

2007 FEDERAL ELECTION

SPORT INDUSTRY PLATFORM

Confederation of Australia Sport

The industry body for sport in Australia



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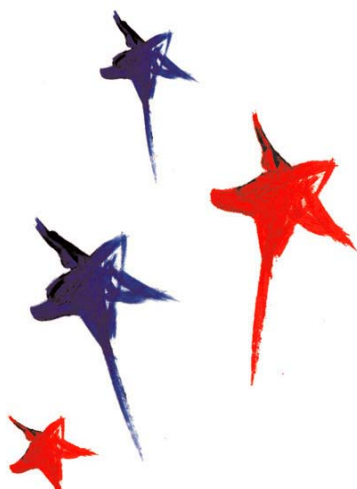


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From the President

A message to all Australians,

As a nation, we have high expectations of our athletes, teams, sporting organisations and sport more generally.

- We expect that sport will provide us regular opportunities to celebrate our team and athlete's successes and the opportunity to be proud of our sporting achievements and our nation.
- We expect to have available to us a wide range of sporting opportunities. We expect to be able to take from those opportunities the very valuable health, social and wellbeing experiences we have all come to know and expect from sport.
- We expect that everyone will have an opportunity to participate in sport regardless of their age, gender, cultural or linguistic background.
- We expect our sporting organisations and sport agencies to continue to deliver real and tangible value to this country, through well structured, structured, well delivered contemporary and relevant sport programs.
- We expect that sport will contribute to uphold Australian values and assist in strengthening local communities. We expect sport will show leadership across a range of key social issues.

To deliver so much requires a vision for, and a commitment to, ensuring the sports industry remains relevant, contemporary and with sufficient capacity and capability to deliver on these many and varied community expectations.

To deliver what the community expects means that we also cannot avoid the serious challenges that now face the Australian community and its sports industry.

We are amidst an obesity crisis and the resultant health issues are threatening to overwhelm our health system. We must embrace and be inclusive of all groups within our linguistically and culturally diverse society, we must face head on the rising facilities crisis in this country and at the same time ensure that our industry remains contemporary and relevant to all Australians. This means building the capacity and capability of the existing sports system.

Quite simply, sport in this country is at a cross roads.

The Confederation of Australian Sport, following consultation across the sports industry, the health and education sectors, has prepared a vision and strategy in response to the critical areas facing the sport industry and indeed all Australians.

The Confederation, the representative body for sport in Australia, calls on political parties of all persuasions to acknowledge the immense contribution that sport provides this country and therefore support these strategies. This requires an investment in the plans and directions for strengthening this pivotal industry.

There is a time and a need for investment in all industries, in infrastructure, industry capacity and industry capability. The time for investment in the sports industry is now.

Avoiding investment or assuming that the industry will simply continue to perform will only guarantee that we not deliver against these community expectations. We do this at the peril of our future, the health and wellbeing of all Australians and lay vulnerable one of the key contributors to the fabric of Australian society.

We encourage everyone to read, critique, comment and debate the strategies detailed in our platform. At its essence, this is not a question of whether we can afford to support these initiatives. The question is whether, as a nation, we can afford **not** to invest in these strategies and initiatives.

Regards,

Michael Sparks
President
Confederation of Australian Sport

The Platform

The Confederation policy recommendations:

On international sporting success and the Australian sporting reputation

- The immediate international benchmarking of elite sport investment against the top ten performing countries at the Olympic Games. This benchmarking to be subsequently conducted on a biennial basis.
- A commitment from the Federal Government to gross funding for national elite sport programs commensurate with the average of the top ten internationally benchmarked competitors.
- The establishment of a *Sport Career Contribution Scheme* to allow athletes in non-professional sport to augment government scholarship funding and enable these athletes to pursue a full time career in sport.
- The Federal Government grant tax exemption status on income derived from Commonwealth athlete scholarships. This should apply where athletes are deemed not to be carrying on a business.
- The Federal Government undertakes, in collaboration with respective State Governments, a full and independent review of all national and state sports institutes. The review should focus on delivering a more consistent strategy, reducing duplication of services, increasing efficiencies and achieving a more integrated delivery of elite sport programs across Australia.

