



Sporting Schools Program Evaluation

Final report

Department of Health
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Glossary

Abbreviation / Acronym	Definition
AASC	Active After School Communities
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHPER	Australian Council for Health, PE and Recreation
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DALY	Disability adjusted life year
FMS	Fundamental Movement Skills
m	Million
n	Total number of individuals or observations in the sample
NPV	Net Present Value
NSO	National Sporting Organisation
PE	Physical education
PES	Physical education and sport
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SSP	Sporting Schools Program
The Department	Department of Health
VSLY	Value of a Statistical Life Year
WHO	World Health Organization
YLD	Years lived with a disability
YLL	Years of life lost

Executive summary

In September 2019, Deloitte Access Economics was engaged by the Department of Health (the Department) to undertake an evaluation of the Sporting Schools Program (SSP).

Background and purpose

In 2015, the SSP was introduced to recognise that schools can play a more direct role in children's participation in sport during school hours, and to increase students' involvement with community sporting initiatives, delivered by local sporting organisations. The SSP was designed with the primary objective of supporting schools to raise children's physical activity levels through the provision of regular, high-quality and diverse sports programs in schools.

The SSP offers all Australian primary and secondary schools the opportunity to apply for per-term grant funding. These grants enable schools to purchase either additional sports equipment, hire professional coaches to deliver specific sport programs, or for teachers to undertake physical education (PE) focussed professional development. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide insight into the effectiveness of the SSP against its original objectives and to understand whether the program is providing value to money based on the ~\$200 million investment since 2015.

The Department identified two key objectives in relation to the evaluation, which included responding to two lines of inquiry:

- Is the delivery of the SSP the most effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?
- Does the expenditure on the SSP provide the Government with value for money?

Building on these, the evaluation was premised on four evaluation domains; Appropriateness, Process, Effectiveness and Efficiency and Sustainability.

The findings contained in this report are intended to inform the future direction of the program, given it has reached the end of its current funding period, and recognising recent shifts in the policy context.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation was conducted between September 2019 and February 2020. It comprised of three phases, including Project Planning and Framework Development; Data collection and Assumption Validation; and Analysis and Reporting. A mixed method approach was used, involving both primary and secondary sources, including:

- **Literature scan on best practice** - a literature scan on best practice approaches in terms of delivering the stated objectives of the SSP was conducted. The purpose of the literature review was to understand best practice approaches, in order to facilitate an assessment of whether the program has been well designed, is evidence informed, and whether it represents current thinking in terms of improving the participation of students in sport.
- **Stakeholder interviews** - the evaluation involved 26 interviews with a range of key program and policy stakeholders, state-based education and sports and recreation departments, and key health promotion and sporting peak bodies. The interviews were a means of gathering information related to the SSP implementation and operations, as well as to gain an overview of the current market for sports programs in schools, and to the range of other similar programs being delivered across Australia.
- **School survey** - a survey was sent to all schools who registered for the program since inception. There were 483 schools that completed at least 70 per cent of the survey. The survey asked about the participants views on the program delivery and its effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives.

- **Sport organisation survey** – a survey was sent to contacts at all National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and NSO-affiliated organisations who have participated in the program. There were 458 sport organisations that completed at least 70 per cent of the survey¹. The survey asked about sporting organisation's views on the program operations and delivery and its effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives.
- **School deep dives** – two schools were consulted as part of the evaluation², in order to gather a deeper understanding of the implementation of the program at the individual school level, and to discuss the outcomes being demonstrated in schools and the local community. The deep dive included interviews with the school principal and PE teachers involved in the SSP coordination and delivery.
- **SSP program data** – a range of program data was collected from Sport Australia, via the Department. This included school and NSO registration details, grant and booking data, program delivery details, AusPlay Clearinghouse for Sport data and financial information.

A summary of key findings aligned with the evaluation framework are described below. This includes responding to the Lines of Inquiry, as well as providing responses to each of the eleven evaluation questions, across the four evaluation domains. Appendix D includes a list of evaluation questions, indicators and reference to the relevant section of the report.

Evaluation findings – key lines of inquiry

Is the delivery of the SSP the most effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?

While overall the evaluation found that the program has achieved significant reach and performed relatively well in relation to the objectives, there are a number of other design features that could be utilised to increase physical activity in young people in school. There are several reasons for this, which include:

Observations

- While the components of the program are broadly appropriate, given the original objectives of the program, there are other design features that could enhance the program given the current policy focus. The focus on sport and on increasing the capacity of the NSO market is too narrow, given the Government's desire to focus more broadly on physical activity.
 - There are a number of factors which contribute to physical inactivity, and the lack of access to sports is only one of these. There are other significant factors as well, including the family environment, financial barriers, access to facilities etc. The attitudes of schools and the priority placed on physical activity is also either a significant enabler or barrier. The SSP is a 'dose-based' response and without addressing these broader factors, will always be limited in its impact.
 - Due to the recent release of the Physical Literacy Framework, approaches to increasing physical activity are evolving. Responsibility for increasing physical activity in children sits with a number of agencies, in the absence of a coordinated approach there is a limit to increasing physical activity in young people.
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Noting these findings, while the program could be improved to enhance its effectiveness, the SSP has been successful in many ways. Evidence to this includes that the program is well regarded by schools and NSOs alike. It has achieved significant reach across the country. Furthermore,

¹ Of the respondents to the survey, 65% were schools in NSWs. The reason for this is unclear as the survey was distributed to all registered schools in the country, however, it should be noted when considering the survey results.

² Whilst the original number was intended to be higher, this was revised due to the timeframes for undertaking the evaluation, which restricted the ability to gain the relevant research approvals for undertaking consultations with schools. The school survey was developed to mitigate this.

improvements to processes have been made since the program's establishment which means that the program typically operates well. Children have been able to access a range of sports.

As outlined in the literature, there is evidence which supports interventions aimed at increasing physical activity, albeit preventative in nature. This means that it is an appropriate pursuit for stakeholders with responsibility for supporting children to become more active – and this includes the Department.

Does the expenditure on the SSP provide the Government with value for money?

Based on the current program objectives, the expenditure on the SSP provides the Government with value for money, although this is over the longer term. There are several reasons for this, which include:

Observations

- Preventative interventions typically have a lag time between the intervention and the desired outcome, as it is not for many years that children would be affected by noncommunicable disease, such as heart disease. This influences the extent to which attribution can defensively be established. Noting this, there is a body of evidence which supports prevention and early intervention as the most cost-effective way to reduce obesity rates and the subsequent burden of disease.
- The BCR is low over a 10-year time period (0.17), as would be expected, yet improves if the timeline is extended (1.78 after 35-years).

Evaluation findings - evaluation domains

The evaluation considered evaluation questions across four domains; appropriateness, process, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The summarised findings under each question is outlined herein.

Table A Evaluation indicator framework

Evaluation question	Key findings	Assessment
Appropriateness		
EQ1. Is the program designed to deliver on the stated objectives?	- Overall, the SSP is designed in order to achieve its key objectives - Whilst the program does intend to offer greater professional development opportunities for teachers, to build schools' internal capacity to deliver sports programs, there is no formalised mechanism to ensure teachers are engaging with the program	
EQ2. What elements of the program were most likely to contribute towards achieving the Program's objectives?	Key elements of the program that support attainment of the program objectives include: - Involvement from NSOs, State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and local coaches - Having a range of sports available via the Program Partners - Making grants available to all schools - Online registration and matching process using the booking system	
Process		

EQ3. How did the administrative structures and capacity building activities support the Program's implementation and the achievement of the Program's objectives?	- At the outset of the program, Sport Australia established an extensive regional team that supported the implementation. This team ceased in 2018. - Overall, stakeholders reported a positive, supportive working relationship between the Department and Sport Australia - Improvements were made, building on the Orima evaluation findings (such as the online registration system changes). - The majority of stakeholders (schools and NSOs) reported that the program's administration and operations were effective. - The Sport Australia team shifted its focus to be tactical, due to the reduction in opex at the point the regional teams ceased. This means that other functions, such as working with less professional/mature sports to support a purposeful focus on physical literacy or support them to build capacity, were not fully supported.	
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EQ4. Was the Program delivered as intended?	Governance - Sport Australia has responsibility for operations and overall program performance, with minimal formal governance and reporting between Sport Australia and the Department. The Sport Australia Board have ultimate responsibility for the program. There are a range of other stakeholders with responsibility for increasing the physical activity of students across state and federal departments. The absence of a joined-up approach between education and sporting agencies in the implementation of the SSP has led to a lack of clarity regarding different policy priorities and programs Stakeholder engagement and communication - Sport Australia's reported positive reputation among schools has been a key enabler in generating awareness and facilitating interest and support for the program. Sport Australia also has strong relationships across the NSO network, which has enabled open communication and collaboration. There may be an opportunity to increase communication about the program and the importance of physical activity between the school and parents, as it was not clear how systematically this was occurring. Management strategy - Open communication processes between the Department and Sport Australia have reportedly supported SSP's implementation and ongoing management. However, responsibility for performance monitoring sits with the Sport Australia Board who are the accountable authority for the SSP. Resource management - Initially, Sport Australia commented that they had to undergo a considerable amount of work to improve the capacity and capability of NSOs and NSO-affiliated organisations to deliver on the program priorities. Recent changes to the program funding are reportedly adversely impacting on ongoing resourcing capacity for program operations.	
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Effectiveness

EQ5. Was the investment in SSP value for money (degree to which the Program has been effective in achieving its key objectives, including program reach, and an assessment of the impacts the Program has had on the target populations and orgs (either intended or unintended)).	• SSP received significant engagement from schools and has extensive reach across the country. Approximately 79 per cent of all schools have registered with the program. Grants data shows that large amounts of funding is reaching schools in regional, rural and remote areas. However, there is evidence of a challenge in attracting registration of schools in small, very remote areas with approx. one-third remain unregistered. • The program provides access to a wide variety of high quality, professionally delivered sport before, during and outside of school hours. Both schools and NSOs reported that the program is positively affecting overall in-school sport participation levels. • Generally, the program is delivered by specialists with an understanding of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS), which stakeholders believe is leading to improved skills development and therefore increased FMS. • Despite evidence to suggest that the SSP is having a positive impact on children's participation in school, there does not appear to be a strong link to increased participation in community-based sport. One of the reasons for this is that sporting organisations and coaches do not have exposure to parents in order to promote their activities outside of school. • Both schools and NSOs have observed an increase in the appreciation of the holistic benefits of sport through the SSP. However, the benefits of the program can depend on the school culture and prioritisation of sport within the curriculum. • The program has enabled NSOs to build connections with schools in their community, leading to increased collaboration and capacity-building. Whilst the demand for NSO services through the SSP has been strong, it appears that this is largely limited to the school environment, rather than translating into uptake of their services in the community.	
EQ6. Has the SSP been value for money for the overall Commonwealth investment?	• Based on the current program objectives, the expenditure on the SSP provides the Government with value for money, although this is over the longer term (as outlined earlier, refer to Page 6). • A body of evidence is mounting which supports investment in public health prevention programs, particularly in relation to curbing the obesity epidemic. This is despite the lag time between intervention and benefit realisation for this health interventions. • There are some areas where the program could be improved, and thus, offer greater value in terms of the Commonwealth investment. This includes broaden the focus of the SSP in alignment with the Physical Literacy Framework and formalising approaches to teacher capacity building and parent involvement.	
EQ7. What has been the ratio of costs to benefits?	• The BCR is low over a 10-year time period (0.17), as would be expected, yet improves if the timeline is extended (1.78 after 35-years). This is intuitively when benefits from sustained participation in sport would materialise, given the age of children receiving the intervention. • When considering the results of the value for money assessment, the results need to be viewed in the context of an economic evaluation of prevention programs. With many public health interventions, there is a large time lag between the	

	intervention and resulting effects, with most benefits occurring over the long-term. ³ This is a limitation when assessing the long-term effectiveness of such a program, ⁴ and so it is not unexpected the assessment would estimate a low return of the program at this stage.	
EQ8. Is the SSP an effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?	Overall the evaluation found that the program has achieved significant reach and performed well relative to the original objectives. However, if it were to maintain these objectives, going forward it would no longer be the most effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools (as outlined earlier, refer to Page 5).	
EQ9. What are the impacts (intended and unintended) and probable long-term outcomes of the SSP?	- The intended impacts of the program include supporting NSOs to enhance their reach. However, this may have supported the larger NSOs to do so (who already had sufficient access to funding), and not necessarily the smaller or less commercial sports. - The intended impact in relation to increasing access to support within schools was, in the main, attained. However, the unintended consequence may have been that some teachers were able to shift responsibility for providing high quality physical education to a third-party. - There are a range of likely positive health and social benefits delivered through this program. Providing access to opportunity for physical activity is desirable. However, the lower levels of flow on effects to community sports may not have been anticipated. Further data is required to validate this finding.	
Efficiency and sustainability		
EQ10. What resources were needed to deliver the program?	- Since establishment, the proportion of funding directed to Sport Australia for operations has been significantly reduced. Sport Australia acknowledged that the operational resourcing demands were higher in the foundational years of the program. Concerns were raised that the reduced budget would inhibit the capacity of the Sporting Schools team to operate the program and could limit future enhancements. - While the program data does not identify unique participants, an assessment of the total number of children participating in the SSP relative to total grant expenditure was undertaken. Following the first year, expenditure per participant declined significantly as the number of participants tripled. - Since 2016, the program has experienced some minor fluctuation in participants relative to grant expenditure though this has remained largely consistent – average expenditure per participant was \$13.80 between 2016 and 2019.	

³ Zechmeister, I., Kilian, R. & McDaid, D. (2008). Is it worth investing in mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness? A systematic review of the evidence from economic evaluations. *BMC Public Health* 8, 20 (2008) doi:10.1186/1471-2458-8-20

⁴ Ibid.

EQ11. Has the program been delivered to enhance sustainability?

- Since the program's inception in 2015, approximately \$200 million has been spent through the program. Grant applications are assessed by the SSP operations team within Sport Australia, based on a set of criteria in accordance with the terms and conditions and program parameters. Currently, 83 per cent of the funding is comprised of grant funds, which schools apply to Sport Australia to receive. Schools show strong support for the funding received through the SSP, with 85% of schools surveyed indicating the funding is 'very important' for the school.
- Responding to the rising epidemic of inactivity and obesity requires a multifaceted, multi-stakeholder response. The SSP has made an impact in terms of enabling a large number of children in Australia to participate in sports, delivered to them through their school.
- The extent to which this, in isolation, has resulted in significant health benefit, is difficult to discern. However, as current trends show, a systemic approach is required to support young people to increase their level of physical activity. As such, it may be the case that the SSP (or some future augmentation of it) may continue to have a role to play, if more acutely focused on improving physical activity levels in children. However, this would need to be in the context of an ecosystem (school, home, community) existing that targets towards an agreed vision and shared set of objectives related to physical activity in children.



Key:

-  Limited evidence that the performance indicators were met or evidence of poor performance against indicator
-  Mixed evidence that the performance indicators were met, or evidence of a medium level of performance against indicator
-  Evidence of strong performance against indicators, with only small suggested improvements to meet
-  Evidence that the performance indicators were met fully, with no suggested improvements

Recommendations

Thirteen recommendations have been made, based on the findings from this evaluation. A summary of key findings and recommendations made throughout the report is provided in Appendix A.

Appropriateness

1. Given that the SSP components broadly align with the stated objectives, the design of the program does not need to immediately change. In terms of whether the objectives themselves are valid, policy work is required to validate the existing objectives, and alter these as required - based on identified need and contemporary evidence.

Process

2. Establish information sharing mechanisms (either formal or informal), which includes state education and sport departments, to support a more consistent approach to increasing physical activity in schools across the country.
3. Review the program's operational expenses in the context of the strategic direction of the program. Operational funding should be commensurate with the remit of the program.

Effectiveness

4. Improving awareness of the SSP in remote locations should be a focal area, as this will likely improve the participation rate of schools in these areas, where participation is currently lagging.
 5. Appreciating and prioritising PE in the school environment and upskilling teachers to incorporate physical literacy within their classes would allow a 'whole of school' approach to improving FMS and physical literacy. The responsible agency should work with relevant stakeholders toward this common goal.
 6. Increasing the SSP's communication with, and involvement of, parents should receive greater focus, as this could alleviate one of the barriers to increasing sporting participation outside of school hours.
 7. More formalised involvement of teachers in the SSP, and the development of resources to support this, should be pursued as this would increase the benefits of the program.
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Efficiency and sustainability

8. Given the changing policy context, there is opportunity for strengthened focus on physical literacy, in the context of taking a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing. This could be achieved through focusing on more than just sport-related education and embedding physical literacy more broadly within the school curriculum.
 9. There is an opportunity to expand the scope of external providers to focus more broadly on health and wellbeing. The SSP should consider offering a broader range of physical activities, beyond organised sport.
 10. The program should aim to better engage with parents and promote physical and mental wellbeing more broadly.
 11. Given the high demand for the program, consideration should be given to how the program can be more targeted to need, such as targeting schools in more socially disadvantaged areas.
 12. The Government should determine the most appropriate delivery model to increase the efficiency of the management of grants, including streamlining the levels of delegation.
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1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the Sporting Schools Program, and the purpose and scope of its evaluation.

1.1 Background and program description

The overall physical activity levels of Australian children are poor. A recent report by the Lancet showed that Australian adolescents are doing close to the least amount of physical activity in the world, ranking 140th out of 146 countries in terms of performance against the World Health Organisation's physical activity recommendations⁵.

Since 2014, The Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card has assessed activity levels to be D minus, meaning that across 12 indicators of physical activity, less than half of children and young people (between 21%-40%) are meeting the required level. The report showed that an estimated 23-63 per cent of primary and 11-40 per cent of secondary school students accumulate the required minimum daily amount of physical activity (60 minutes every day) per week, respectively⁶.

From 2005-2014, the Commonwealth Government delivered the Active After School Communities (AASC) program to respond to societal trends influencing children's participation in physical activity. The AASC provided primary schools with access to free sport and physical activity programs after school hours. In 2015, the SSP was introduced in recognition that schools can play a more direct role in facilitating children's participation in sport during school hours, and to increase students' involvement with community sporting initiatives, delivered by local sporting organisations. The program was designed with the primary objective of supporting schools to raise children's physical activity levels through the provision of regular, high-quality and diverse sports programs in schools. Through this, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in the number of children participating in community sport programs.

The SSP involves the delivery of organised sport, provided by accredited sporting organisations, as opposed to general PE activities or 'games'. The focus on providing sport-based activities to students recognises the benefits of sport in terms of increasing physical movement through skills-based activities, and as a source of social capital within communities. The program also aims to increase the variety of sports available to school-aged children and connect them with community sporting clubs to encourage physical activity outside of school hours.

Research has shown that people who play sport as children have greater levels of fitness, which leads to numerous physical and mental health benefits, such as reduced risk of cancer, diabetes and depression⁷. However, there are also other benefits beyond physical fitness, including that children who play sport regularly will typically stay at school longer, attain higher academic performance and as a result have higher lifetime earnings⁸. They will also be more involved in their communities, including having more diverse friendship groups⁹.

⁵ Guthold, R., Stevens, G., Riley, L. and Bull, F. (2020). Global trends in insufficient physical activity among adolescents: a pooled analysis of 298 population-based surveys with 1.6 million participants. *The Lancet: Child and Adolescent Health* 4:1, p23-35.

⁶ Active Healthy Kids Australia (2018). *Muscular Fitness: It's Time for a Jump Start. The 2018 Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People*. Adelaide, South Australia.

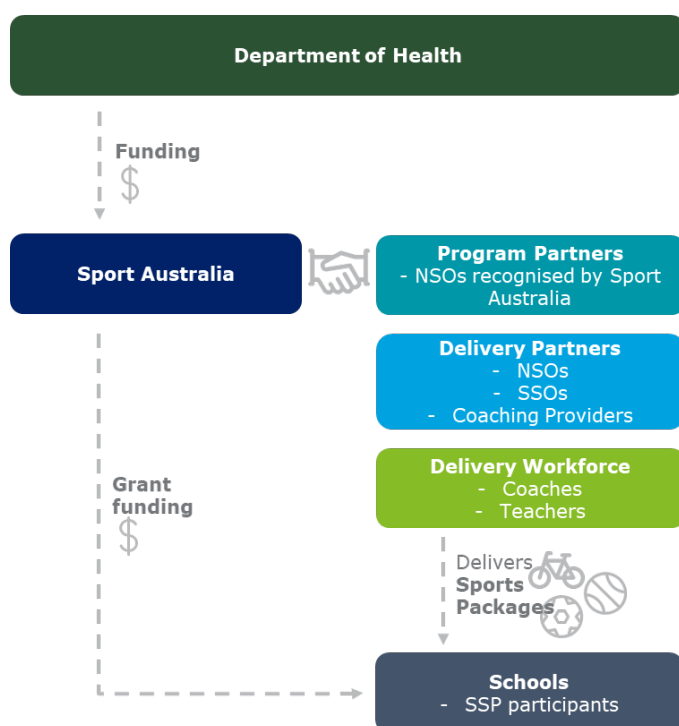
⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Impact of physical inactivity as a risk factor for chronic conditions: Australian Burden of Disease Study. *Australian Burden of Disease Study series no. 15*. Cat. no. BOD 16. Canberra: AIHW.

⁸ Tammelin, T. et al. (2003). Adolescent Participation in Sport and Adult Physical Activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 24, Issue 1, 22 – 28.

⁹ Sport Australia (2018), *Sport 2030 – National Sport Plan*, <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/677894/Sport_2030_-_National_Sport_Plan_-_2018.pdf>

The SSP offers all schools the opportunity to apply for per-term grant funding. These grants enable schools to purchase either additional sports equipment, hire professional coaches to deliver specific sport programs, or for teachers to undertake PE focussed professional development – see Figure 1.1: SSP delivery model. The SSP was initially targeted at all primary school students nationwide and as of 2017 it also became available to Year 7 and 8 students.

Figure 1.1: SSP delivery model (illustrative only)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, stakeholder consultations and program documentation

1.1.1 Roles and responsibilities

Table 1.1 shows the stakeholders that are involved in the funding, operations and delivery of the program. Below (in Table 1.1) is a more detailed description of the operational design of the SSP, and program parameters, based on the Sporting Schools Guidelines¹⁰ (the Guidelines).

Table 1.1: SSP roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Role in SSP
The Department	Undertake activities to maintain funding through the Government's budget process, and support Sport Australia's ongoing SSP operations.
Sport Australia	Responsible for program operations, including management of NSOs, school registrations and grants. The operations team reports to the Sport Australia Board who have oversight of the funding and performance against budget outcomes.
Sporting organisations	Participate in the program by becoming a coaching provider and delivering coaching services on behalf of an NSO.
Schools (public, private and Catholic)	Apply for funding grants to have SSP delivered at the school, either via an external sporting organisation, to fund resources to allow for teacher-delivered sport programs, or to contribute to professional training for teachers in PE.

¹⁰ Sport Australia (2017). *Sporting Schools Guidelines*.

Sport Australia partners with NSOs that are recognised by Sport Australia and are identified as program partners. All program partners must demonstrate the following:

- Have a sport offering that has been suitably modified for junior participation and meets the program objectives
- Has an aligned workforce across Australia
- Is able to deliver a consistent, safe and quality experience
- Has a clear pathway to move participants from the SSP to the sports community offerings.

Other stakeholders – such as sporting organisations, individuals and coaches – involved in the SSP must also be registered with the program.

For a sporting organisation to register for the SSP, it must provide an active ABN or confirm exemption; and meet minimum requirements, including service level agreement, memorandum of understanding, licence or franchise agreement, which will be determined by the relevant Program Partner that the organisation is working under.

For an individual coach or a teacher at the school to register for the SSP, they must be of a minimum age (not stated in documentation provided by the Department); show completion of a valid state and/or territory Working with Children Check (WWCC); and meet minimum requirements, including accreditation and qualifications, which will be determined by the relevant Program Partner that the coach or teacher is working under. Additionally, for teachers delivering the SSP, they must be at least 16 years of age and be currently registered in the applicable state and/or territory, associated with employment at a school.

The delivery of the SSP is overseen by a Delivery Partner, which can be an NSO, SSO or Coaching Provider, and must be approved by the relevant Program Partner (a recognised NSO) to deliver the program. A Delivery Partner needs to be registered as an organisation as part of the SSP; be recognised by one of the three Delivery Partner categories (an NSO, SSO or Coaching Provider); and must be connected to a Program Partner sport.

The delivery of the SSP itself is completed by the Delivery Workforce, which is made up of coaches and teachers, and must be approved by the relevant Delivery Partner. These NSO-nominated coaching providers, organisation-nominated coaching providers or teachers must be registered for the SSP; be connected to a Delivery Partner; and be connected to a Program Partner sport.

A Program Partner must approve a Delivery Partner, and a Delivery Partner must approve the Delivery Workforce. These approval decisions must be solely made on the quality standards relevant to the delivery of the program and the safety standard required by the Program or Delivery Partner.

Delivery Partners deliver the SSP through a Sport Package. School and organisation stakeholders must register for the Site Account to administer and manage participation in the SSP. The Site Account is an online portal. Schools can access details of available sports and booking information via the Site Account and request an Organisation for the delivery of Sport Packages or nominate a Teacher to deliver Sport Packages. Organisations can use the Site Account to engage with schools for the delivery of Sport Packages, which must be delivered with a minimum of four sessions. Each session of a Sport Package must have 45 – 60 minutes of activity; have the same participant taking part; be delivered to a minimum of ten participants; and must actively engage participants of all abilities.

1.1.2 SPP objectives and program features

In its current form, the SSP has five key objectives. These relate to both student participation in sport, as well as generating appreciation for sport in the school context and subsequently driving NSO participation growth. These objectives are:

1. Engaging students in high quality NSO-led sport-based physical activity within schools
2. Improving FMS in anticipation of a broader physical literacy focus
3. Converting students' participation in SSP to participation in sport outside of school hours
4. Increasing appreciation of sport in schools
5. Improving the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth

1.2 Evaluation overview

1.2.1 Previous evaluation

SSP was evaluated by Orima in 2017¹¹, to understand the extent to which the program was achieving its objectives at the time, and to identify potential improvements to the service delivery model.

SSP was found to be meeting the primary objective of increasing children's participation in high-quality, NSO-led, sport-based physical activity in schools, and improving the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth. However, there was mixed evidence about the program increasing appreciation of the value of sports participation in schools and whether increased physical activity within schools was translating to increased participation in community sport. Further, there was little evidence that the program was improving children's FMS¹².

The evaluation made several recommendations to improve the program in both the short and long term, across categories ranging from improved articulation of the program benefits, implementation of formal feedback mechanisms from schools and providers, and increased teacher training and co-delivery.

1.2.2 Current evaluation

In 2019, Deloitte Access Economics was engaged by the Department to undertake an evaluation of the SSP. The evaluation consists of both process and outcome components, including an assessment of whether the program is providing value for money to the Department based on the ~\$200 million investment made since 2015.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide insight into the effectiveness of the SSP against its original objectives and to understand whether the program provides value for money to the Commonwealth Government. The findings contained in the report are intended to be useful for the Department in informing the future direction of the program, given it has reached the end of its current funding period, and recognising recent shifts in the policy context which may mean some of the original objectives are no longer appropriate.

The key lines of enquiry for the evaluation are:

- Is the delivery of the SSP the most effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?
- Does the expenditure on the SSP provide the Government with value for money?

1.2.3 Program logic and evaluation questions

Evaluation questions and a program logic provide a framework to undertake the evaluation. The evaluation questions ensure the evaluation framework comprehensively covers the issues required to be addressed. The logic framework provides the conceptual basis for the evaluation framework and the selection of performance indicators, identifying and describing objectives and desired outcomes and the anticipated cause and effect relationships between initiatives and overarching goals. The evaluation questions are listed in Table 1.2.

¹¹ Orima. (2017). *Evaluation of the Sporting Schools Program – Final Report*. Canberra, ACT.

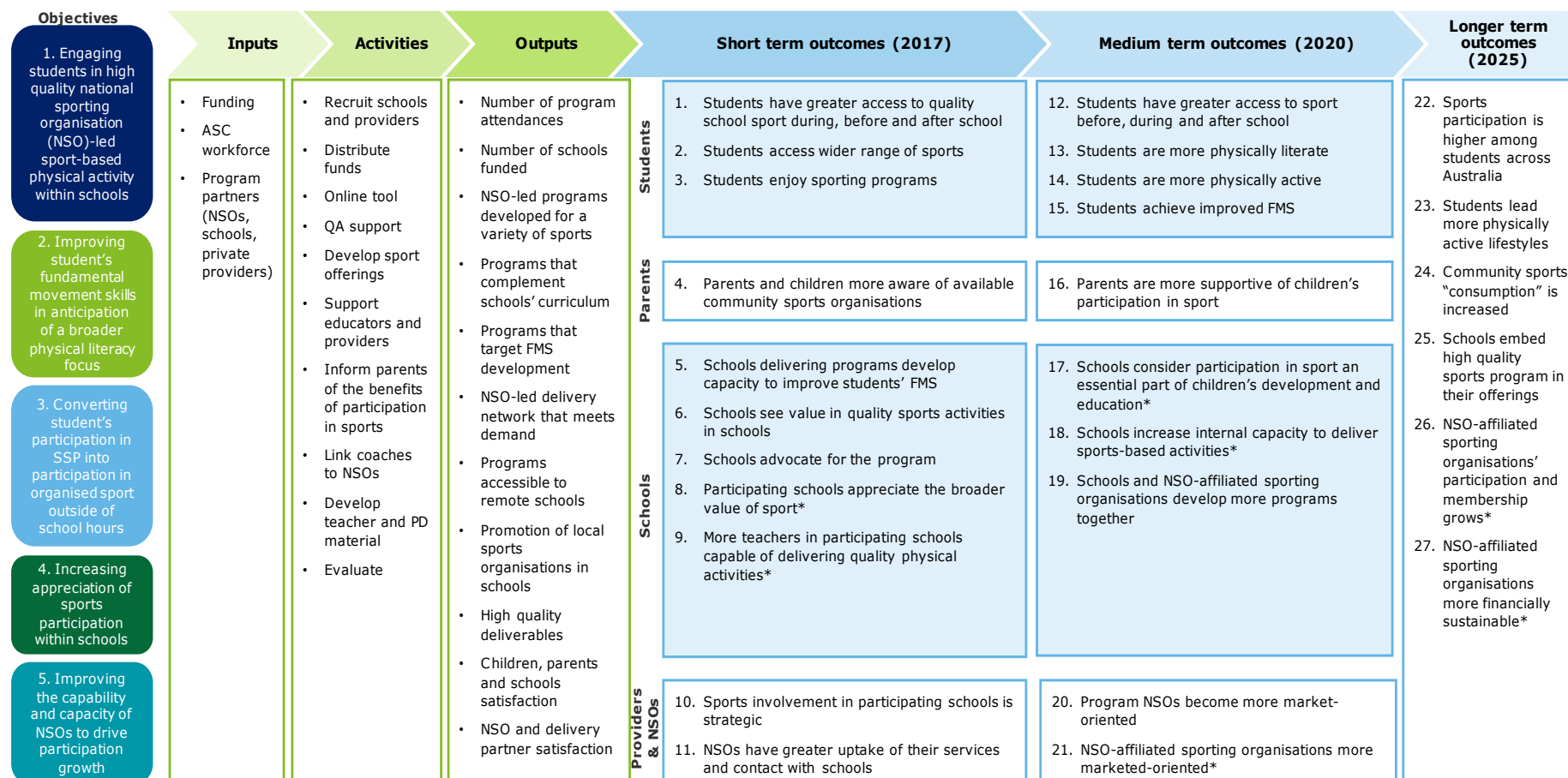
¹² Fundamental movement skills are a specific set of skills that involve different body parts such as feet, legs, trunk, head, arms and hands. These skills are the "building blocks" for more complex and specialised skills that kids will need throughout their lives to competently participate in different games, sports and recreational activities (ACT Department of Health, 2019).

Table 1.2: Evaluation questions

Evaluation domain	Evaluation question
Appropriateness	Is the program designed to deliver on the stated objectives?
	What elements of the program were most likely to contribute towards achieving the Program's objectives?
Process	How did the administrative structures and capacity building activities support the Program's implementation and the achievement of the Program's objectives?
	Was the Program delivered as intended?
Effectiveness	Was the investment in SSP value for money (degree to which the Program has been effective in achieving its key objectives, including program reach, and an assessment of the impacts the Program has had on the target populations and orgs (either intended or unintended).
	Has the SSP been value for money for the overall Commonwealth investment?
	What has been the ratio of costs to benefits?
	Is the SSP an effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?
	What are the impacts (intended and unintended) and probable long-term outcomes of the SSP?
Efficiency and sustainability	What resources were needed to deliver the program?
	Has the program been delivered to enhance sustainability?

Figure 1.2 shows the program logic model for SSP which was developed for this evaluation in consultation with both the Department and Sport Australia.

Figure 1.2: SSP Program Logic



1.2.4 Data collection

Data collection throughout the evaluation included a mix of both primary and secondary sources. These included:

- **Literature scan on best practice** - a literature scan on best practice approaches in terms of delivering the stated objectives of the SSP was conducted. This was enabled by the proprietary AI bot developed by Deloitte – The Hunter. The Hunter reviews grey and academic literature based on predefined search terms. The purpose of the literature review was to understand best practice approaches, in order to facilitate an assessment of whether the program has been well designed, is evidence informed, and whether it represents current thinking in terms of improving the participation of students in sport.
- **Stakeholder interviews** – the evaluation involved 26 interviews with a range of key program and policy stakeholders, state-based education and sports and recreation departments, and key health promotion and sporting peak bodies. The interviews were a means of gathering information related to the SSP implementation and operations, as well as to gain an overview of the current market for sports programs in schools, and to the range of other similar programs being delivered across Australia.
- **School survey** – a survey was sent to all schools who have registered for the program since it begun. There were 483 schools that completed at least 70 per cent of the survey. The survey asked about the participants views on the program delivery and its effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives.
- **Sport organisation survey** – a survey was sent to contacts at all NSO and NSO-affiliated organisations who have participated in the program. There were 458 sport organisations that completed at least 70 per cent of the survey¹³. The survey asked about sporting organisation's views on the program operations and delivery and its effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives.
- **School deep dives** – two schools were consulted with as part of the evaluation¹⁴, in order to gather a deeper understanding of the implementation of the program at the individual school level, and to discuss the outcomes being demonstrated in schools and the local community. The deep dive included interviews with the school principal and PE teachers involved in the SSP coordination and delivery.
- **SSP program data** – a range of program data was collected from Sport Australia, via the Department, for analysis in the evaluation. This included school and NSO registration details, grant and booking data, program delivery details, AusPlay Clearinghouse for Sport data and financial information.

1.2.5 Ethics

It was been determined that formal ethics approval would not be sought for the purposes of this evaluation for the following reasons:

- The team understand and adhere to ethical standards when undertaking any research
- There was no consultation with children or vulnerable populations
- The subject matter is not sensitive in nature

However, in order to undertake research directly with schools, a national research application form was completed and submitted to the relevant state education department research bodies. Each jurisdiction that receives a research application assesses it according to its research appraisal guidelines, which contain broadly similar assessment criteria. The form covers the below areas:

- Overview of research project
- Details of researcher
- Methodology and data collection
- Location of research and recruiting participants

¹³ Of the respondents to the survey, 65% were schools in NSWs. This reason for this is unclear, as the survey was distributed to all registered schools in the country, however should be noted when considering the survey results.

¹⁴ Whilst the original number was intended to be higher, this was revised due to the timeframes for undertaking the evaluation, which restricted the ability to gain the relevant research approvals for undertaking consultations with schools. The school survey was developed to mitigate this.

- Impact
- Benefits
- Ethics
- Sensitivities
- Public liability insurance
- Working with children registration

Approval was granted by the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory within the timeframes available for data collection during the evaluation.

1.2.6 Limitations

The list below outlines limitations which must be considered in the context of this evaluation:

- Due to delays in obtaining research application approval across states, we were unable to speak in-depth to a large cross-section of schools with a number of differing demographics as originally planned. While the survey provided this cross-section, a larger number of deep dives would have been able to validate and further explore the survey findings.
- The responses to the school survey highlighted that there was a significantly lower number of responses for schools that were registered for the SSP but not approved to deliver the program, compared to those already delivering, due to the large reach of the program. This means that the sample of non-delivering schools was significantly smaller than that of delivering schools, and therefore less likely to be representative of the entire group of non-delivering schools. Furthermore, there was a low number of responses from special schools, and so there is similarly underrepresentation for this sub-group of schools.
- In addition to the low number of responses of some sub-groups to the school survey, there was also a greater than proportional response from schools in NSW metropolitan area. This means the results to the school survey are skewed towards schools located in NSW metropolitan areas.
- Some of the data underpinning the change in participation in community sport over time has a high relative margin of error. Additionally, the increases in this data over time cannot directly be attributed to the SSP. This limits the applicability of the data to the effectiveness assessment component of this research and increases the margin of error in the results.
- For economic evaluations, such as a value for money assessment, of prevention programs it is not unexpected for a low return to the program result, if the analysis occurs soon after program implementation. This is because benefits of such programs are usually gained in the long-term. This is discussed further in section 4.2 of this report.
- The SSP participant data used for the value for money assessment does not identify the number of unique students per schools per term, provide demographics about participants or outline continuity of participants across terms and years. In order to quantify unique numbers and associated demographics, assumptions had to be made where the data was missing. Further explanation of the data limitations and assumptions used can be found in section 4.2.

1.3 Purpose and structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 – Appropriateness. This chapter reports the key findings from the evaluation pertaining to the appropriateness of SSP. It considers the appropriateness from the perspective of SSP stakeholders.

Chapter 3 – Process. This chapter discusses the effectiveness of the SSP service model.

Chapter 4 – Effectiveness. This chapter reports the key findings related to the effectiveness of the SSP, relative to the program logic. Additionally, it contains the results of the value for money assessment of the SSP.

Chapter 5 – Efficiency and sustainability. This chapter comments on the program's efficiency, given the investment and considers its sustainability into the future.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion. This chapter provides a summary of the evaluation report and identifies potential next steps for the Department to consider.

