Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Sport and Recreation Industry Priorities

Sport and Recreation Industry Priorities

About the project

The purpose of the Sport and Recreation Industry Priorities project is to:

- document evidence-based industry priorities

- provide a snapshot of what is important to the industry

- guide resource allocation

- inform the review and/or development of initiatives that are delivered by the department to support the industry

- inform industry and sector strategic planning process.

Facilities This review will focus on priorities relating to the activation of infrastructure. The department will continue to address priorities relating to new or replacement capital works via its existing strategic approach.

The project has been delivered in three stages:

Desktop review

Review of
11 **industry documents**
reviewed to identify common sport and recreation priorities

additional
12 **documents**
used to source evidence and justification for the priorities.

Consultation and Engagement

Concept testing approach → online survey to all levels of the industry → **306 responses**

17 identified priorities were well supported.

Second phase of engagement → seven regional and two metropolitan focus groups → **72** community-based attendees

Final report

- Available at www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/industry-priorities

- Distributed to forum attendees and the wider sport and recreation industry.

- Will be used by the DLGSC in an internal gap analysis of initiatives and response mechanisms available to the industry.

Focus Areas and Priorities

Value

1. The industry is equipped to capture and evaluate structured and unstructured participation data.

2. The industry is equipped to quantify, communicate and advocate for the benefits that sport and recreation provides to both individuals and the wider community.

People

3. The industry is equipped to attract, support and maintain the volunteer base undertaking the delivery of sport and recreation.

4. The industry is equipped to effectively support paid staff to enter employment within the industry, be retained in the industry and progress along employment pathways.

5. The industry is equipped to provide pathways and development opportunities for coaches, officials, program leaders and instructors.

6. The industry has access to sector and position specific learning and development opportunities, tailored to the needs of volunteers and paid personnel.

Structures and systems

7. The industry is equipped to adopt governance/operational models and structures relevant to their needs - including size, activity and membership base.

8. The industry is equipped to effectively collaborate/partner/engage with stakeholders to achieve common goals and objectives.

9. The industry is equipped to effectively use technology to support the administration and delivery of sport and recreation.

10. The industry is equipped to ensure systems and structures are representative of the Western Australian community including diversity in age, culture, ability, gender and location.

Environment

11. The industry is equipped to understand the impact of policy and legislation on different settings, self-represent and inform decisions impacting industry operations and structures.

12. The industry is equipped to ensure the settings in which activity takes place are accessible, protected and available into the future.

13. The industry is equipped to provide safe environments for participants.

Opportunity

14. The industry is equipped to provide opportunities for participants to develop their skills, and experience progressively greater challenges/levels of competition.

15. The industry is equipped to provide information, education and entry level participation opportunities for those new to an activity.

16. The industry is equipped to understand the unique locations, demographics and differences within the Western Australian community and take into account differing needs during product/program development.

17. The industry is equipped to reduce/minimise barriers to participation.

Value

The ability to understand, quantify and articulate the social, economic, health and environmental benefits derived from sport and recreation.

The passionate sports person who has been attending training and games since they were 5 years old and the avid Bibbulmun Track hiker already understand and accept the benefits derived from participating in their preferred pursuit.

The challenge faced by the sport and recreation industry is capturing, quantifying and articulating the social, economic, health and environmental benefits derived from sport and recreation to a wider audience. The importance of clarifying the more obvious benefits of fun, friendship, physical and mental health, social connectiveness and community engagement should not be underestimated. However, challenges remain with analysing and communicating the benefits of economic development, tourism, education, connection to Country, crime prevention, youth engagement, environmental management and sense of one's own worth/self-respect.

> A clear and empirically-supported picture of value created by trails will increase priority amongst decision-makers and assist to convey the relevance of trails to the community.
>
> **Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009-2015**

Decision makers that understand the benefit and value of sport and recreation will be more likely to allocate and invest their time, resources and money. As decision makers include parents, participants, sponsors and all levels of government, the key messaging, language and method of promotion/communication should align with their specific priorities in order to influence and inform their investment decision.[1, 2, 3] Contemporary and flexible data collection, advocacy strategies and promotional campaigns that utilise technology and a variety of media are also seen as critical to demonstrating the value of sport and recreation.