On Obesity

- A 'whole of child' approach to tackling the obesity epidemic facing Australia. An immediate, independent and collaborative review of obesity in young Australians is urgently required to be undertaken by a *Joint Obesity Advisory Board*, consisting of representatives from sport, health professionals and educators. The review must, as a priority, tackle the heart, mind and body issues associated with obesity among young Australians. The Confederation believes a fully integrated approach is the only solution to solving this growing crisis.
- All sport related programs or initiatives identified by the Board to have clear and established links to the existing national sport systems.
- Adoption of the Confederation proposed tax benefit for families to encourage children's participation in sport and activity.
- The Joint Obesity Advisory Board to consider and support programs targeting adults, in particular older Australians, and their participation in sport and recreational activities.

On Sport in schools

The Confederation recommends a national set of minimum standards pertaining to sport and physical activity:

- *Primary schools Kindergarten to Year 2:* 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity per day
- *Primary schools Year 3 to Year 6;* a minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education or sport.
- *Secondary schools Year 7 to Year 12;* a minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education, including sport
- The opportunity for all school children to participate in after school sport programs organised by local sporting clubs which are part of the national sporting network
- The Government invest, through per capita funding, in the establishment and support of sport programs and services in all Australian Universities.

On a place to play

- The development of new national guidelines for land development that makes specific and appropriate allocation for sport and recreation facilities.
- The Federal Government establish a Sports Facilities Future Scheme to provide immediate and on-going investment in:
 - the renewal and refurbishment of existing sport and recreation facilities (both indoor and outdoor); and
 - development of new sport and recreation facilities.
- The Confederation acknowledges that, to be successful, this Scheme must seek and receive support from State and Local Government. The Confederation urges the Federal Government to take a leadership position in this critical area.

On a smarter, more contemporary sport system

- An industry assistance program to develop and strengthen the capabilities and capacities in sports leadership and business skills across the sector.
- Industry assistance program to fast track the adoption of technological solutions to build and leverage sport AND recreation as online communities and to broaden accessibility to sport recreation services.
- An enquiry and investigation of membership and insurance models that allow casual participation and participation in a number of sports.
- COAG support for integration of national and state sports strategic direction.

On Sport for All

- Implementing the recommendations to integrate mainstream sport programs and systems with current programs for athletes with a disability.
- Implementing the key recommendations identified from the Women in Sport Senate enquiry.
- Managing existing indigenous funding programs and developing an appropriate long term strategy for supporting indigenous Australians across the sports system.
- Identifying programs, initiatives and funding necessary to address the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) or otherwise disadvantaged groups in sport.

On the volunteer crisis

- Additional national funding to further encourage coaches and officials to undertake level 0 and level 1 accreditation.
- Implement the policy initiatives detailed in Volunteering Australia's *National Agenda on Volunteering*.



About the Confederation of Australian Sport

The Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS) is the national peak body for sport in Australia. CAS was established in 1976 to advance the interests of the Australian sports community and to give the industry a united voice in discussions and negotiations with governments and key stakeholders.

Our overriding aim is to contribute to the development of a society in which the social, economic and health benefits of widespread participation in sport and recreation are recognised and valued by all.

As the peak body for sport, CAS has as its members Australia's National Sporting Organisations, the bodies which collectively represent over five million Australians. Our members also include a number of other organisations associated with the sport industry.

Through the promotion of participation in sport and physical activity, CAS aims:

- to improve the health and well-being of individual Australians; and
- to maximise the sport and leisure industry's contribution to the Australian economy
- CAS has over twenty years experience with political, economic, industrial and social developments in sport. It is the voice of the sport sector and plays a leading role in the development of sport in Australia. CAS aims to be influential and respected in the sport and recreation industry, the government and the community.

CAS aims to further the interests of sport and member organisations by:

- facilitating positive public policy outcomes through active representation of sector views to governments, community decision makers and the public
- improving the performance of the sector through the dissemination of timely and relevant information, advice and services;
- providing relevant and appropriate services to the member organizations; and
- raising the profile of member organisations and increasing public awareness and understanding of the sector's contribution to the community, the economy and the health status of the population.

In the next section, CAS presents the 2007 Federal election Sport Industry Policy Platform in detail.