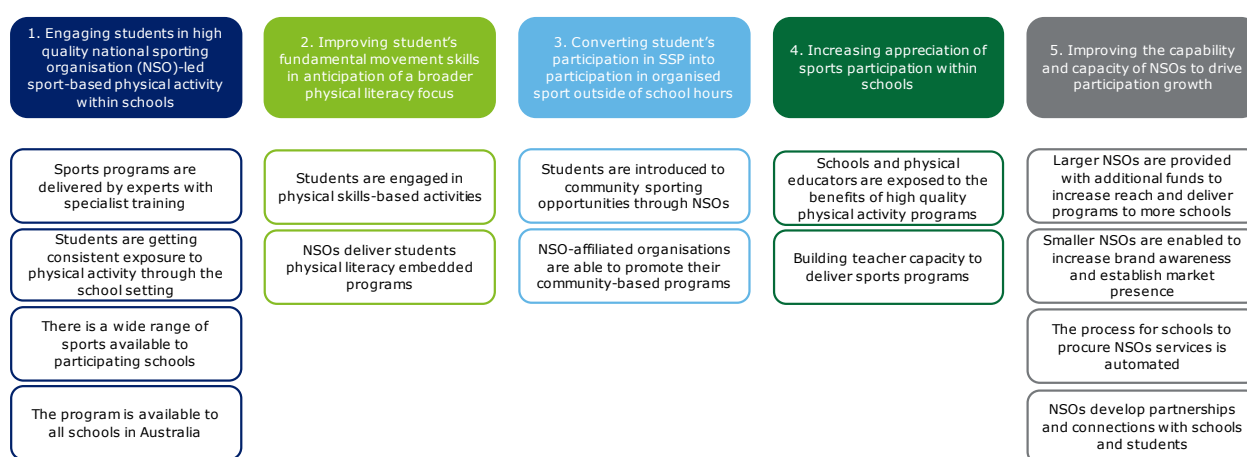
2 Appropriateness

This chapter considers whether the SSP has been designed in alignment with its five objectives.

2.1 SPP objectives and program features

In its current form, the SSP has five key objectives. These relate to both student participation in sport, as well as generating appreciation for sport in the school context and subsequently driving NSO participation growth. These objectives are shown in Figure 2.1, along with the features of the program that have been designed to contribute to each of the objectives.

Figure 2.1 Program objectives and high-level features



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, based on review of SSP documentation.

In this chapter, each of the program design features will be discussed in terms of their alignment to achieving the SSP's five objectives. This analysis is based on evidence from program documentation and stakeholder consultation. This analysis will assess the program components, relative to the objectives, and consider whether this is appropriate. It will also consider if, based on the evidence, there are any program components missing that would have further supported the attainment of the stated objectives.

2.1.1 Objective 1: Engaging students in high quality sport-based physical activity within schools

2.1.1.1 Sports programs are delivered by experts with specialist training

- Sport Australia has partnered with 33 NSOs in order to help deliver a quality sporting experience in schools¹⁵. Sporting organisations participate in the program by becoming a coaching provider and are engaged by schools to deliver the coaching services through sports sessions. There are stipulated minimum standard requirements for coaches in terms of becoming accredited to deliver the SPP, as noted in the previous chapter. The coaches must be accredited through the Program Partner NSOs.

Outsourcing the program to professional sports coaches rather than teachers is intended to increase the quality of the program, as professionals can teach students the specific skills and techniques required to play the sport. Teachers may only have a general knowledge of the sport

¹⁵ Sport Australia (2019), *Sporting Schools: Sporting Organisations*, Accessed at: https://www.sportaus.gov.au/schools/sporting_organisations/get_started.

and would not have the specific skills in order to teach this. In many schools, teachers are not specialised in PE, and have not received training in conducting specialised PE classes.

2.1.1.2 Students are getting consistent exposure to sport through the school setting

When established, the SSP was intended to be complementary to the new National Health and PE curriculum which commenced in 2014, by offering quality club-delivered sport based physical activity. In order to engage students in sport-based physical activity within schools, the program provides students with direct access to organised sport sessions during and after school hours.

The focus on sport is enabled by the partnership with the NSOs, rather than general PE which is typically taught in schools. As outlined in the Orima evaluation report, sport is highly valued by schools and the broader community due to the range of outcomes it can deliver, including improved physical and mental health, social skills and good learning outcomes. There was also a view from stakeholders that sport, and the broader benefits it brings, is underemphasised in the school curriculum.

The SSP sessions are typically structured on a weekly basis with the coach, in order to provide consistent exposure to the activity, rather than as a one-off clinic which does not allow for skills to be learned and developed overtime. The Guidelines also stipulate that students should participate in the program for a minimum of four sessions, which are required to run for 45-60 minutes.

The 'school setting' in this instance relates to before, during (including during class time or lunch) and after school. The SSP is delivered by coaches and/or teachers during these periods in the school day. Further to this, analysis of the Program Delivery Survey shows that the program is delivered at various points during the school day. This includes before, during class time, during lunch time or after school.

2.1.1.3 There are a wide range of sports available to participating schools

The first objective to engage students in sport during school hours is very clear in its focus on 'sport-based physical activity'. To achieve this, the program should have a component of the program which ensures the availability of 'a range of sports'.

Partnering with 33 NSOs to provide a range of sports available to schools aligns with the specific focus on sport as a means of increasing physical activity. Not only does this provide access to sport in the school setting, as opposed to general PE classes whereby students may play generic games, or learn non-specific skills, the diversity of sports allows the schools to determine what best suits their individual context.

Schools are also provided with connections to sporting organisations in their local community, which they may have previously been unaware of. Documentation provided by the Department outlines that the online registration process includes a matching service which links participating schools with recognised local sport providers based on their individual needs.

Particularly for government schools, or schools in lower socio-economic areas, in many cases there is not the funding available to provide students with access to a diverse range of sports. The SSP can therefore provide access to a wider range of sporting opportunities in this instance. However, for many private schools, the SSP funding can contribute to an existing sports offering, or replace funding that may have been previously provided through the school. Additionally, consultation with the Department indicated that expanding the program to include secondary schools would better accommodate some sports which are more suited to older age groups, such as rowing.

2.1.1.4 The program is available to all schools across Australia

The first objective sets out an intent to support 'engagement of students with high quality sports'. In order to support this objective, it would be necessary to firstly determine whether there were students who were not engaging with high quality sport and target the program accordingly.

Currently, all schools can register for the SSP. Every primary and secondary school in the country can apply to receive funding for the SSP. Whilst the current budget does not allow for funding to be provided to every school, the changes made to the program following the adaption from the previous AASC program were intended to reach more than double the number of schools, and increase the number of participating students by 110 per cent, compared with the AASC. This was

enabled by an increase in the total funding for the program, and by increasing the intended grant funding ratio to 65 per cent of the program, up from 45 per cent under AASC. This has since increased to over 80 per cent of funding directed to grants, and a subsequent streamlining of the program staffing level.

The result is that the program allows for population-wide exposure to sport-based physical activity for primary school students in Australia. This has increased the potential for a greater number of 5 to 12-year-old children to attain the recommended daily physical activity levels of at least 60 minutes of physical activity for a minimum of two days per week, with the secondary aim of fostering an interest among children in continued engagement with sport.

There is, however, limited targeting based on needs of specific target cohorts, apart from the overarching criteria. The Sporting Schools Grant Applications Processes document provided by the Department outlines that schools with 'special circumstances', e.g. regional or remote schools, or students with special needs, can apply for additional funding to deliver the program. Based on the documentation provided, these factors are not considered in the prioritisation and ranking of successful applications.

Objective 1: Engaging students in high quality sport-based physical activity within schools - key findings:

1. Engaging experts with specialist training is an appropriate element of the program to ensure that the sports sessions are of a high quality. Given that specialists are accredited to deliver the sports via the Program Partners, this further supports the attainment of this first program objective.
2. Providing access to sports program in the school setting (either before, during or after), across at least four sessions per term, provides a degree of consistent exposure to sport. This focus on students, in the school setting, over several sessions, is appropriate given the objective to engage students in sport-based activity during school hours.
3. Engaging with a wide range of NSOs is an appropriate way to increase the accessibility of sport-based activity in schools, and to increase opportunities for diversity in PE in schools.
4. Given the intent of the program to engage students in high quality supports, this is aligned to the program scope to include all schools in Australia, in order to reach to all students. However, there is an opportunity to target based on student need and current engagement with sport, given the demand for the program is greater than the current funding level.

2.1.2 Objective 2: Improving FMS in anticipation of a broader physical literacy focus

2.1.2.1 Students are engaged in sports activities

The second objective focuses on FMS, which are the skills that are the basis for all physical activity. This includes things like sports, dance, gymnastics and other physical recreational activities.

Development of FMS sets the groundwork for the development of more complex, specialised skills that young people will use in recreational activities, sports and other games. Categories of FMS include locomotor and non-locomotor skills, such as balancing, running, jumping, skipping, as well as ball skills, such as bouncing, throwing, catching and kicking. This objective clearly identifies that the program is seeking to improve FMS within the target group. The question is whether the focus on sports will facilitate the anticipated improvement in FMS.

The skills-based nature of sport supports the principles of FMS and incorporates a number of the movement activities listed above¹⁶. Therefore, the focus on sport in SSP will contribute to the objective of improving FMS.

However, sport is not the only means to achieving improved FMS, and, according to consultation with ACHPER, some sports have more of a focus on FMS development than others. Improving FMS involves the development of a range of different foundational movements, and therefore

¹⁶ School Sport Victoria (2018) *Sporting Schools*. Accessed at: <https://www.ssv.vic.edu.au/Pages/SportingSchools.aspx>

participation in a single sport will limit the FMS development that can be gained by participating in a wide variety of activities. It is therefore important that the SSP forms part of a range of activities that primary school students are doing to increase their movement in the school environment. Similarly, with the increasing focus on physical literacy as a broader concept than just physical activity, sport will only form one aspect of this.

2.1.2.2 NSOs deliver students physical literacy embedded programs

A recent focus of the SSP has been the promotion of the Physical Literacy Framework. Consultation and survey findings show that NSOs are being encouraged to embed the physical literacy principles within their programs and have access to materials from Sport Australia in order to do this, including the Physical Literacy Program Alignment Guidelines.

However, as touched on above, incorporation of physical literacy within the school environment is enabled through a holistic learning approach, with a focus broader than sport. Therefore, the move to a broader physical literacy focus is not reliant on NSO involvement, and in fact will require input from numerous stakeholders in a child's life, including parents and families, teachers, and other health and wellbeing professionals. With the right training and resources, both generalist and specialist HPE teachers can be equipped with the right skills to support whole-of-child development and movement with a physical literacy focus, drawing on the support of a range of external providers as required.

Objective 2: Improving FMS in anticipation of a broader physical literacy focus – key findings:

5. While a focus on FMS supports children to attain the basic skills necessary for physical activity, sport-based activity is not the only mechanism through which FMS can be developed. This means that the SSP does not have to solely focus on sport in order to achieve this objective.
6. Whilst NSOs can play a role in promoting physical literacy through their programs, there are other providers who could also do this. However, it is likely that NSOs have the capability and capacity to support their affiliated coaches with the design and delivery of sports programs that have a focus on FMS, which provides some degree of quality assurance over program delivery.

2.1.3 Objective 3: Converting students' participation in SSP to participation in sport outside of school hours

2.1.3.1 Students are introduced to community sporting opportunities through NSOs

The third objective is very clear in that the program is intended to lead to children participating in sport outside of school hours, over and above that which they would do in the absence of this program. This component of the program focuses on creating links between students, and community sports, given that the coach is drawn from the local community.

The scope of the SSP was expanded from the previous AASC program, to include the delivery of sport activities to students before, during and after school hours. This was intended to give schools the flexibility to deliver the program based on their individual preferences and 'climatic conditions'. Whilst stakeholder consultation suggests that most programs are conducted during school hours, as part of the school's PE program, the intention of engaging external NSOs was to provide students with the links to sporting organisations in the community, to encourage further sport participation outside of school hours.

This feature of the program assumes that, if students get exposure to a sport during school hours, they will be more likely to develop an interest in this sport and go onto play it outside of school hours. However, whilst knowledge of available community sports is important, there are a number of factors which will influence a child's engagement in sport outside of school hours. Most notably, parent and family engagement with, and willingness to support their child's participation in, community-based sport is vital. This includes the family's financial situation. According to a recent

study by the ABC¹⁷, a survey of families in NSW showed that, on average, the cost to play a sport per season is \$1,100, not including transport costs. The biggest expense was reported to be the registration fee for sporting organisations, which was \$225 a year on average.

Additionally, there are other barriers to participation in community-based sport including access to equipment and facilities outside of the school environment, as well as other costs such as uniforms and footwear. The same study found that costs for these items can add up to over \$200 a year on average. AusPlay data shows that, due to the factors outlined, high-income families are more likely to have children in sports programs (84 per cent) compared with low income families (58 per cent)¹⁸.

2.1.3.2 NSO-affiliated organisations can promote their community-based programs

From the NSO's perspective, the SSP is intended to provide them with an opportunity to promote their community-based programs by building connections with schools. Particularly for smaller organisations, this may have previously been difficult due to a lack of resources for promotion. The expansion of the funding for SSP provides NSOs with a network of over 8,000 school communities through which to engage and promote their community-based programs.

However, as outlined above, exposure to sport during school hours is only one part of promoting the translation to community-based sport. The SSP in its current format does not focus on how schools and NSOs can take the next step to build the connections with parents and families, who are a key driver of community sport participation. This would require parent involvement and education to demonstrate the benefits of sport participation, as well as resources and incentives to assist in the uptake of community-sport, such as enabling NSO use of school sports facilities outside of school hours. As outlined in the Sport 2030 strategy, schools are a key contributor to promoting more physically active communities, including through 'unlocking their gates' so that communities can access their facilities where appropriate.

Objective 3: Converting students' participation in SSP to participation in sport outside of school hours – key findings:

7. Having local coaches from community sports deliver the program is desirable in terms of creating opportunities for children to transition into community sports outside of school hours. However, without reducing other barriers to participation (largely driven by the home context), the impact that the SSP can have, in terms of driving up community sport participation, is limited.
8. It is appropriate for NSOs, SSOs and local coaches to be involved in this program, in order to create links with community sports. While this may lead to greater awareness of the options available in the community, the extent to which this will lead to students converting to community sport is uncertain and could not be determined in this evaluation.

2.1.4 Objective 4: Increasing appreciation of sport in schools

2.1.4.1 Schools and physical educators are exposed to the benefits of high-quality physical activity programs

By creating opportunities for the delivery of high-quality sports programs by professional coaches within schools, it is not only the students who are the intended beneficiaries. Through the SSP, school-teachers are exposed to the benefits of a professionally delivered program, which is intended to align with the National Health and PE curriculum.

PE, including participation in sport, is one of the eight learning areas within the Australian curriculum, however stakeholder consultation indicated that it is often deprioritised compared with literacy and numeracy outcomes. By increasing the quality and diversity of the PE offering in schools, through engaging with external providers, schools will be able to appreciate the role sport plays in influencing children's confidence, competence and motivation across other aspects of their learning.

¹⁷ ABC (2018). *Is participating in sport becoming too expensive for average Australians?*, Accessed at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-10/is-participating-in-sport-becoming-too-expensive/10220960>

¹⁸ Ibid

In schools where there is a specialised PE teacher, there are instances where the SSP grant is used to access better quality equipment so that the school can deliver higher quality sports programs internally or incorporate sport-based activities within the classroom more generally. This feature of the program is intended to enable the school to increase the quality of their internal PE offering, and demonstrate the value sport plays in contributing to this.

2.1.4.2 Builds teachers' capacity to deliver sports programs

Whilst exposure to high quality sport sessions will play a role in demonstrating its benefits, this is not enough to drive increased appreciation of physical activity in schools more broadly. The SSP is intended to provide greater professional development opportunities for teachers, to enable them to build the school's internal capacity to deliver high-quality sports programs. By engaging professional coaches to deliver the programs initially, it is expected that they will be able to transfer these skills to teachers.

However, there is currently no formal mechanism to ensure that teachers are involved in the delivery of the program or for them to take ownership of promoting student outcomes in this context. If teachers are to engage in the program, they need to understand the importance of their role in building internal capacity, rather than viewing the program as a replacement for their own role in delivering PE classes.

In order to generate a broader appreciation of the role of sport in schools, and to emphasise the role the school can play in this, there is an opportunity for the SSP to engage teachers more formally. This could be through more formalised teacher training in specialised PE, or through program guidelines which emphasise the requirement for joint delivery of the sessions so that there is an opportunity for skills-transfer.

Objective 4: Increasing appreciation of sport in schools – key findings:

9. By providing access to high quality coaches, schools will likely develop a greater appreciation for sports. However, this depends on the extent to which schools truly engage with the program, as some may see it as a way to negate their own role in delivering quality PE.
10. The intention of the program to provide opportunities for internal capacity building in order to increase appreciation of sport in schools is appropriate, but currently there are no formal mechanisms to ensure this is systematically taking place.

2.1.5 Objective 5: Improving the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth

2.1.5.1 NSOs are provided with additional funds to increase reach and deliver programs to more schools

Linked to the objective of increasing sport participation in the community, is the objective of driving NSO participation growth. This is intended to be achieved by engaging external providers to deliver the program in schools, rather than relying purely on school-led delivery. Central to this is Sport Australia's role in leveraging their existing partnership with NSOs and providing oversight in the delivery of the program.

For larger NSOs, who already have existing high-quality programs, the SSP funding allows their programs to be accessed by a greater proportion of the student population, given the reach of the program. For smaller, local NSOs, who may not have previously had the resources to build connections with schools, the SSP facilitates this. Additionally, particularly for the smaller organisations, Sport Australia has undertaken capability-building exercises to ensure organisations are providing programs aligned with the objectives of SSP.

2.1.5.2 The process for schools to procure NSOs is automated

To respond to recommendations made in the 2011 Harvey Review, in order to generate efficiencies in the delivery of the AASC program, the SSP was designed to improve direct links between schools and sporting organisations, including via an interactive website and booking function. This means that schools do not have to dedicate resources to developing connections with local NSOs, and vis-versa, as this is facilitated by the online system. This feature improves NSOs exposure

across a number of schools within their local community within the one platform, and therefore provides opportunity for growth via increased uptake of their services.

2.1.5.3 NSOs develop partnerships and connections with schools and students

Enabling direct links between schools and NSOs as part of SSP is intended to provide opportunities for partnerships and collaboration in the broader promotion of physical activity in schools. The intention is that, by building these relationships as part of the SSP, NSOs will be able to generate ongoing opportunities to partner with the school in other sport-based initiatives.

However, within the current program format, there are some barriers to achieving this. Most notably, the capacity of a local coach to build a relationship with the school is limited due to the dose-based nature of program delivery, and therefore the likely lack of regular exposure to senior school staff members who have decision-making capabilities. This also is highly dependent on the individual teacher's engagement with the program.

Local coaches are more likely to drive increased community-based sport participation by building relationships with individual students, and therefore encouraging an interest in their sport. Broader partnerships between NSOs and schools requires a more formalised arrangement, potentially as part of a governance forum connecting schools and NSOs, to develop opportunities in the local community, with sport from education and sport agencies.

Objective 5: Improving the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth:

11. The use of external providers is aligned to the objective of increasing the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive growth in sport participation. However, if this is to extend beyond the school environment, the program will need to address the numerous barriers to community sport participation.
12. Automation of procurement for NSOs generates direct links with schools in the local community, in order to provide opportunity for greater exposure and uptake of services.
13. The format of the SSP is appropriate for developing connections at an individual student level, however broader ongoing partnerships between schools and NSOs is likely to require involvement of more senior stakeholders.

Appropriateness – recommendations:

1. Given that the SSP components broadly align with the stated objectives, the design of the program does not need to immediately change. In terms of whether the objectives themselves are valid, policy work is required to validate the existing objectives, and alter these as required - based on identified need and contemporary evidence.

3 Process

This chapter considers whether SSP's administrative structures and capacity-building activities have supported the program to be delivered as intended.

The SSP was implemented five years ago and has already been subject to the previous evaluation which included a focus on initial implementation. Therefore, a detailed assessment of the program's implementation was not a central focus of this evaluation.

The evaluation has considered whether the program's administrative functions, governance structures, and processes have supported the program to be delivered as intended. This includes an assessment of governance and processes at both the overarching program and policy level within the Department and Sport Australia, as well as at the NSO and school level, in terms of program awareness, registration and delivery.

3.1 Program operations

Four domains are considered as part of this process evaluation. These include:

1. **Governance** – the roles and responsibilities of each person or group involved in the initiative have been defined, agreed and documented.
2. **Stakeholder engagement and communications** – the process used by an organisation to engage stakeholders has a clear purpose to achieve outcomes and ensure ongoing engagement.
3. **Management strategy** – consideration of whether timeframes and outcomes are achievable within the proposed financial, human and technical resources.
4. **Resource management** – consideration of the types (financial and non-financial) and amounts of resources required, and how they will be used to deliver the stated outcomes of an initiative.

Stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation were asked to consider the barriers and enablers to the program continuing to be implemented as intended, with a specific focus on program governance and administration structures. These barriers and enablers have been grouped according to the four domains.

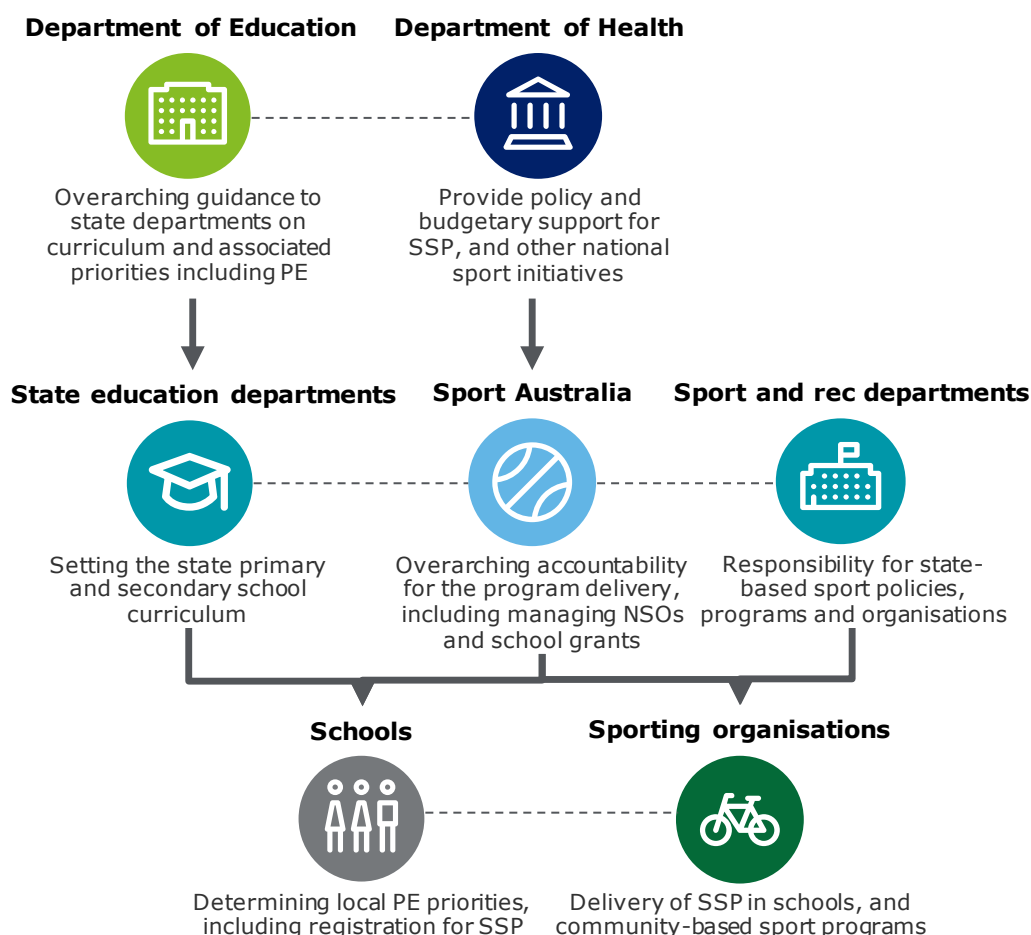
3.1.1 Governance

3.1.1.1 Governance arrangements

The SSP is a nationally funded and delivered program, which has an interface with state-based agencies due to their responsibility for primary and secondary education, as well as with individual schools who have a certain level of autonomy in determining the priorities and programs for their students. Whilst the Department has oversight of the program from a policy and funding perspective, Sport Australia and the Board of the Sport Australia are the accountable authority for SSP. It is important to note that there are a range of other stakeholders with responsibility for increasing the physical activity of students, and therefore a number of layers of governance involved in the SSP policy and delivery model. This adds to the complexity of managing the priorities of the different stakeholders involved, ensuring there is sufficient oversight of the program at each level, and ensuring that the program continues to be delivered in line with its objectives.

Figure 3.1 outlines the stakeholder landscape for ensuring school children are undertaking the required levels of physical activity.

Figure 3.1: SSP stakeholder landscape



Source: Deloitte Access Economics.

Since the SSP's establishment, Sport Australia outlined that they have maintained informal relationships with state education and sport and recreation departments regarding the program's delivery, including communicating with them providing relevant updates regarding the program. Whilst these relationships are largely informal, with communication as required, there is a working group facilitated by Sport Australia with state and territory contacts which includes regular updates on the SSP program. Despite this, there are opportunities to further strengthen the partnerships with state and territory departments in relation to the delivery of the SSP to ensure there is consistency with state level priorities and programs, and that the SSP is responding to local trends and policies.

3.1.1.2 Sport organisations

According to Sport Australia, the federated structure of the NSOs, and their affiliated state and local organisations has been central to the extensive reach of the program (as discussed in Chapter 4), and the efficient delivery of the program. The partnerships between national, state and local organisations, as well as the partnership between NSOs and Sport Australia, have enabled consistent program design and delivery, with appropriate tailoring depending on local circumstances and priorities.

There are two governance forums involving NSOs and Sport Australia – the first being a quarterly meeting involving all 33 NSOs, and the second being a smaller reference group of NSOs from a cross-section of sports. When the SSP was first established, these forums allowed Sport Australia to maintain significant oversight of NSO partnerships and operational arrangements. Going forward, they have allowed the NSOs to contribute to the design and suggested improvements of the program.

3.1.1.3 The education system

Stakeholders across both the federal and state governments commented on the complexity of the federated education system, which leads to competing policy priorities at each level. Health and PE is one of the eight specified learning areas in the Australian Curriculum¹⁹. However, each state and territory has varying levels of focus on PE within the state-determined curriculum, including the mandated hours of physical and sport education per week, and the involvement of specialist PE teachers, and therefore Sport Australia's level of influence, via the SSP, differs according to the state curriculum and priorities.

This has also resulted in a lack of clarity regarding who has ultimate responsibility for increasing physical activity and promoting health and wellbeing within the school environment. It has also impacted the extent to which SSP can truly influence schools. Further to this, schools continue to have a growing level of autonomy in terms of what programs and initiatives they wish to prioritise, which adds to the difficulty in responding to local needs.

Governance - key findings:

14. Strong partnerships between national, state and local organisations, as well as the partnership between NSOs and Sport Australia, have enabled consistency across the design and delivery of the SSP, allowing flexibility for local circumstances and priorities.
15. SSP is limited in its ability to influence the degree to which schools focus on PE, including the extent to which they prioritise it. The devolved education model means that it can be hard for the Commonwealth Government to influence school's approaches to physical activity improvement in a consistent way.

3.1.2 Stakeholder engagement and communication

3.1.2.1 Communication with NSOs

The model whereby Sport Australia was given overarching operational responsibility for the SSP has been a key enabler in generating awareness and facilitating interest and support for the program. Building on the historical arrangements of the AASC program, Sport Australia (the Australian Sports Commission at the time) built a positive reputation among schools. State sport agencies commented that this meant schools became comfortable with the model of external sporting organisations delivering programs in the school context, and a number of these relationships already existed. Sport Australia also reportedly having a strong reputation and relationship across the NSO network, which has enabled open communication and collaboration, as described above.

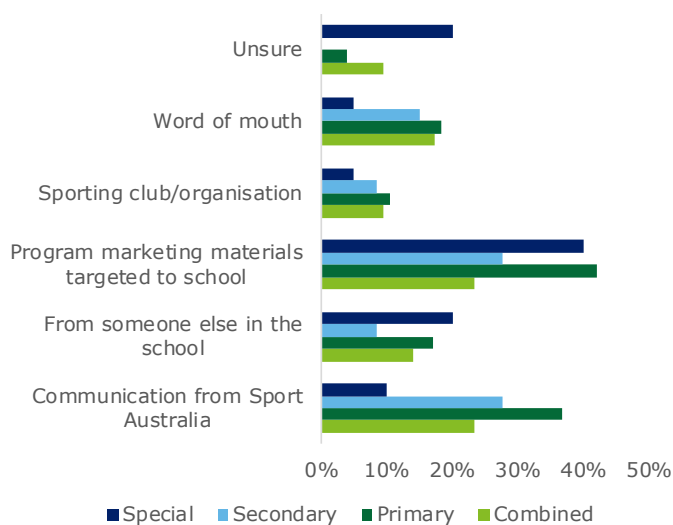
3.1.2.2 School awareness and motivation to registration

Ongoing funding for the program has been driven by the strong support it has received from schools. Demand for SSP has been greater than anticipated, which is discussed further in Chapter 4. The uptake of the program has demonstrated a clear desire for high quality sports-based programs in schools.

The program's implementation has been supported through the strong uptake from schools. Whilst this appears to have driven widespread awareness and support for the program, survey results show that targeted marketing and communication directly from Sport Australia were the biggest drivers of awareness for the SSP among respondents. Chart 3.1 shows the method of awareness by school type and overall, results were largely consistent across school type.

¹⁹ Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority: <https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum>

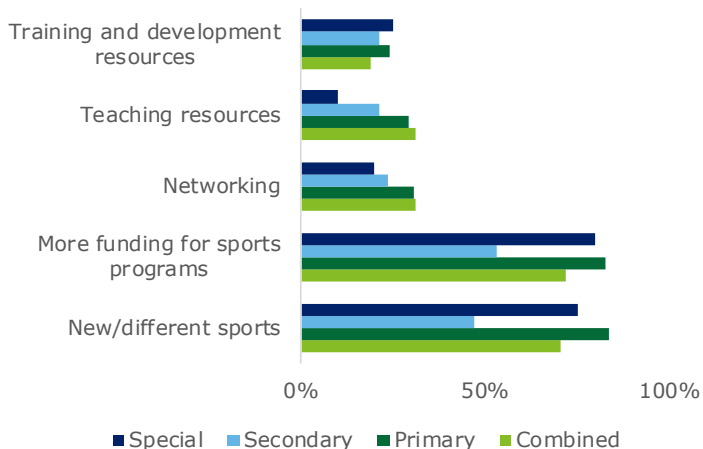
Chart 3.1: Method of awareness about SSP by school type (n=570)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of the school survey

Unsurprisingly, a primary motivation for schools registering for SSP was to access additional funding for sports programs. Additionally, the survey results showed that schools valued the opportunity to access new and different sports compared to what had previously been available at the school. Chart 3.2 shows that once again, this was consistent across school types.

Chart 3.2: Schools' motivation to register for SSP by school type (n=570)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of the school survey

Stakeholder engagement and communication - key findings:

16. Sport Australia's strong reputation and relationship across the NSO network has enabled open communication and collaboration between stakeholders.
17. The program's implementation has been supported through the strong uptake from schools, with survey results showing that targeted marketing and communication directly from Sport Australia were the biggest drivers of awareness for the SSP.

3.1.3 Management strategy

3.1.3.1 Overarching program management

Open communication between the Department and Sport Australia has reportedly supported SSP implementation and ongoing management. Supported by program documentation, there is a clear

delineation of responsibilities between the two agencies, and a strong day-to-day working relationship. The Department provides support for the program from a funding and policy perspective, and frequently engage with Sport Australia regarding the ongoing operations and priorities of the SSP. They recognise the expertise and reputation Sport Australia hold in this space. Sport Australia also acknowledged they are given a reasonable level of flexibility and autonomy in the delivery of the program, which they perceive as being due to their track record in this sector.

It was reported to the evaluation that there are high level targets that Sport Australia is expected to meet, which primarily relate to a target number of schools participating in the program. Sport Australia report progress against this target on a periodic basis and reported to the evaluation team that these are met or exceeded.

Additionally, Sport Australia collects data on several elements of the SSP including bookings, grant applications and grant acquittals. This data informs internal operational reports such as quarterly program reports, as well as quarterly reports provided to NSO partners. These internal reports are provided to the Department upon request and do not form part of any mandatory reporting obligations. Stakeholders confirmed that there are no other formalised reporting arrangements that exist between the two organisations. This is in part due to the governance structure whereby Sport Australia has accountable authority for the management of program operations and funding, with oversight of this sitting with the Sport Australia Board. Sport Australia receive funding for the program through a government appropriation. Funding for the program goes directly to their organisation. While the Department provides support to Sport Australia where required, for example during the budget process, they have limited oversight of the program. Both the Department and Sport Australia stated that there is no Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or formalised documentation that sets out contractual obligations in relation to the performance requirements of this program.

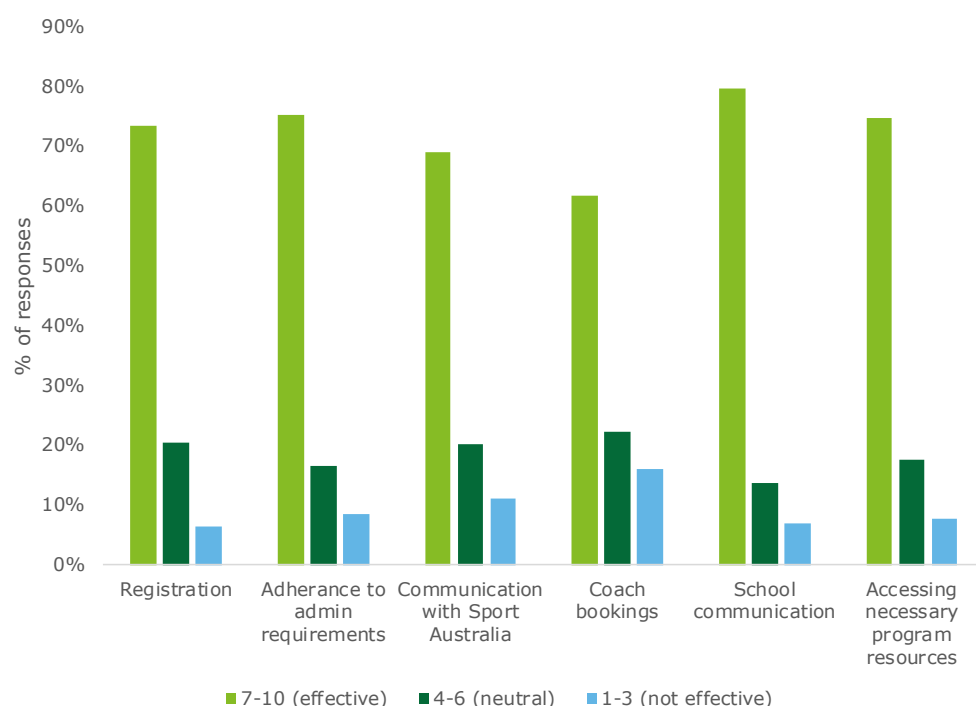
3.1.3.2 School/NSO administration

Results from the school and NSO surveys indicated that in some instances NSOs are finding it difficult to understand individual school requirements and funding arrangements using the booking system. This is reportedly due to delays experienced by schools in being able to access their funding, and therefore make specific program registration requests. This appears to have been an issue for a minority of program participants since the program commenced, with the Orima evaluation report also indicating that a small number of case study and survey respondents had concerns about the inflexibility of the booking system²⁰.

Despite this, stakeholders who completed the survey perceived that communication between schools and NSOs is largely effective. Chart 3.3 shows the responses from NSOs in the survey regarding the effectiveness of a number of the administrative processes they are required to undertake as part of the SSP. This shows that, overall, NSOs believe that the program is working well from an administrative and communication perspective. 'Coach bookings' had the highest proportion of 'not effective' and 'neutral' responses, however almost 60 per cent of responses still find it to be an effective process.

²⁰ Orima. (2017). *Evaluation of the Sporting Schools Program – Part A: Executive Summary and Key Findings*. Canberra, ACT.

Chart 3.3: NSO survey responses – “How well was the program delivered in terms of ...”



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of school survey

Management strategy – key findings:

18. As outlined in the program documentation, there is clear delineation of responsibilities between the Department and Sport Australia. The day-to-day working relationship between the two organisations was reported to be strong.
19. Sport Australia are accountable for the delivery of the program, and responsibility for performance monitoring sits with the Sport Australia Board.
20. Despite a minority of schools experiencing delays in being able to access their funding, stakeholders who completed the survey felt that communication between schools and NSOs is largely effective.

3.1.4 Resource management

3.1.4.1 Initial capacity and capability of NSOs

When the SSP was first established, Sport Australia commented that they had to undergo a considerable amount of work to improve the capacity and capability of NSOs and NSO-affiliated organisations to deliver on the program priorities. Particularly at a local organisational level, local coaches or community sporting clubs were not set up or resourced to adequately deliver the program to the required standard. Sport Australia was required to train coaches and organisations to effectively deliver the program, including supporting them to incorporate principles of FMS and physical literacy. Since the establishment phase, these delivery partners have matured, and the feedback is that the programs delivered in most schools are of a high quality, as discussed further in Chapter 4.

3.1.4.2 Ongoing resourcing capacity for program operations

Since the program was established in 2015, there has been a change in the amount of operational funding directed to Sport Australia as a component of the overall funding amount. Initially, a larger amount of the funding was allocated to the operating budget, which assisted with building awareness and support for the program and enhancing the capabilities of NSOs. The funding also assisted with the development of the Physical Literacy Framework. However, recently the operational funding has been reduced, with almost 100 per cent of the program’s funding being

directed to school grants. This has resourcing implications for the Sport Australia team in being able to support enhancement of the SSP, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Resource management – key findings:

21. There has been significantly positive feedback on the delivery of the SSP, with most stakeholders stating that the programs delivered in a majority of schools are of a high quality.
22. There has been a notable reduction in the proportion of SSP funding allocated to the operating budget. This will have implications for the Sport Australia team being able to support enhancements of the SSP going forward.

Process – recommendations:

2. Establish information sharing mechanisms (either formal or informal), which includes state education and sport departments, to support a more consistent approach to increasing physical activity in schools across the country.
3. Review the program's operational expenses in the context of the strategic direction of the program. Operational funding should be commensurate with the remit of the program.

4 Effectiveness

This chapter discusses the impact of SSP relative to its intended outcomes. This includes consideration of outcomes from an equity perspective, evaluating the program's reach across various target populations

The intended outcomes sought through the investment in SSP align with the five program objectives, as outlined in Chapter 1. This chapter outlines the evidence relating to the effectiveness of the SSP in achieving each objective. In doing so, the assessment was undertaken in alignment with the short and medium-term outcomes for each stakeholder group as outlined in the program logic. The alignment of each objective with the outcomes is indicated in each subheading throughout the chapter.