Evidence is emerging that participation in sport and recreation is shifting towards more informal, unstructured formats.[4, 5, 6] This shift carries with it the inherent challenge of accurately and consistently capturing and presenting participation data.[7, 8] Data collection and analysis models that accommodate for the breadth of participation - unstructured and structured - are essential to paint an accurate picture of the industry.[9, 10, 11] While the structured nature of the Australian sport system provides a clearer approach to data collection, the unstructured freedom that attracts participants to the outdoor sector creates a challenge in the collection of its data.[12, 13]

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1   Getting Australia Active III
2   Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009-2015
3   Managing Informal Sport Participation: Tensions and Opportunities – Monash University
4   Managing Informal Sport Participation: Tensions and Opportunities – Monash University
5   AusPlay Focus: Early impact COVID-19 (October 2020)
6   Play. Sport. Australia – Sport Australia
7   Play. Sport. Australia – Sport Australia
8   Measuring Participation in Outdoor Activities: An exploration of methods – QORF
9   Getting Australia Active III
10   Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009-2015
11   Measuring Participation in Outdoor Activities: An exploration of methods – QORF
12   More People More Active Outdoors
13   WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030

The role and importance of clubs, associations, volunteers and service/activity providers in the delivery of sport and recreation opportunities and outcomes is clear and relatively easy to define. Sound and creditable evidence (including longitudinal research) will assist the industry to develop value statements which are activity, location or audience specific and demonstrate alignment with a variety of outcomes including health, economic, social, education and environmental.[14, 15, 16, 17]

> Robust and accurate data on the value of the sector from an economic, health and social perspective will produce the kind of metrics which can be used at all levels of government to illustrate the true value of the sector.
>
> **Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest**

Priorities

The industry is equipped to:

- capture and evaluate structured and unstructured participation data

- quantify, communicate and advocate for the benefits that sport and recreation provides to both individuals and the wider community.

14   Getting Australia Active III
15   Play. Sport. Australia – Sport Australia
16   SportAus: Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport 2017
17   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest

People

The people involved in the delivery of sport and recreation have well developed capabilities, aligned to the needs of the industry.

Like any provider of services and experiences, the people involved in the sport and recreation industry are critical to the high-quality delivery of the activity and participant experience. From volunteers delivering mountain biking classes to the Board member of a large state sporting association, ensuring the industry's people are engaged and committed is essential if they are to act as custodians of the sector's culture.

The development of volunteers and employees through a structured pathway is critical to ensure the industry is well supported by passionate, confident, motivated, skilled and capable people.[1, 2, 3] Leadership training for an organisation's most dedicated Manager is just as important as an entry level environment that encourages and supports new volunteer coaches at clubs.

Volunteers are the backbone of many community sport and recreation organisations.[4, 5] A strong understanding of what drives people to become involved with a sport or recreation organisation can be used to recruit and retain these vital volunteers.[6, 7, 8, 9]

Like athletes, coaches, officials, program leaders and instructors will benefit from well supported, resourced pathways that have cross-provider alignment with all partners.[10] This is particularly true for the outdoor sector which, by its unstructured nature, has limited opportunities for pathway development.[11]

> Individuals in a position of power or influence within a sport are temporary custodians, there to 'protect the sport' and 'pass the baton' onto the next generation of leaders and decision-makers.
>
> **Sport 2030 - Sport Australia**

In the most part, sport and recreation activities in Western Australia are delivered consistent with the rest of the country so they can capitalise on nationally delivered training, guidance and information. Notwithstanding this, there are numerous state-based rules and regulations that should be considered when delivering some types of training. Specifically, this includes those relating to working with children checks, liquor licensing, other state-based legislation and outdoor recreation in the State's unique landscape.

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1   SportWest – Strategic Priorities for WA Sport
2   DLGSC: More People More Active Outdoors
3   Sport 2030 – Sport Australia
4   Sport 2030 – Sport Australia
5   Clearinghouse for Sport
6   SportWest – Strategic Priorities for WA Sport
7   Clearinghouse for Sport
8   Market Segmentation Study for Volunteers, Australian Sports Commission, (2014)
9   Game on – Getting South Australia Moving
10   Coaching and Officiating Framework Toolkit – Sport Australia
11   DLGSC: More People More Active Outdoors

MtHassell Stirling Range. Credit: Lenore Lyons

Professional development opportunities for employees and volunteers should be considered to ensure they reflect the generic skill and abilities from across other like-minded industries, while reflecting the unique attributes of the sport and recreation industry. The opportunity to share with, and learn from, other industries should never be underestimated.

> To make diverse boards more effective, boards need to have a more egalitarian culture — one that elevates different voices, integrates contrasting insights, and welcomes conversations about diversity.
>
> **Sport 2030 - Sport Australia**

Like any industry that relies on people to deliver its outcomes, consideration and attention should be provided to establishing appropriate and efficient recruitment, training, retaining and rewarding practices. While this may involve financial or resource costs, the role volunteers play should be understood in achieving activity delivery in a cost-effective manner.

Of particular importance is consideration of reward and recognition programs for volunteers and the establishment of positive cultures that encourage appropriate behaviors at all levels of the industry.

Priorities

The industry is equipped to:

- attract, support and maintain the volunteer base undertaking the delivery of sport and recreation

- effectively support paid staff to enter employment within the industry, be retained in the industry and progress along employment pathways

- provide pathways and development opportunities for coaches, officials, program leaders and instructors.