International sporting success and the Australian sporting reputation

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The immediate international benchmarking of elite sport investment against the top ten performing countries at the Olympic Games. This benchmarking to be subsequently conducted on a biennial basis.**
- **A commitment from the Federal Government to gross funding for national elite sport programs commensurate with the average of the top ten internationally benchmarked competitors.**
- **The establishment of a *Sport Career Contribution Scheme* to allow athletes in non-professional sport to augment government scholarship funding and enable these athletes to pursue a full time career in sport.**
- **The Federal Government grant tax exemption status on income derived from Commonwealth athlete scholarships. This should apply where athletes are deemed not to be carrying on a business.**
- **The Federal Government undertakes, in collaboration with respective State Governments, a full and independent review of all national and state sports institutes. The review should focus on delivering a more consistent strategy, reducing duplication of services, increasing efficiencies and achieving a more integrated delivery of elite sport programs across Australia.**

Australia's international sporting achievements significantly define who we are as a nation and provide inspiration for our children to strive for excellence and adopt active and healthy lifestyles.

These ambitions are driven by our reputation for achieving success at international competitions. We are known for 'punching above our weight'.

It is evident that current investment levels will be insufficient to protect our highly regarded reputation. Our international competitors are investing heavily to build systems, attract coaches, sport scientists and provide funding and support to athletes to achieve success. The value of sporting success to a nation is now well acknowledged. The Confederation remains concerned at a comparative under investment in elite sport in Australia against our international competitors.

The Confederation proposes three strategies to ensure our investment in maintaining our international reputation is soundly based, that where we do spend we do so in an integrated and optimal way and that we provide

incentives for young athletes to take up the challenge to become the best they can in their sporting endeavours.

- Firstly we seek, using the tax rate review precedent, an international benchmarking project to review the comparative investment in elite sport by the Federal Government.

The Confederation and its members seek comparative funding to our international competitors to provide a 'level playing field'.

- Secondly the Confederation seeks an independent review of all national and state institute programs to ensure the best return on the collective investment made by governments across Australia. The Confederation seeks to ensure an integrated delivery and management of elite sport be achieved.
- The third strategy aims to encourage young Australians to take up the challenge to become an elite athlete by:
 - Establishing a HECS style scheme for young aspiring athletes in non professional sports to allow them to dedicate their efforts through a full time career in sport to facilitate the very best they can achieve for themselves and for their country
 - The Government supporting a tax exemption status on all federal funded grants provided to supported athletes and teams for non professional athletes (utilising the definition of an athlete carrying on a business from the ATO Class Ruling on the AOC Medal Incentive Program)

The Confederation seeks support of these strategies to continue our international sporting successes.

The Obesity Crisis

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Confederation makes a series of recommendations regarding the role sport can and should play in tackling the national obesity crisis. The Confederation calls for:

- A 'whole of child' approach to tackling the obesity epidemic facing Australia. An immediate, independent and collaborative review of obesity in young Australians is urgently required to be undertaken by a *Joint Obesity Advisory Board*, consisting of representatives from sport, health professionals and educators. The review must, as a priority, tackle the heart, mind and body issues associated with obesity among young Australians. The Confederation believes a fully integrated approach is the only solution to solving this growing crisis.
- The Federal Government to act immediately on all recommendations detailed in the review.
- All sport related programs or initiatives identified by the Board to have clear and established links to the existing national sport systems.
- Adoption of the Confederation proposed tax benefit for families to encourage children's participation in sport and activity.
- The Joint Obesity Advisory Board to consider and support programs targeting adults, in particular older Australians, and their participation in sport and recreational activity.

Acknowledging the expert views recently tabled on the obesity issue, the Confederation is firm in its view of the absolute need for a reinvigorated, more significant but most importantly integrated approach to the delivery of programs that effectively address the obesity crisis.

The Confederation has identified three fundamental changes to that way in which this issue is currently being delivered:

- That a 'whole of child' integrated solution much be adopted. A collective of sport, health and education professionals must be used to guide initiatives and programs through all levels of Government that will tackle the heart, mind and body of this social crisis. This group must report to

the Ministerial Task Force on Healthy Living (or equivalent) and monitor the delivery of programs through each responsible agency

- That the existing national sport organisations form the pivot to delivering the sport and activity component of the integrated solutions.
- That the Government commit to a more significant financial investment in order to achieve substantive outcomes.