4.1 Effectiveness against objectives

4.1.1 Engaging students in high quality physical activity

Two components of engagement in sport were considered through this evaluation; access to sport in general and access to higher quality sport.

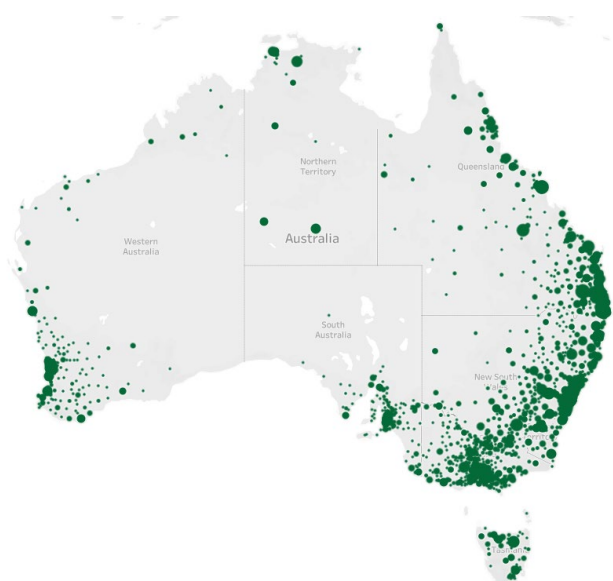
Program engagement and reach

As noted in the previous chapter, the SSP has achieved a substantial level of engagement from schools. According to Sport Australia, demand for the program has been approximately 30 per cent greater than the available funding.

4.1.1.1 Registered schools

Registered schools are schools that have registered their details with Sport Australia to be eligible for SSP grant funding. Analysis of registration data reveals that approximately 79 per cent of all schools – primary, secondary, combined and special schools – in Australia registered with the SSP as at October 2019. Figure 4.1 shows the geographic dispersion of program registrations across the country.

Figure 4.1: School SSP registrations by individual postcodes, all schools (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration data.

Note: The size of the circle represents the number of registered schools in that postcode (larger circle = more schools).

Since 2015, the number of registrations has almost doubled, and the proportion of all eligible schools registered has risen from approximately half to three-fifths (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Additional and cumulative SSP registrations per year, by school type (2015-2019)

Year	Primary	Secondary	Combined	Special	Total (Year)	Total (Cumulative)
2015	3,798	52	714	133	4,697	4,697
2016	1,196	72	264	69	1,601	6,298
2017*	605	246	146	49	1,046	7,344
2018	261	319	98	34	712	8,056
2019**	119	138	53	29	339	8,395
Total	5,979	827	1,275	314	8,395	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

Note: * Secondary schools became eligible to receive SSP grants as of Term 3 2017.

** Figures are as of October 2019.

The distribution of registrations is skewed toward government schools – on average, non-government schools have a 11.7 per cent lower rate of registration than government schools. However, it is noted that many non-government schools have a larger financial capacity to procure external sport providers independent of additional funding support compared to government schools. This may reflect the difference in registration rates.

In contrast, registrations are relatively well distributed across states and territories. WA has the lowest proportion of registered schools (73.1%) while ACT has the highest (87.2%). Table 4.2 presents a breakdown of registrations by jurisdiction and sector.

Table 4.2: SSP registrations, all schools, by state/territory and sector (%)

Jurisdiction	Government	Non-government	Total
ACT	89.0	85.5	87.2
TAS	89.1	77.3	83.2
SA	86.1	76.3	81.2
QLD	87.3	73.9	80.6
NT	84.1	72.0	78.1
NSW	86.5	65.7	76.1
VIC	79.6	66.9	73.3
WA	76.8	69.4	73.1
Total	84.8	73.4	79.1

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

See Appendix B for a breakdown of registrations by school type.

Registrations are higher amongst schools in regional and remote locations across all states and territories, with 86 per cent of schools in outer regional and remote area schools engaged in the program (Table 4.3). This is aligned with the SSP's priority to encourage registration from schools whose students face larger barriers to sport participation, such as those in more remote settings with fewer opportunities to be participate in organised sport. In contrast, schools in very remote settings have the lowest rate of proportional registrations with only 64 per cent currently registered in the SSP.

Table 4.3: SSP registrations, all schools, by location (%)

Jurisdiction	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
ACT	87	92	-	-	-
NSW	74	84	89	91	74
WA	76	72	81	86	63
QLD	81	85	86	88	74
VIC	74	76	78	63	-
TAS	-	82	89	96	50
NT	-	-	89	88	75
SA	81	89	86	89	50
Total	79	83	86	86	64

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

Note: Dashes indicate that there are no schools in the state/territory classified as being in that location.

4.1.1.2 Unregistered schools

Despite registrations being high overall, there remain areas across Australia where penetration has not been as successful. Table 4.4 shows the top 14 postcodes with the highest numbers of unregistered schools, across all school types, as well as the associated decile of relative disadvantage. As noted in the table, low registration is not solely confined to high disadvantage and remote areas (for example, Broadmeadows and Thursday Island, respectively) – locations in which barriers are more clearly identifiable. This indicates that there are other barriers to registration beyond proximity to available sport providers, which could include location-specific factors.

Table 4.4: Postcodes with the highest number of unregistered schools, all schools

Post code	Location	Decile of disadvantage	Total schools	Schools not registered
0872	South NT (NT)	1	56	24
3350	Ballarat (VIC)	6	36	14
2148	Blacktown (NSW)	5	28	13
4350	Toowoomba (QLD)	5	48	13
5000	Adelaide (SA)	8	18	11
2076	Normanhurst (NSW)	10	18	11
4875	Thursday Island (QLD)	1	20	11
3047	Broadmeadows (VIC)	1	25	10
3199	Frankston (VIC)	6	26	10
2170	Liverpool (NSW)	4	33	9
0822	North NT (NT)	1	35	9
2340	Tamworth (NSW)	4	32	9
3030	Werribee (VIC)	7	30	9
3150	Whealers Hill (VIC)	9	25	9

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration data.

Note: SEIFA Index operates on a scale of 1-10 (1 = high disadvantage. 10 = low disadvantage).

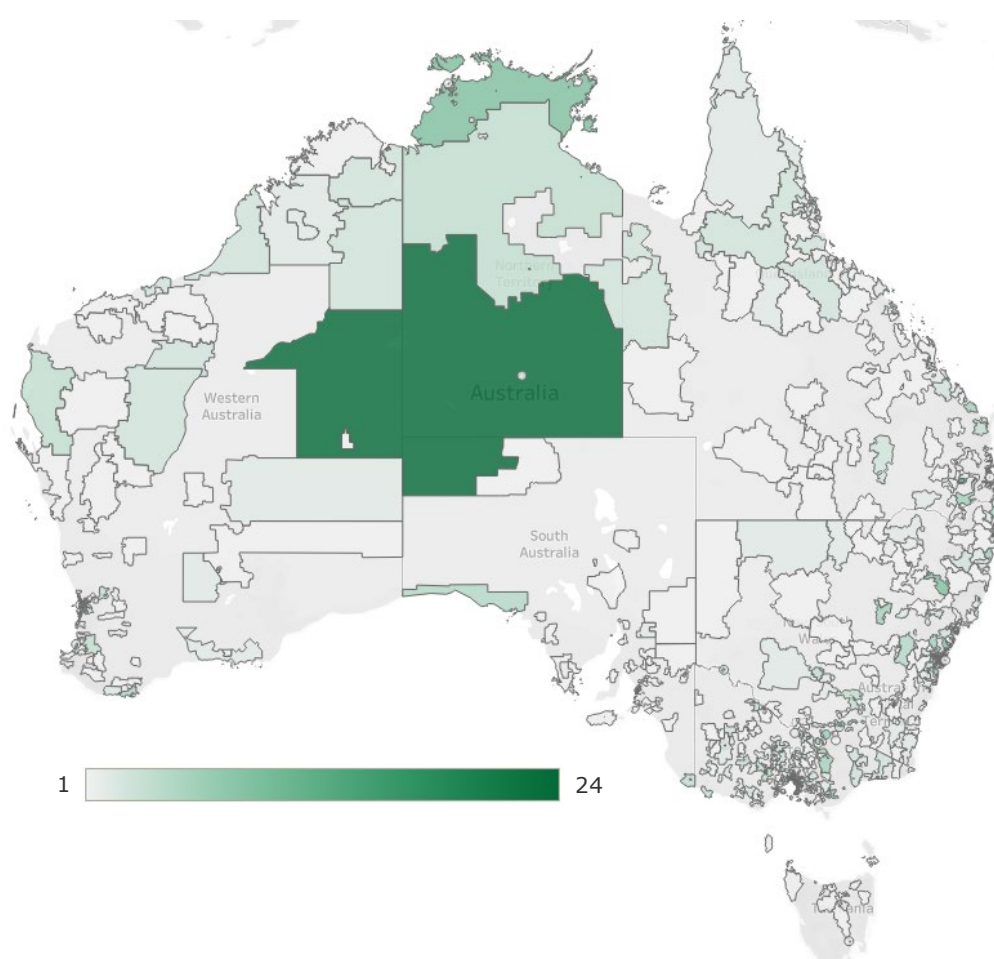
Furthermore, Figure 4.2 reveals all postcodes in which one or more schools are not registered for SSP. It is important to note there are 306 postcodes in which over half of schools are not registered, however, 203 of these have fewer than four schools in total. This indicates that the program is challenged in attracting registration of schools in small, very remote areas where almost one-third remain unregistered – see Table 4.5. This may suggest that awareness of the SSP in remote locations is lacking or that, due to their remoteness, they are unable to utilise the grants to access sport providers.

Table 4.5: SSP registrations, by remoteness (2019)

Location	Registered schools	All schools	Proportion unregistered (%)
Major cities	4,121	5,423	24
Inner regional	2,130	2,631	19
Outer regional	1,464	1,705	14
Remote	367	415	12
Very remote	313	456	31
Total	8,395	10,630	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

Figure 4.2: Post codes with one or more schools not registered for SSP



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Note: The density of colour of the area indicates the number of schools that are not registered for SSP.

4.1.1.3 Grant funding

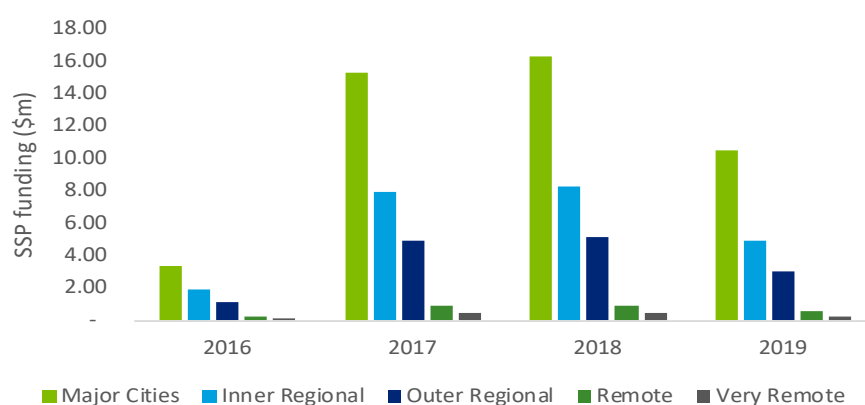
Analysis of the SSP registration data against the acquittal data demonstrates that, within each state and territory, funding is being provided to schools across all regions. While a significant proportion of funding is concentrated to capital cities and urban areas, such as Sydney and Melbourne, this is attributed to the greater number of schools in these locations. However, large amounts of funding are also reaching schools in regional and remote areas. The data shows that the percentage of grant funding by location has remained broadly consistent over the four years. See Table 4.6 and Chart 4.1 for a breakdown of funding across locations.

Table 4.6: SSP grant funding by location (2016-2019)

Location	2016		2017		2018		2019		Total	
	\$m	%	\$m	%	\$m	%	\$m	%	\$m	%
Major cities	3.4	50.4	15.34	52.1	16.32	52.7	10.44	54.1	45.51	52.6
Inner regional	1.8	27.7	7.95	27.0	8.22	26.6	4.97	25.7	23.01	26.6
Outer regional	1.14	17.0	4.87	16.5	5.12	16.5	3.07	15.9	14.20	16.4
Remote	0.24	3.6	0.87	2.9	0.87	2.8	0.58	3.0	2.56	3.0
Very remote	0.09	1.3	0.42	1.4	0.42	1.4	0.24	1.2	1.17	1.4
Total	6.74		29.45		30.95		19.30		86.44	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

Chart 4.1: SSP grant funding by location (2016-2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

4.1.1.4 Funding by populations

Grant funding is broadly similar across the states and territories regarding allocation of funds by levels of disadvantage (according to the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas [SEIFA] index). As shown in Table 4.7, funding to schools in high disadvantage areas is consistent with amounts provided to those in areas of low disadvantage. However, as there are fewer schools in high disadvantage areas on average (i.e. regional and remote areas), these areas are receiving higher funding per school.

Table 4.7: Total SSP funding, by SEIFA index (2016-2019)

SEIFA index	Total funding (\$m)	Funding proportion (%)
1	8.29	9.6
2	8.36	9.7
3	8.38	9.7
4	10.33	11.9
5	8.18	9.5
6	8.70	10.1
7	7.06	8.2
8	8.95	10.4
9	9.67	11.2
10	8.52	9.9

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

Note: SEIFA index operates on a scale of 1-10 (1 = high disadvantage. 10 = low disadvantage).

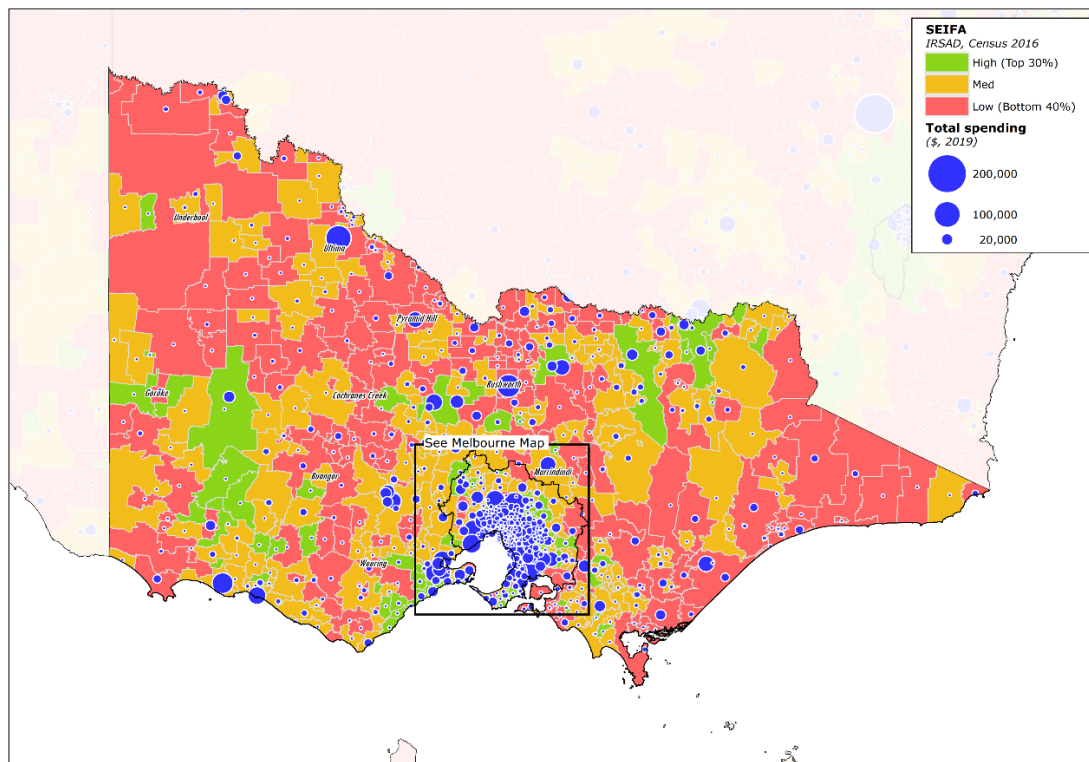
4.1.1.5 Funding across state and territories

An analysis of SSP grant funding across all states and territories was undertaken to identify any patterns of funding. The analysis revealed largely similar distributions of funding across each with respect to targeting by remoteness, population density and disadvantage. Victoria has been used as a case study to highlight these patterns and is considered broadly representative of the patterns in other jurisdictions.

State/territory case study - Victoria

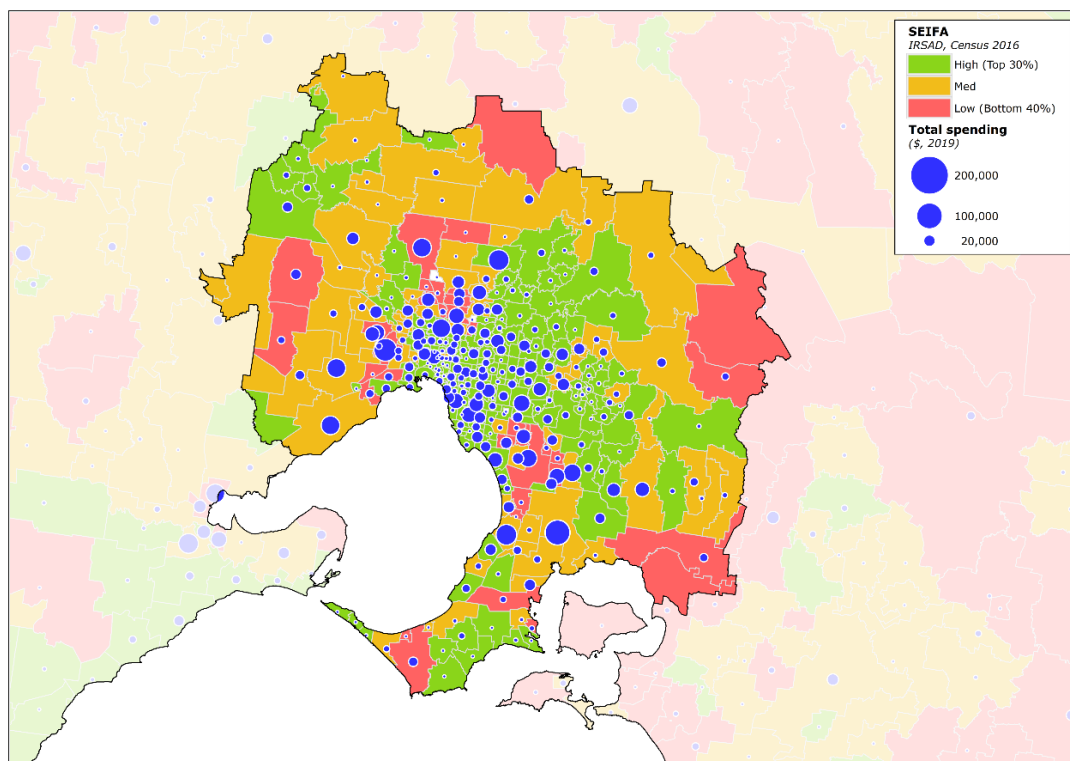
In Victoria, total funding to metro and major regional towns – such as Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Warrnambool – is more pronounced, but this is attributed to their larger population bases relative to more regional and remote locations. Furthermore, much of the funding distribution to schools in non-metro areas appears to be across disadvantaged areas, Geelong being one exception. As for Melbourne, much of the funding is concentrated in the inner-east/south-east region, reflecting the higher population children and schools in these suburbs. However, funding is also reaching Melbourne's outer lying growth areas which are more disadvantaged, including Werribee Tarneit towards the west, Craigieburn onwards to the north, Casey-Cardinia (extending from Dandenong) to the south-east. While geographic concentrations of disadvantage differ by state - for example, regional/remote NSW is more uniformly disadvantaged than Victoria, where pockets of advantage exist – similar levels of disadvantage exist across each state and territory. As such, the distributions of funding in Victoria and Melbourne can be considered representative of the SSP's funding patterns across all major cities, states and territories around Australia with respect to funding areas of disadvantage. See Appendix B for visualisations of funding to all other major cities, states and territories. The even distribution of funding across areas of disadvantage is exemplified in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 which depict total spending (represented by blue circles) across the different SEIFA areas in Victoria and Melbourne, respectively. Funding is shown across three categories of advantage – green indicates high advantage (SEIFA index 7-10), yellow represents medium advantage (SEIFA index 4-7), and red designates low advantage (SEIFA index 1-3). Figure 4.5 shows total funding in Victoria over 2019, expressed on a per child basis (aged 7-14) based on 2016 Census counts. Funding per child is low in the Greater Metropolitan Area (Greater Melbourne), and in major regional towns such as Geelong and Ballarat. Conversely, there are several funding hotspots across regional and remote Victoria. According to the index of relative disadvantage, these regions typically have higher levels of disadvantage when compared with more urban locations.

Figure 4.3: Total SSP funding in Victoria, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data

Figure 4.4: Total SSP funding in Melbourne, by post codes (2019)

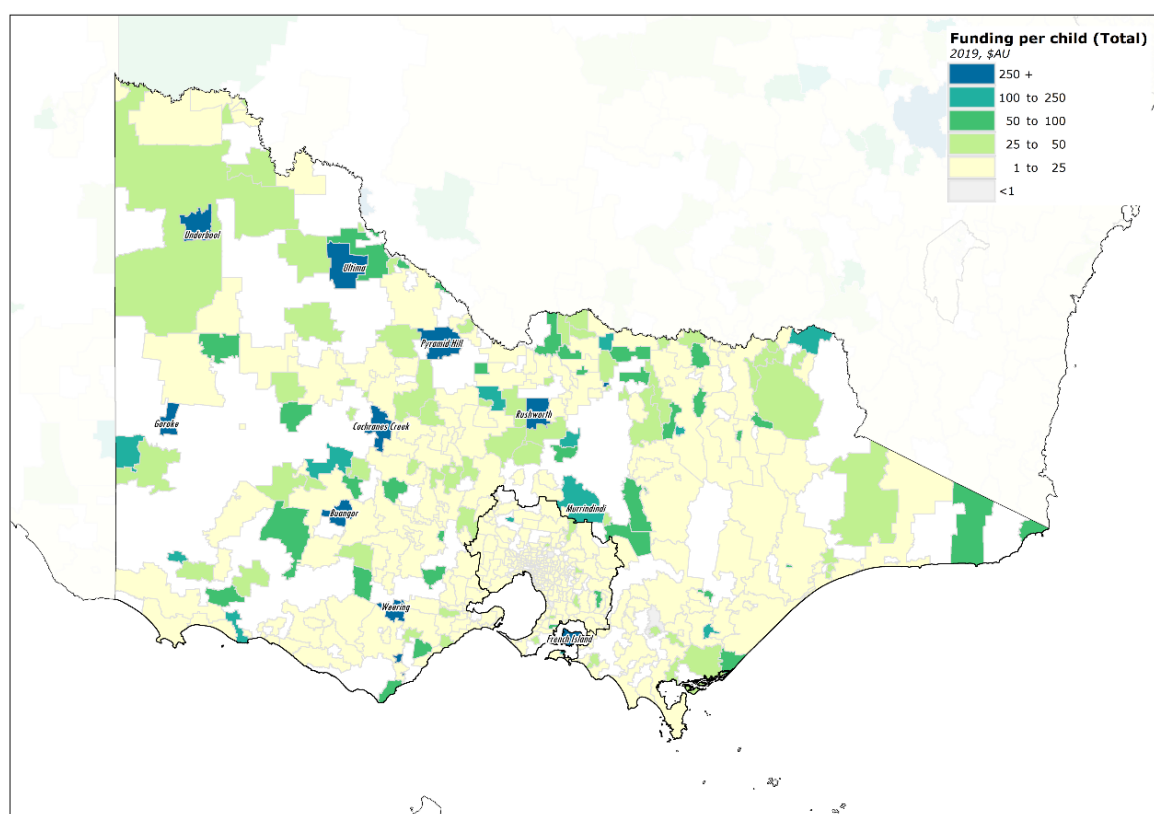


Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration data.

4.1.1.6 Funding per child

SSP grant funding was also assessed at a per child level. Analysis of SSP funding highlights that a greater amount has been given to schools in regional and remote areas, and those with higher levels of disadvantage.

Figure 4.5: Total SSP funding per child in Victoria, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration data.

4.1.1.7 Funding per school

Of the schools who registered for SSP, some have yet to apply for and receive grant funding to participate in the program. The SSP program data shows that of the schools that have registered, 91.4 per cent have applied for a grant – see Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Proportion of registered schools that applied for SSP grants (2015-2019)

Year	No. of schools	Percentage
Applied for grants	7,677	91.4
Did not apply for grants	718	8.6
Total	8,395	100.0

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

Table 4.9 shows the rate per year at which grants are approved and rejected, noting that some schools apply for multiple grants. It is noted that there was a large increase in grant rejections in 2018 and 2019. Chart 4.2 also presents the number of approved and rejected grants in each year.

Grant expenditure broadly remained the same over each year of the program, however there was a slight decrease in 2018/19 (as outlined further in Chapter 5). It was reported that the reason for the increase in rejections in 2018 was because, up until that point, grant applications were open

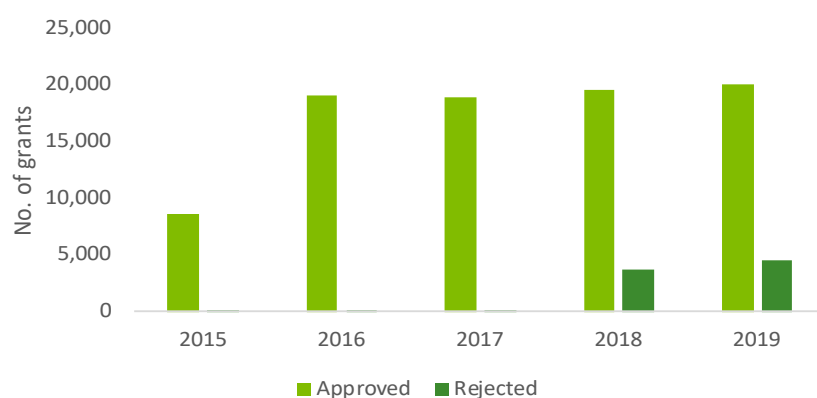
until funding was fully allocated. However, in 2018, a ranking process was introduced for primary schools which meant that grant applications were not capped and could be oversubscribed. Further, Sport Australia reported that it is common for grant application and rejection rates to fluctuate overtime and that these changes are typical in terms of other grants programs they administer.

Table 4.9: SSP grant approval and rejection rates (2015-2019)

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Grants	%	Grants	%	Grants	%	Grants	%	Grants	%
Approved	8,622	99.4	19,120	99.9	18,924	99.8	19,584	84.1	20,056	81.7
Rejected	49	0.6	24	0.1	45	0.2	3,703	15.9	4,488	18.3
Total	8,671		19,144		18,969		23,287		24,544	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

Chart 4.2: SSP grant approvals and rejections (2015-2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant data.

Based on the number of SSP registrations relative to grants in each year, registered schools have received an average of 2.5 grants per year – see Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: SSP grants per school, all schools (2015-2019)

Year	Total registrations	Grants approved	Grants per school
2015	4,697	8,622	1.8
2016	6,298	19,120	3.0
2017	7,344	18,924	2.6
2018	8,056	19,584	2.4
2019	8,395	20,056	2.4
Average	-	-	2.5

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant data.

Benefits of professionally delivered sport

SSP is reported to be having a positive impact upon children's physical activity engagement in-school. Foremost, the NSO-delivered programs offer a substantial increase in the quality of opportunities due to their delivery by professionally trained coaches with specialist training in specific activities. Such coaches are reported to have a stronger understanding of the technical skills required to perform certain activities and can support children to develop them.

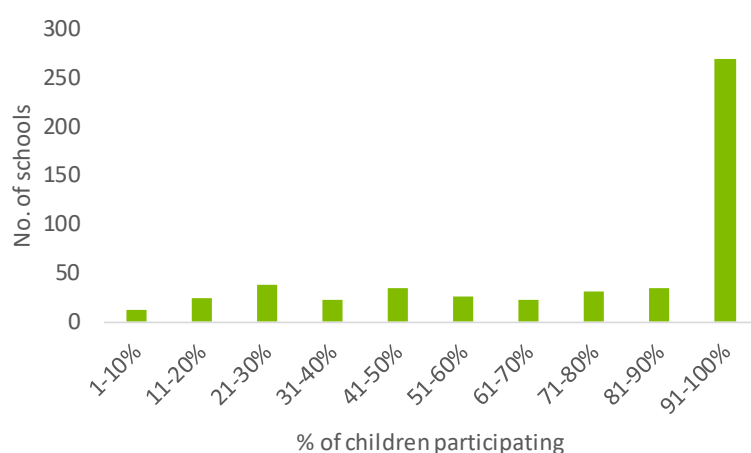
Additionally, they typically understand how to deliver activities for children. For example, coaches may adapt a sport to simplify understanding, improve accessibility or increase user enjoyment, whilst maintaining the core elements of the activity that allow for skill development to occur. Some stakeholders even suggested that students are more responsive to the direction of professional coaches.

While stakeholders reported that the quality of sport delivered through SSP can sometimes vary depending on the capabilities of individual coaches employed by sporting organisations, many schools reported that the overall quality of activities delivered through the program are typically greater than those delivered by internal staff (both generalist and specialist teachers):

"The message of inclusion in the program and the access to schools that may not otherwise have the speciality staff to deliver the specific sport. With less PE staff in schools, the "specialists" are becoming more attractive with schools who wish to continue the sports" – NSO survey respondent.

Furthermore, as participation in a sport is made compulsory for most students of schools in the program, it has a significant rate of engagement with over half of schools reporting a participation rate of above 90 percent (Chart 4.3) – see Appendix B for a breakdown of participation rates by school sector and ARIA status.

Chart 4.3: Proportion of children per school participating in SSP (%) (n=512)



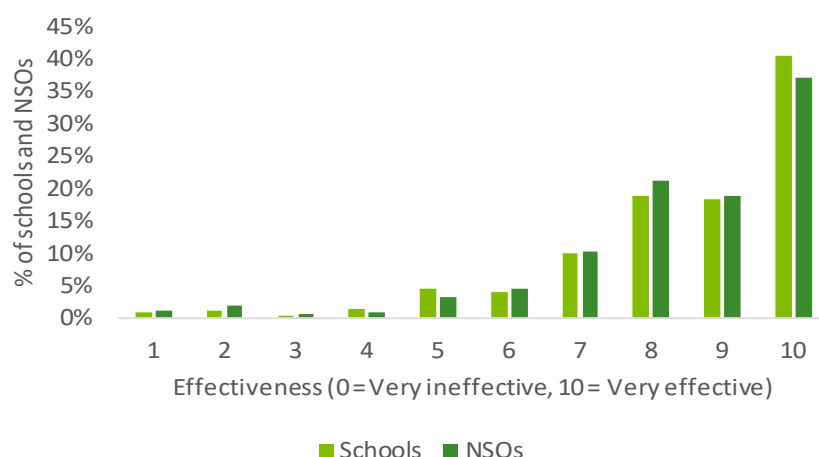
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Note: Results may reflect schools' best estimation of proportion of students participating.

Consequently, both schools and NSOs suggested that the program is positively affecting overall in-school sport participation levels: over one-third of NSOs and schools surveyed feel that the SSP is 'highly effective' as a means of increasing participation in sport during school hours (Chart 4.4), and over one-quarter of respondents view the SSP as 'highly effective' in increasing the overall physical activity of students (Chart 4.5) – see Appendix B for a breakdown of effectiveness by school sector, type and ARIA status.

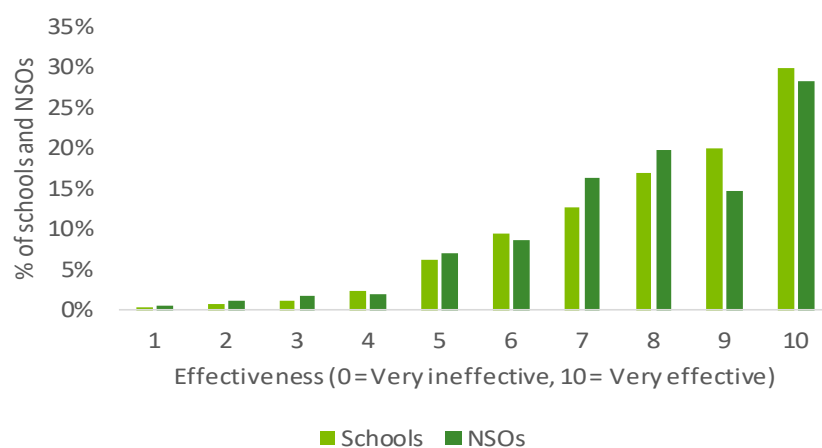
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Chart 4.4: Effectiveness of SSP: increasing participation in sport during school hours [Schools (n=468) & NSOs 423)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Chart 4.5: Effectiveness of SSP: increasing overall physical activity of students [Schools (n=470) & NSOs 415)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

However, it should be noted that while the program is designed to operate alongside school-delivered PE – as mandated by state/territory education curriculums – some schools are reportedly using NSO-delivered programs as a substitute. This is either a symptom of schools feeling that they have insufficient time in the school day to offer SSP activities and PE or because schools feel the SSP activities are a higher quality than those delivered by teachers.

As a result, the SSP may unintentionally crowd out existing in-school physical activity which may undermine the increased participation in sport that the program is purportedly achieving. The precise extent of this crowding out is unclear, though it is highly dependent on the decisions made by individual schools and can therefore vary significantly between schools.

Variety of sports

Stakeholders report that the program is improving children's engagement in physical activity by exposing them to a range of new and diverse sports. These sports represent opportunities which children may otherwise would not have had; as they are beyond the capabilities – in resourcing and expertise – that schools can offer. The diverse sport offering is seen as critical to accommodate different preferences and engage as many children as possible. However, some

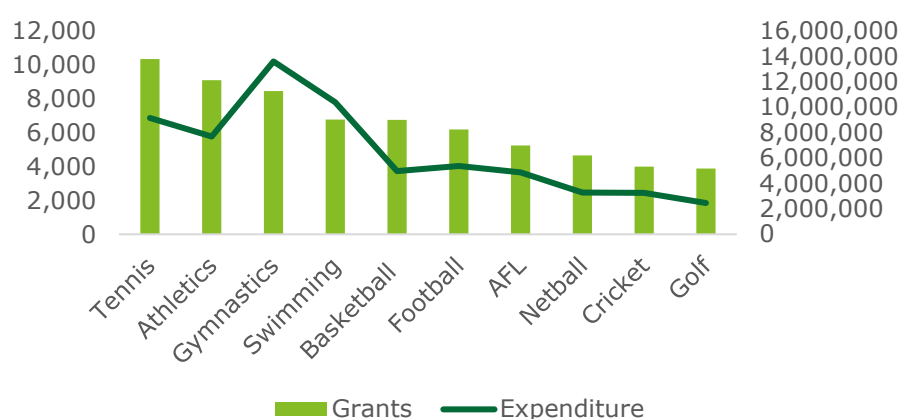
stakeholders commented that the program is limited in that it constrains schools to the choice of one sport per term which can create disengagement amongst disinterested children.

4.1.1.8 Sport sessions

Between 2016 and 2019, 92,597 grants were awarded to schools, according to the SSP grants acquittals data provided by Sport Australia. The number of grants awarded for specific sports remained consistent as the program reached a level of maturity. The number of grants was generally more heavily skewed towards those sports with more established NSOs (i.e. Tennis Australia, Athletics Australia, Swimming Australia).

Chart 4.6 shows the top ten sports according to the total number of grants that were awarded across all schools between 2016-2019. This has then been compared with the total expenditure for these sports across the same time period (in relation to grant expenditure). Whilst the trend for expenditure is broadly consistent with the popularity of sport, based on the total number of grants, gymnastics and swimming are more costly to deliver than the more popular sports of tennis and athletics. This is likely to be related to the availability and cost of the facilities required for these sports.

Chart 4.6: Top ten sports by number of grants, and total expenditure per sport (2016-2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant acquittals data.

When comparing the SSP data with research undertaken 2018 by Sport Australia and Ausplay on the most popular sports for Australia children, the findings are broadly consistent. This data showed that swimming was most popular for both boys and girls. Tennis, athletics, gymnastics, basketball, and football (soccer) both also featured in the top 10 for both genders. However, dancing was the second most popular sport for girls according to the Sport Australia and Ausplay data, however this is not offered in the SSP.

Furthermore, the primary purpose for which grants were used was for schools to procure sport equipment, hire professional coaches and to obtain sport packages – see Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: SSP grants by purpose (2016-2019)

Sport	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Equipment	1,696	8,877	8,806	6,078	25,457
Coach Delivery	2,023	8,567	8,182	4,692	23,464
Sport Package	1,356	7,016	7,977	6,815	23,164
Program Administration	653	2,563	2,163	1,298	6,677
Transport	510	1,589	1,569	749	4,417
Supervision (Teacher)	462	2,014	1,499	290	4,265

Sport	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Venue Hire	232	654	608	285	1,779
Other	160	470	562	239	1,431
Sport Related Professional Development	81	249	221	166	717
Facilities	77	263	187	119	646
Supervision (Teacher) - After School	-	-	-	295	295
Supervision (Teacher) - During School	-	-	-	258	258
Supervision (Teacher) - Before School	-	-	-	27	27
Grand Total	7,250	32,262	31,774	21,311	92,597

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP grant acquittals data.

The case study presented below outlines the experience of a small school in the ACT which has been able to offer its students a wide variety of sports as a result of SSP funding.

School case study 1

As a small regional primary school in the ACT with approximately 200 students, this school doesn't have extensive resourcing and so has been part of the SSP since its beginning. As a self-proclaimed "not very sporty" school, the children generally don't participate in sport out of school, so getting children involved in physical activity within the school day is important to improve the activity levels of the student population.

The teachers at the school recognise the benefits of physical activity and emphasise mental health and wellbeing throughout the school day, seeing sport as a key component of this. There is a strong belief that the responsibility for supporting children to be more physically active should be shared between the school and caregivers, and the school aims to work in partnership with the caregivers of the school's students to achieve this.

The school heard about SSP through an email from Sport Australia and was motivated to apply due to resourcing constraints for sporting expertise. The school has an appointed sports coordinator, and teachers do their own teaching of sports in addition to the SSP, but these are generalist teachers that don't necessarily have expertise in the sport they are teaching.

The SSP funding is predominantly spent on bringing in expert sport coaches and purchasing sporting equipment. Clinics have often given the school the resources and equipment to use in the following years, and the school has utilised this for its most popular sporting clinics. Additionally, there has been a direct effect on increasing the FMS of students, with the expert coaching something that the students would not have received without the program.