The industry has access to:

- sector and position specific learning and development opportunities, tailored to the needs of volunteers and paid personnel.

Structure and systems

The structures and systems that support the sport and recreation industry are fit-for-purpose and operate efficiently and effectively.

Like any business or organisation, the size, activity and membership should guide a sport or recreation's type of structure and the complexity of the systems used to run and govern the operations. Options based on principles, rather than specifics, will ensure an efficient and effective approach to the review and development of appropriate systems and structures.[1]

> Encouraging cross-industry advocacy and strengthening hiking groups and their volunteers will contribute towards effective governance and advocacy in the long term.
>
> **WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030**

Templates, guides and resources are great options for assisting all levels and types of organisations and decision makers. However, of greater importance is the relevance of the policies, procedures and practices, along with the ability of the people involved to understand and implement them. Rules and processes should support the optimal delivery of the activities, programs and services while ensuring appropriate standards of compliance.

While robust and appropriate systems and structures are important, it is also vital that decisions are made at the right level and by the right people.[2, 3] A balance between due diligence, legal compliance, discussion and consultation with an appropriate decision-making timeframe will ensure valuable time and resources are not wasted while protecting the organisation and members' best interests.

All kinds of diversity, including background, culture, language, age, ability and gender, make our communities rich and vibrant places. It is obvious that focusing on diversity and inclusion means Australians from all walks of life can participate in, and benefit from, an active lifestyle and connection to their communities. However, there are other organisational benefits such as enhanced organisational performance, attracting and retaining top talent, providing a platform for growth and meeting community expectations.[4, 5]

A sport and recreation organisation that can utilise technology and a simple membership engagement and management experience, will enable members, volunteers and staff to spend less time and resources shuffling paper and more time actively engaged in the activity.[6, 7, 8]

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1 Sport Governance Principles – Sport Australia - 2020
2 Strategic Priorities for WA Sport – SportWest
3 Comparing federal and unitary models of sport governance: A case study investigation.
4 Case for Change - DLGSC
5 Gender Equity Insights 2020 – BCEC | WGEA Gender Equity Series
6 Strategic Priorities for WA Sport – SportWest
7 Heart Foundation's Blueprint for an Active Australia
8 Virtual Volunteering in Community Sport – Sport Information Resource Centre Canada

In a business ecosystem with limited resources, open communication through well maintained networks assists in developing mutually beneficial partnerships. Partnerships that benefit all parties rely on each bringing something of value to the table, a shared mission/outcome and a willingness to co-operate.

Partnerships and network development should include those within the industry and those within external sectors, such as community, business and all levels of government.[9, 10]

A balanced approach to relevant planning processes (e.g., strategic, business/operational, financial and risk) should enable leaders, inform members/stakeholders and create a culture/system of ongoing business continuity and coordinated organisational performance.

For some parts of the industry there is an abundance of small, fragmented organisations each working to achieve their own outcomes with limited communication or partnerships. A coordinated, focused approach with an aligned mission may achieve greater sector advocacy and outcomes.[11]

Priorities

The industry is equipped to:

- adopt governance/operational models and structures relevant to their needs - including size, activity and membership base

- effectively collaborate/partner/engage with stakeholders to achieve common goals and objectives

- effectively use technology to support the administration and delivery of sport and recreation;

- ensure systems and structures are representative of the Western Australian community including diversity in age, culture, ability, gender and location.

> While good governance is an essential feature of well-run organisations, it is important that sports adopt governance models which are 'fit for purpose' and do not overly burden or distract from an organisation's ability to deliver on its primary purpose and meet the needs of its members and the communities for which they exist.
> **Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest**

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9   Sport 2030 – Sport Australia
10   Active and inactive young Australians – SPRINTER Research Group
11   Comparing federal and unitary models of sport governance: A case study investigation.

Environment

The places and spaces in which sport and recreation occurs are accessible, safe and available into the future.

While it is incumbent on decision makers and venue/land managers to have in place appropriate policies and procedures, it is equally as important to understand the impact on participants and end users.[1, 2,] If provided access to relevant and current information, sport and recreation organisations are well placed to contribute to effective policy development. Policies and procedures that support and encourage participation while ensuring responsible venue/land management will benefit both the manager and the community, organisations and participants.[3, 4, 5]

By their nature, sport and recreation activities are enjoyable, fulfilling and at times unpredictable. While these characteristics are what attracts the majority of participants, activity providers should ensure the environment where the activity takes place and how it is delivered aligns with legal and community-based expectations.[6] Areas of particular importance are health, safety and environmental considerations as well as creating places that are free from harassment, discrimination, abuse and unacceptable risk.[7, 8, 9]

Ngaanyatjarraku Lands - Child Shooting Basketball Hoops. Photo by Mark Weller.

