, the Office for Sport, given its policy, program and delivery responsibilities is better placed in a policy and program area reporting to a deputy secretary who can support these responsibilities to better align with other health and well-being initiatives in the Department. This is already under consideration.

6. **Review the Office for Sport functional priorities** and senior reporting lines within the Department of Health and Aged Care to improve alignment with other related functions to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Although this final recommendation is beyond the scope of the review, it was too important to ignore, in the context of role of the Australian Sports Foundation and ever increasing pressures on government funding. With more than 90% of adults in Australia having an interest in sport¹¹ there is an opportunity to consider options to develop a pipeline of sustainable funding and innovative funding options to support community and elite sport. The Australian Government as the shareholder of the Australian Sports Foundation could consider a transparent policy framework to support further innovative options for funding, including extension of public private-philanthropic partnerships, sponsorships, crowd funding, matching funding for programs with other levels of government and other partners etc. This framework should ensure that the ASF is engaged, consulted, and involved in all discussions and policy debates relating to sports funding, as there are opportunities for philanthropic contributions to funding at all stages, but they are often left until it is too late. Developing a financing and funding framework will supplement investment in support, consistent with sports priorities identified by the Government and other sports entities in the portfolio. This would require potential changes to the ASF enabling infrastructure to be user friendly and to meet contemporary ICT security requirements.

Suggestion: Consider a framework for the development of options for innovative and sustainable funding to grow sport in Australia. The Office for Sport could lead its development in consultation with many agencies across government including the ASF and other sports entities in the portfolio. This could be considered in the context of developing a national strategy for sport (Recommendation 3).

¹¹ *About Sport in Australia*, Department of Health and Aged Care, <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/sport/about-sport-in-australia#> About 13 million adults and 3 million children take part in sport each year and 3.1 million Australians volunteer in sport and active recreation each year.