The SSP is delivered across most of the school year and every student at the school is involved. Most sports are run across four weeks, with each student receiving a 40-minute session weekly. A variety of sports have been delivered as part of the SSP, with a focus on sports that wouldn't necessarily be played on the weekend.

The school has an ongoing relationship with some of the coaches that have delivered clinics, and the coaches often offer the students free sessions out of school time. While the SSP appears to only have translated to a few students taking up the sport out of school hours, there has been a considerable uptake of the sport that the program is delivering by students casually during recess breaks.

The teachers at the school are generally present at the clinics and do behaviour management as well as assessing skills for part of the students' PE grade. This exposure to the clinics has introduced teachers to a variety of sport and has provided professional learning on best practice for teaching basic sporting skills. In addition to the SSP, specialist teachers for gymnastic, dance and swimming are paid for as part of the school fees to ensure the safe teaching of basic skills for these sports.

The SSP aligns well with the school curriculum and helps the school achieve their physical activity goals. The school would participate in the program in the future. However, the school would value more information on how to develop links with sporting organisations, as the sports being delivered are generally based on which sporting organisations have contacted the school directly. If given the option, the school would spend the funds on a similar program, with an increased amount being used for the purchase of equipment and ensuring the clinics are advancing the teachers' own skillsets.

Engaging students in high quality physical activity - key findings:

23. Relative to the intended outcomes in relation to access, SSP has enabled greater access to sport due to its extensive reach across the country. However, schools in very remote settings have a lower rate of proportional registrations relative to the rest of the country. This means that the program is not as equitable as it could be. [SO1, SO2]
24. The SSP is equitably allocating grants, albeit it not purposely through design. There are pockets of disadvantage that could be more intently targeted to support participation in this program.
25. Relative to the intended outcomes in relation the range of sports on offer, students can access a wider variety of sports due to the SSP, although the already popular sports (swimming, tennis etc.) appear to be favoured through this program. [SO2]
26. Relative to the intended outcomes of student enjoyment and overall participation, the SSP provides access to higher quality, professionally delivered sport before, during and after school hours. Both schools and NSOs reported that the program is positively affecting overall in-school sport participation levels. [SO3, MO12, MO13, MO14, MO15]

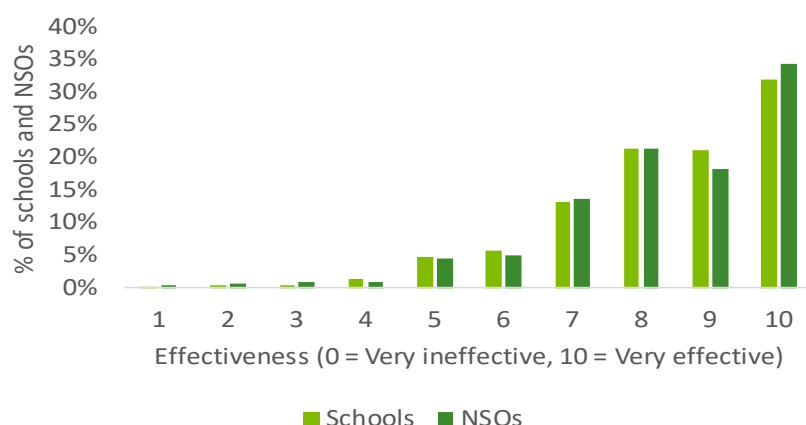
4.1.2 Improving Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy

Impact on Fundamental Movement Skills improvements

According to stakeholders, one of the more effective elements of the program is the delivery of sports by professional, registered coaches who are trained in the principles of FMS and physical literacy. As outlined in Chapter 3, building these competencies within NSOs was a focus for Sport Australia when the program was first established. With the recent development of the Physical Literacy Framework, there is an increasing emphasis on incorporating these principles within the program.

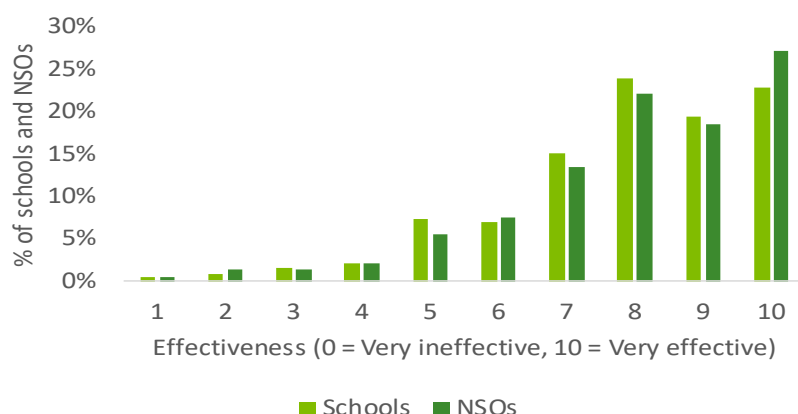
The survey results show that over 43 per cent of NSOs and 50 per cent schools who responded to the survey believe that the SSP is highly effective (reporting a score of 9 or 10) in improving children's FMS, as shown in Chart 4.7. Similarly, the same number also believe the program is highly effective in improving children's physical literacy, as shown in Chart 4.8. During consultation, it was reported that at least one NSO had mapped their program delivery against the Physical Literacy Framework. This would enable schools to refer to the program and be assured that the program was of a high quality and in line with the national framework.

Chart 4.7: Survey results – SSP effectiveness of improving student’s FMS skills (n = 474 & 433)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Chart 4.8: Survey results – SSP effectiveness of improving student’s physical literacy (n = 466 & 415)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Incorporation of Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy principles within the curriculum

It is difficult to objectively measure increases in FMS and physical literacy without conducting more empirical research. Added to this, as with other aspects of the program, there was reported variability across schools and NSOs in terms of how these principles are incorporated.

The program will offer the greatest benefit when the coach is able to deliver the sport in a way which focuses on developing skills that can be linked to other physical activities and transferred to other aspects of learning within the classroom.

As was found in the Orima evaluation, and as was reported during consultation as part of this evaluation, this requires a long-term approach, involving a ‘whole of school’ lens. Whilst ‘dose

Improving Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy - key findings:

27. The program is delivered by specialists with an understanding of FMS, which stakeholders believe is leading to improved skills development and therefore increased FMS. [MO13, MO15]
28. The incorporation of FMS and physical literacy principles within the curriculum varies depending on the school’s and NSO’s priorities and capabilities. [MO13, MO15, SO5]

based' sports programs can teach children sport-specific skills and techniques, there needs to be sustained FMS-based physical activity in order to improve children's FMS. This is more likely to occur when the school and the NSO incorporate a broader physical literacy focus into the program, which extends beyond the individual sport sessions delivered by the coach, as discussed further in Chapter 5. This requires schools to appreciate and prioritise PE and the upskilling of teachers to deliver the program and incorporate physical literacy within their classes, as discussed further below.

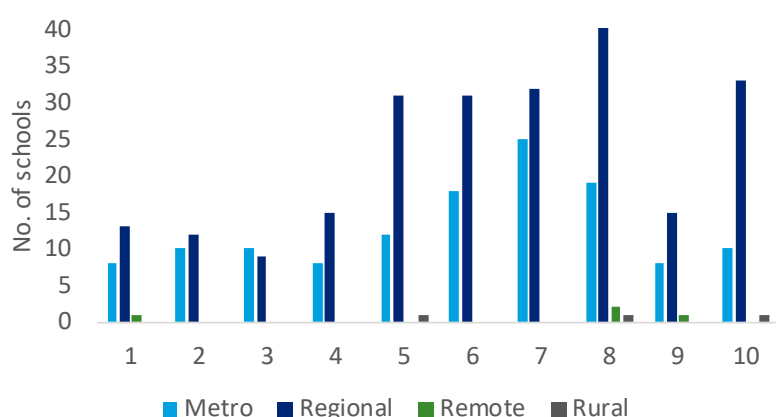
4.1.3 Participation in sport outside of school hours

Conversion to sport outside of school hours

Despite evidence to suggest that the SSP is having a positive impact on children's participation in sport during school hours, there does not appear to be a strong link to participation in community-based sport. Both the stakeholder consultations and the survey data revealed that there is limited evidence to suggest a conversion between a child's participation in the SSP and participation in organised sport outside of school hours.

The survey showed that approximately half of all metro and regional schools, and three-quarters of remote schools view the SSP as an effective mechanism to increase out of school sport participation (shown in Chart 4.9). Fifty-one per cent of government schools rated the effectiveness of the SSP to increase participation in sports outside of school as six or below. Additionally, 76 per cent of secondary schools and 100 per cent of special schools rated its effectiveness as a six or below, in terms of conversion to community-based sport.

Chart 4.9: Effectiveness (1-10) of SSP in increasing sport participation outside of schools by ARIA (n = 369)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of school survey data.

Of the schools that noted an increase in the number of their students participating in community sports, most cited the development of links between the school and sport organisations as the main reason for this occurring. Some schools also reflected that participation in the program had increased the confidence of their students to continue engaging in the sport beyond school.

However, one of the prevailing issues raised was the inability to translate participation in SSP programs to community sport due to the lack of opportunities. While schools noted that students enjoyed exposure to a diversity of sports which were not locally available, this presented a barrier to children wanting to continue participating outside of school.

From an NSO perspective, many agreed that there is a link between engagement in the SSP and community participation in sport. Most indicated that there are modest levels (between 33 and 39%) of students that go onto play sport outside of school (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Links between SSP and community sport – NSO responses

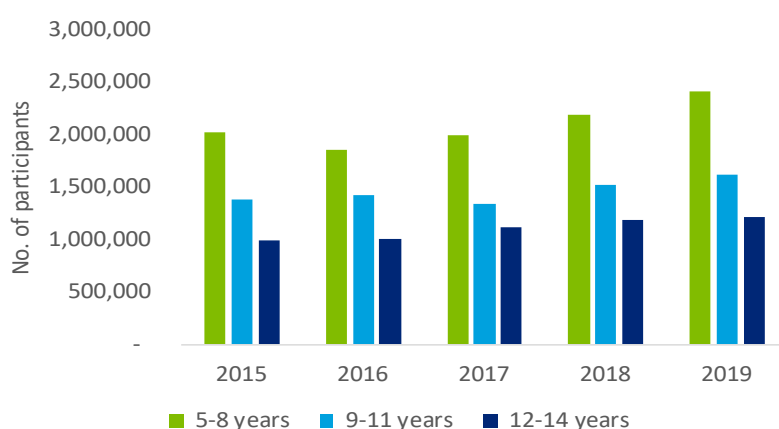
	Average level of agreement that there is a direct link between SSP and an increase in community sport participation (0 = strongly disagree, 10=strongly agree)	Average estimated proportion of SSP students that went on to play sport outside of school (%)
NSO	6.5	33
SSO/SSA	6.5	36
LSO	6.4	33
Other/did not say	7.0	39

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of NSO survey data.

To test this perception, Deloitte Access Economics analysed community sport participation data provided by the AusPlay Clearinghouse for Sport. This data contains the approximate number of children who participated in community sports, which can also be accessed by schools through the SSP. As shown in Chart 4.10, participation rates have experienced a significant increase year-on-year across several sports.

Though this increase cannot be attributed to the program, the extensive reach of the SSP would suggest that the program has somewhat driven the trend (along with other factors, such as population growth).

Chart 4.10: Year-on year increase in community sport participation (2015/16–2018/19)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of AusPlay Clearinghouse for Sport data.

Note: (1) Figures represent the average increases in participation across the same 15 sports.

(2) Underlying participation data has a significant margin of error

Feedback from stakeholders suggests there are many factors that can influence the conversion of participation in school-based sport to an increase in community-based sport. This includes cost, program availability and accessibility, parent and family engagement (discussed below), and coach enthusiasm and knowledge.

Low engagement with parents

As indicated in the program logic model, one of the short-medium term outcomes of the SSP is to engage with parents to make them more aware and supportive of their children's participation in sport. Whilst this evaluation has not involved engagement with parents directly, conversations with other stakeholders indicates that there has been little engagement with parents to date, beyond the development of an information sheet for children to take home with information about community sport opportunities.

Some stakeholders stated that parent engagement with, and support for, their child's participation in sport plays a crucial role in the conversion from school-based to community-based sport. This is because school sport is accessible from the child's compulsory attendance at school, whereas community-based sport is largely dependent on the child's parents to encourage, fund and enable their participation (e.g. transport them to games on the weekend).

Due to the one-off, 'dose-based' nature of the SSP during school hours, sporting organisations and coaches do not often have exposure to parents in order to promote their activities outside of school hours:

"Connecting with families is fraught... Schools often publish promotional material in their newsletters, but the 'feedback circuit' is rarely closed, so it's hard to tell how widely read or considered such material is" – NSO survey response.

There is an opportunity for the program to increase the communication with, and involvement of parents, which would potentially lead to an increase in sport participation outside of school hours.

Participation in sport outside of school hours - key findings:

29. Stakeholders perceived that the SSP is having a modest impact in terms of converting student's participation during school into participation in community sport, yet this cannot be validated within the scope of this evaluation. Stakeholders stated that cost, program availability and accessibility, parent and family engagement, and coach enthusiasm and knowledge influence conversion rates. [SO1, MO12, SO11]
30. There is low parent awareness of, engagement with, and support for, their child's participation in sport, which is contributing to a lack of participation in community-based sport. [SO4, MO16]

4.1.4 Increasing appreciation of sport in schools

Appreciation of the holistic benefits of sport

Most stakeholders interviewed agreed that the SSP has led to an increased appreciation of the benefits of sport within the school environment. State education and sport departments commented that the program has provided an opportunity for more variety in the approach to how PE is delivered, as well as greater access to sports equipment through the external providers. The Orima evaluation also found that 34 per cent of teachers and 31 per cent of principals perceived that the value they place on sport in education had increased 'a lot' as a result of the SSP.²¹

The case study below outlines the impact the program is having at a school in the Northern Territory, including the broader health and wellbeing benefits associated with the program. Due to the remote location of the school, and the difficulty with access to coaches, one of the teachers delivers the program, and the funding goes towards equipment.

²¹ Orima. (2017). *Evaluation of the Sporting Schools Program – Part A: Executive Summary and Key Findings*. Canberra, ACT.

School case study 2

A primary school of approximately 400 students, this school is situated in remote NT. With a specialist PE teacher recently joining as a staff member, this school reported that increasing physical activity is a priority of the school from the top down. Nutrition is also a significant feature of the health program for the older students.

The specialist teacher is reported to be passionate about delivering a quality health and PE program to the entire school and is responsible for delivering the majority of classes. For the additional classes that fall outside the specialist teacher's capacity, a few generalist teachers deliver these classes with extensive guidance and upskilling from the specialist teacher.

The biggest enabler of the SSP was noted to be the ease of the application process and timeliness of approvals, with the process being increasingly streamlined over the life of the program. A range of sports have been delivered through the SSP to the school, with all students participating in the same sport per term. Generally, younger students receive one hour of the program a week whereas older students receive one and a half hours. Each sports program is run for 4–6 weeks.

As a remote school, one of the biggest barriers to implementation of the SSP is attracting qualified coaches to the school to deliver the program. Due to the cost of transport and accommodation, the school reported that it may not be financially viable for sporting organisations to visit remote schools if they are not able to engage with other schools in the region. However, this school reported that often schools within the remote region are able to coordinate their programs to attract sporting organisations to visit. The school's specialist PE teacher holds qualifications in several sports and often delivers the SSP program himself. Due to this, most of the SSP funding received is spent on equipment rather than obtaining coaches.

The school reported that the SSP has had a positive impact on its students, allowing the school to increase the quality of its PE program. It has allowed students to access sports they would not have otherwise been able to, and this has translated into a reported increase in afterschool and club sports participation. Students from the school competing in sports at a representative level was reported to have noticeably risen since the inception of the SSP. Additionally, the school recognises the program's contribution to increased fitness levels of students as many students are achieving above the national average in fitness testing, however this also may be attributable to the capability of the specialist teacher, amongst other factors. While FMS are also tested for younger students and has shown improvement, the increase in skill level has reportedly not been as strong as the school would have hoped.

The school indicated a high willingness to participate in the SSP in the future but supports funding being prioritised for schools that have not yet received grants, as the school sees the programs reach as one of its biggest benefits. Furthermore, due to the difficulty of attracting qualified coaches, it is likely that any future funding would continue to be predominantly spent on sports equipment for the school. The school reported that overall it has benefited from the program and is highly supportive of the program continuing into the future.

School culture and prioritisation of sport within the curriculum

According to state education departments and Sport Australia, one of the reported advantages of the program has been the flexibility given to schools to book sports depending on their individual priorities and circumstances. This is also aligned to the growing autonomy of schools to determine how different aspects of the curriculum are applied within their school, and this influences their preference for certain programs or schools. For example, one stakeholder reported that the principal at their local school demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm for the program and had previously competed in triathlons, so sought out a local triathlon club to deliver the program at the school.

This does, however, mean that there can be an inconsistency in the emphasis placed on the program depending on the school, and therefore a varying degree in the realisation of benefits across schools. The realisation of the benefits of physical activity will depend on the school culture, the prioritisation of sport within the curriculum, and the school's capacity to support the program, e.g. providing the relevant infrastructure.

This level of flexibility is also driven by the prioritisation of health and PE within the curriculum at a state level. Stakeholders with a national interest in PE indicated that this aspect of the curriculum often gets deprioritised relative to literacy and numeracy subjects within a 'crowded curriculum', and the influence of NAPLAN, despite the growing evidence of the ongoing benefits of physical activity and education on health outcomes (outlined further in Chapter 5).

It was suggested by ACHPER that this is driven by a lack of clarity in how health and wellbeing outcomes are being pursued between education and health departments both within and between states. ACHPER outlined that priorities vary between states., for example, NSW has no requirement to hire specialist PE teachers as part of school staff, which means the quality of programs is more likely to be variable. This contrasts with Victoria where there is a greater focus on specialist PE programs and the concept of specialist teachers is more prominent. The pursuit of health and wellbeing outcomes for students is an appropriate priority for all government departments to prioritise, if it is done in a consistent way, with a shared understanding of how outcomes will be achieved.

Stakeholders reported that in schools where there is a greater focus on PE, they are more likely to work with the NSO to promote the SSP at a whole-of-school level, and therefore derive a greater level of value from the program. This was also reported as impacting on the ability of the school to build their internal capacity to deliver sport-based activities, and incorporate physical literacy within classrooms, as one survey respondent commented:

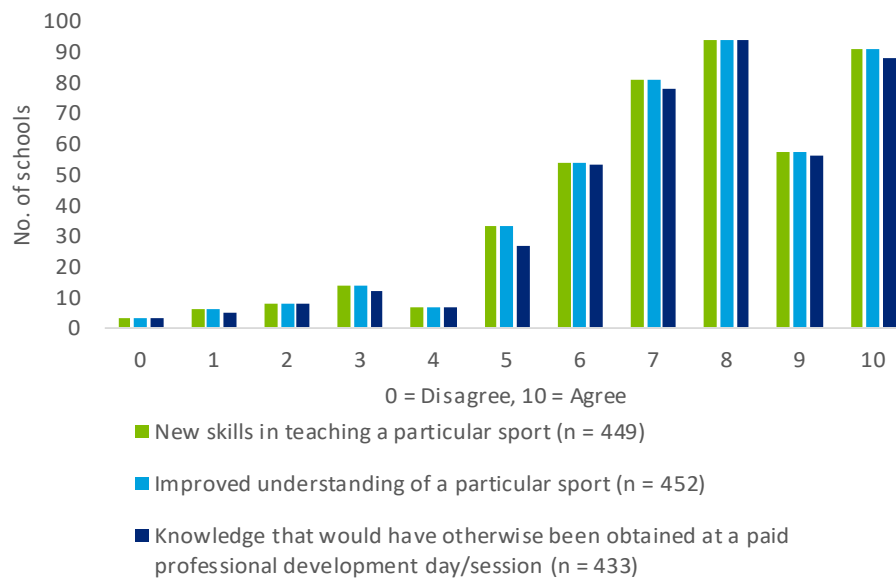
"Most NSOs have been fantastic points to connect and network with to provide further opportunities for students to engage in activities. The curriculum aligned documents are generally of a high quality and embeds best practice for HPE teachers and allows other teachers to understand the game sense approach and how to adapt teaching to improve fundamental movement skills and tactical knowledge" – School survey respondent.

Schools' capacity to deliver sports activities internally

Stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation had mixed views on whether the SSP is effective in building the school's internal capacity to deliver sports programs. From the perspective of schools, the program increased most teacher's skills and knowledge, and they formed a better understanding of the specific sports that they were exposed to (Chart 4.11).

Commercial-in-confidence

Chart 4.11: Degree to which schools agree that SSP provides teachers with further skills and understanding

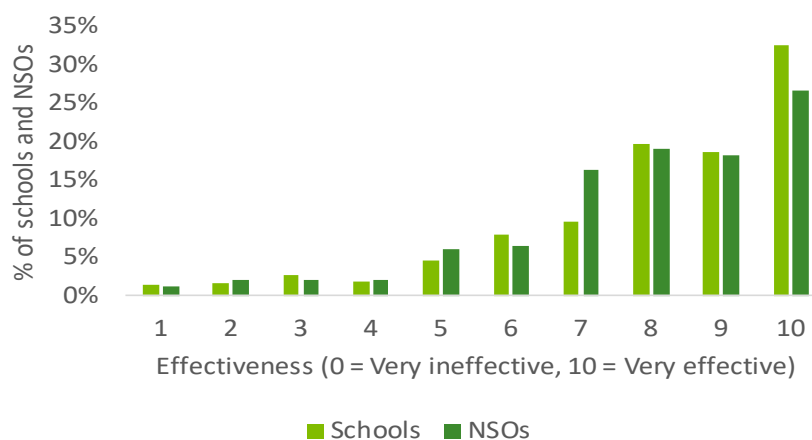


Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Where teacher confidence and capacity has reportedly increased, it is when the school prioritises sport and physical literacy within the curriculum and the teachers are actively involved in program delivery. When the teacher participates in, or observes the delivery of the sports sessions, there is an opportunity for them to see the benefits of the program. There is also opportunity for the coach to transfer specific skills and techniques for delivery of a high-quality PE session.

The survey results showed there was consensus among schools and NSOs that the SSP has been effective in improving schools' internal capacity to deliver sport-based activities – 51 per cent of school and 45 per cent of NSO respondents scored its effectiveness at achieving this objective as a 9 or 10 (Chart 4.12). It should be noted that the schools who completed the survey are likely to be more engaged in the program and its benefits, and therefore it is more likely that they would respond favourable to survey questions of this nature.

Chart 4.12: Effectiveness of SSP in improving schools' internal capacity to delivery sport-based activities (n = 462 and 408)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

There was a view from some stakeholders that teachers are often not present during the sessions, or if they are then they are not necessarily engaging with the content. This was thought to be because they are using the SSP as an opportunity to handover responsibility of the students to the coach for the duration of the session while they catch-up on other work. As one survey respondent noted:

"A particular school I was involved with did not have any interest in promoting or sharing further awareness of the sport. They simply used the program to obtain the kind of coverage we would normally get for a relief teacher. Students clearly enjoyed the program. The teachers were clearly an impediment to further progress" – NSO survey respondent.

This shows that there is an opportunity for more formalised involvement of the teachers in the program, and the development of resources to support this, as was also suggested in the previous evaluation. This would ensure a more consistent approach to building teacher capacity to deliver sports programs in schools. However, given the stakeholder landscape, responsibility for improving teacher capability should extend beyond the responsibility of Sport Australia, and include state education departments playing a role to facilitate this capability uplift. For example, the NSW Department of Education report that they offer teacher professional development opportunities in order to support teachers to deliver high quality sports lessons.

Stakeholders commented on the benefit of utilising the specific skills and expertise of external providers who are trained in delivering their sport in line with best practice approaches. However, they reinforced the importance of teachers understanding the benefits of incorporating physical activity and wellbeing in all facets of the classroom.

However, of those teachers that were exposed to the SSP, many reported an increase in their confidence to be able to deliver quality sport sessions to students without support from professional coaches.

Increasing appreciation of sport in schools - key findings:

31. Both schools and NSOs have observed an increase in the appreciation of the holistic benefits of sport through the SSP. [SO6, SO8, MO17]
32. The benefits of the program can depend on the school culture and prioritisation of sport within the curriculum, with physical activity often being deprioritised relative to literacy and numeracy. [SO6, SO8, SO10, MO17]
33. There is variable evidence on whether the program is increasing schools' capacity to deliver sports activities internally. Schools where teachers were actively involved in the program showed higher increases in teacher confidence and capacity. [SO9, MO18]

4.1.5 Increasing the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth

Uptake of NSO-affiliated organisations' services

As outlined in Section 4.1.1, and in Chapter 3, the reach of the program across a significant proportion of schools nation-wide has driven continued demand for NSO services, and therefore a continued source of funding for these organisations and the coaching workforce. The program's reach across a variety of school types, sectors and regions has meant that NSO-affiliated organisations across a number of communities and sporting codes have been involved in, and benefited from, the program.

As was noted in the previous Orima evaluation, and by stakeholders from sport and recreation agencies, participation in the SSP has more than just a financial benefit for a number of NSOs involved in the program. Particularly for local organisations, participation in SSP allows for coaches to have greater exposure to young people across a range of ages and ability levels, and in large groups, which enables them to build their coaching skills in working with diverse participant cohorts. Coaches also have an opportunity to develop their soft skills in addition to technical skills, which is particularly important when working with children.

In the survey, 42 per cent of NSOs indicated that the SSP is very important (a score of 9 or 10) in terms of the growth of participation and membership in their sport. Similarly, 36 per cent of NSOs indicated that the SSP was very important (a score of 9 or 10) in generating interest in their sport.

Whilst Sport Australia noted that significant work was required to build the capacity of some NSOs at the program's establishment, in order to be able to deliver on the program objectives, they believe this has enabled NSOs to be more independent, autonomous and confident in their engagement with schools in delivering the program. This has enabled them to gain a greater understanding of children's engagement in physical activity, and subsequently develop new products to enhance their service offerings.

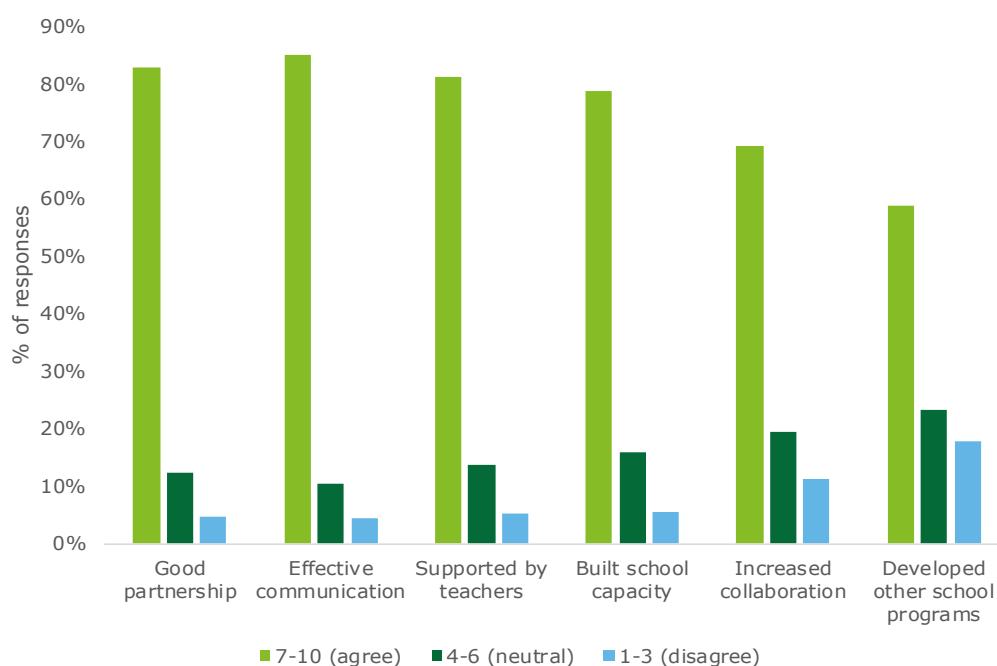
Whilst the demand for NSO services through the SSP has been strong, it appears that this is largely limited to the school environment, rather than translating into uptake of their services in the community. This is discussed further below.

NSO's connection with schools in their community

The data analysed through this evaluation has identified that a positive consequence of SSP has been the relationships built between NSOs and schools, which can have benefits that extend beyond the program itself. The survey results show that schools and NSOs consider the program to be contributing to increased collaboration and capacity-building between these each other.

Chart 4.13 shows that NSOs report strong partnerships (83 per cent agreement) and communication (85% agreement) with schools as a result of the program, and moderate to high support for the view that the SSP leads to increased collaboration between NSOs and schools (69% agreement), and the development of other programs at the school (59 per cent agreement).

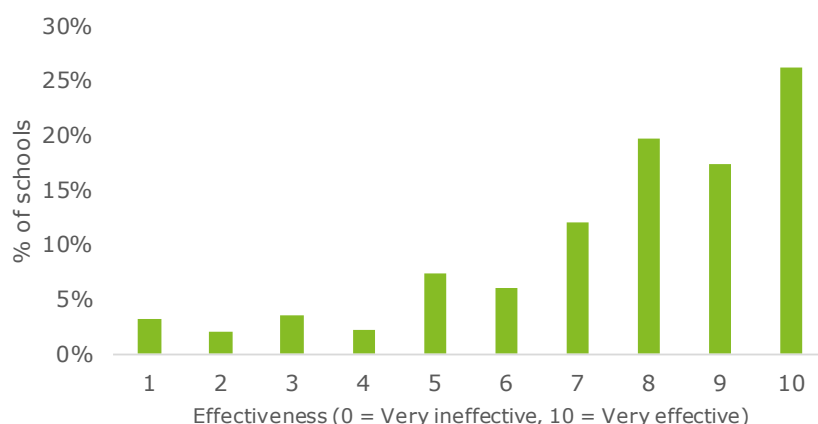
Chart 4.13: NSO reported experience in working with schools as part of SSP



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of NSO survey data.

Additionally, over a quarter of schools (26 per cent) who responded to the survey reported that SSP is 'very effective' in improving collaboration between schools and sporting organisations, as shown in Chart 4.14.

Chart 4.14: Improving collaboration between schools and sporting organisations [schools' perspective] (n = 442)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of school survey data.

Sport Australia report that they have received feedback from smaller NSOs who say that the program has been a 'game changer' in being able to penetrate the school environment due to their involvement in the program.

NSO capacity to drive participation growth

Despite the increased capacity of NSOs to connect with schools, and deliver high-quality sports programs in the school context, it is uncertain the extent to which this has led to increases in the level of community sport participation.

Stakeholders from sport and recreation departments, as well as health agencies, commented on the difference in outcomes for small compared to larger sporting organisations as a result of participating in the program. While some smaller sporting organisations have limited resourcing, and therefore participation in the school context alone has provided them with a substantial increase in funding and capacity, larger sporting organisations are already well established and may not have needed this injection of funds or more formalised ties with schools. There was a view among some stakeholders that school-based sports are a standard offering for larger NSOs, for example Auskick or Cricket Australia, which means the SSP is providing funding for programs that may have been delivered regardless of SSP. This means that the SSP is most likely not increasing the capacity of these larger, more mature sporting organisations.

Stakeholders also reported that there is an imbalance in terms of the ability of sporting organisations to align their offerings with physical literacy principles. Smaller organisations which are less 'professionalised' do not have latent resources to undertake this work. The program reportedly provides a mechanism for these organisations to elevate their service offering and increase their "footprint" in the local community. Larger organisations are likely to have more resources through which to promote their programs outside of the SSP program, and so are less reliant on the SSP itself.

An additional barrier mentioned by sporting organisations that ran the program was that while they were able to pass on information about local clubs to the participating children, it is not clear if this information makes it home, as they have no direct linkages to the parents or caregivers. This is particularly a barrier for children in the younger age groups. Additionally, many sporting organisations noted a lack of uptake due to the affordability of after school sports, highlighting the lower socioeconomic demographics of schools in which they were delivering the program.

Finally, some sporting organisations noted that in some instances there was a lack of local clubs running after school programs in the sport being delivered, with some rural areas not having any local clubs available. Of further concern is that even where there were local clubs available, some sporting organisations noted a lack of interest from the club in recruiting new players, citing a lack of response or unwillingness to supply information to be passed on to participants.

Increasing the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive participation growth – key findings:

34. The extensive reach of the program has driven uptake of NSO-affiliated organisations' services and enabled them to be more market-oriented. [SO11, MO20, MO21]
35. The program has enabled NSOs to build connections with schools in their community, leading to increased collaboration and capacity-building. However, this may have disproportionately benefited larger, more established sports [SO11]
36. Modest conversion into community-based sport restricts NSO capacity to drive participation growth. There are barriers to driving this growth that are largely outside of the control of NSOs. [MO20, MO21]

4.2 Value for money assessment

A value for money assessment involves the estimation of costs and benefits over several years, with future benefits and costs discounted to the present using a discount rate. The costs and benefits of an intervention program are compared to determine a net benefit (or cost) along with a benefit cost ratio (BCR). The BCR is calculated as the ratio of the sum of the discounted benefits of the intervention, relative to the cost of undertaking it. A BCR between 0 and 1 represents a net cost, while a BCR above 1 represents a net benefit.

The cost benefit analysis (CBA) for the SSP assessed the costs of implementing the program for the years 2015-2019 against the future benefit of participants remaining active due to their positive experiences in the program.

4.2.1 Context – physical inactivity and young people

Physical inactivity is a key risk factor in the development of most chronic conditions and several cancers. As a result, the benefits of physical activity, particularly among children and adolescents, are traditionally viewed in the context of the individual's future health benefits.²² A favourable effect on public health, in turn, would lead to lower healthcare costs for the community.

Large studies suggest that participation in physical activity is associated with a 20%–40% reduction in all-cause mortality compared with non-participation.²³ A recent Swedish study reported that regular physical activity reduces all-cause mortality by 30% across the population and by 44% for elderly.²⁴

In Australia, the AIHW estimated that 2.5% of morbidity and mortality in Australia was directly attributable to physical inactivity in 2015.²⁵ Physical inactivity contributed 10-20% of the individual disease burden from diabetes, bowel cancer, uterine cancer, dementia, breast cancer, coronary heart disease and stroke. The proportion of burden associated with physical inactivity increases with age and was the most pronounced for the 65-84 age group. The AIHW reports the burden of disease attributable to physical inactivity starts in adolescence, with the cohort aged 15-24.

²² Bailey, R., Hillman, C., Arent, S. and Petitpas, A. (2013). *Physical Activity: An Underinvestment in Human Capital?*. Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 10:289-308.

²³ Kahn, K.M. et al (2012). *Sport and exercise as contributors to the health of nations*, Accessed at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)60865-4/fulltext#sec11330808e193](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)60865-4/fulltext#sec11330808e193)

²⁴ Malm, C., Jakobsson, J., and Isaksson, A. (2019). *Physical Activity and Sports—Real Health Benefits: A Review with Insight into the Public Health of Sweden*, Accessed at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6572041/>

²⁵ AIHW (2019)

Physical activity also exacerbates other risk factors, such as being overweight or obese, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. In addition, insufficient levels of physical inactivity have adverse effects on psychological health, social inclusion, academic performance and professional success.²⁶ Physical inactivity contributes to a much broader range of health problems, as well as behaviour and overall well-being, however, there is limited evidence to quantify the strength of association.

It is commonly accepted that improving levels of physical activity in children and adolescents is important to the promotion of public health outcomes. A 2010 systematic review of 86 eligible papers found that physical activity is associated with numerous health benefits in school-aged children.²⁷ Generally, physical activity is positively correlated to the health benefits derived, i.e. the more physical activity, the greater the health benefit. However, at-risk children, e.g. those who are obese or have high blood pressure, may benefit greatly even from a small increase in physical activity. The study noted that physical activity levels should be of at least a moderate intensity to achieve material health benefits.

A key reason for focusing on youth programs that encourage physical activity is the belief that physical activity is habitual, hence active children will become active adults. In 2009, a review was conducted on longitudinal studies that sought to establish and quantify the benefit of physical activity tracked over time, i.e. to what extent the physical activity level in children and adolescents predicts physical activity in adulthood.²⁸ The studies tracking young children (younger than 10 years) into adulthood activity showed low or non-significant correlations. Studies tracking adolescents into adulthood consistently revealed a low but significant positive correlation for males, while for females the tracking was positive but less reliable, with a number of non-significant outcomes.

In comparing the impact of different types of physical activity in youth, participation in organised sports competitions and school PE programs were the better predictors of adult physical activity. Persistent participation in organised sports (longer than 3 years) increased the correlation with adult activity, supporting the premise that physical activity is habitual. The study notes that while the information supporting the validity and reliability of individual studies was generally not strong, the weight of evidence indicates that childhood physical activity is a reasonably good predictor of adult activity. It concludes that increasing childhood and adolescent physical activity is a genuinely important public health goal.

In the Australian context, the LOOK Lifestyle Study, based in Canberra, commenced in 2005 to establish a scientifically rigorous, long-term study of the health benefits of physical activity. The 8-year old children first included in 2005 have since been assessed at ages 10, 12 and 16 with the intent of continuing through adulthood, middle and old age. The research and publications have established positive connections between physical activity and a range of physical and mental health criteria for adolescents. However, the primary long-term goal is to determine how early physical activity and education impact quality of life for the research cohort as it ages. At the next measurement this year (2020) the LOOK study should be able to establish and quantify the retention of benefits as young adults, several years removed from their childhood PE.

When considering the results of the value for money assessment, they need to be viewed in the context of an economic evaluation of prevention programs, such as the SSP. With many public

²⁶ Bailey, R., Hillman, C., Arent, S. and Petitpas, A. (2013). *Physical Activity: An Underinvestment in Human Capital?* Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 10:289-308.

²⁷ Janssen, I. and LeBlanc. (2010). *Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth*, International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity, 7:40.

²⁸ Telama, R. (2009). *Tracking of Physical Activity from Childhood to Adulthood: A Review*, Obesity Facts, 3:187-195.

health interventions, there is a large time lag between the intervention and resulting effects, with most benefits occurring over the long-term.²⁹

This is a major barrier for assessing the long-term effectiveness of such a program,³⁰ and so it is not unexpected the assessment would estimate a low return of the program at this stage. Further investment in long-term follow up assessments would be one way to overcome this barrier and achieve a more balanced view of the program's overall relative costs and benefits. Given the strength of evidence that links physical activity to longer term benefits, it is recommended that the CBA results be considered in the context of the wider research and evidence base.