1   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest
2   More People More Active Outdoors
3   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport
4   WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-20201
5   HikeWest Strategic Plan 2018-2021
6   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport
7   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport
8   Heart Foundation's Blueprint for an Active Australia
9   WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030

> There is an urgent need for stakeholders and facility owners and managers to work together to improve accessibility and increase participation opportunities that are inclusive and sustainable.
>
> **Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest**

The built and natural place or space in which sport and recreation occurs is quantifiable, visual and tangible and is therefore easy to identify, control and manage. Environment can also include the intangible place created by a club, organisation or activity provider that includes creating and managing an inclusive, positive, safe and welcoming culture. A smiling and welcoming face is just as important as a physical sign advertising for new members.

Western Australia has some of the best built facilities and most unique natural outdoor environments in the world. This presents participants, the community and activity providers amazing opportunities and complexities in establishing specific management and promotional initiatives. Balancing and accommodating the interests of all users, the community and stakeholders while ensuring long-term sustainability and access requires a transparent and considered consultative approach.

> Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the well-being of future generations.
>
> **Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future – United Nations (1987)**

The end user and relevant stakeholders should be considered at all stages of planning, program development, policy formation and promotion to ensure accessibility, cultural inclusiveness, barrier reduction and maximum participation opportunities. Flexible and adaptive management of places, spaces, venues and the open natural environment plays a significant role in the establishment of opportunities for sport and recreation.

Priorities

The industry is equipped to:

- understand the impact of policy and legislation on different settings, self-represent and inform decisions impacting industry operations and structures

- ensure the settings in which activity takes place are accessible, protected and available into the future

- provide safe environments for participants.

Opportunity

Participants are attracted, retained and able to transition from entry level to elite.

Participants, coaches and officials start their sport and recreation journey at different stages of life, backgrounds and with different skills, experiences and cultures. Opportunities to start, develop and progress should embrace current and potential participants' diversity and tolerance for risk.[1]

> There are many barriers limiting participation for first time hikers and enthusiasts alike. Reducing barriers will facilitate happier, healthier communities.
>
> **WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030**

Pathways for participants, especially those designed for elite or aspiring champion players, coaches and officials should have cross provider alignment with all partners and providers to maximise resources and expertise while ensuring athlete wellbeing is considered.[2]

> The challenge is to modify and adapt traditional sporting offers to attract new less active population groups, such as older adults or those with existing chronic disease.
>
> **Getting Australia Active III - Department of Health, Australian Government**

The reasons for participating in a specific activity are as varied as the activities available for the community. Likewise, the reasons people stop participating are just as varied and at times may be unclear to leaders and decision makers. Programs and activities that increase the reasons to engage while reducing the barriers will achieve their desired outcomes with less effort, resources and complications.[3, 4, 5]

The barriers to participation and solutions to address them should be identified from the perspective of the unengaged or potential participant. Barriers associated with culture, age, religion, ability, gender, activity misconceptions, socio-economic status or previous experiences may not be obvious to those actively and happily involved in the sport or recreation. The barriers may also be related to the activity itself or the requirement to invest time or money to enable participation (e.g. fees, equipment, base skill/fitness, a whole day's commitment).

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1   More People More Active Outdoors
2   Sport 2030 – Sport Australia
3   Drivers of Participation – Sport Australia
4   More People More Active Outdoors
5   Active and Inactive Young Australians – SPRINTER Research Group

Traditions within the sport and recreation industry are one of the reasons participants and volunteers are committed and passionate with their time and resources.[6] It is also a reason that, from time to time, an organisation may miss an opportunity or put growth over providing a quality service or experience.[7] Organisations and activity providers that acknowledge the past and embrace the future can adapt and respond to an ever-changing demographic, audience and environment.[8, 9]

Considering Western Australia's regional and remote locations and diversity, offering unique opportunities for outdoor and nature-based activities presents additional challenges for metropolitan/centralised administration, programs and pathways.[10, 11] Innovative solutions and partnerships are critical for developing and maintaining high quality participation opportunities and experiences for all Western Australians regardless of their location.

Priorities

The industry is equipped to:

- provide opportunities for participants to develop their skills, and experience progressively greater challenges/levels of competition

- provide information, education and entry level participation opportunities for those new to an activity

- understand the unique locations, demographics and differences within the Western Australian community and take into account differing needs during product/program development

- reduce/minimise barriers to participation.

> Sports have been committed to the growth in participation or their membership which can place additional pressures on community clubs. It is important that club volunteers are appropriately equipped to deliver a quality experience to retain members.
>
> **Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest**

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6   More People More Active Outdoors
7   Strategic Priorities for WA Sport - SportWest
8   Getting Australia Active III
9   Play. Sport. Australia.
10   More People More Active Outdoors
11   WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030

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