The Confederation encourages strategies which tackle obesity amongst mature adult Australians. The Confederation recommends three important initiatives to support and encourage mature age Australians to remain active and healthy:

- The development of a major health promotion for older Australians that actively recruits supports and refers mature age persons return to participation in sport and physical activity.
- Federal Government support of Australian and regional Masters Games events that provide a regular forum for participation for older Australians.
- Supplementary funding for National Sporting Organisations to respond to the shifting demographic of Australia's ageing population.

Furthermore, it has been clearly identified through research that levels of obesity are higher amongst lower socio-economic groups. CAS therefore calls on the Federal Government to make sporting membership fees of up to \$250 per child per year to be tax deductible for parents or carers. This tax initiative will ensure that cost is not a prohibitive factor in children maintaining an active lifestyle through sport.

Sport in Schools

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Confederation recommends a national set of minimum standards pertaining to the sport and physical activity:

- *Primary schools Kindergarten to Year 2: 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity per day*
- *Primary schools Year 3 to Year 6; a minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education or sport.*
- *Secondary schools Year 7 to Year 12; a minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education, including sport*
- **The opportunity for all school children to participate in after school sport programs organised by local sporting clubs which are part of the national sporting network**
- **The Government invest, through per capita funding, in the establishment and support of sport programs and services in all Australian Universities.**

The Confederation defines physical education as the process of gaining knowledge, skills and attitudes, mainly through physical activity.

Sport provides the opportunity to apply and develop the knowledge, attitudes and motor skills acquired in physical education through a range of physical activities governed by formalised rules.

There has been widespread public debate on the appropriateness and structure of our education curriculum from a number of sectors.

Given the now well acknowledged importance of investing in and protecting the human capital, the Confederation calls for;

- The reintroduction of dedicated sport and activity into primary school curriculum. Young Australians need to be educated on the principles and values of being active.
- The reintroduction of dedicated sport and activity into secondary school curriculum.

The Confederation acknowledges the crowded curriculum but places a high priority on the health and wellbeing of young Australians.

Universities in Australia can no longer rely on the compulsory amenities and service fees which, until abolished by VSU legislation, met many of the costs of running campus sporting activities. In this post VSU environment universities require grant or fee income to maintain and provide sporting infrastructure and those services which support the aspirations of university students who participate in and play sport. The charter of university sport is not only to provide a playing field or swimming pool: it is to promote the benefits of sport through improved health and fitness which in-turn assists students in their academic endeavours through the connection of a "healthy body – healthy mind".

It is incontrovertible that sport enriches and complements the academic experience of students during their studies. Those tertiary capable high performance athletes who excel require support by way of scholarships, grants or bursaries to enable them to meet their academic and sporting objectives in Australia, at Australian Universities. The value of sport can be further recognised by providing these elite athletes with the support required to assist them in their post sporting lives. With approximately one-million students now engaged in the tertiary sector in Australia, society can ill-afford to under-invest in the full development and well being of the next generation of Australia and its future leaders.

A place to play

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The development of new national guidelines for land development that makes specific and appropriate allocation for sport and recreation facilities.
- The Federal Government establish a Sports Facilities Future Scheme to provide immediate and on-going investment in:
 - the renewal and refurbishment of existing sport and recreation facilities (both indoor and outdoor); and
 - development of new sport and recreation facilities.
- The Confederation acknowledges that, to be successful, this Scheme must seek and receive support from State and Local Government. The Confederation urges the Federal Government to take a leadership position in this critical area.

The Confederation, through its members, has identified facility access and development as an emerging crisis for sport and recreational activities.

The state of current facilities has declined significantly with little or no investment by any level of government in existing facilities for sport and recreation. The Confederation believes a coordinated and top – bottom effort by all levels of government is required to attract the necessary level of investment in existing infrastructure and land available for sport and recreational activities. The Confederation believes the Federal Government must lead this investment program.

While this addresses existing facilities, the Confederation has grown increasingly concerned at the absence of new facilities for sport in newly developed community areas. The Confederation calls again on all levels of government to establish land development guidelines that future proofs our communities and ensure that all Australians have access to areas where sport and recreational activities can be undertaken in a suitable, safe and maintained environment.