4.2.2 Summary of the results

Table 4.13 presents the results of the CBA for the base case assumption where benefits are only assessed until the year 2030, along with sensitivities where benefits for participants due to increased activity persist until 2040 and 2050. In all cases the program is assumed to stop at year 2019. The present value of the total cost of the SSP for all cases was \$167.7 million. For the base case to 2030 the present value of the benefit was \$29.1 million, with a BCR of 0.17 – for every dollar invested in the SSP there is a \$0.17 return in benefits. The low return is attributable to the age of the participants through this period (largely in the 15-24-year-old bracket) – noting that serious health issues resulting from physical inactivity generally do not manifest in young adults.

Testing the impact for longer durations shows that the benefits increase substantially as the cohort ages due to the increased incidence of inactivity-related disease. It was assumed that all active children as a result of the SSP would remain active adults throughout the assessed durations. However, this attributable proportion is unlikely to remain constant and will tail off over longer time periods as the causal link to the original activity weakens. Due to the lack of empirical evidence, no drop-off values (i.e. deterioration of the outcome) were applied.

²⁹ Zechmeister, I., Kilian, R. & McDaid, D. (2008). Is it worth investing in mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness? A systematic review of the evidence from economic evaluations. *BMC Public Health* 8, 20 (2008) doi:10.1186/1471-2458-8-20

³⁰ Ibid.

Table 4.13: Total costs, benefits and BCR, 2019

	2030	2040	2050
Costs (\$)	167,657,456	167,657,456	167,657,456
Benefits (\$)	29,107,676	133,598,441	297,755,970
NPV (\$)	(138,549,780)	(34,059,015)	130,098,514
BCR	0.17	0.80	1.78

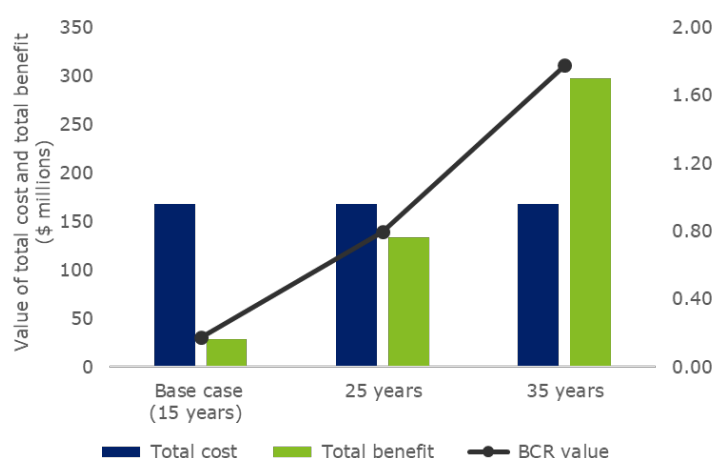
Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

This analysis presents results from changing the timeframe from 15 years to 25 years and 35 years (Chart 4.15). Due to all costs being incurred in years 2015 to 2019 there were no changes to the total present value of costs when the timeframe was changed. The present value of benefits was highly sensitive to changes in the timeframe as:

- The annual benefits are now accruing over a longer timeframe, and
- The proportion of burden associated with physical inactivity (and the resulting cost of physical inactivity) increases markedly with age.

Over a period of 25 years, the present value of benefits in 2019 dollars was estimated to be \$133.6 million. Compared to the base case, the present value of benefits is 10 times higher over a period of 35 years (\$297.8 million).³¹ The BCR under the 25-year timeframe was 0.80, while under the 35-year timeframe it was 1.78.

Chart 4.15: Sensitivity testing – timeframe



Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Further detail about the CBA methodology can be found in Appendix E. This includes information about the parameters, costs, benefit quantification, results and sensitive analysis.

4.2.3 The national landscape for sport in schools

As identified through consultations and desktop research, there are a number of jurisdictional physical activity and/or health programs aimed at school aged children being led by various state and territorial government departments, organisations and not-for-profits. These programs and strategies are provided in Appendix B. However, none of these programs appear to directly compete with the SSP, which has a reach that is unmatched by any other individual program.

³¹ It is assumed that there is no deterioration of outcome (i.e. drop-off values) over longer time periods and all active children as a result of the SSP (12.6%) would remain active adults throughout the assessed duration.

As the SSP is a program run at the federal level, it is consistent across jurisdictions, and being available to every school in Australia ensures it is equitable across all students. In contrast, many programs listed target particular groups of individuals who may be more likely to be less active than their peers (e.g. Queensland's Good Start Program, which targets Maori and Pacific Islander communities), or are opt-in programs at the family/individual level (e.g. ACT's Ride or Walk to School program). The benefits of the SSP in comparison is that it provides the same opportunity for every child in primary school in Australia, and the extensive reach of the program is evidence that it is having an impact on a large number of these students.

Instead of competing with the program, many of the jurisdictional-level programs complement the SSP. For example, many states have a sporting voucher program providing funding at the family level, often targeted at lower socioeconomic families. This alleviates one of the barriers to children transitioning from the in-school-based SSP to out of school sport when there is a financial barrier to participating in the latter. Given how programs such as these can complement the SSP, there is opportunity for the Commonwealth Government to better link in with the jurisdictional health and education departments to allow better visibility over what's happening in each jurisdiction. This would ensure a collective understanding across both levels of government and provide opportunity for better coordination around the delivery and promotion of programs.

Additionally, jurisdictional programs targeted at living a healthier lifestyle, such as South Australia's Eat Well Be Active project, provide a more holistic, whole-of-person approach to living a healthier life. The more holistic focus of many of these programs provides opportunity for the SSP to better align itself with what is happening at the jurisdiction level, benefiting jurisdictions by having a consistent national approach to holistic health programs and strategies.

The SSP (or some future augmentation of it) may continue to have a role to play, if more acutely focused on improving physical activity levels in children. However, this would need to be in the context of an ecosystem (school, home, community) existing that targets towards an agreed vision and shared set of objectives related to physical activity in children.

Value for money assessment - key findings:

37. With many public health interventions, such as the SSP, there is a significant time lag between the intervention and resulting effects, with most benefits occurring over the long-term. As such, economic analysis such as this should always be considered in the context of the broader body of evidence.
38. The BCR is low over a 10-year time period (0.17), as would be expected, yet improves across the years (1.78 after 35-years). This is intuitively when benefits from sustained participation in sport would materialise, given the age of children receiving the intervention.
39. Multiple state and federal agencies are investing money in improving physical activity levels in children. There are numerous other programs which are similar in nature and intent to the SSP, yet none are of the same size and scale. Given the enormous health system burden caused by physical inactivity, this program still constitutes value for money for the Department. It is appropriate that the Department make investment in national programs that encourage children to get more active.

Effectiveness – recommendations:

4. Improving awareness of the SSP in remote locations should be a focal area, as this will likely improve the participation rate of schools in these areas, where participation is currently lagging.
5. Appreciating and prioritising PE in the school environment and upskilling teachers to incorporate physical literacy within their classes would allow a 'whole of school' approach to improving FMS and physical literacy. The responsible agency should work with relevant stakeholders toward this common goal.
6. Increasing the SSP's communication with, and involvement of, parents should receive greater focus, as this could alleviate one of the barriers to increasing sporting participation outside of school hours.
7. More formalised involvement of teachers in the SSP, and the development of resources to support this, should be pursued as this would increase the benefits of the program.

5 Efficiency and sustainability

This chapter provides an assessment of the SSP's current funding and resourcing levels, and outlines considerations for the program's sustainability in future years

5.1 Program funding

The program is funded through the Australian Government Department of Health's Office for Sport; however, it is coordinated through Sport Australia. Since the program's inception in 2015, approximately \$200 million has spent through the program – Table 5.1 provides a breakdown of the SSP's expenditure between 2015-2019. This information has been provided by Sport Australia, and no further detail was provided in order to validate individual expense items against program activities. The scope of this project did not extend to undertaking detailed analysis of expense items.

Table 5.1 SSP financials, \$ million (2014/15 – 2019/2020)

	14/15*	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20**	Total
Employee Costs	3.49	7.30	6.20	5.38	1.67	2.44	26.49
Internal Expenses	0.68	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	-	0.69
Loss/(Profit) from Sale of Assets	-	0.00	0.01	0.00	-	-	0.01
Grants	10.29	29.13	28.39	28.68	27.06	37.61	161.16
Supplier Costs	2.06	3.91	4.11	2.59	1.23	1.98	15.88
Depreciation and Amortisation	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	0.00
External Revenue – Other***	-	-1.53	-2.73	-1.17	-0.72	-4.03	-10.18
Total	16.53	38.82	35.98	35.50	29.24	37.99	194.06

Source: Sport Australia (2019).

Notes: * The program was operational for only half of the financial year.

** Financials for January–July 2020 have been projected by Sport Australia.

*** Revenue relates to grant funds not spent by schools that are returned to Sport Australia (i.e. contra expense)

All analysis is based on data provided by Sport Australia. The discrepancy between the figures presented in this table and prior analysis requires further exploration and is outside of the scope of this evaluation.

5.1.1 Program expenditure

5.1.1.1 Grants criteria and funding

Grant applications are assessed by Sport Australia in accordance with the terms and conditions and program parameters.³²

³² Australian Sports Commission, *Manual: Primary School Grants, Secondary School Grants*.

Primary school grant applications are awarded based on priority and ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Funding history: the number of grants the school has received over the past four terms – schools with zero or less terms of funding are ranked higher
2. School participation ratio: the proportion of the student population that the school proposes will participate – schools with higher proportions of engaged students are ranked higher
3. Application timeliness: Timing of application is used as a differentiator if schools have identical funding history and school participation ratio – earlier grant submission times ranked higher.

Based on the criteria and given a specified budget, Sport Australia determines which primary schools receive grants. A funding matrix (see Appendix – page 123) then informs the maximum funding package that a primary school can receive.

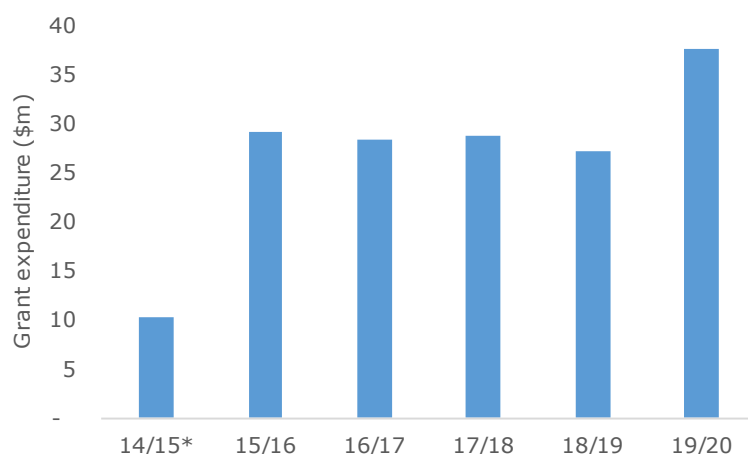
Secondary school applications are assessed against a stricter criterion (0) aimed at identifying schools with higher-priority demographics, such as female only schools. A cut-off is set for a certain score based on the available budget. Depending on the school population, schools can receive up to \$2,500.

Applications for grant funding are made by schools in the term preceding the one in which they require funds, through the SSP website. Based on a set of criteria, Sport Australia will approve schools' grant applications, which can be allocated toward any of the following:

- coaching services from sporting organisations
- sporting equipment
- professional development for teachers.

Since the beginning of the program in 2015, grant expenditure has remained relatively consistent, except for an increase in the 2019/20 financial year – see Chart 5.1. This is associated with a streamlining of internal operations in order to increase the proportion of funding directed to schools.

Chart 5.1: SSP grant expenditure, \$ million (2014/15* – 2019/2020)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP financials.

Notes: * Grant expenditure commenced in January 2015.

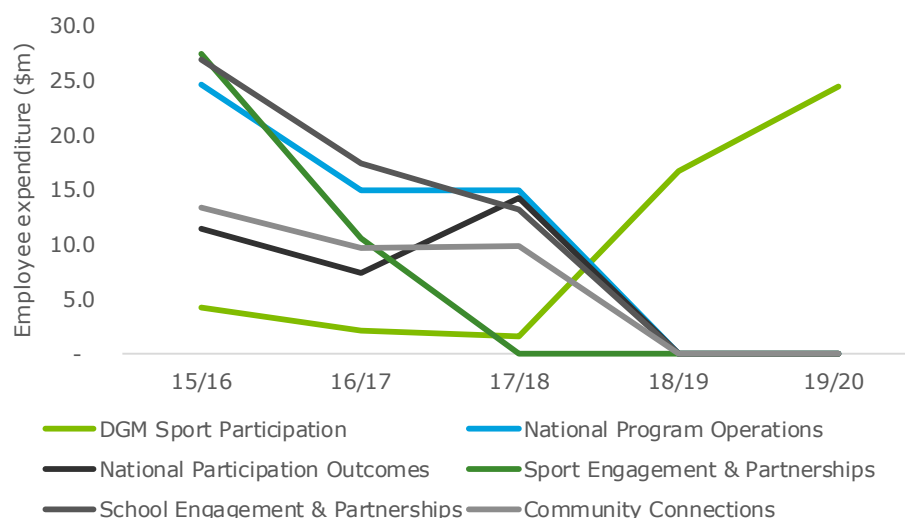
All analysis is based on data provided by Sport Australia. Any discrepancy between the figures presented in this chart and prior analysis may warrant further exploration and is outside of the scope of this evaluation.

5.1.1.2 Employee costs

Employee costs associated with the program have significantly changed both in size and composition since its inception. Initially, during the program's establishment (2014-2015), employee expenditure was distributed across a range of teams which included program operations, sport partnerships, school partnerships and community engagement.

However, following 2017/18, there was a large reduction in the SSP workforce, which was consolidated into a smaller, core team – this team assumed responsibility for all program functions. Consequently, overall employee expenditure reduced substantially between the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial year.

Chart 5.2: SSP employee expenditure, \$ million (2015/16 – 2019/2020)



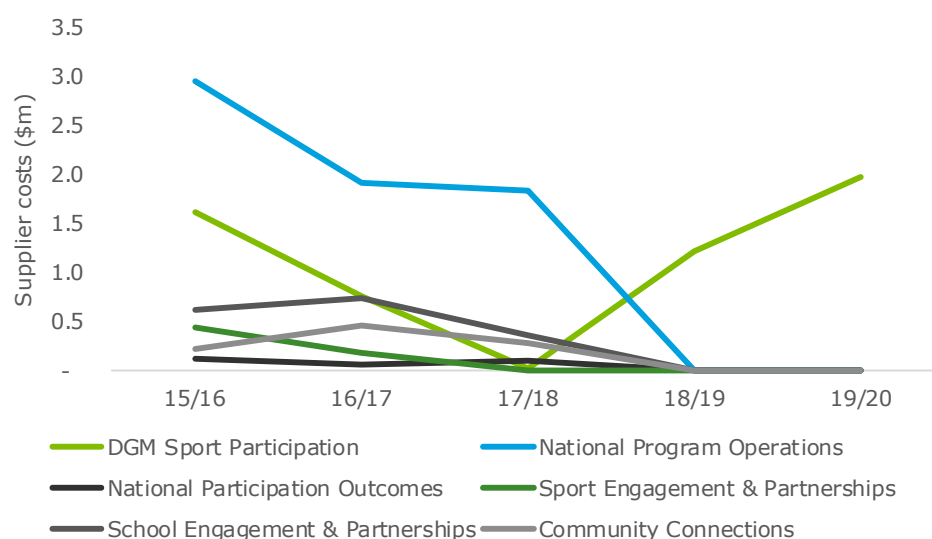
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP financials.

Note: 2015/16 amount includes expenditure from January – June 2015.

5.1.1.3 Supplier costs

The program averaged \$2.6 million in annual expenditure on supplier costs – external providers of services such as web development contractors, research partners and other professional services.

Chart 5.3: SSP supplier costs, \$ million (2015/16 – 2019/2020)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP financials.

Note: 2015/16 amount includes expenditure from January – June 2015.

5.1.1.4 Funding efficiency

While the program data does not identify unique participants, an assessment of the total number of children participating in the SSP relative to total grant expenditure was undertaken. Following

the first year, expenditure per participant declined significantly as the number of participants tripled.

Since 2016, the program has experienced some minor fluctuation in participants relative to grant expenditure though this has remained largely consistent – average expenditure per participant was \$13.80 between 2016 and 2019.

It is noted that participants would likely participate in multiple sessions (given that each term it is expected students participate in at least four sessions), which would mean that the per session cost would be a smaller proportion of this per participant expenditure amount. However, due to the limitations in program data, this amount is unable to be calculated.

While no benchmark exists to enable comparison between this expenditure per participant, publicly available suggests that the average cost of a sports lesson (such as tennis, swimming or dance) can be anywhere between \$20-80 per session^{33,34,35}. On this basis, the expenditure per participant appears to be fair, given students are receiving multiple sessions for, on average, \$13.80 per participant.

Table 5.2: SSP funding per participant (2015-2019)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Participants	655,189	1,894,765	2,021,654	2,386,187	2,590,293
Grant expenditure (\$m)	39.4	28.4	28.7	27.1	37.6
Expenditure per participant (\$)	60.2	15.0	14.2	11.3	14.5

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP financial statements.

Notes: Grant expenditure is the gross amount received by school prior to unspent funds being returned. The amounts also include expenditure on items other than sport sessions, such as sport equipment. Therefore, the expenditure per participant is marginally overstated.

All analysis is based on data provided by Sport Australia. The discrepancy between the figures presented in this table and prior analysis requires further investigation and is outside the scope of this evaluation.

- Program expenditure - key findings:

40. Grant expenditure remained relatively consistent from 2016/17 to 2018/19, followed by an increase of nearly 40% in 2019-20. This sharp increase was due to a decrease in operational expenses.
41. Overall employee expenditure reduced substantially between 2017/18 and 2018/19, resulting from a large reduction of the SSP workforce into a smaller, core team.
42. While benchmarking is challenging, the investment in the SSP based on per participant expenditure indicates the program is spending money efficiently, relatively to the market for sports coaching.

5.1.2 Program resourcing

5.1.2.1 Sport Australia

As shown in Table 5.1, above, since the establishment of the SSP in 2015, the proportion of overall funding directed to Sport Australia for operations has significantly decreased. While Sport Australia acknowledged that the operational resourcing demands have decreased since the formative initial years of the program, they raised concerns that their significantly reduced budget will limit the

³³Inspire tennis, ANZ Tennis Hot Shots, Accessed at: <https://www.inspiretennis.com.au/tennis-coaching-sydney-2/tennis-hot-shots-sydney/>

³⁴Lessons.com, Average cost for swimming lessons ranges from \$20-\$60 per hour, Accessed at: <https://lessons.com/costs/swimming-lessons-cost>

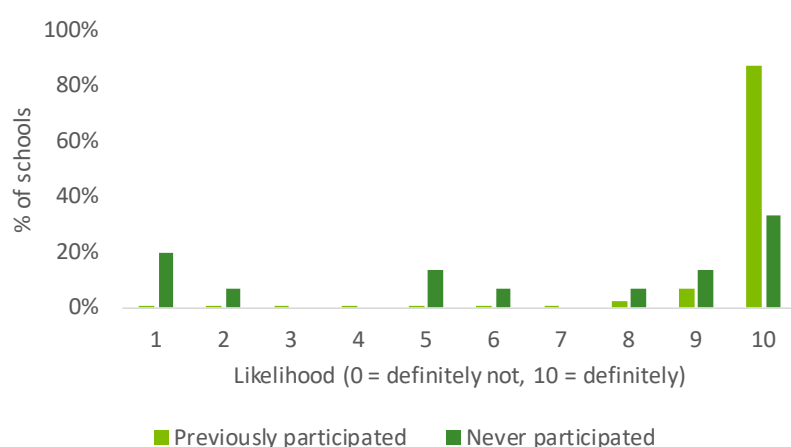
³⁵Lessons.com, Average cost for private dance lessons ranges from \$50-\$85 per hour, Accessed at: <https://lessons.com/costs/dance-lessons-cost>

capabilities of the team to operate the program and could limit any future enhancements. Stakeholders expressed concern that this reduction might lead to redundancies and the objectives outlined in Sport 2030 not being met. However, Sport Australia reported planning to work within the resourcing pressures to ensure that the delivery of the program would not be impacted.

5.1.2.2 Schools

Schools showed strong support for the funding amount received through the program. Of those who responded to the survey and had previously participated, 87 per cent indicated that they would seek funding again to participate in the SSP going forward (Chart 5.4). While some schools commented that increased competition for funding in recent years has led to a decline the amounts they had received, these schools also acknowledged that the funding received remains critical to facilitating quality sports opportunities for their students.

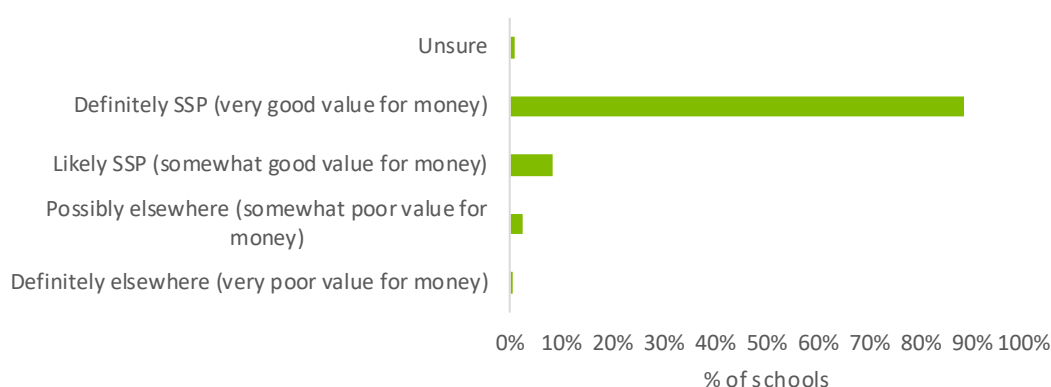
Chart 5.4: Likelihood of school seeking funding to participate in the future (%) [Participated (n = 469) and Never participated (n=15)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

In addition to the funding, which has afforded schools the capacity to procure equipment and services, schools also endorsed the SSP model as it has helped to foster relationships with sporting organisations. Eighty-eight per cent of survey respondents indicated that, given the same funding allocation, without any restrictions on how the money could be spent, they would 'definitely' allocate it toward the SSP; only 3 per cent indicated that they would consider using for another purpose (Chart 5.5).

Chart 5.5: How future SSP funding would be spent, if given the choice (%) (n=469)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

According to the Future Direction Survey – a survey completed by participating schools – 85 per cent of respondents reported the SSP as ‘very important’ for the school. These results indicate that most schools believe that the SSP is an optimal use of the available resources for progressing levels of participation in physical activity.

With respect to the timing of SSP programs, most sessions were delivered within the school day. Based on the Program Delivery Survey – the survey administered to schools who received grants specifically for sport delivery – 79 per cent of respondent schools indicated that sessions were delivered during the school day. Seventy-five per cent of which were delivered during lunchtime. See Table 5.3 for a breakdown by year.

Table 5.3: Timing of SSP sport sessions (2016-2019)

	2016		2017		2018 ¹		2019 ^{1 2}		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
After School	3,096	22	1,991	17	938	9	123	2	6,148	14
Before School	394	3	355	3	170	2	9	0	928	2
During Class	9,688	70	9,105	76	6,739	66	596	8	26,128	60
Lunchtime	584	4	495	4	271	3	62	1	1,412	3
No response	7	0	2	0	2,156	21	6,415	89	8,580	20
Total	13,769		11,948		10,274		7,205		43,196	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of Program Delivery Survey data.

Notes: (1) Excludes analysis of secondary schools

(2) Excludes Term 4

Of the sessions that were delivered, 77 per cent of who responded had an external, professional sport coach attend the school to deliver the program. However, almost one-quarter were internally delivered by either a qualified physical educator or generalist teacher – see Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Deliver of SSP sport sessions (2016-2019)

	2016		2017		2018 ¹		2019 ^{1 2}		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
External coach	10,060	73	9,504	79	6,616	64	793	11	26,973	62
Teacher	3,592	26	2,441	20	1,502	15	164	2	7,699	18
Other	114	1	21	0	-	0	-	0	135	0
No response	9	0	1	0	2,156	21	6,392	87	8,558	20
Total	13,769		11,948		10,274		7,205		43,196	

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of Program Delivery Survey data.

Notes: (1) Excludes analysis of secondary schools

(2) Excludes Term 4

However, due to the high non-response rate in 2018 and 2019, it is difficult to discern whether the program has had any impact on schools’ internal capacity to deliver sports internally. Furthermore, per the Future Direction Survey – another survey administered to participating schools – teachers self-report a high level of confidence to be able to internally deliver sport sessions to their students, though, it is unclear whether this can be directly attributed to their exposure to the program – see Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Self-reported teacher confidence to deliver sport sessions (2016-2019)

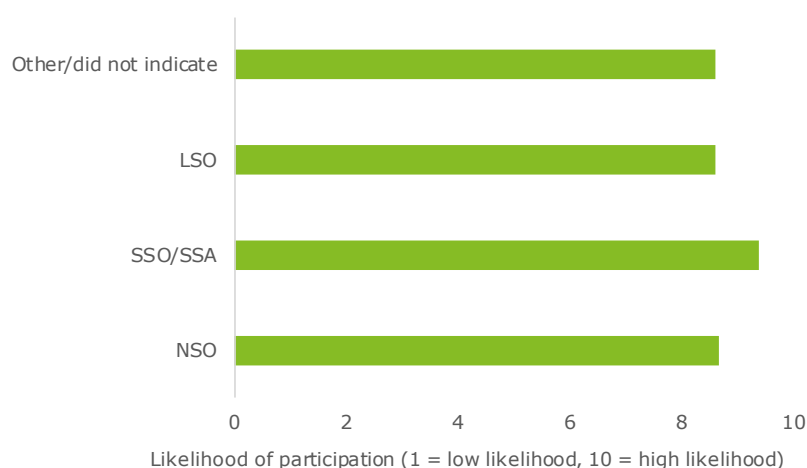
	No. of teachers	%
Extremely confident	148	62
Very confident	78	33
Moderately confident	11	5

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of Future Direction Survey data.

5.1.2.3 National Sporting Organisations

Like schools, NSOs largely indicated their support for the program. Across national, state and local levels, most sporting organisations felt that they would continue to participate in the SSP into the future (Chart 5.6).

Chart 5.6: Likelihood of NSOs continuing to participate in the SSP (n=428)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of survey data.

Sporting organisations suggested that the funding provided to schools overcame the costs barrier of accessing their coaching services. Further, the fostering of relationships between sporting organisations and schools created opportunities and encouraged children to engage in community sport programs.

For those NSOs that indicated a low likelihood of continuing the SSP, the most frequent reasons mentioned in the associated free-text responses were that it was not financially viable; the NSO had limited resources to promote the SSP themselves and/or had limited demand for their sport; and it was difficult to get coaches who were available during school hours.

An additional barrier mentioned by local sports organisations in the survey was the lack of resources and infrastructure to deliver out of hours programs. While these organisations can make use of facilities during school hours, there is an opportunity for further collaboration between NSOs and schools in order to share resources to promote more out of hours sport participation, such as use of the school gym or ovals.

- Program resourcing - key findings:

43. Since the establishment of the SSP in 2015, the proportion of overall funding directed to Sport Australia for operations has been significantly decreased, which will limit the capabilities of the team to operate the program and could limit any future enhancements.
44. Schools show strong support for the funding received through the SSP, and what the funding was able to be spent on, with 85% of schools surveyed indicating the funding is 'very important' for the school.
45. Most NSOs indicated that they would continue to participate in the SSP moving forward, while some indicated a lack of financial incentive, low demand, lack of available coaches during school hours, and limited resources and infrastructure as some of the main barriers.

5.2 Assessment of best practice

In order to inform the evaluation of the SSP, and areas for the future focus of the program, a scan of the relevant domestic and international literature was undertaken. The scan identified best practice features of interventions focussed on improving physical literacy and enhancing children's engagement in physical activity and sport.

5.2.1 The benefits of physical activity

The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that physical activity is an essential component of the development of children which produces improved outcomes in multiple domains, including physical and mental health, cognition and social skills.³⁶ PE and sport (PES) – structured and supervised physical activity that occurs during the school day – is a mechanism which schools use to encourage children to participate in sports.

This section will further explore the various benefits of PES to children.

5.2.1.1 Physical benefits

Engagement in PES has been shown to deliver an array of physical benefits for children. A systematic review of literature on the benefits of physical activity and sport to school-aged children highlighted that it contributed to the growth of healthy musculoskeletal tissues through increased bone density and muscular strength, and cardiovascular systems, attributed to improvements to heart and lung function.³⁷

Furthermore, PES is understood to be instrumental to neuromuscular and FMS development.³⁸ Participation in PES has been linked to a decrease in the risk of multiple chronic health problems in children. By supporting the prevention and reduction of obesity, PES can mitigate the risk of

³⁶ World Health Organization, *Physical Activity and Health – Physical activity and young people* (2019), <https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_young_people/en/>

³⁷ Janssen, I., & LeBlanc, A.G. (2010). Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth. *International journal of behavioral nutrition and physical activity*, 7(1), 40.

³⁸ Laukkanen, A., Pesola, A., Havu, M., Sääkslahti, A., & Finni, T. (2014). Relationship between habitual physical activity and gross motor skills is multifaceted in 5-to 8-year-old children. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, 24(2), 102-110.

associated conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.³⁹ Certain forms of PES can assist in the prevention of injury in adulthood.⁴⁰

5.2.1.2 Mental benefits

There are notable mental health and cognitive benefits attributable to engaging in PES as a child. Several studies have demonstrated that PES has the capacity to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, and can boost self-esteem.⁴¹ Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence linking PES to improvements in children's concentration and arousal, which may result in enhanced academic performance and improved long-term mental health outcomes.⁴²

5.2.1.3 Social benefits

The social benefits that result from participation in PES are another significant element of their overall benefit. PES has been shown to facilitate the development of social skills and improve overall social health. Through the social element of participation, PES has the potential to engender positive social behaviours and traits such as trust, empathy, personal and corporate responsibility and cooperation. Additionally, such skills may function as a form of social capital for individuals and assist with the development of resiliency, as well as leading to increased social cohesion.⁴³

5.2.1.4 Long-term participation

While PES offers an array of immediate benefits to children, a substantial value too lies in its link to increased physical activity into adolescence and adulthood. Longitudinal studies have found childhood physical activity to be a strong predictor of lifetime participation in physical activity.⁴⁴ Therefore, increasing childhood participation in physical activity is viewed as an imperative step toward improving long-term health outcomes.

The benefits of physical activity - key findings:

46. PES has been shown to deliver several physical benefits for children, including growth of healthy musculoskeletal tissues and cardiovascular systems, neuromuscular and FMS development, a decrease in the risk of multiple chronic health problems, and preventing and reducing obesity.
47. Mental benefits of physical activity include reduced feelings of anxiety and depression, boosted self-esteem and improvements in concentration and arousal.
48. A significant benefit of PES is the social benefits, facilitating the development of social skills and improve overall social health.
49. PES in children is strongly linked to increased physical activity in adolescence and adulthood, leading to longer-term participation and further health benefits.

³⁹ Bailey, R. (2006). PE and sport in schools: A review of benefits and outcomes. *Journal of school health*, 76(8), 397-401.

⁴⁰ Rössler, R., Donath, L., Verhagen, E., Junge, A., Schweizer, T., & Faude, O. (2014). Exercise-based injury prevention in child and adolescent sport: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sports medicine*, 44(12), 1733-1748.

⁴¹ Biddle, S. J. H., & Asare, M. (2011). Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: A review of reviews. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 45(11), 886-895.

⁴² Rasberry, C. N., Lee, S. M., Robin, L., Laris, B. A., Russell, L. A., Coyle, K. K., & Nihiser, A. J. (2011). The association between school-based physical activity, including PE, and academic performance: a systematic review of the literature. *Preventive medicine*, 52, S10-S20.

⁴³ Bailey, R., Armour, K., Kirk, D., Jess, M., Pickup, I., Sandford, R., & Education, B. P. (2009). The educational benefits claimed for PE and school sport: an academic review. *Research papers in education*, 24(1), 1-27.

⁴⁴ For example: Perkins, D.F., Jacobs, J.E., Barber, B.L. and Eccles, J.S. (2004). Childhood and adolescent sports participation as predictors of participation in sports and physical fitness activities during young adulthood. *Youth & Society*, 35(4), 495-520; Telama, R., Yang, X., Hirvensalo, M. and Raitakari, O. (2006). Participation in organized youth sport as a predictor of adult physical activity: a 21-year longitudinal study. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 18(1), 76-88; Kjønnsen, L., Fjørtoft, I. and Wold, B. (2009). Attitude to PE and participation in organized youth sports during adolescence related to physical activity in young adulthood: A 10-year longitudinal study. *European PE review*, 15(2), 139-154.

5.2.2 Best practice features

The number of Australian children meeting global physical activity recommendations is declining – an estimated 89 per cent Australian adolescents failed to meet the necessary level in 2016, up from 87 per cent 2001.⁴⁵ Furthermore, for Australian children aged 9–13 years, daily moderate to vigorous physical activity reduces by approximately 10 minutes per day per year.⁴⁶ The decline in physical activity amongst children that has occurred in recent decades is understood to have played a large role in the increasing childhood obesity epidemic.⁴⁷ Additionally, it has resulted in less FMS development, which is fundamental to engagement in more complex physical activities later in life.⁴⁸

Schools are in a unique position to affect levels of participation in physical activity – for many, school is the first and primary mechanism through which participation in physical activity transpires.⁴⁹ Research also indicates that physical activity participation is increasingly plateauing in primary school before the transition into secondary school.⁵⁰ Accordingly, school-based physical activity interventions can be highly effective measures to increase participation levels.

Through analysis of the academic and grey literature, several best practice features of effective child-focussed physical activity interventions were identified. These include:

- Outcomes oriented
- Population targeted
- Multi-component
- Community involvement
- Professional development.

5.2.2.1 Outcomes oriented

While encouraging children to engage in any form of physical activity remains a key priority, the provision of generic, unplanned or inconsistent opportunities to be active can inhibit an intervention from achieving its objectives. Rather, physical activity interventions should be designed to directly influence the drivers of the outcomes they ultimately seek to achieve. This is accomplished through the incorporation of more structured, evidence-based activities that can be clearly linked to outcomes.

For example, to effectively enable the development of FMS in children, research demonstrates that programs should include developmentally appropriate, FMS-specific learning experiences, which are distinct from general activities, and direct or explicit teaching strategies.⁵¹ Where the objective is to increase the sense of enjoyment experienced in physical activity, evidence suggests that the intervention is more likely to succeed when focussing on improving children's FMS. Mastery of a skill, which FMS development supports, is correlated with a greater sense of enjoyment in a given

⁴⁵ Guthold, R., Stevens, G., Riley, L. and Bull, F. (2020). Global trends in insufficient physical activity among adolescents: a pooled analysis of 298 population-based surveys with 1.6 million participants. *The Lancet: Child and Adolescent Health* 4:1, p23-35.

⁴⁶ Department of Health and Ageing (2007), *Australian national children's nutrition and physical activity survey - main findings*, <[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/8F4516D5FAC0700ACA257BF0001E0109/\\$File/childrens-nut-phys-survey.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/8F4516D5FAC0700ACA257BF0001E0109/$File/childrens-nut-phys-survey.pdf)>[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/8F4516D5FAC0700ACA257BF0001E0109/\\$File/childrens-nut-phys-survey.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/8F4516D5FAC0700ACA257BF0001E0109/$File/childrens-nut-phys-survey.pdf)

⁴⁷ Weiss, R. and Raz, I. (2006). Focus on childhood fitness, not just fatness. *The Lancet*, 368(9532), 261-262.

⁴⁸ Hardy, L.L., Barnett, L., Espinel, P. and Okely, A.D. (2013). Thirteen-year trends in child and adolescent fundamental movement skills: 1997-2010. *Medicine and science in sports and exercise*, 45(10), pp.1965-1970.

⁴⁹ Bailey, R. (2006). PE and sport in schools: A review of benefits and outcomes. *Journal of school health*, 76(8), 397-401.

⁵⁰ Marks, J., Barnett, L.M., Strugnell, C. and Allender, S. (2015). Changing from primary to secondary school highlights opportunities for school environment interventions aiming to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour: a longitudinal cohort study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 12(1), 59.

⁵¹ Morgan, P., Barnett, L., Cliff, D., Okely, A., Scott, H., Cohen, K. and Lubans, D. (2013). Fundamental movement skill interventions in youth: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*, 132(5), e1361-e1383.

activity which utilises the skill.⁵² Interventions that employ incentive structures and/ or self-measurement tools have been linked to increased daily activity levels.⁵³

5.2.2.2 Population targeted

To be effective, child-focussed physical activity interventions should be tailored to accommodate the needs, preferences and barriers to participation of the target populations that they seek to engage. The population of Australian children is comprised of a range of sub-groups, each with different partialities for the types and patterns of activities (i.e. frequency, intensity).⁵⁴ Approaches need to resonate with their target audiences in a way that stimulates interest in and provides pathways to be physically active so that engagement persists beyond the intervention itself.

At the most fundamental level, there are distinctions in preferences for physical activity between genders: research indicates that for girls, activities aimed at maximising enjoyment and facilitating a social element are typically of greater appeal.⁵⁵ In contrast, boys tend to be more attracted to physical activity when a competitive element is introduced.⁵⁶

Social and cultural tailoring becomes especially pertinent when attempting to engage at-risk groups for whom barriers to engagement may be higher and levels of participation might be lower. Discrepancies in access, driven by factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, also necessitate targeted interventions. This may include the use of voucher or financial assistance schemes,⁵⁷ or by firmly embedding opportunities to engage in physical activity within the school day.⁵⁸

Similarly, interventions targeting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, should consider the more complex barriers to engagement in physical activity. For CALD populations, there is a need for culturally appropriate and relevant programs,⁵⁹ which may require the use of different languages and culturally sensitive messaging that communicates the importance of physical activity.⁶⁰ Likewise, there is a need for culturally specific training for activity facilitators to ensure that service provision is delivered with sufficient cultural competency.⁶¹

Targeted physical activity interventions are also imperative to enable the engagement of children with disabilities. With a lack of disability-friendly community services and the large personal investment required to provide opportunities for children with disabilities, interventions should

⁵² Okely, A. D. and Booth, M. L. (2000) Relationship of enjoyment of physical activity and preferred activities to fundamental movement skills in young children. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 7, S151.

