



WA Sports Federation Election Policy 2008

“Building the communities of WA”

Background

The Government and communities of Western Australia recognise the significant contribution sport and active recreation makes to our healthy lifestyle. A vibrant sport and active recreation community is also a sought after factor when people choose a place to live and to improve their quality of life.

WA Sports Federation (WASF) asserts that building the capacity and increasing participation in sport and active recreation clubs fundamentally strengthens the community throughout our State. It increases community engagement, community resilience and social cohesion. This leads to sustainable, functional and healthier communities and also fosters an ability to manage local environments across the State.

Investing in sport and recreation at the community level also reduces future health, social and environmental costs. It also ensures greater access for disadvantaged groups within the community.

Much of the delivery of sport and recreation relies on the relationship between sport and recreation organisations and Government (Federal, State and Local). Across WA, over one third of all incorporated associations are sport and active recreation organisations that rely significantly on a volunteer base.

With a large proportion of the delivery of sport and active recreation by these organisations, the community is dependant on the capacity of a state wide network of volunteers.

The challenges confronting sport and recreation organisation are huge. The booming economy with the worker shortage, an aging population and increasingly bureaucratic and regulated system are eroding sport and recreation's vital volunteer base. WASF has concerns about the sustainability of community based sport and active recreation in this current climate.

The need to increase physical activity levels can also be difficult to achieve at the community level due to the cost of participation. Increasing membership and equipment costs are known barriers for many people. Providing incentives for more people to get involved and to support financially disadvantaged clubs will also ensure that services are provided to the communities that need it the most.

An increasing regulatory regime has also added to these costs by diverting the scant resources clubs have. The WA Sports Federation urges the Government to recognise the impact on the sport and active recreation community when it introduces or amends laws and regulations, and to offset any associated costs.

What the community needs

The WA Sports Federation urges Government to increase the public investment in the role of sport and recreation as a community builder and

explore initiatives that will enable it to meet the challenges in contemporary Western Australia. WASF is seeking a commitment to:

1. Implement a whole of government approach that ensures local community access to spaces, facilities and amenities (natural and built form) for sport and active recreation. This coordinated approach should incorporate agencies (government and non-government) involved in the planning, provision, maintenance and lifecycle management of active open space, facilities and amenities.
2. Legislate for an increased provision of active public open space in all new outer metropolitan and regional land developments.
3. Consult with outer metropolitan and regional communities so that new facilities are designed and built to the needs of that community.
4. Refurbish (or rebuild) existing community sport and recreation facilities, particularly aquatic and community club facilities, to ensure they remain accessible for all, now and into the future.
5. Increase funding to train, empower and support community sport and active recreation clubs to address current societal issues including: physical activity, obesity and overweight, nutrition, binge drinking, illicit drugs, youth at risk.
6. Increase funding to deliver low cost education and training to enable the clubs to responsibly manage their operations and environments; increase knowledge of contemporary governance; implement efficient management systems and practices linked to consistent, appropriate and ethical behaviour.
7. Annually review the public funding required to support operating not-for-profit organisations to ensure an accurate assessment of the value of existing funding schemes relative to increasing costs. This may require the current level of some funds to be increased i.e. Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.
8. Decrease the administrative and regulatory burden experienced by the not for profit sector which adds to participation costs, consumes and diverts valuable volunteer resources.
9. Increase funding to assist sport and active recreation organisations to manage the impact of implementing of new government policy which expands regulatory frameworks e.g. Responsible Service of Alcohol training, further deregulation of retail trading hours etc.
10. Ensure an ongoing financial commitment to community sport and active recreation by reappropriating the funding from the Sports Lottery Account which is currently used for elite sport (WAIS). Funding for WAIS should be accessed from the Appropriated Consolidated Account.
11. Increase participation in sport and recreation by subsidising clubs to cover the costs they must pass on to participants e.g. hire fees, travel, venue charges, insurance premiums, Working with Children Checks etc.