A smarter, more contemporary sport system

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **An industry assistance program to develop and strengthen the capabilities and capacities in sports leadership and business skills across the sector.**
- **Industry assistance program to fast track the adoption of technological solutions to build and leverage sport AND recreation as online communities and to broaden accessibility to sport recreation services.**
- **An enquiry and investigation of membership and insurance models that allow casual participation and participation in a number of sports.**
- **COAG support for integration of national and state sports strategic direction.**

The Confederation, through its members, has identified an immediate need to invest in the sector to provide a smarter, more contemporary sports system.

This comes as all sporting organisations acknowledge the changing face of the Australian population, a sport, recreation and leisure market offering more choices and an increasingly discerning customer.

The Confederation seeks Government intervention and assistance to facilitate pathways for the industry to increase its relevance for Australians and understanding of the changing needs of Australians. The nation is rapidly changing in the way they wish to consume sport and recreation services in this country.

The Confederation acknowledges that the competition for people's recreation time is intense with a multitude of new options now available for Australians to participate in. An industry assistance package will provide a stimulus for a better skilled, more competitive sport and recreation industry which will increase the likelihood of a sector better aligned with the needs of the Australians.

'Sport for All'

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Confederation recommends the establishment of a *Sport Equality Commission* to identify needs, develop and implement programs to broaden access to sport to all Australians, regardless of their gender, cultural or linguistic background. The Sport Equality Commission, using the funding already identified, should focus on:

- Implementing the recommendations to integrate mainstream sport programs and systems with current programs for athletes with a disability.
- Implementing the key recommendations identified from the Women in Sport Senate enquiry.
- Managing existing indigenous funding programs and developing an appropriate long term strategy for supporting indigenous Australians across the sports system.
- Identifying programs, initiatives and funding necessary to address the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) or otherwise disadvantaged groups in sport.

To be a newly established body, the **Sport Equality Commission** should assume responsibility for:

- Delivering clear and targeted improvements in the access, participation and success of identified disadvantaged groups of Australians
- Deployment of the current government funding for indigenous programs
- Coordination of the government response from the Women in Sport Enquiry
- Establishment of dialogue, then develop programs which aid in development access pathways into sport for identified cultural and linguistically diverse communities across Australia.

The Sport Equality Commission will include representatives from indigenous community in Australia (for example Michael Long / Dean Widders / Noel Pearson), CAS, Women in Sport (AWRA) and the peak body representing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD), the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia. The Commission would be funded by and report directly to the Minister for Sport.

The volunteer crisis

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Additional national funding to further encourage coaches and officials to undertake level 0 and level 1 accreditation.**
- **Implement the policy initiatives detailed in *Volunteering Australia's National Agenda on Volunteering*. The Agenda outlines six strategic goals and highlights specific outcomes needed to ensure that the gains from the International Year are maximised, volunteers are better supported and volunteering remains an important and sustainable social movement.**

The Australian sports system is dependant upon volunteers to provide advice, support and labour. There is now strong evidence to suggest:

- Volunteer numbers are declining; and
- Volunteers are seeking alternate, more contemporary involvements

For the sport system to remain a largely inconsequential burden on the national wallet, the Confederation seeks immediate and long term support in encouraging and supporting volunteers to provide their time and expertise to sports in this country. The six strategic goals of *Volunteering Australia's National Agenda on Volunteering* are:

1. Publicly respect and value in enduring, formal, and tangible ways, the essential contribution that volunteers make to building and sustaining the Australian community.
2. Ensure that volunteers have legal status and are afforded protection through every piece of legislation and public policy that affects them and their work.
3. Ensure that all new legislation, by-laws and public policies, developed at any level of government, which may affect volunteers and their work, works only to facilitate and sustain volunteering.
4. Acknowledge that the activity of volunteering is not without cost and develop means by which Australian volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations are supported and funded to provide valuable services.
5. Ensure excellence in all levels of volunteer involvement and volunteer management in order to encourage, protect and enhance the work of volunteers.
6. Ensure that volunteering is a potent, dynamic and unifying social force for community benefit by acknowledging and accepting that it is a diverse and evolving activity.