⁵³ For example: Horne, P.J., Hardman, C.A., Lowe, C.F. and Rowlands, A.V. (2009). Increasing children's physical activity: a peer modelling, rewards and pedometer-based intervention. *European Journal of clinical nutrition*, 63(2), 191.; Lubans, D.R., Morgan, P.J. and Tudor-Locke, C. (2009). A systematic review of studies using pedometers to promote physical activity among youth. *Preventive medicine*, 48(4), 307-315

⁵⁴ Morgan, P.J., Young, M.D., Smith, J.J. and Lubans, D.R. (2016). Targeted health behavior interventions promoting physical activity: a conceptual model. *Exercise and sport sciences reviews*, 44(2), 71-80.

⁵⁵ Sirard, J.R., Pfeiffer, K.A. and Pate, R.R. (2006). Motivational factors associated with sports program participation in middle school students. *Journal of adolescent health*, 38(6), 696-703.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Christian, D., Todd, C., Hill, R., Rance, J., Mackintosh, K., Stratton, G. and Brophy, S. (2016). Active children through incentive vouchers-evaluation (ACTIVE): a mixed-method feasibility study. *BMC public health*, 16(1), 890.

⁵⁸ Craike, M., Wiesner, G., Hilland, T.A. and Bengoechea, E.G. (2018). Interventions to improve physical activity among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups: An umbrella review. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 15(1), 43.

⁵⁹ Marshall, A.L., Hunt, J. and Jenkins, D. (2008). Knowledge of and preferred sources of assistance for physical activity in a sample of urban Indigenous Australians. *International journal of behavioral nutrition and physical activity*, 5(1), 22.

⁶⁰ Caperchione, C.M., Kolt, G.S. and Mummery, W.K. (2013). Examining physical activity service provision to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Australia: a qualitative evaluation. *PloS one*, 8(4), e62777.

⁶¹ Ibid.

support the creation of opportunities to be physically active. Furthermore, such activities should be family-centric to ensure the continuation of physical activity behaviours beyond the intervention.⁶²

5.2.2.3 Multi-component

Multi-component interventions which combine more than one interventional element, such as promoting the benefits of physical activity, raising awareness of opportunities to be active, and dietary advice, alongside the provision of physical activity, have the potential to be more effective than singularly focussed interventions.⁶³

While trying to affect too many health behaviours can dilute the effectiveness of the physical activity component of an intervention, a greater focus on two components can enhance success.⁶⁴ In particular, interventions that have provided opportunities for children to be physically active, coupled with education materials for children, families and teachers (i.e. minimum daily physical activity guidelines, strategies to be more active) have showed the highest level of evidence for increasing overall physical activity.⁶⁵

Without an understanding of the necessity and role of family members, physical activity interventions may be unlikely to deliver substantial changes in children's physical activity behaviours. Parental support occurs through a variety of mechanisms, such as the provision of transport or clear encouragement during participation, which have been consistently and positively attributed with improved rates of youth physical activity.⁶⁶

Additionally, the introduction of a family component (e.g. parent education) to school-based interventions has shown to be efficacious.⁶⁷ An increase in both parent and child motivation to change behaviour was identified as a potential mechanism, suggesting that identifying a target (e.g. a defined increase in steps per day) recording progress to provide feedback, and rewarding achievement may improve levels of motivation. A meta-analysis of family-based interventions to promote increased physical activity in children revealed two-thirds had shown a positive impact on behaviours.⁶⁸

Recognised models of health promotion consider that children's levels of engagement in physical activity is the result of multiple levels of influence;⁶⁹ therefore, multisectoral approaches can have a greater likelihood of encouraging regular engagement in physical activity by reinforcing the behaviour

5.2.2.4 Community involvement

Another component of best practice, school-based, physical activity interventions is the extent to which they seek to offer further physical activity opportunities. This is achieved by fostering networks between schools' and their respective communities; specifically, opportunities for physical activity within the community, such as through sport clubs.

⁶² Willis, C., Nyquist, A., Jahnsen, R., Elliott, C. and Ullenhag, A. (2018). Enabling physical activity participation for children and youth with disabilities following a goal-directed, family-centred intervention. *Research in developmental disabilities*, 77, 30-39.

⁶³ Van Sluijs, E.M., McMinn, A.M. and Griffin, S.J. (2007). Effectiveness of interventions to promote physical activity in children and adolescents: systematic review of controlled trials. *BMJ*, 335(7622), 703-707.

⁶⁴ Kriemler, S., Meyer, U., Martin, E., van Sluijs, E.M., Andersen, L.B. and Martin, B.W. (2011). Effect of school-based interventions on physical activity and fitness in children and adolescents: a review of reviews and systematic update. *British journal of sports medicine*, 45(11), 923-930.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Gustafson, S.L. and Rhodes, R.E. (2006) Parental correlates of physical activity in children and early adolescents. *Sports Medicine*, 36, 79-97.

⁶⁷ O'Connor, T.M., Jago, R. and Baranowski, T. (2009). Engaging parents to increase youth physical activity: a systematic review. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 37(2), 141-149.

⁶⁸ Brown, H.E., Atkin, A.J., Panter, J., Wong, G., Chinapaw, M.J. and Van Sluijs, E.M.F. (2016). Family-based interventions to increase physical activity in children: a systematic review, meta-analysis and realist synthesis. *Obesity reviews*, 17(4), 345-360.

⁶⁹ Van Acker, R., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., De Martelaer, K., Seghers, J., Kirk, D., Haerens, L., De Cocker, K. and Cardon, G. (2011). A framework for physical activity programs within school-community partnerships. *Quest*, 63(3), 300-320.

Studies demonstrate that children, parents and teachers all place value on established links to physical activity opportunities in the community, particularly those designed to affect health issues such as obesity.⁷⁰ Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that establishing community links may be effective for overcoming participation barriers for cohorts for whom engagement rates are typically lower, such as adolescent girls.⁷¹

Additionally, establishing networks with community sport organisations can reduced barriers to participation associated with a lack of resourcing. Developing these relationships can provide children access to community infrastructure, such as facilities and sport-specific equipment.

5.2.2.5 Professional development

As regular access to specialist sport coaches in schools can be limited, interventions should place impetus on upskilling of physical educators in schools– the primary deliverers of PE and activities to children – to ensure that they are equipped to provide quality physical activities beyond the intervention.

Studies show that children’s engagement in school-based physical activity is largely determined by the competencies of those delivering the activities. Therefore, opportunities delivered by generalist teachers without any PE-specific training or by those with limited interest in sport are likely to detract from the experiences of children.⁷²

Furthermore, physical activity organised and delivered by PE specialists, or at a minimum, by generalist teachers who have undergone comprehensive training, has been shown to significantly improve FMS proficiency in youth relative to generalist teachers.⁷³ Likewise, it has been demonstrated to result in immediate and greater levels of physical fitness amongst children.⁷⁴

Interventions that do not have a direct professional development component for generalist teachers should therefore encourage such teachers to observe and work alongside specialists to

- Best practice features - key findings:

50. The number of Australian children meeting global physical activity recommendations is declining, as well as time spend daily moderate to vigorous physical activity. School-based interventions can be highly effective measures to increase participation levels.

51. There are a number of best practice features identified across the literature:

- Interventions should be outcomes oriented, through the incorporation of more structured, evidence-based activities that can be clearly linked to outcomes.
- Physical activity should be tailored appropriately for the target population that the intervention is targeting.
- Interventions that have multi-components have the potential to be more effective than singularly-focussed interventions.
- Opportunity for children to participate in further physical activity opportunities in the community should be a key focus of any intervention.
- With access to specialist coaches as one barrier to implementing effecting interventions, there should be a focus on upskilling physical educators in schools.

⁷⁰ Smibert, A., Abbott, R., Macdonald, D., Hogan, A. and Leong, G. (2010). School, community, and family working together to address childhood obesity: Perceptions from the KOALA lifestyle intervention study. *European PE Review*, 16(2), 155-170.

⁷¹ Casey, M.M., Harvey, J.T., Telford, A., Eime, R.M., Mooney, A. and Payne, W.R. (2014). Effectiveness of a school-community linked program on physical activity levels and health-related quality of life for adolescent girls. *BMC Public Health*, 14(1), 649.

⁷² Domville, M.S., Watson, P.M., Richardson, D.J. and Graves, L.E. (2018). Educator perspectives on factors influencing children’s school-based physical activity. *Health promotion international*. 34(5), 931-940.

⁷³ Morgan, P., Barnett, L., Cliff, D., Okely, A., Scott, H., Cohen, K. and Lubans, D. (2013). Fundamental movement skill interventions in youth: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*, 132(5), e1361-e1383.

⁷⁴ Chen, W., Mason, S., Hypnar, A. and Hammond-Bennett, A. (2016). Association of quality PE teaching with students’ physical fitness. *Journal of sports science & medicine*, 15(2), 335.

enable learning of the necessary skills and knowledge, and to develop the confidence to coordinate opportunities in the future.⁷⁵

5.2.3 Alignment of SSP features with best-practice features

The SSP has been assessed against these five best-practice features to determine the appropriateness of the delivery model relative to its stated objectives.

5.2.3.1 Outcomes oriented

The SSP design is only partially aligned with its intended outcomes. According to schools who completed the survey, the program positively affects children's in-school engagement in physical activity by providing more and diverse sport opportunities. Schools report that the delivery of these activities by professionally trained sport coaches is increasing the quality, which is creating an enhanced experience for children.

"It provides students the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports with coaches that are proficient in the technical skills of those sports who are able to teach these skills correctly to students" – School survey respondent.

Similarly, several schools noted via the survey that the use of professionally trained sport coaches is enabling children to experience FMS-based activities and is leading to greater FMS development. Despite the views of schools, stakeholders with expertise in PE outlined that a notable increase would require sustained physical activity over time, rather than a short-term program. Similarly, while the program does involve professional development opportunities to support coaches and teacher to incorporate physical literacy principles within PE activities, the 'dose based' nature of the program limits this being embedded at a whole-of-school level.

The SSP model is also limited in its ability to drive community sport participation. A number of stakeholders interviewed questioned the strength of the program in directly impacting on children's desire to engage in out-of-school activities. The model assumes that interest generated from children during in-school activities will create sufficient motivation to participate in community sport. Furthermore, it is reliant on families and NSOs to ensure that in-school participation translates to community sport.

5.2.3.2 Population targeted

Whilst the SSP is available to all schools in Australia, program documentation outlines that schools with special circumstances, such as regional, remote, or schools with special needs students, have the flexibility to apply for additional costs associated with the program as part of their grant⁷⁶. In the secondary school program, funding is targeted according to three goals:

1. Tackle the decline in sports participation that occurs during adolescence, particularly among girls
2. Increase physical activity in areas with large cohorts of inactive students
3. Provide access to tailored resources for schools where there is evidence of disadvantage⁷⁷.

However, the SSP delivery model does not tailor activities to individual needs. The model only permits schools to receive a select few sports each term which are assumed to resonate with the entire school population. This can cause those with negative experience to reduce participation and further alienate those who are disengaged from physical activity altogether. Additionally, the program does not encourage the tailoring of programs to specific target populations. While it is schools' responsibility to select sports appropriate for their students, NSOs are not challenged to adapt their activities to their audience, for example, culturally diverse children.

⁷⁵ Whipp, P.R., Hutton, H., Grove, J.R. and Jackson, B. (2011). Outsourcing PE in primary schools: Evaluating the impact of externally provided programmes on generalist teachers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and PE*, 2(2), 67-77.

⁷⁶ Australian Sports Commission, *Manual: Primary School Grants*.

⁷⁷ Australian Sports Commission, *Manual: Secondary School Grants*.

5.2.3.3 Multi-component

The SSP is predominantly focussed on the provision of additional and diverse sporting opportunities in school; consequently, there is not a central focus on other strategies to achieve its objectives. The expectation of children increasing their physical activity participation is assumed to result solely from increased enjoyment in the NSO-delivered opportunities, with minimal education of the health benefits of exercise and no other efforts to affect behaviours.

The model has some impact on teachers' appreciation of the benefits of sport which occurs incidentally through observation of NSO-delivered activities, and some grants being directed at teacher professional development. Schools agree that an appreciation of the importance of physical activity in children has risen through participation in the program. However, the program distinctly lacks engagement with families of participating children. There are no means to educate families of the health benefits of physical activity, nor strategies to encourage engagement in physical activity alongside children.

5.2.3.4 Community involvement

The SSP model prioritises and encourages the development of networks between schools and community as a means of consolidating in-school to out-of-school sport participation. However, to achieve this, the model does not seek to directly foster these networks. Rather, the SSP relies on NSOs to market themselves to schools – for which funding is provided; individual families are then expected to seek out community opportunities from this. Though, there are no measures in place to create direct and formalised relationships between schools and local sport opportunities.

5.2.3.5 Professional development

There is a strong professional development component of the SSP model which enables both formal and informal upskilling for school teachers to occur – both generalist and specialist teachers

- Alignment of SSP features with best-practice features- key findings:
52. Outcomes oriented - the design of the SSP is somewhat aligned with achieving increased in-school participation in sport and developing FMS but is limited in its capacity to affect community sport participation and enhance knowledge of physical literacy.
 53. Targeted - the SSP funding is targeted to specific regions and target populations but activities are not targeted or tailored to meet children's individual needs and preferences.
 54. Multi-component - the SSP affects schools' appreciation of physical activity but is limited in engagement with parents and its approach to improve children's understanding of healthy behaviours.
 55. Community-involvement - the SSP encourages the development of connections between schools and community sports opportunities but does little to establish relationships.
 56. Professional development - the SSP provides direct opportunities for and encourages physical educators to upskill, through both independent learning and observing NSO-delivered programs.

have access to this. Schools report becoming more confident to deliver quality sport activities during regular PE classes.

5.3 Current policy context

Since the SSP was first established, there has been a shift in the policy context for PE in schools towards a focus on broader physical literacy outcomes, and a 'whole-of-school' approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. This is in the context of rising incidences of inactivity and non-communicable diseases, particularly those related to sedentary lifestyles.

In 2018, the WHO released a Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, titled *More Active People for a Healthier World* due to the slow global progress in increasing physical activity. The WHO puts this slow growth down to a lack of awareness and investment. In this document, a

Framework for Action is outlined, covering four strategic objectives and twenty policy actions.⁷⁸ The four strategic objectives are:

1. Create active societies
2. Create active environments
3. Create active people
4. Create active systems

Twenty evidence-based policy actions are provided alongside as recommendations for achieving these four objectives. The objectives and policy actions are identified as both important and effective as a population-based response to improving physical activity levels and reducing sedentary time. The focus of the framework is a whole-of-system approach, with each component playing a pivotal role in meeting the objectives. The idea is to create a society that "intrinsically values and prioritises policy investments in physical activity as a regular part of everyday life."⁷⁹

This whole-of-system focus from the WHO aligns well with the increasingly broader focus of the policy context around sport and physical activity in Australia. In 2018, the Australian Government and Sport Australia released *Sport 2030*, a comprehensive strategy to reshape Australian sport and build a healthier, more physically active country.⁸⁰ The *Sport 2030* strategy is underpinned by the principals of sport and physical activity for all by promoting a diverse sector, enabling inclusive opportunities for a diverse population.

The strategy aims to expand the traditional definition of 'sport' to a wider range of physical activities including informal and unstructured activity as well as the traditional more structured sport and physical activities. It has a focus on physical literacy as the vehicle for showing the positive effects of sport and physical activity on the health of all Australians. With schools being a key contributor to the physical activities of the community, the strategy has a focus on embedding physical activity within the school day.

Figure 5.1: Summary of the objective of Sport 2030 strategy and the key outcomes of measure



Source: Sport 2030, Australian Government Department of Health and Sport Australia

Following this in 2019, Sport Australia released its *Physical Literacy Framework*, to promote a shared vision, common language and consistent understanding about what physical literacy is and

⁷⁸ World Health Organization, *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More Active People for a Healthier World*, <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/677894/Sport_2030_-_National_Sport_Plan_-_2018.pdf>

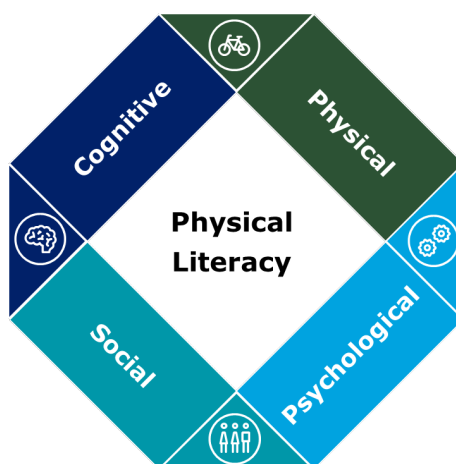
⁷⁹ World Health Organization, *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More Active People for a Healthier World*, <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/677894/Sport_2030_-_National_Sport_Plan_-_2018.pdf>

⁸⁰ Australian Government Department of Health, *The unveiling of Sport 2030*, <<https://www.health.gov.au/news/the-unveiling-of-sport-2030>>

how it can be developed.⁸¹ The physical literacy framework has four domains, with each having several key elements that contribute towards physical literacy development.

The physical domain is just one element of physical literacy. It is intended for schools and education departments to use a physical literacy approach to support whole-of-child development, by focusing on explicitly teaching the skills that support movement for life.

Figure 5.2: Components of the Physical Literacy Framework



Source: The Australian Physical Literacy Framework, Sport Australia

5.4 Future priorities

Based on the current policy focus and global trends, as well as the best practice assessment, there are some areas where the program can focus in the future. There are also opportunities for greater targeting of funding to ensure that the program supports those most likely to be inactive, to become active.

5.4.1 Moving beyond sport to a broader focus on physical literacy

Given the current policy focus, and Sport Australia's recently released Physical Literacy Framework, there is the opportunity for an increased focus on physical literacy and taking a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing. This can be achieved by focusing on more than just sport-related education as a key outcome of achieving physical literacy and embedding physical literacy more broadly within the school curriculum, such as other classroom activities to increase incidental movement.

Currently, the facilitation of the program by external coaches inhibits schools' ability to build their internal capability and embed the learnings more broadly across the school. An increased emphasis on building teacher capacity and capability would facilitate a focus on physical literacy and a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing, as well as increasing the sustainability of the program by shifting its focus.

This would be consistent with other policies being proposed or rolled out across the education system, with an increased focus on student health and wellbeing (including physical and mental health). For example, the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health has recommended School Wellbeing Leaders in all schools⁸². For these types of policies and programs to be most effective, all facets of the community would need to operate in unison (including the school, families, and local community, including local government, to ensure safe access to facilities and infrastructure).

⁸¹ Sport Australia (2019), *The Australian Physical Literacy Framework*

⁸² Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health, Draft Report, 2019, p. 86 <
<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/draft/mental-health-draft-volume1.pdf>>

Whilst this does not entirely remove the need for the involvement of NSOs, there is an opportunity to expand the scope of external providers to focus more broadly on health and wellbeing, depending on the school's different priorities and needs. It is also important for the program to develop connections and resources to better engage with parents, as they are key drivers of a child's engagement in not just sport, but also in promoting their physical and mental wellbeing more broadly.

Moving beyond sport to a broader focus on physical literacy - key findings:

57. Since the establishment of the SSP, the policy context for PE in schools has shifted towards a focus on broader physical literacy outcomes and a 'whole-of-school' approach.
58. Other policies being proposed or implemented across the education system have an increased focus on student health and wellbeing, including both physical and mental health.

5.4.2 Prioritisation of PE within the curriculum

Reducing the prevalence of overweight and obesity is a key focus for the Australian Government. In 2017-18, one in four children and adolescents aged 5-17 were overweight or obese.⁸³ Obesity rates in children and adolescents in particular are increasing, rising from 7.4 per cent in 2014-15 to 8.1 per cent in 2017-18.⁸⁴ Physical activity is one factor that can help reduce the prevalence of obesity and has a number of associated health benefits. With the importance of ensuring adolescents are physically active, there could be a prioritisation of PE within the curriculum alongside literacy and numeracy. Additionally, by broadening PE to include more than just sport, it is likely to appeal to a wider adolescent audience and help with improving physical activity more broadly as opposed to just sport participation.

This focus of the program should ideally include students from Prep-equivalent to Year 10. This is in recognition that health behaviours and habits form at a young age and that it is important to embed these early. It also recognises the drop-off in participation that typically happens around the start of high school and seeks to rectify this known 'participation-cliff'.

In order to garner buy-in to this, a number of key agencies, both state and federal, would have to collaborate to outline a shared vision for the increased prioritisation of PE in schools, and reach agreement on the outcomes being sought. It is likely that the new National Obesity Strategy, due to be released by Health Council of Australian Governments this year, will provide a platform to support all stakeholders to do this, in order to support children to achieve more active and healthier lifestyles.

Continued efforts will be required to ensure that investment in physical activity for children occurs in concert with complementary programs being offered within each jurisdiction. This would typically be delivered through agencies such as those responsible for health promotion and prevention, sport and recreation, and of course, education. Articulation of responsibilities and accountabilities across each stakeholder group, as well as established mechanisms for information sharing, may also be of benefit.

⁸³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Overweight and obesity: an interactive insight*, <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/overweight-obesity/overweight-and-obesity-an-interactive-insight/contents/what-is-overweight-and-obesity>>

⁸⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Overweight and obesity: an interactive insight*, <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/overweight-obesity/overweight-and-obesity-an-interactive-insight/contents/what-is-overweight-and-obesity>>

Prioritisation of PE within the curriculum - key findings:

- 59. Child obesity is on the rise in Australia and increased physical activity is an important means of reducing the prevalence of obesity. There is a role for schools in prioritising physical activity outcomes.
- 60. The focus of the SSP to include both primary and secondary schools aligns well with literature and should remain the focus of the program, however, could be increased to include up to Year 10.

5.4.3 More targeted funding decisions based on level of need

Given the higher than expected demand for the program, consideration of how the program could be more targeted to need should be given. As the SSP does not have capacity to fund all schools in the country, and as of October 2019, 79 per cent of schools in Australia were registered, moving forward the program should consider how funding can be prioritised. It was widely noted during consultation that larger and less socially disadvantaged schools had more resources to complete high quality applications for the SSP, while smaller and more socially disadvantaged schools struggled to complete applications to the same calibre. This means that the schools with the most resources – and assumed to be the schools with the least need for the program – have an advantage over those with less resources to obtain SSP funding.

While it was noted during consultation that Sport Australia is aware of this bias, a more formal prioritisation process could be put in place to ensure the funding is being given to the schools with the greatest need. For example, prioritisation could be given to public schools in more socially disadvantaged areas. This is already being implemented with the secondary schools SSP program, with the program focussed at targeting an age group (Year 7 and 8 students), gender (girls) and areas of social disadvantage – the groups most likely to be less physically active than their peers.

More targeted funding decisions based on level of need - key findings:

- 61. The SSP does not have capacity to fund all schools in the country and demand for the program is higher than expected.

5.4.4 Consideration of the long-term program management strategy

With a focus moving beyond sport, there is a need to consider potential changes to the overarching management and delivery model for the SSP. If the program moved to a model whereby funding is used to build schools' internal capacity to deliver PE, aligned to the Physical Literacy Framework, schools would have more flexibility to use the funding based on areas of need in this domain. This may involve engaging a range of different health and wellbeing providers where necessary, including sports providers, nutritionists, psychologists, etc. Given this, having a third-party agency responsible for the management of the programs adds an extra layer of delegation and overhead to the administration of the grants. This includes the need to monitor and manage public funding and reporting against performance metrics. To increase the sustainability of the program, consideration should be given to the delivery mechanism within government, including the potential increased involvement of state-based education departments.

Long-term program management strategy - key findings:

- 62. The current delivery model adds an extra layer of delegation and overhead and contributes to inefficiencies in program administration and reporting.

Efficiency and sustainability – recommendations:

8. Given the changing policy context, there is opportunity for strengthened focus on physical literacy, in the context of taking a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing. This could be achieved through focusing on more than just sport-related education and embedding physical literacy more broadly within the school curriculum.
9. There is an opportunity to expand the scope of external providers to focus more broadly on health and wellbeing. The SSP should consider offering a broader range of physical activities, beyond organised sport.
10. The program should aim to better engage with parents and promote physical and mental wellbeing more broadly.
11. Given the high demand for the program, consideration should be given to how the program can be more targeted to need, such as targeting schools in more socially disadvantaged areas.
12. The Government should determine the most appropriate delivery model to increase the efficiency of the management of grants, including streamlining the levels of delegation.

6 Conclusion

This chapter draws on the evidence provided in the proceeding chapters. In concluding, it identifies areas that warrant commendation, as well as improvement considerations for future iterations of the program

This report recognises the commendable effort and the impact that the SSP has had over the past five years, based on its original design and objectives.

Over its duration, the SSP has achieved significant reach, covering 79 per cent of schools in Australia. Based primarily on stakeholder feedback, it appears that the program has largely achieved success relative to its initial objectives.

In terms of the objective in relation to reach and access, the program has achieved considerable results. The program is delivered across the country, and in the main, sees an equitable division of funding relative to factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as regional and remote localities. However, further and ongoing focus on equitable allocation of funds should be pursued, particularly given the increased number of applications received (and rejected) over the past two years. Given that physical inactivity disproportionately impacts on those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, this should be a continual key focus when grant funding allocations are being made.

Given the sheer size and scale of the program, it has led to an increase in investment in the sporting sector. This is due to the large number of sporting organisations, and specifically, coaches, required to deliver this program. It appears that it has also had some impact on translation of participation from school to community sport, although the specific impact of this is hard to determine based on available data.

As noted earlier, in order to increase physical activity in young people, the ecosystem must be conducive to them doing so. This means that community sports should be available, accessible and have minimal barriers to entry. Noting this, the role of parents in enabling their children to be more physically active warrants further attention both in terms of engendering healthy behaviours as well as encouraging and facilitating their participation in physical activity.

The question of whether the program has offered value for money, based on the investment, should be considered with caution. Investment in prevention programs, which are in effect 'dose-based', and in which there is a significant time delay in terms of when the largest health benefits are likely to materialise, can be challenging in terms of calculating defensible, demonstrable and monetisable benefit.

For example, if a seven-year-old becomes more physically active, and this level of physical activity is maintained over their lifetime, the benefit of this may not materialise until some 50-60 years later. In this time period, there are a large number of other factors that could impact on this person's health, meaning that attributing the benefit of the preventative program is fraught. This does not negate the fact that the prevention program most likely contributed, to a greater or lesser extent, to this person living a healthier lifestyle.

Noting this, the BCR for the SSP is, as expected, low across a 10-year time window. This is because there are few, if any, health benefits that materialise for participants within this window, given that for the most part participants would now only be teenagers. Attributing benefit to public health promotion and prevention interventions, such as the SSP, typically results in low BCRs, for the reasons previously described. For this reason, economic analysis of these sorts of programs should not be considered in isolation in terms of informing subsequent decision making. The cost per participant appears reasonable, yet without longer term follow up studies, it is hard to quantify the cost-effectiveness of this program, relative to alternative investment options.

While recognising the significant reach realised by the program, there are several areas of potential improvement. These specifically relate to:

- **Increasing the 'whole of system' approach** – including an increased focus on the inclusion of families, as well as supporting teachers to increase their capacity to deliver higher quality PE and FMS, beyond the involvement of the SSP coach
- **Broaden the focus beyond 'sport'** – into one more aligned with a focus on increased 'physical activity and FMS'. This may mean that the program may no longer explicitly seek an increase in the capacity of the NSO sector as a specific objective. Opportunities for a wider set of physical activity providers to become involved, or to work collaboratively together to offer a mixture of participation options for students, may be more appropriate (premised on the requirements for providers to be suitable, qualified and certified to work with children)
- **Establishment of shared principles and articulation of roles and responsibilities across key agencies** – the recent Physical Literacy Framework, as well as the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, both highlight that all those who can play a positive role in supporting young people to get active should be enabled to do so. This means that work is required to ensure that all those who can influence health behaviours of children should be working towards achieving a shared set of outcomes and pursuing policies and programs that are complementary of the shared vision for physical activity in young people across Australia. Shared language, common understanding, open data, investment in research and evaluation and a universal commitment to outcomes (or potentially, established targets) will be important in terms of realising the desired longer-term health improvement gains.

6.1 Evaluation recommendations

Thirteen recommendations have been reached, based on the 62 evaluation findings identified in this report. These are provided below:

Appropriateness

1. Given that the SSP components broadly align with the stated objectives, the design of the program does not need to immediately change. In terms of whether the objectives themselves are valid, policy work is required to validate the existing objectives, and alter these as required - based on identified need and contemporary evidence.

Process

2. Establish information sharing mechanisms (either formal or informal), which includes state education and sport departments, to support a more consistent approach to increasing physical activity in schools across the country.
3. Review the program's operational expenses in the context of the strategic direction of the program. Operational funding should be commensurate with the remit of the program.

Effectiveness

4. Improving awareness of the SSP in remote locations should be a focal area, as this will likely improve the participation rate of schools in these areas, where participation is currently lagging.
5. Appreciating and prioritising PE in the school environment and upskilling teachers to incorporate physical literacy within their classes would allow a 'whole of school' approach to improving FMS and physical literacy.
6. Increasing the SSP's communication with, and involvement of, parents should receive greater focus, as this could alleviate one of the barriers to increasing sporting participation outside of school hours.
7. More formalised involvement of teachers in the SSP, and the development of resources to support this, should be pursued as this would increase the benefits of the program.

Efficiency and sustainability

8. Given the changing policy context, there is opportunity for strengthened focus on physical literacy, in the context of taking a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing. This could be achieved through focusing on more than just sport-related education and embedding physical literacy more broadly within the school curriculum.
 9. There is an opportunity to expand the scope of external providers to focus more broadly on health and wellbeing. The SSP should consider offering a broader range of physical activities, beyond organised sport.
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10. The program should aim to better engage with parents and promote physical and mental wellbeing more broadly.
 11. Given the high demand for the program, consideration should be given to how the program can be more targeted to need, such as targeting schools in more socially disadvantaged areas.
 12. The Government should determine the most appropriate delivery model to increase the efficiency of the management of grants, including streamlining the levels of delegation.
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Appendix A – Findings and recommendations

Table A: Key findings and recommendations

Domain	Key findings	Recommendations
Appropriateness	- Engaging experts with specialist training is an appropriate element of the program to ensure that the sports sessions are of a high quality. Given that specialists are accredited to deliver the sports via the program partners, this further supports the attainment of this first program objective. - Providing access to sports program in the school setting (either before, during or after), across at least four sessions per term, provides a degree of consistent exposure to sport. This focus on students, in the school setting, over several sessions, is appropriate given the objective to engage students in sport-based activity during school hours. - Engaging with a wide range of NSOs is an appropriate way to increase the accessibility of sport-based activity in schools, and to increase opportunities for diversity in PE in schools. - Given the intent of the program to engage students in high quality supports, this is aligned to the program scope to include all schools in Australia, in order to reach to all students. However, there is an opportunity to target based on student need and current engagement with sport, given the demand for the program is greater than the current funding level. - While a focus on FMS supports children to attain the basic skills necessary for physical activity, sport-based activity is not the only mechanism through which FMS can be developed. This means that the SSP does not have to solely focus on sport in order to achieve this objective. - Whilst NSOs can play a role in promoting physical literacy through their programs, there are other providers who could also do this. However, it is likely that NSOs have the capability and capacity to support their affiliated coaches with the design and delivery of sports programs that have a focus on FMS, which provides some degree of quality assurance over program delivery. - Having local coaches from community sports deliver the program is desirable in terms of creating opportunities for children to transition into community sports outside of school hours. However, without reducing other barriers to participation (largely driven by the home context), the impact that the SSP can have, in terms of driving up community sport participation, is limited. - It is appropriate for NSOs, SSOs and local coaches to be involved in this program, in order to create links with community sports. While this may lead to greater awareness of the options available in the community, the extent to which this will lead to students converting to community sport is uncertain and could not be determined in this evaluation. - By providing access to high quality coaches, schools will likely develop a greater appreciation for sports. However, this depends on the extent to which schools truly engage with the program, as some may see it as a way to negate their own role in delivering quality PE.	Given that the SSP components broadly align with the stated objectives, the design of the program does not need to immediately change. In terms of whether the objectives themselves are valid, policy work is required to validate the existing objectives, and alter these as required - based on identified need and the evidence base.

Commercial-in-confidence

	10. The intention of the program to provide opportunities for internal capacity building in order to increase appreciation of sport in schools is appropriate, but currently there are no formal mechanisms to ensure this is systematically taking place. 11. The use of external providers is aligned to the objective of increasing the capability and capacity of NSOs to drive growth in sport participation. However, if this is to extend beyond the school environment, the program will need to address the numerous barriers to community sport participation. 12. Automation of procurement for NSOs generates direct links with schools in the local community, in order to provide opportunity for greater exposure and uptake of services. 13. The format of the SSP is appropriate for developing connections at an individual student level, however broader ongoing partnerships between schools and NSOs is likely to require involvement of more senior stakeholders.	
Process	14. Strong partnerships between national, state and local organisations, as well as the partnership between NSOs and Sport2. Australia, have enabled consistency across the design and delivery of the SSP, allowing flexibility for local circumstances and priorities. 15. SSP is limited in its ability to influence the degree to which schools focus on PE, including the extent to which they prioritise it. The devolved education model means that it can be hard for the Commonwealth Government to influence school's approaches to physical activity improvement in a consistent way. 16. Sport Australia's strong reputation and relationship across the NSO network has enabled open communication and collaboration between stakeholders. 17. The program's implementation has been supported through the strong uptake from schools, with survey results showing that targeted marketing and communication directly from Sport Australia were the biggest drivers of awareness for the SSP. 18. As outlined in the program documentation, there is clear delineation of responsibilities between the Department and Sport Australia. The day-to-day working relationship between the two organisations was reported to be strong. 19. Sport Australia are accountable for the delivery of the program and the Department are somewhat removed from the program in relation to performance oversight. Sport Australia are accountable for the delivery of the program, and responsibility for performance monitoring sits with the Sport Australia Board. 20. Despite a minority of schools experiencing delays in being able to access their funding, stakeholders who completed the survey felt that communication between schools and NSOs is largely effective. 21. There has been significantly positive feedback on the delivery of the SSP, with most stakeholders stating that the programs delivered in a majority of schools are of a high quality. 22. There has been a notable reduction in the proportion of SSP funding allocated to the operating budget. This will have implications for the Sport Australia team being able to support enhancements of the SSP going forward.	Establish information sharing mechanisms (either formal or informal), which includes state education and sport departments, to support a more consistent approach to increasing physical activity in schools across the country. 3. Review the program's operational expenses in the context of the strategic direction of the program. Operational funding should be commensurate with the remit of the program.
Effectiveness	23. Relative to the intended outcomes in relation to access, SSP has enabled greater access to sport due to its extensive reach across the country. However, schools in very remote settings have a lower rate of proportional registrations relative to the rest of the country. This means that the program is not as equitable as it could be. [SO1, SO2] 24. The SSP is equitably allocating grants, albeit it not purposely through design. There are pockets of disadvantage that could be more intently targeted to support participation in this program. 25. Relative to the intended outcomes in relation the range of sports on offer, students can access a wider variety of sports due to the SSP, although the already popular sports (swimming, tennis etc.) appear to be favoured through this program. [SO2]	4. Improving awareness of the SSP in remote locations should be a focal area, as this will likely improve the participation rate of schools in these areas, where participation is currently lagging. 5. Appreciating and prioritising PE in the school environment and

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	26. Relative to the intended outcomes of student enjoyment and overall participation, the SSP provides access to higher quality, professionally delivered sport before, during and after school hours. Both schools and NSOs reported that the program is positively affecting overall in-school sport participation levels. [SO3, MO12, MO13, MO14, MO15] 27. The program is delivered by specialists with an understanding of FMS, which stakeholders believe is leading to improved skills development and therefore increased FMS. [MO13, MO15] 28. The incorporation of FMS and physical literacy principles within the curriculum varies depending on the school's and NSO's priorities and capabilities. [MO13, MO15, SO5] 29. Stakeholders perceived that the SSP is having a modest impact in terms of converting student's participation during school into participation in community sport, yet this cannot be validated within the scope of this evaluation. Stakeholders stated that cost, program availability and accessibility, parent and family engagement, and coach enthusiasm and knowledge influence conversion rates. [SO1, MO12, SO11] 30. There is low parent awareness of, engagement with, and support for, their child's participation in sport, which is contributing to a lack of participation in community-based sport. [SO4, MO16] 31. Both schools and NSOs have observed an increase in the appreciation of the holistic benefits of sport through the SSP. [SO6, SO8, MO17] 32. The benefits of the program can depend on the school culture and prioritisation of sport within the curriculum, with physical activity often being deprioritised relative to literacy and numeracy. [SO6, SO8, SO10, MO17] 33. There is variable evidence on whether the program is increasing schools' capacity to deliver sports activities internally. Schools where teachers were actively involved in the program showed higher increases in teacher confidence and capacity. [SO9, MO18] 34. The extensive reach of the program has driven uptake of NSO-affiliated organisations' services and enabled them to be more market-oriented. [SO11, MO20, MO21] 35. The program has enabled NSOs to build connections with schools in their community, leading to increased collaboration and capacity-building. However, this may have disproportionately benefited larger, more established sports [SO11] 36. Modest conversion into community-based sport restricts NSO capacity to drive participation growth. There are barriers to driving this growth that are largely outside of the control of NSOs. [MO20, MO21] 37. With many public health interventions, such as the SSP, there is a significant time lag between the intervention and resulting effects, with most benefits occurring over the long-term. As such, economic analysis such as this should always be considered in the context of the broader body of evidence. 38. The BCR is low over a 10-year time period (0.17), as would be expected, yet improves if the timeline is extended (1.78 after 35-years). This is intuitively when benefits from sustained participation in sport would materialise, given the age of children receiving the intervention. 39. Multiple state and federal agencies are investing money in improving physical activity levels in children. There are numerous other programs which are similar in nature and intent to the SSP, yet none are of the same size and scale. Given the enormous health system burden caused by physical inactivity, this program still constitutes value for money for the Department. It is appropriate that the Department make investment in national programs that encourage children to get more active.	upskilling teachers to incorporate physical literacy within their classes would allow a 'whole of school' approach to improving FMS and physical literacy. The responsible agency should work with relevant stakeholders toward this common goal. 6. Increasing the SSP's communication with, and involvement of, parents should receive greater focus, as this could alleviate one of the barriers to increasing sporting participation outside of school hours. 7. More formalised involvement of teachers in the SSP, and the development of resources to support this, should be pursued as this would increase the benefits of the program.
Efficiency and sustainability	40. Grant expenditure remained relatively consistent from 2016/17 to 2018/19, followed by an increase of nearly 40% in 2019-20. This sharp increase was due to a decrease in operational expenses.	8. Given the changing policy context, there is opportunity for strengthened focus on physical

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41. Overall employee expenditure reduced substantially between 2017/18 and 2018/19, resulting from a large reduction of the SSP workforce into a smaller, core team.
42. While benchmarking is challenging, the investment in the SSP based on per participant expenditure indicates the program is spending money efficiently, relatively to the market for sports coaching.
43. Since the establishment of the SSP in 2015, the proportion of overall funding directed to Sport Australia for operations has been significantly decreased, which will limit the capabilities of the team to operate the program and could limit any future enhancements.
44. Schools show strong support for the funding received through the SSP, and what the funding was able to be spent on, with 85% of schools surveyed indicating the funding is 'very important' for the school.
45. Most NSOs indicated that they would continue to participate in the SSP moving forward, while some indicated a lack of financial incentive, low demand, lack of available coaches during school hours, and limited resources and infrastructure as some of the main barriers.
46. PES has been shown to deliver several physical benefits for children, including growth of healthy musculoskeletal tissues and cardiovascular systems, neuromuscular and FMS development, a decrease in the risk of multiple chronic health problems, and preventing and reducing obesity.
47. Mental benefits of physical activity include reduced feelings of anxiety and depression, boosted self-esteem and improvements in concentration and arousal.
48. A significant benefit of PES is the social benefits, facilitating the development of social skills and improve overall social health.
49. PES in children is strongly linked to increased physical activity in adolescence and adulthood, leading to longer-term participation and further health benefits.
50. The number of Australian children meeting global physical activity recommendations is declining, as well as time spend daily moderate to vigorous physical activity. School-based interventions can be highly effective measures to increase participation levels.
51. There are a number of best practice features identified across the literature:
- Interventions should be outcomes oriented, through the incorporation of more structured, evidence-based activities that can be clearly linked to outcomes.
 - Physical activity should be tailored appropriately for the target population that the intervention is targeting.
 - Interventions that have multi-components have the potential to be more effective than singularly focussed interventions.
 - Opportunity for children to participate in further physical activity opportunities in the community should be a key focus of any intervention.
 - With access to specialist coaches as one barrier to implementing effecting interventions, there should be a focus on upskilling physical educators in schools.
52. Outcomes oriented - the design of the SSP is somewhat aligned with achieving increased in-school participation in sport and developing FMS but is limited in its capacity to affect community sport participation and enhance knowledge of physical literacy.
53. Targeted - the SSP funding is targeted to specific regions and target populations but activities are not targeted or tailored to meet children's individual needs and preferences.
- literacy, in the context of taking a whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing. This could be achieved through focusing on more than just sport-related education and embedding physical literacy more broadly within the school curriculum.
9. There is an opportunity to expand the scope of external providers to focus more broadly on health and wellbeing. The SSP should consider offering a broader range of physical activities, beyond organised sport.
10. The program should aim to better engage with parents and promote physical and mental wellbeing more broadly.
11. Given the high demand for the program, consideration should be given to how the program can be more targeted to need, such as targeting schools in more socially disadvantaged areas.
12. The Government should determine the most appropriate delivery model to increase the efficiency of the management of grants, including streamlining the levels of delegation.
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- 54. Multi-component - the SSP affects schools' appreciation of physical activity but is limited in engagement with parents and its approach to improve children's understanding of healthy behaviours.
 - 55. Community-involvement - the SSP encourages the development of connections between schools and community sports opportunities but does little to establish relationships.
 - 56. Professional development - the SSP provides direct opportunities for and encourages physical educators to upskill, through both independent learning and observing NSO-delivered programs.
 - 57. Since the establishment of the SSP, the policy context for PE in schools has shifted towards a focus on broader physical literacy outcomes and a 'whole-of-school' approach.
 - 58. Other policies being proposed or implemented across the education system have an increased focus on student health and wellbeing, including both physical and mental health.
 - 59. Child obesity is on the rise in Australia and increased physical activity is an important means of reducing the prevalence of obesity. There is a role for schools in prioritising physical activity outcomes.
 - 60. The focus of the SSP to include both primary and secondary schools aligns well with literature and should remain the focus of the program, however, could be increased to include up to Year 10.
 - 61. The SSP does not have capacity to fund all schools in the country and demand for the program is higher than expected.
 - 62. The current delivery model adds an extra layer of delegation and overhead and contributes to inefficiencies in program administration and reporting.
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Source: Deloitte Access Economics

Appendix B – Further data analysis

SSP registrations

Table A1.1: SSP registrations, primary and combined schools (%) (2019)

Jurisdiction	Government	Non-government	Total
ACT	97.0	91.3	94.2
TAS	96.0	86.5	91.3
QLD	92.2	87.1	89.7
NSW	95.2	83.2	89.2
VIC	93.5	82.1	87.8
SA	91.6	84.0	87.8
NT	87.8	84.8	86.3
WA	85.9	84.1	85.0
Total	92.4	85.4	88.9

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

Table A1.2: SSP registrations, secondary and combined schools (%) (2019)

Jurisdiction	Government	Non-government	Total
QLD	70.8	74.0	72.4
ACT	73.3	70.8	72.1
TAS	74.2	68.0	71.1
NT	78.7	56.8	67.7
WA	57.7	72.6	65.1
SA	70.2	58.8	64.5
NSW	66.7	59.3	63.0
VIC	47.2	44.0	45.6
Total	67.3	63.0	65.2

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data.

Table A1.3: SSP registrations, special schools (%) (2019)

Jurisdiction	Government	Non-government	Total
NT	100.0	100.0	100.0
TAS	75.0	100.0	87.5
ACT	75.0	50.0	62.5
SA	62.5	57.1	59.8
QLD	85.4	19.2	52.3
VIC	58.8	14.8	36.8

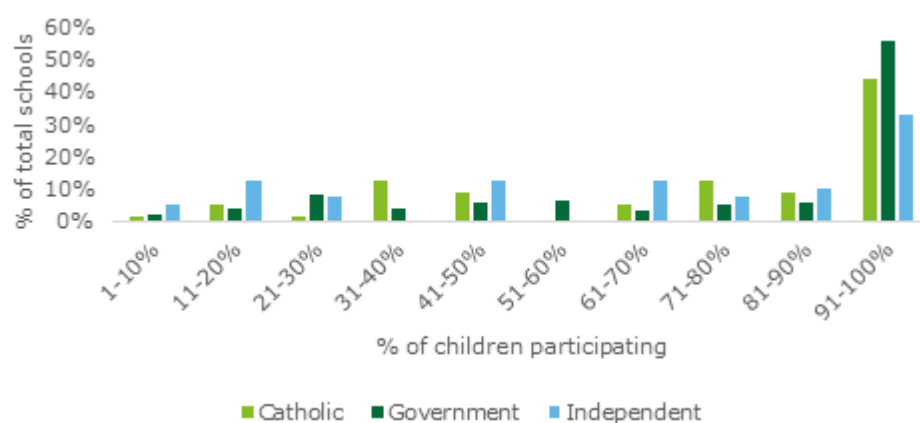
NSW	53.6	16.8	35.2
WA	48.0	16.7	32.3
Total	69.8	46.8	58.3

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and ACARA data

Engaging students in high quality physical activity

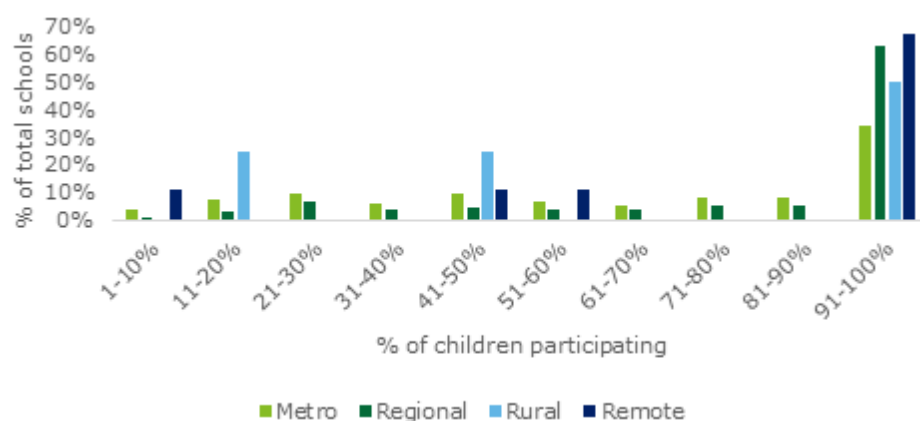
The program offers higher quality, professionally delivered sport during school hours, beyond what can be delivered by the school. [SO1, MO12]

Chart A1.1: Proportion of children in school participating in SSP, by sector (%) [Catholic (n=57), Government (n=408) and Independent (n=40)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economic analysis of survey data.

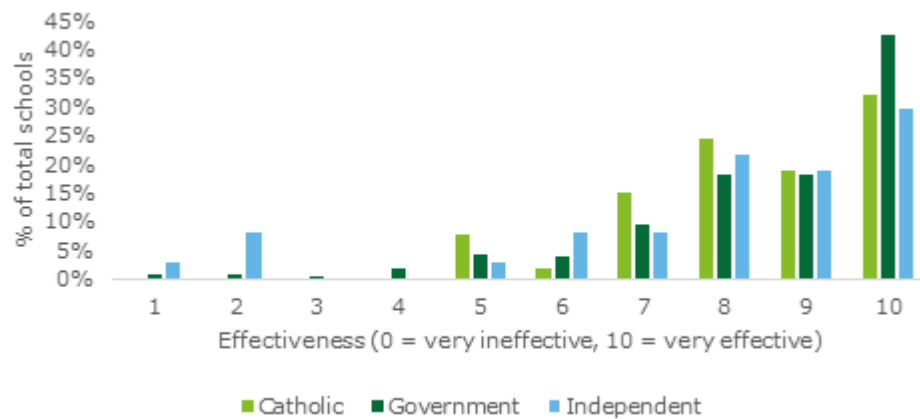
Chart A1.2: Proportion of children in school participating in SSP, by ARIA (%) [Metro (n=181), Regional (n=311), Rural (n=4) and Remote (n=9)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economic analysis of survey data.

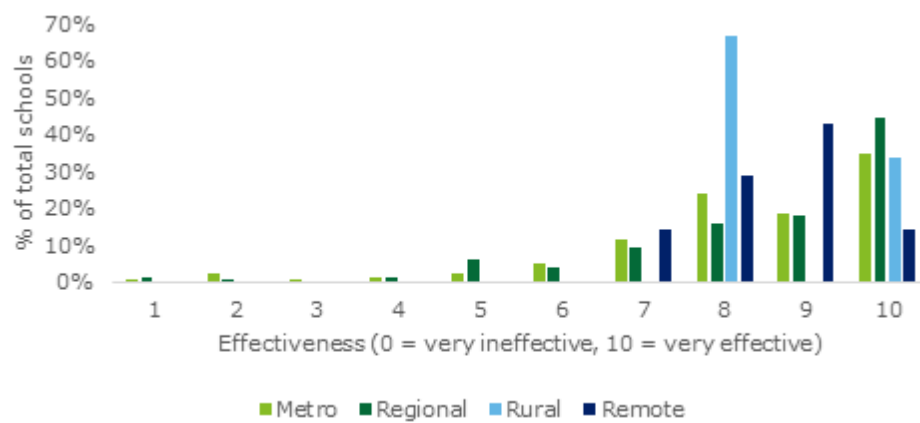
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Chart A1.3: Effectiveness - Increasing sport participation in schools, by sector (%) [Catholic (n=53), Government (n=371) and Independent (n=37)]



Source: Deloitte Access Economic analysis of survey data.

Chart A1.4: Effectiveness - Increasing sport participation in schools, by ARIA (%) [Metro (n=168), Regional (n=283), Rural (n=3) and Remote (n=7)]

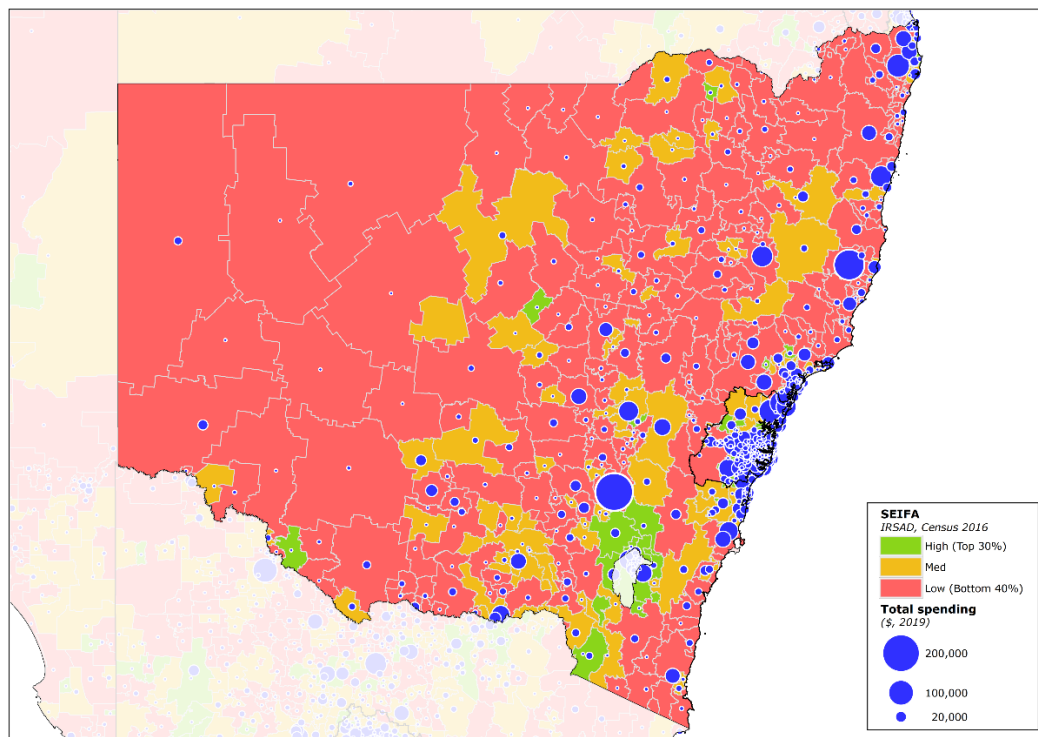


Source: Deloitte Access Economic analysis of survey data.

SSP funding

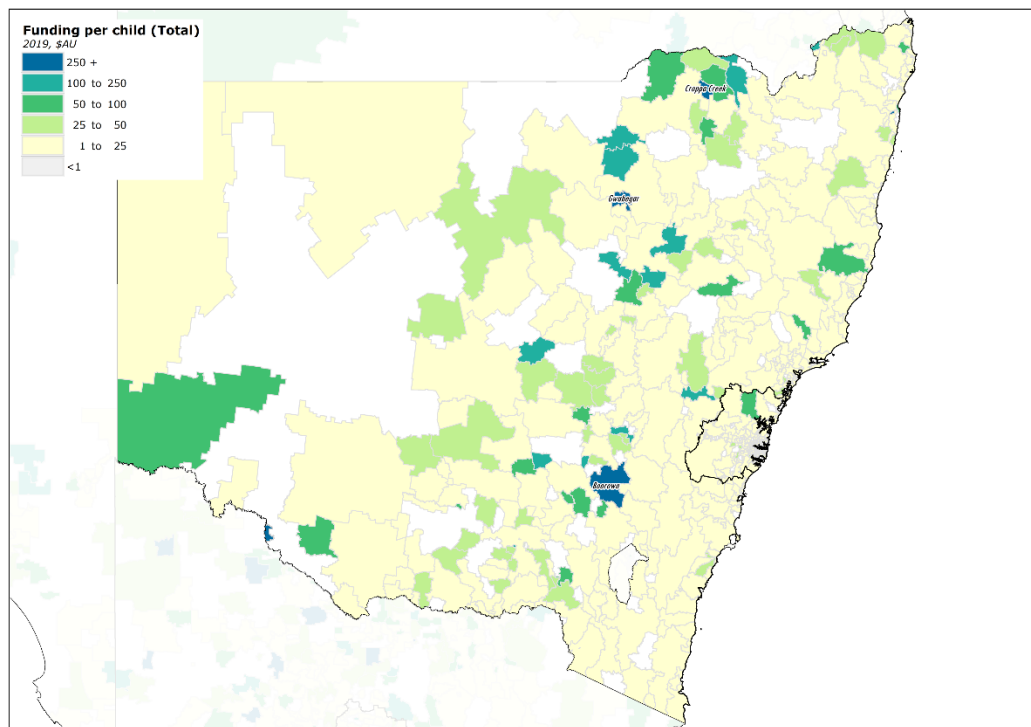
New South Wales

Figure A1.1: Total SSP funding in NSW, by post codes (2019)



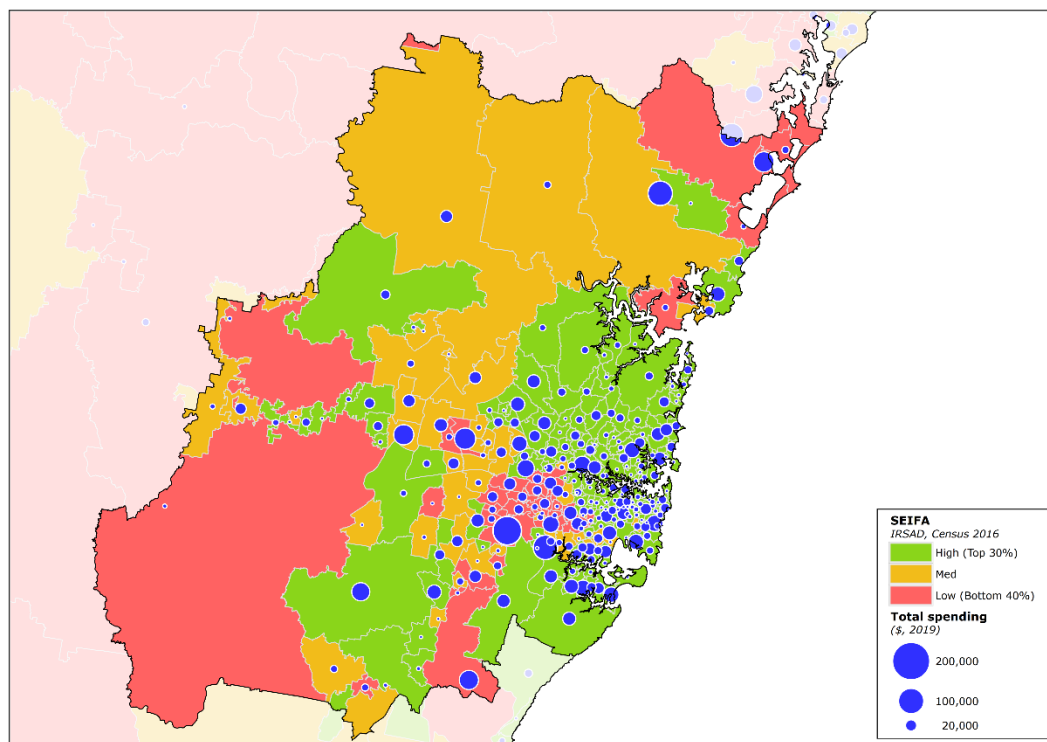
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.2: Total SSP funding per child in NSW, by post codes (2019)



Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

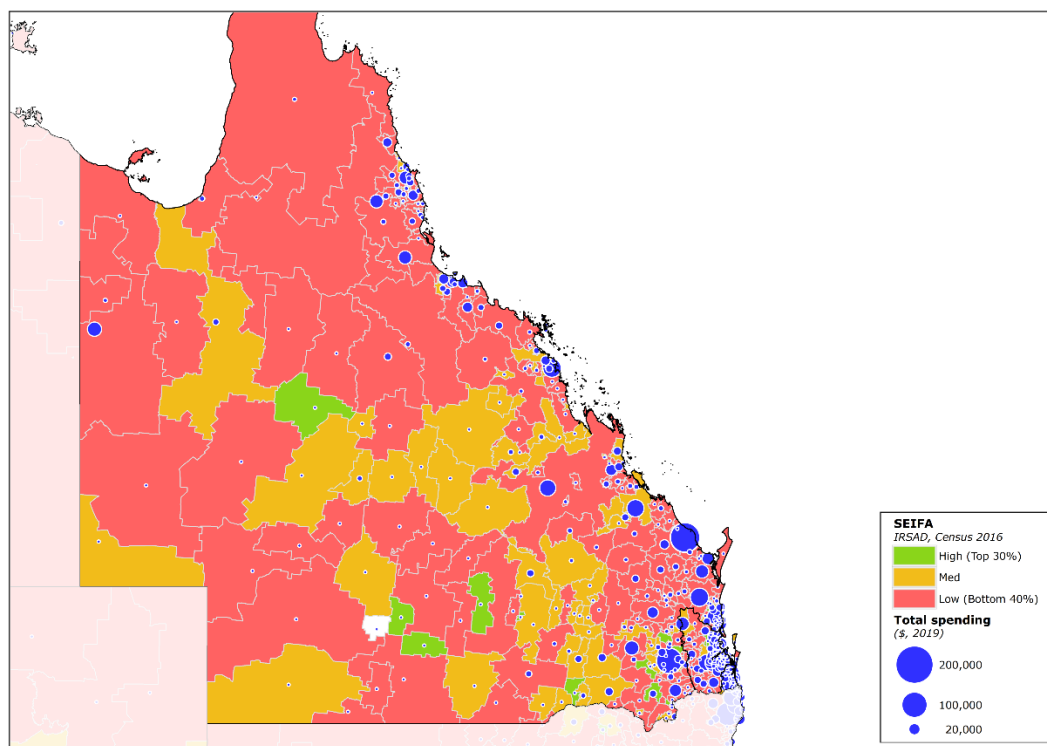
Figure A1.3: Total SSP funding in Sydney, by post codes areas (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

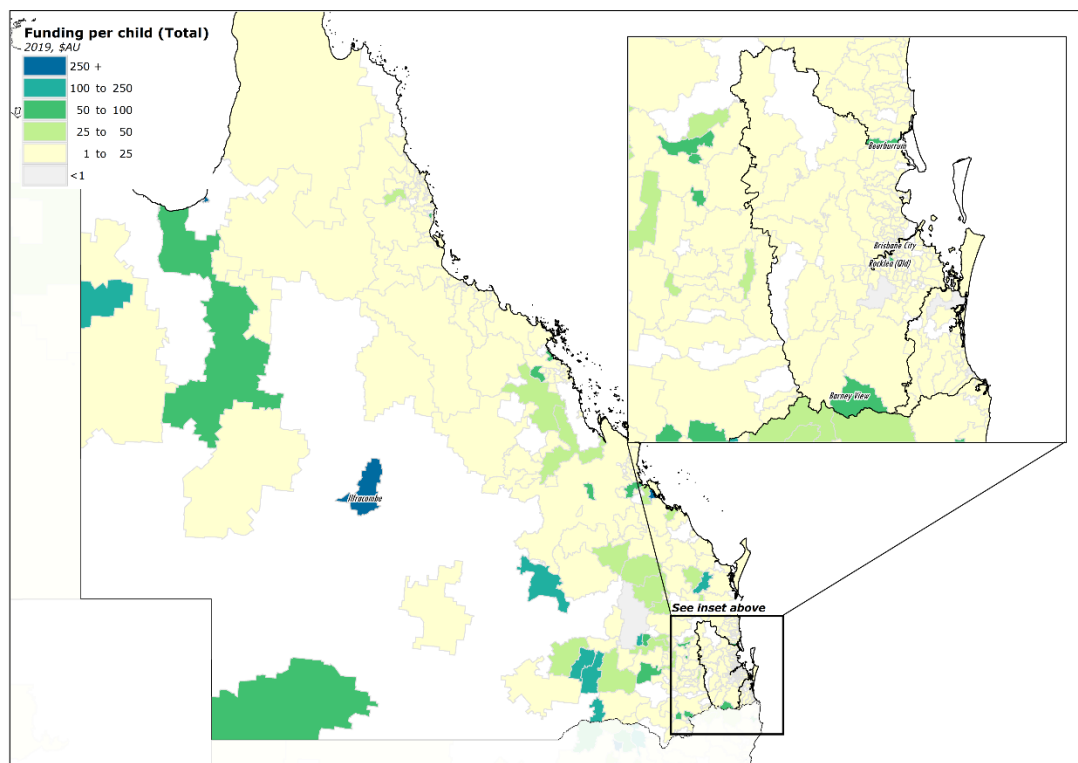
Queensland

Figure A1.4: Total SSP funding in QLD, by post codes (2019)



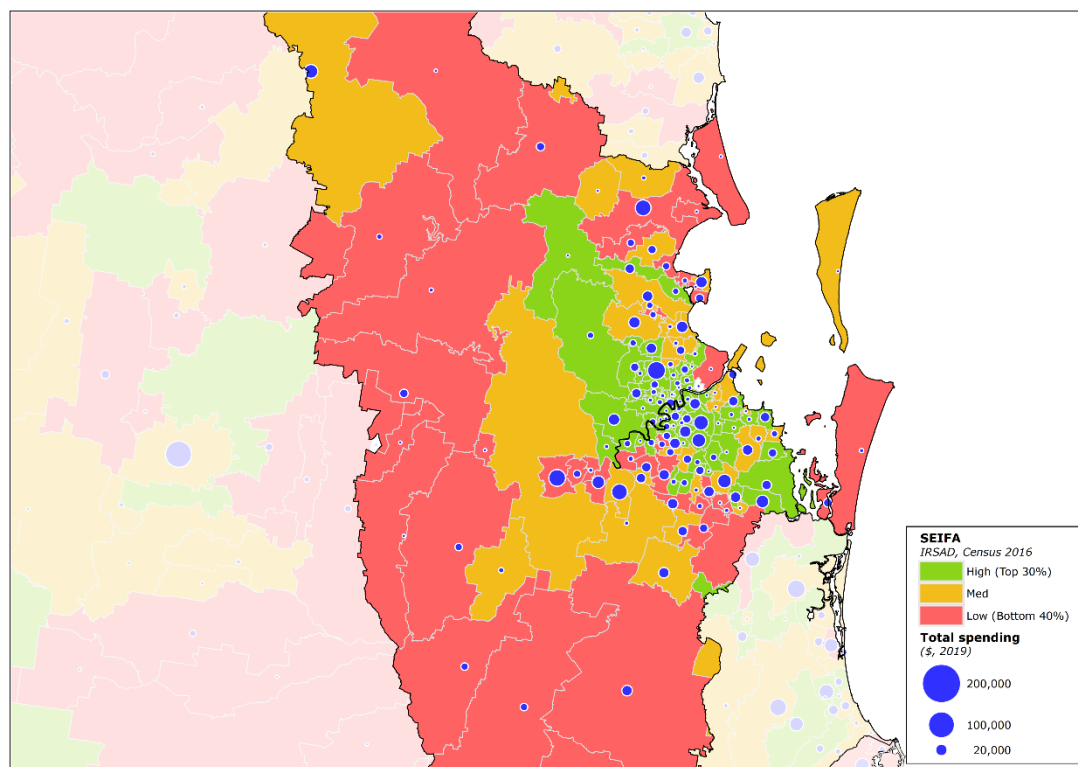
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.5: Total SSP funding per child in QLD, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

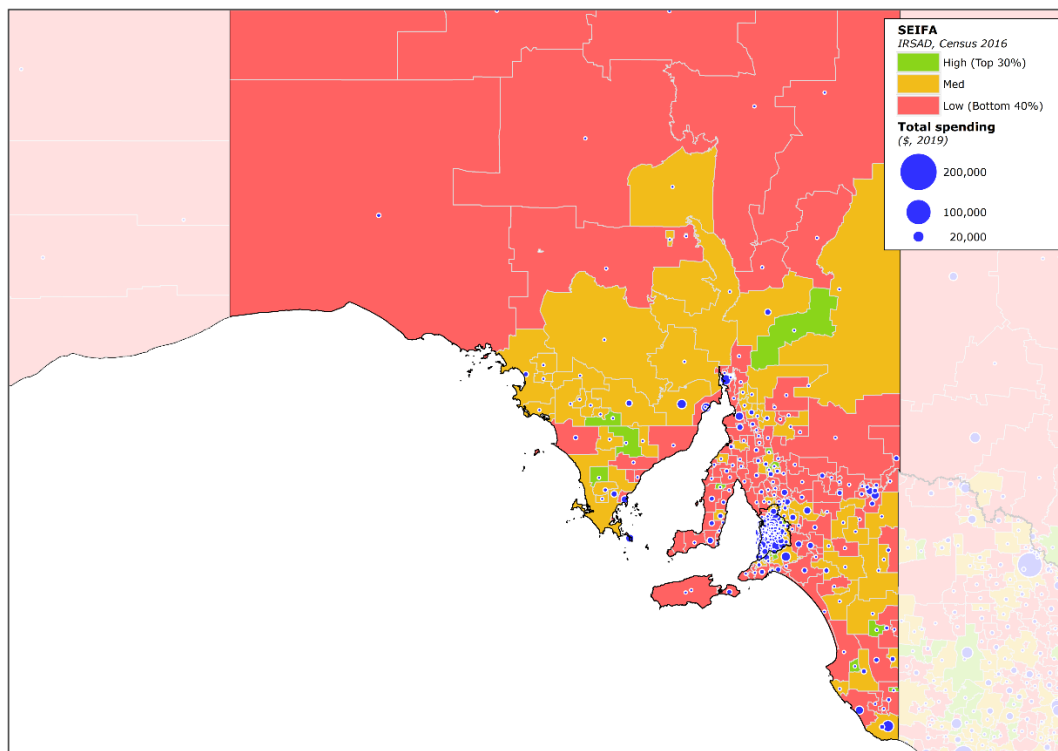
Figure A1.6: Total SSP funding in Brisbane, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

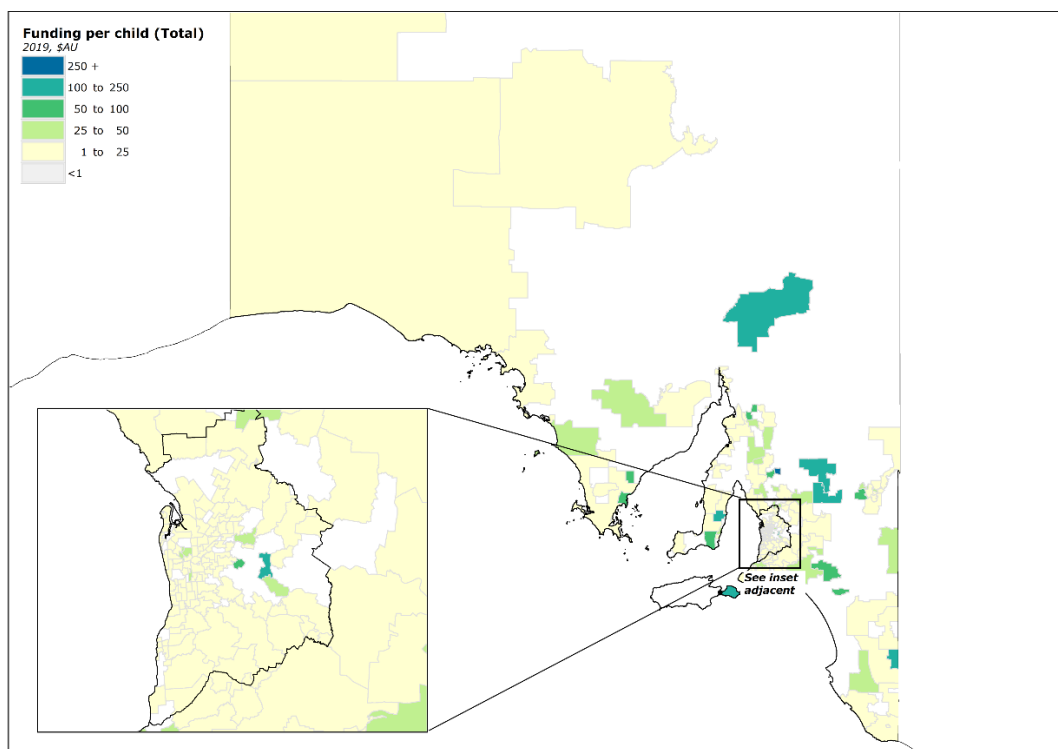
South Australia

Figure A1.7: Total SSP funding in SA, by post codes (2019)



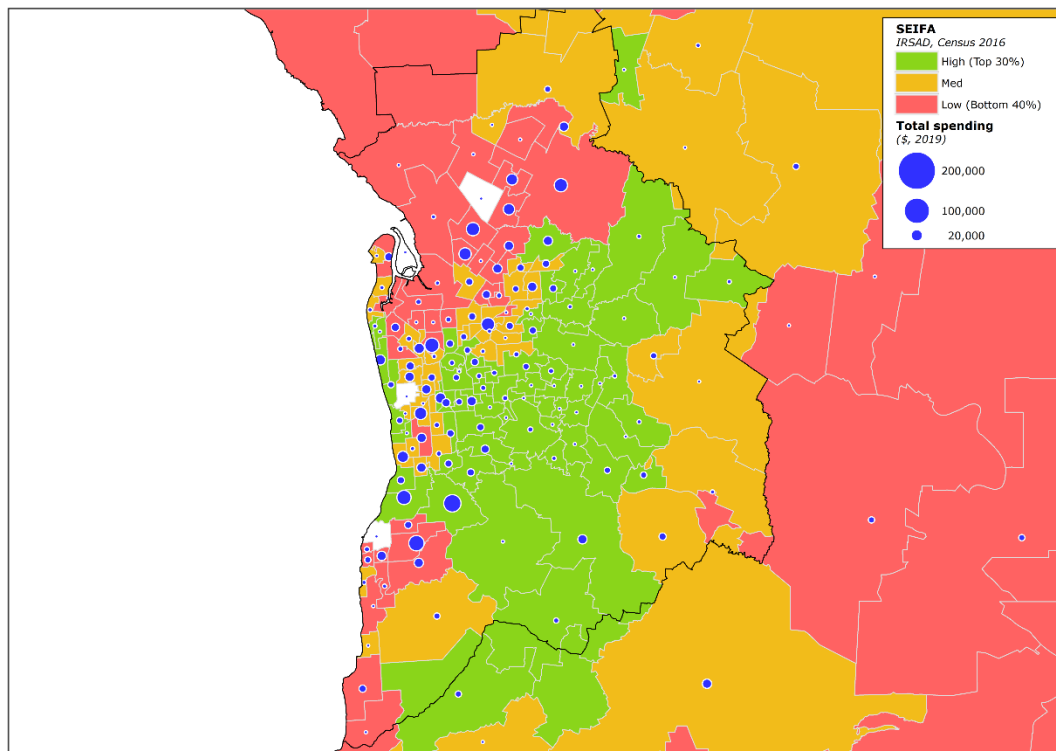
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.8: Total SSP funding per child in SA, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

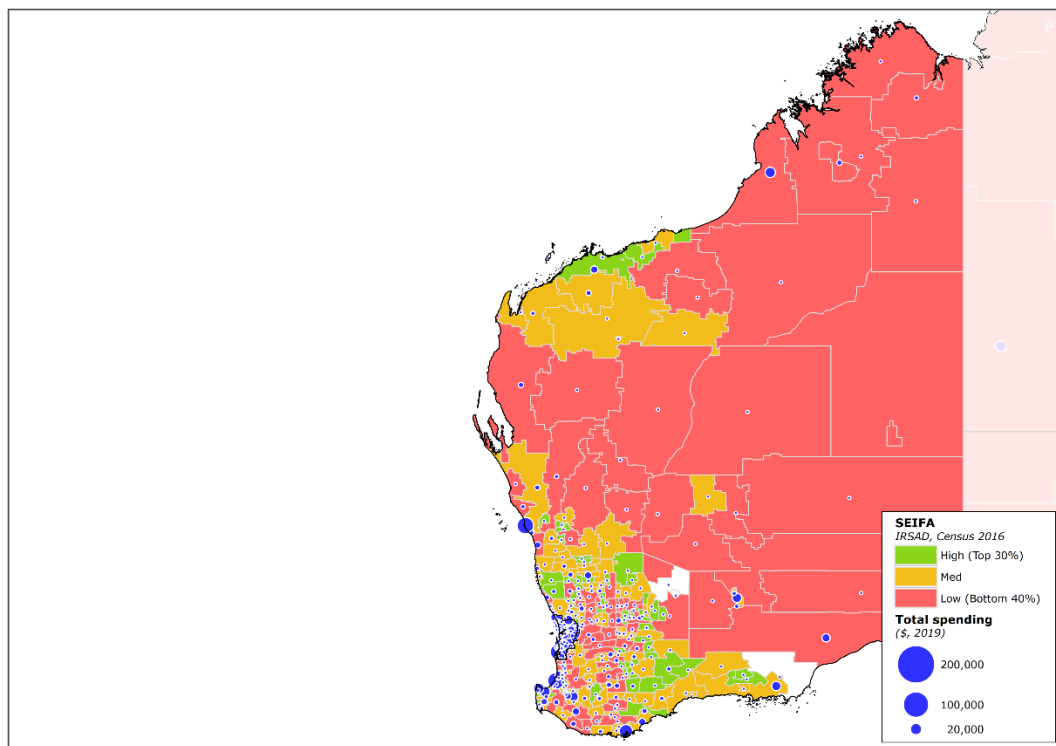
Figure A1.9: Total SSP funding in SA, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

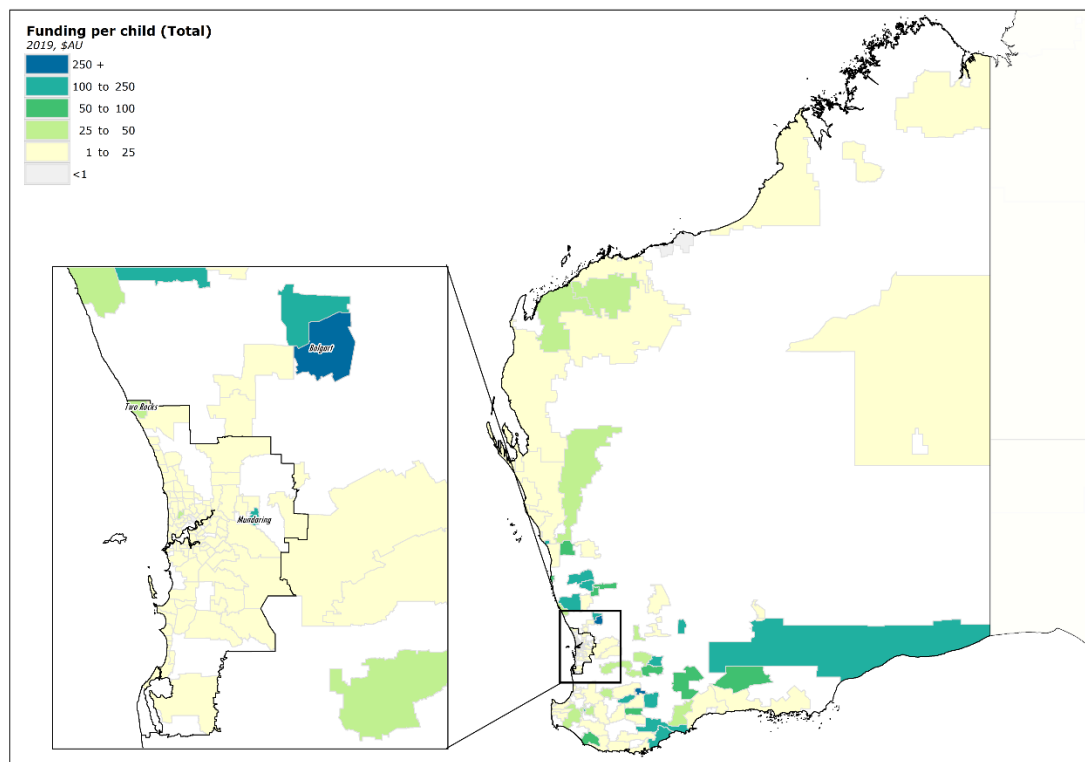
Western Australia

Figure A1.10: Total SSP funding in WA, by post codes (2019)



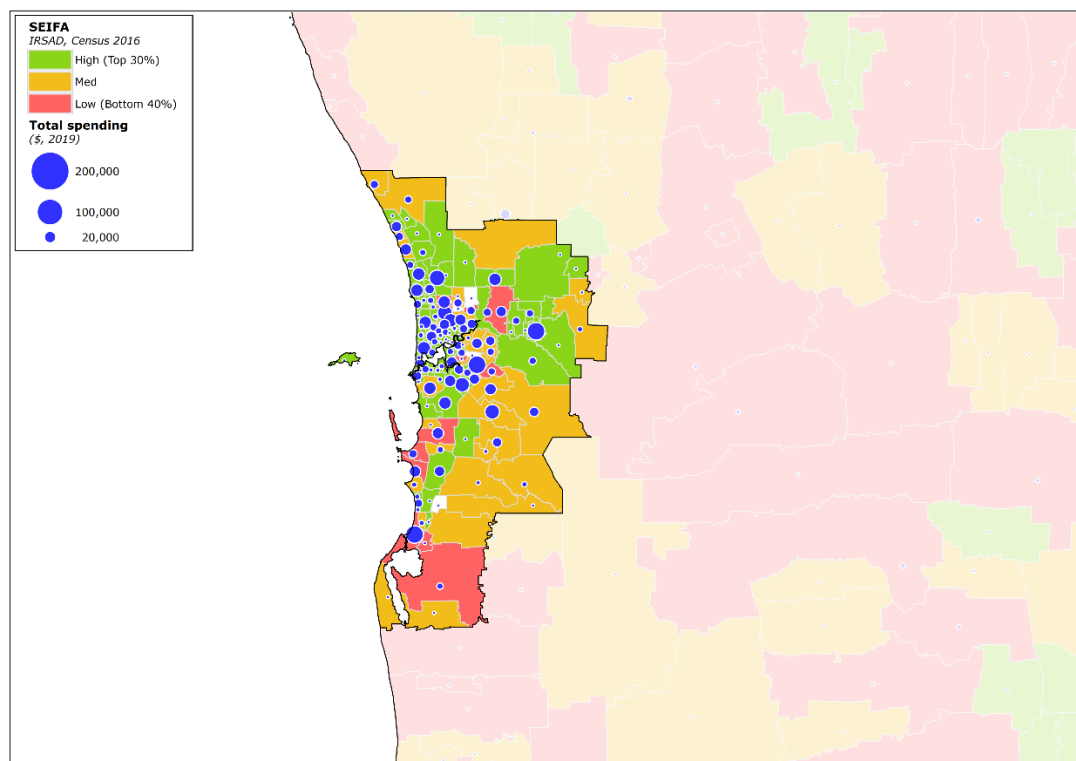
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.11: Total SSP funding per child in WA, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

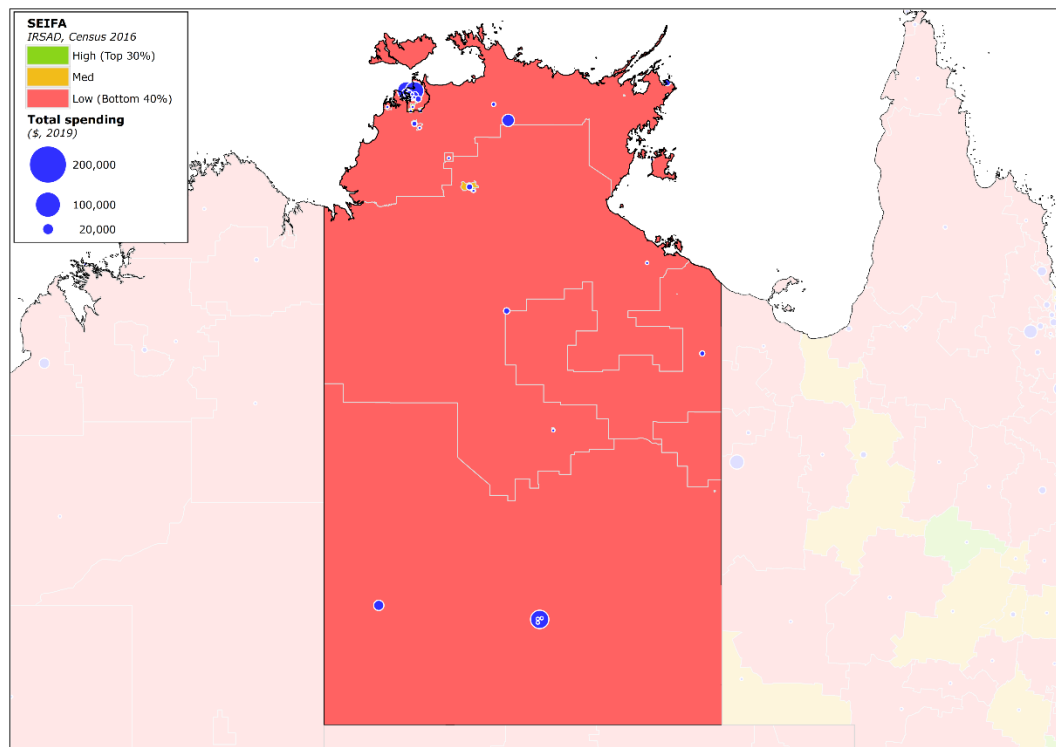
Figure A1.12: Total SSP funding in Perth, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

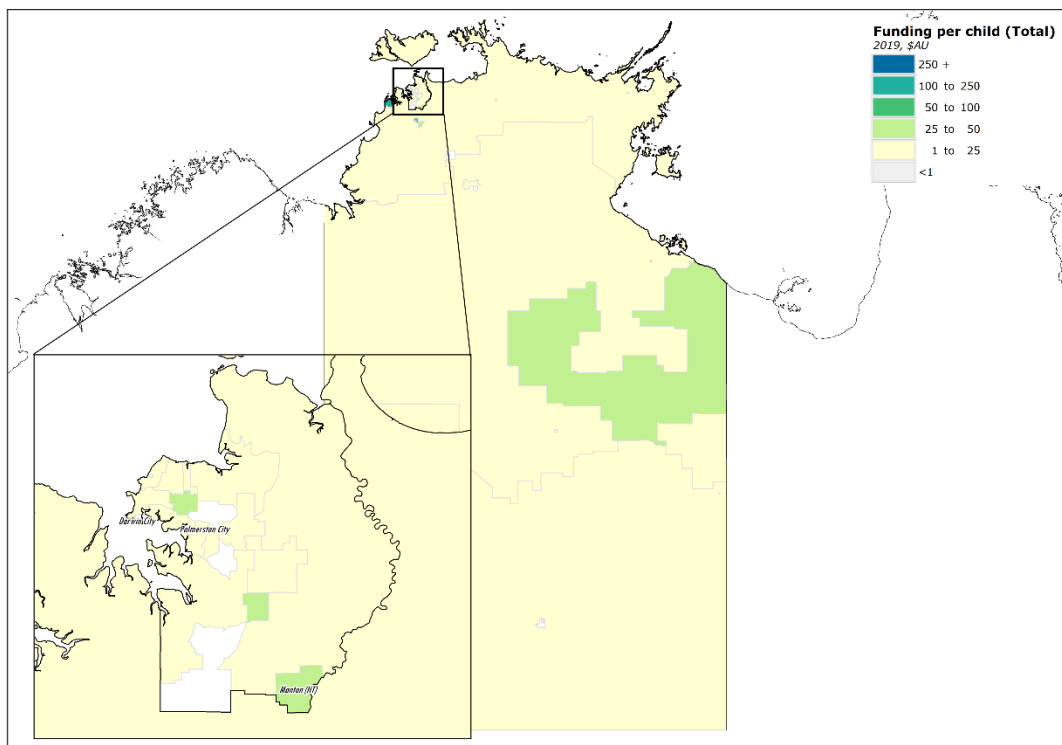
Northern Territory

Figure A1.13: Total SSP funding in the NT, by post codes (2019)



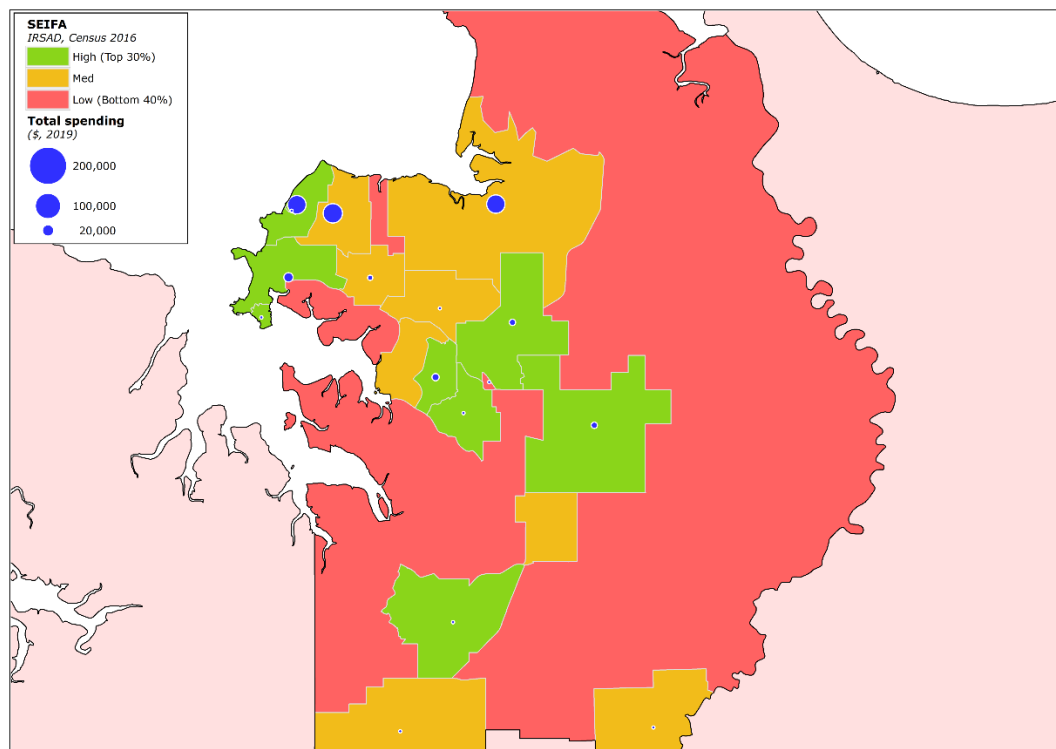
Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.14: Total SSP funding per child in the NT, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

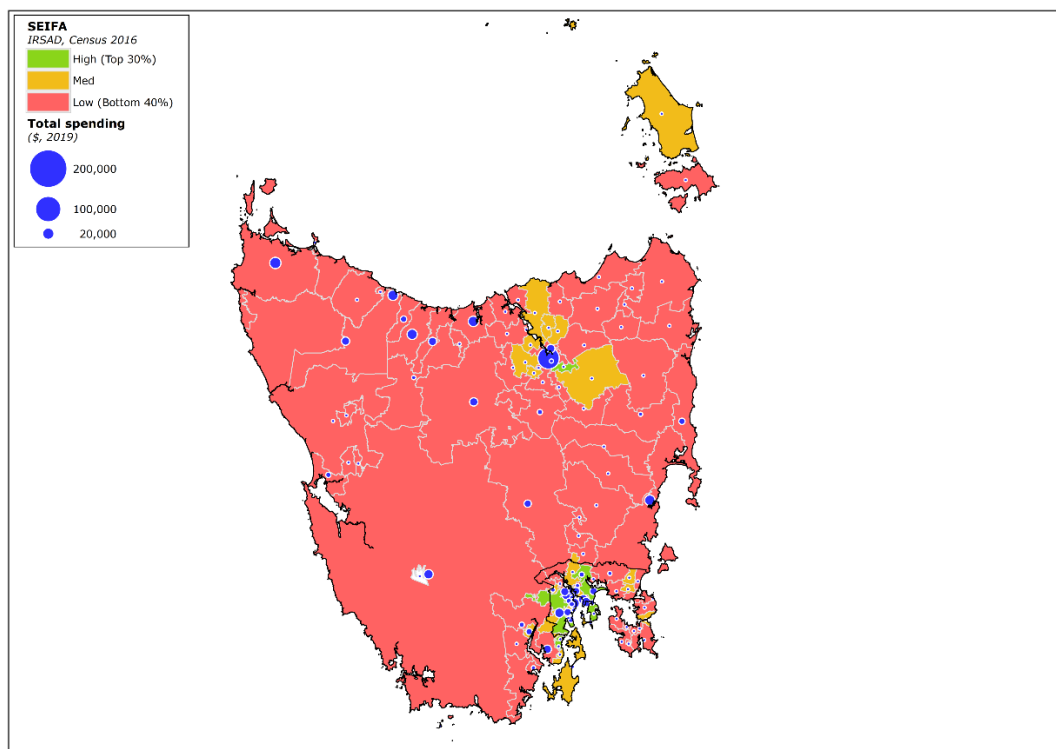
Figure A1.15: Total SSP funding in the Darwin, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

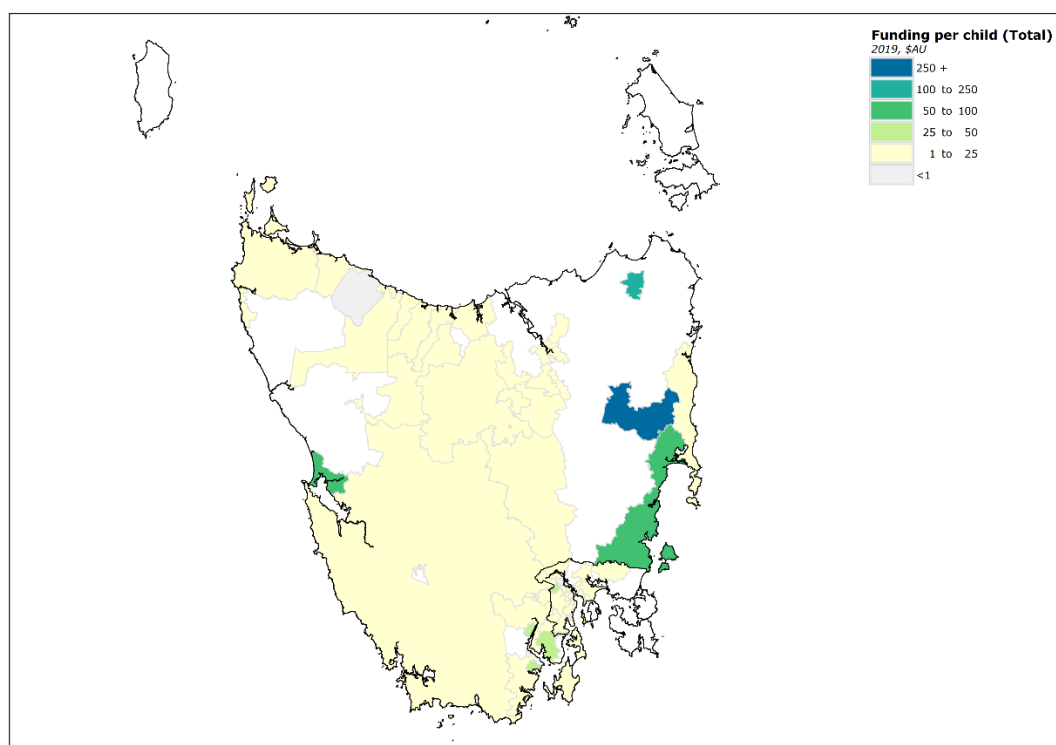
Tasmania

Figure A1.16: Total SSP funding in the NT, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Figure A1.17: Total SSP funding per child in TAS, by post codes (2019)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis of SSP registration and grant acquittal data.

Grant funding criteria

Primary schools

Table A1.4: SSP primary school grant funding matrix (2019)

School population	Participants					
	1-30	31-60	61-120	121-200	201-300	300+
1-150	1,000	1,300	1,700	2,000	N/A	N/A
151-300	1,200	1,500	1,900	2,200	2,500	N/A
301-800	1,400	1,700	2,100	2,400	2,700	2,900
801+	1,600	1,900	2,300	2,600	2,900	3,100

Source: Australian Sports Commission (2019).

Secondary schools

Table A1.5: SSP primary school grant funding matrix (2019)

	Response	Score
Age checkbox	Year 7 Only	3
	Year 8 only	
	Year 7-8	
Gender Checkbox	Female	5
	Female/Male	3
	Male	1

Written response	G1a – Tackle decline	1
	G1b – Targeting 7/8s or 12-14s*	1
	G1c – Particularly girls	1
	G1d – Encouraging long lasting relationships with sport	1
	G2a – Increase physical activity	1
	G2b – Inactive students	1
	G2c – Spark motivation/interest	1
	G3 – Evidence of disadvantage/barriers	1
Age text	Includes Year 9,10,11 and/or 12 in text	-2
Gender text	Males in text when ticked Female only	-2
Maximum score		16

Source: Australian Sports Commission (2019).

Appendix C – Summary of state-based sport programs and strategies

Table A1.6: State-based sport programs and strategies

State	Program	Responsible Agency
ACT	Activate My Day*	Heart Foundation ACT
	Healthy Schools Network ACT*	Healthy Schools Network ACT
	Kids at Play*	ACT Health
	Ride or Walk to School*	ACT Health; Physical Activity Foundation
NSW	Active Kids Voucher	Service NSW
	Crunch&Sip*	NSW Office of Preventive Health
	Finish with the Right Stuff*	NSW Health
	Go4Fun*	NSW Health
	Healthy Kids website*	NSW Health; NSW Department of Education; Office of Sport; and the Heart Foundation
	iPLAY	iPLAY
	Live Life Well @ School*	NSW Health; school sectors in NSW
	Live Outside the Box*	NSW Health; NSW Department of Education
	Make Healthy Normal*	NSW Government
	NSW Active Travel Charter for Children*	NSW Health
	Premier's Sporting Challenge	NSW Department of Education
	Yhunger*	Yfoundations
NT	Healthy Territory Kids*	Healthy Living NT; NT Health
	School Nutrition Projects* [still running?]	NT Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
	Sport Voucher Scheme	NT Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture
QLD	CQ Sporty Schools: Physical Activity Innovation with Schools	Queensland Health; QLD Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing; Australian Sports Commission (ASC); Australian Council for Health, PE and Recreation (ACHPER)
	FairPlay Voucher	QLD Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
	Good Start Program*	Children's Health Queensland
SA	Eat Well Be Active Primary Schools Project	SA Health; SA Department of Education and Child Development
	Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (OPAL) program	SA Health
	PE Week*	Australian Council for Health, PE and Recreation Inc. (SA)

	PE/Physical Literacy (PEPL) program	SA Department of Education
	Premier's be active challenge	Government of South Australia
TAS	Health Promoting Schools*	Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania
	Healthy Kids*	Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania
	Move Well Eat Well	Health Improvement Public Health Services, the Department of Health
	Ticket to Play	Department of Communities Tasmania
	Achievement Program	Cancer Council Victoria; Department of Health
VIC	Active for Life*	Department of Health Tasmania
	Active Kids Tribe*	YMCA Victoria
	After School Physical Activity Programs*	Department of Health Tasmania
	Ride2School	Bicycle Network
	School Sport Victoria	Department of Education and Training
	Transform-Us!	Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition; Deakin University
	VICSWIM	Aquatics and Recreation Victoria
WA	Better Health Program	WA Health
	Shooting Stars	Shooting Stars
	Take the Challenge*	Department of Education WA
	WA Health Promoting Schools Association (Inc.)*	WA Health Promoting Schools Association (Inc.)
NT, QLD and VIC	The Stars program	Stars Foundation
Country wide	Jump Rope for Heart*	Heart Foundation
Country wide	Health & PE (HPE) Day	Australian Council for Health, PE and Recreation Inc.

Appendix D – Evaluation indicator framework

Table A1.7 Evaluation indicator framework

Evaluation domain Number		Evaluation question	Performance indicators	Section	Assessment
Overarching		Is the delivery of the SSP the most effective vehicle for the Commonwealth to increase physical activity in schools?	Associated evaluation questions: EQ1, EQ2, EQ3, EQ4, EQ5, EQ8, EQ9, EQ11.		
Overarching		Does the expenditure on the SSP provide the Government with value for money?	Associated evaluation questions: EQ5, EQ6, EQ7, EQ10.		
Appropriateness	EQ1	Is the program designed to deliver on the stated objectives?	•Compare program components to stated objectives for soundness	2.3	
	EQ2	What elements of the program were most likely to contribute towards achieving the Program's objectives?	•Reported components of the program which are aligned to the achievement of program objectives	2.1	
Process	EQ3	How did the administrative structures and capacity building activities support the Program's implementation and the achievement of the Program's objectives?	•Reported effectiveness of program administrative functions by SSP management and delivery partners	3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4	
			•Reported effectiveness of governance structures by SSP management and delivery partners	3.1.1	
			•NSOs report that the program has contributed to internal capacity of schools to deliver sports programs	4.1.4	
			•Teachers capacity to deliver sports programs internally	4.1.4	
	EQ4	Was the Program delivered as intended?	•Timing of actual project delivered versus planned activities	Information not available	
			•Reported satisfaction on implementation from management and delivery staff	3.1	
			•Reported satisfaction on implementation from schools and NSOs	3.1.3.2	

Effectiveness (value for money)		•Reported aspects of project not delivered as planned	Information not available	
		•Number of sports offered as part of SSP	4.1.1	
		•Reported effectiveness of SSP promotional material	3.1.2	
	EQ5	•Diversity of schools participating in SSP	4.1.1	
		•Reported effectiveness of the program in increasing students' physical literacy	4.1.2	
		•Reported effectiveness of program in supporting student's FMS	4.1.2	
		•Reported student participation in sport during school hours	4.1.1	
		•Reported student participation in sport outside school hours	4.1.3	
		•Accessibility of community sports programs in communities where SSP is delivered	4.1.1	
		•Level of NSO interaction with schools	3.1.3.2	
		•Reported uptake of NSO services in communities where SSP is delivered	4.1.5	
		•NSOs report that the program has contributed to internal capacity of schools to deliver sports programs	4.1.4	
		•Reported effectiveness of NSO-developed programs	4.1.1	
	EQ6	•The program has been delivered within the agreed budget	5.1.1	
		•The SSP is cost effective relative to alternative programs	4.2	
		•The SSP model is adding additional value compared with other sports programs offered in schools	5.3	
	EQ7	What has been the ratio of costs to benefits?	•The benefits associated with the program outweigh the program costs 4.2	
	EQ8	•Reported effectiveness of the program in increasing students' physical literacy	4.1.2	
		•Reported student participation in sport during school hours	4.1.1	
		•The SSP model is adding additional value compared with other sports programs offered in schools	5.3	

Commercial-in-confidence

Efficiency and sustainability	EQ9	What are the impacts (intended and unintended) and probable long-term outcomes of the SSP?	•Increased sports participation among students	4.1.1	
			•Increased participation in community sport	4.1.3	
			•Children, youth and adults lead more physically active lifestyles	4.1.1	
			•Students have improved FMS and physical literacy	4.1.2	
			•Growth of NSO-affiliated organisation participation and membership	4.1.5	
			•NSO-affiliated organisations are more financially sustainable	4.1.5	
	EQ10	What resources were needed to deliver the program?	•Reported time and effort invested by NSOs	5.1.2	
			•Reported time and effort invested by teachers	5.1.2	
			•Reported time and effort invested by SSP program team	5.1	
	EQ11	Has the program been delivered to enhance sustainability?	•Reported intention/barriers to continue with the program	5.3	
			•Identified improvement opportunities	5.3	
			•Alignment of program with government priorities	1.1, 5.2	

Key:



Limited evidence that the performance indicators were met or evidence of poor performance against indicator



Mixed evidence that the performance indicators were met, or evidence of a medium level of performance against indicator



Evidence of strong performance against indicators, with only small suggested improvements to meet



Evidence that the performance indicators were met fully, with no suggested improvements

Appendix E – Cost benefit analysis methodology

Further detail about the parameters, costs, benefit quantification, results and sensitives are included below.

Parameters

The costs and benefits of the SSP are evaluated over a 15-year timeframe from the start of implementation (2015-2030). This evaluation period is believed to strike a balance between data availability and robustness with accuracy and validity of the benefits, which can be accrued and measured. However, sensitivity testing was performed at 25 and 35 years as most of the benefits gained from sports participation will occur later in life.

The choice of discount rate is important in any analysis as it has a significant influence on the BCR. A 5 per cent discount rate was used with sensitivity testing performed at 3 per cent and 7 per cent. As the costs and benefits are measured in real terms (2019 dollars), the discount rates are considered to be 'real' to comply with the current Australian Government guidelines.

The parameters used for this analysis are summarised in Table 6.1 .

Table 6.1: Parameters used in the analysis

Parameter	Base	Sensitivity testing
Year	2015	
Timeframe	15 years	25 years and 35 years
Discount rate	5%	3% and 7%
Cohort	Year 1 – 8*	
Price year	2019 dollars	

*Initially, the SSP was designed as a program for primary schools; in 2017 it was expanded to include Year 7 and 8 students in secondary schools.

Source: SSP stakeholders, Department of Health

Costs

The costs analysed are limited to the actual financial costs of administering the SSP between 2015 and 2019. The costs were inflated to 2019 dollars using CPI inflation rates (ABS 2019) and are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Summary of SSP program costs, 2019

Cost stream	Total (\$)
DGM Sport Participation	134,420,882
National Program Operations	12,646,858
National Participation Outcomes	3,719,595
Sport Engagement & Partnerships	4,653,586
School Engagement & Partnerships	7,787,424
Community Connections	4,429,111

Acquittal Funds ⁸⁵	(6,354,515)
Total	167,657,456

Source: Department of Health, Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Benefits

Quantifying the eligible participants

The participant data on the SSP provides the number of participants per sports program per school per term. This identifies the number of participant opportunities, but does not contain information to clearly define the:

- Number of unique students per school per term as some may be playing multiple sports
- Age of students
- Gender of students
- Continuity of participants across terms and years.

In order to quantify the participants eligible for benefit from the program, the following assumptions were made:

- All eligible participants receive the same benefit; there is no differentiation by sport, gender, number of years in the program or age when participating.
- New primary and secondary participants are equally split across the six primary years (1-6) and two secondary years (7-8).
- 75 per cent of students participating each year continue on next year (the higher this proportion, the fewer the number of new participants modelled in the next year).
- Students participated in only one program in any term.

The lowest participation term aggregated across all schools was used as a proxy to determine the number of unique participants in each year; this was considered the best representation of the number of students participating for at least one full year. The age of eligible participants by the end of 2019 is presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: SSP eligible participants by the end of 2019, by age

Age	Total participants
6	21,702
7	46,204
8	72,978
9	113,103
10	162,341
11	162,341
12	160,626
13	153,548
14	106,787
15	49,238
Total	1,048,868

Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

⁸⁵ The terms and conditions of the SSP require schools to return any unspent funds as part of the acquittal process. To date, these funds have been re-applied as either grants to schools or put towards capability building exercises in-line with the policy objectives of the NPP. In this analysis it was assumed that 100% of the funds are re-applied as grants in order to avoid underestimation of the costs.

Impact on participation in the SSP on adult activity levels

The literature on childhood sports participation consistently shows a significant positive correlation on physical activity as an adult, especially where the childhood experience was viewed as positive by the participant. The correlation is strengthened by increased duration (how many years) and intensity (level of exercise / competition) (Telama et al 2006, Davies et al 2019). The literature does not provide a reliable predictor that can be applied to the SSP participants.

The key assumption is that 12.6 per cent of the program participants will become and remain active over the assessed period as a result of program participation. This is based on the survey results where the question was asked about increasing children's participation in sport outside school hours due to the SSP.

Value of activity

The benefits of activity are seen across several areas, including mental health, crime and professional outcomes. However, the strongest and most readily quantifiable benefits are to physical health and the avoidance of lifestyle related diseases.

'Loss of wellbeing' methodology has been adopted to quantify the impact of physical inactivity on quality of life, and the improved quality of life (benefits) arising from the SSP. This methodology is used to calculate the costs of reduced health and premature mortality in terms of disability adjusted life years (DALYs). The DALY approach has been adopted and applied in Australia by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (e.g. Mathers et al, 1999 and Begg et al, 2007).

DALYs represents years of healthy life lost, either through premature death ('years of life lost' or YLL) or from living with an illness or injury ('years lived with disability' or YLD) where:

$$\text{DALYs} = \text{YLLs} + \text{YLDs}$$

The AIHW estimated that 2.5 per cent of the disease burden in Australia was attributed to physical inactivity in 2015. The proportion of burden associated with physical inactivity increases with age and was the most pronounced for the 65-84 age group (Table 6.4). Physical inactivity starts to cause burden in adolescents aged 15-24.

The loss of wellbeing as measured in DALYs can be converted into a dollar figure using an estimate of the value of a Value of Statistical Life Year (VSLY), which is an estimate of the value society places on reducing the risk of premature death. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2019) estimated the value of a VSLY to be \$213,000 in 2019 dollars. The annual cost of inactivity for each age group was then calculated on a per inactive person basis (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Annual cost of physical inactivity per person by age group, 2019 dollars

Age group	Attributable DALYs	Annual cost of inactivity (\$ million)	Inactive persons (million)	Annual cost of inactivity (\$/person)
0-14	-	-	-	-
15-24	279	59.36	1.70	35
25-34	1,976	420.96	1.97	214
35-44	4,980	1,060.73	2.10	506
45-54	12,555	2,674.25	2.00	1,334
55-64	20,364	4,337.59	1.84	2,353
65-84	56,591	12,053.90	2.25	5,353
85+	24,413	5,199.87	0.26	9,644
All ages	121,158	25,806.66	12.13	2,127

Note: The figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source: AIHW (2019), ABS (2019) and Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Net Benefit

This net benefit represents the health benefits derived from the intervention only; not the economic benefit. It is noted that an increase in participation in sport may have led to higher levels of employment for coaches, who would typically be casual workers, or self-employed. It is therefore likely that this 12.6 per cent increase in community sport would generate more employment opportunities for coaches. This benefit has not been calculated, primarily because it was not a primary aim of this program. However, it is likely that it would be a positive unintended consequence of this investment.

The net benefit is derived each year as the product of:

- Eligible participants by age group
- % of participants active due to the SSP
- Value of activity by age group.

The present value of benefits was estimated to be \$29.1 million in 2019 dollars.

Results and Sensitivities

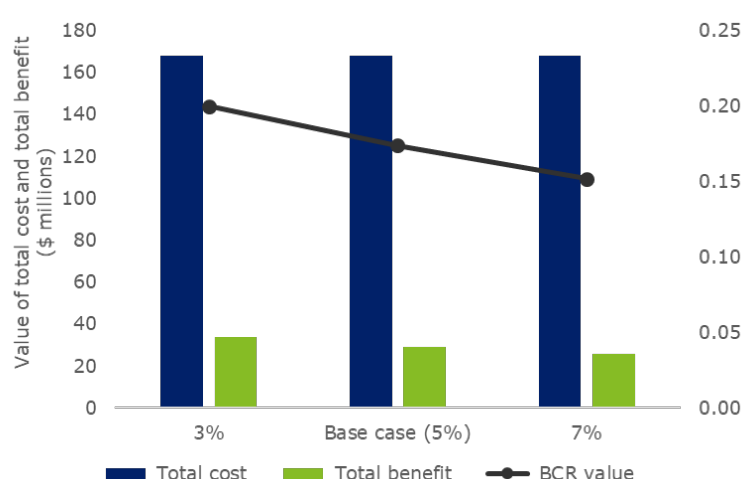
Base Case Results

Assessed until 2030 with a 5 per cent real discount rate, the present value of benefits of \$29.1 million against a present value of costs of \$167.7 million in cost results in an NPV of – \$138.6 million, with a BCR of 0.17.

Discount rate

This analysis shown in Chart 6.1 presents the results when the discount rate is changed from the base case of 5 per cent to 3 per cent and 7 per cent. Due to all costs being incurred in years 2015 to 2019 there were no changes to the total present value of costs when the discount rate was changed. The present value of benefits was sensitive to changes in the discount rates. Under the 3 per cent discount rate the present value of benefits in 2019 dollars was \$33.5 million while under the 7 per cent discount it was reduced to \$25.4 million, with the difference being \$8.1 million. The BCR under the 3 per cent discount rate was 0.20, while under the 7 per cent discount rate the BCR was 0.15.

Chart 6.1: Sensitivity testing – discount rate



Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Timeframe

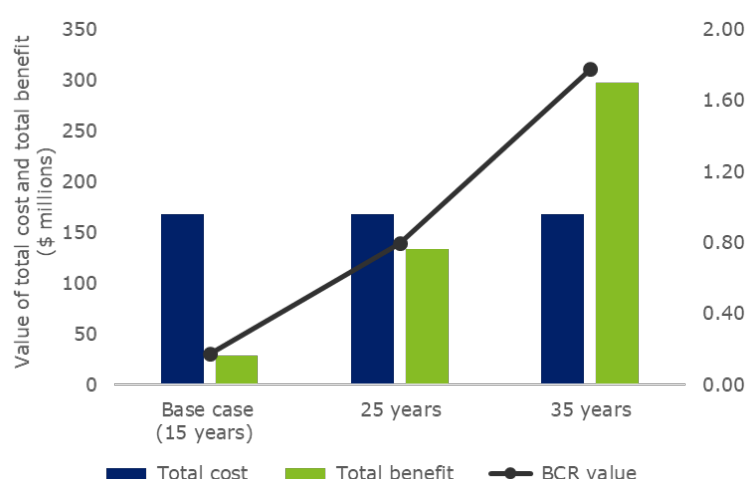
The analysis in Chart 6.2 presents results from changing the timeframe from 15 years to 25 years and 35 years. Due to all costs being incurred in years 2015 to 2019 there were no changes to the

total present value of costs when the timeframe was changed. The present value of benefits was highly sensitive to changes in the timeframe as:

- The annual benefits are now accruing over a longer timeframe, and
- The proportion of burden associated with physical inactivity (and the resulting cost of physical inactivity) increases markedly with age.

Over a period of 25 years, the present value of benefits in 2019 dollars was estimated to be \$133.6 million. Compared to the base case, the present value of benefits is 10 times higher over a period of 35 years (\$297.8 million).⁸⁶ The BCR under the 25-year timeframe was 0.80, while under the 35-year timeframe it was 1.78.

Chart 6.2: Sensitivity testing – timeframe



Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Number of unique participants

The lowest participation term aggregated across all schools was used as a proxy to determine the number of unique participants in each year; this was considered to be the best representation of the number of students participating for at least one full year. However, the number of unique participants depends on the assumptions made and, as a result, on the method of calculation.

Three alternative methods on a per school basis were considered to determine the number of unique participants in each year:

- Scenario 1: Sum of each school's lowest participation term
- Scenario 2: Sum of each school's lowest participation term, excluding terms where there were no active programs in a school
- Scenario 3: Sum of each school's highest participation term.

Under Scenario 1 it is assumed that new students participated in the SSP each year while Scenarios 2 and 3 maintain the original assumption that 75 per cent of students participating in a given year continue on next year.

The total number of participants using different calculation methods is presented in Table 6.5.

⁸⁶ It is assumed that there is no deterioration of outcome (i.e. drop-off values) over longer time periods and all active children as a result of the SSP (12.6%) would remain active adults throughout the assessed duration.

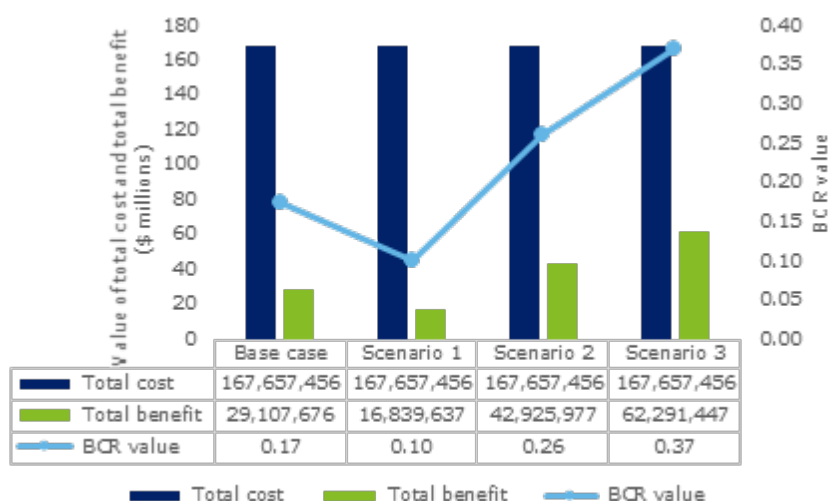
Table 6.5: Participants through the SSP by scenario

Scenario	Total eligible participants (as at Dec 2019)
Base case	1,048,868
Scenario 1	631,202
Scenario 2	1,626,363
Scenario 3	2,306,792

Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations.

Error! Reference source not found. This analysis presents the results when the number of unique participants is changed from the base case. Due to all costs being incurred in years 2015 to 2019 there were no changes to the total present value of costs when the discount rate was changed. The present value of benefits was sensitive to changes in the number of students participating in SSP for at least one full year (Chart 6.3).

Chart 6.3: Sensitivity testing – number of unique participants



Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations

Limitation of our work

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