

TASMANIAN SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY

Discussion Paper Summary

The Tasmanian Government is committed to increasing opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in sport and active recreation.

As part of this commitment, the Government is developing a dedicated strategy for sport and active recreation to ensure its initiatives and investments are guided by a long-term vision.

The Tasmanian Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (the Strategy) will provide a strategic framework for sport and active recreation in Tasmania over the next eight years (2022–2030).

The Strategy will not be an action plan with prescribed projects and funding attached but will guide Tasmanian Government activities and future investment decisions. Action plans and issue-specific strategies will be developed under this framework to drive progress towards the Strategy's vision and outcomes.

Benefits of sport and active recreation

- » Supports physical and mental health and reduces the risk of disease and mental illness;
- » Provides opportunities for social interaction and builds more connected, inclusive and safe communities;
- » Shapes our Tasmanian identity, brand, culture and lifestyle;
- » Supports improved educational outcomes and school retention rates; and
- » Benefits the economy through sales, creating jobs, tourism revenue, avoiding health costs and creating a healthy and productive workforce.



The Strategy will cover *sport* and *active recreation*:

- » **Sport** means a human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill, which, by its nature and organisation, is competitive and is generally accepted as being a sport.
- » **Active recreation** means activities engaged in for the purpose of relaxation, health and wellbeing or enjoyment with the primary activity requiring physical exertion, and the primary focus on human activity.

Participation in Sport and Active Recreation

In 2020 62.8 per cent of Tasmanian adults participated in sport or physical activity three or more times per week.¹ The most popular activities were recreational walking, fitness/gym, swimming, athletics/running and bush walking.

Australians' participation in sport and physical activity has slowly increased over the last two decades, as has the frequency of participation. This has been driven by increasing participation in non-sport activities such as going to the gym, while participation rates in sport have remained about the same.²



Barriers to increasing participation in sport and active recreation

Time

People are working longer and struggling to fit sport and active recreation activities into their increasingly busy lives

Money

Household budgets are increasingly stretched, and costs are a barrier, especially for families.

Access

A lack of transport, insufficient facility capacity in growth areas, or limited accessible facilities.

Culture and confidence

Unfriendly environments, ultra-competitive or exclusive cultures, low self-confidence and/or a lack of encouragement.

Changes and trends affecting sport and active recreation

- » Shift towards personal health objectives and fitness, with increasing participation in casual and non-organised activities such as walking and fitness classes.
- » Demographic changes including our aging population and increasingly multicultural communities are changing the types of sports we play.
- » Growing popularity of lifestyle, adventure and alternative sports—such as mountain biking and skateboarding—which are increasingly coming into the sporting mainstream.
- » Increasing demands for professionalised sport administration, delivery and good governance structures.
- » The rise of online media including gaming, streaming services and social media which are increasingly competing more and more with sport for limited leisure time.

1 Sport Australia, 2021, [AusPlay Tasmania Survey Results January 2020 – December 2020](#), accessed July 2021.

2 Sport Australia, 2021, [Participation trends in Australia since 2001](#), accessed July 2021.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact sport and active recreation and has caused disruptions at all levels – from international competitions to community level junior sport. While Tasmania has not been impacted as severely as other parts of Australia, the pandemic has had significant financial impacts, particularly from event cancellations and restrictions to businesses. However, the pandemic has increased social awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing, and many sport and recreation organisations are responding creatively to meet changing demand.

Vision

Our vision is for Tasmania to be *the Place to Play*.

Whether it be organised team sport, individual competitive sport, or just a relaxing surf, ride or yoga session, we want Tasmanians to get out there, to connect with each other and enjoy themselves. We want outsiders to see Tasmania as a unique playground with enviable places, spaces and communities offering world class sport and active recreation opportunities. We want to inspire the next generation of Tasmanian sporting stars and motivate all of us to get active to improve our health and wellbeing.

Our core objective is to increase participation in sport and active recreation. This will support the development of active, inclusive and connected Tasmanian communities.

Focus areas

The Strategy will provide strategic directions to guide the focus of Tasmanian Government support and investments in sport and active recreation. To inform the strategic directions, we are seeking input from the sector and community on the following six focus areas.



Enable increased participation for all

Ensure all Tasmanians have opportunities to participate in sport and active recreation

There are many barriers to increasing participation – busy modern schedules, tight family budgets, limited transport options, and competition from increasingly popular online and screen-based activities. Some Tasmanians are missing out on the benefits of sport and active recreation due to exclusion based on factors such as gender, disability or ethnicity. Others lack the motivation or confidence to get active. Overcoming these challenges will require the sport and active recreation sector to be innovative in developing attractive and flexible programs, breaking down barriers and engaging disadvantaged groups.

The next decade offers opportunities to embrace change to make sport and active recreation a part of all Tasmanian's lives. Recognising and embracing participation trends, community preferences and social change will be critical. Adapting and evolving traditional sports offers opportunities to renew sport participation through diverse and flexible programs. While increasing collaboration with recreation providers to support accessible and high-quality active recreation opportunities can help us maximise areas of growing participation.

Build stronger organisations

Ensure all Tasmanians can enjoy safe, inclusive and fair sport and active recreation

Tasmanian sport and recreation organisations are generally small and rely on volunteer support. Many are still improving governance structures and developing contemporary integrity policies and practices. Demands on community organisations administering sport and recreation are increasing, while volunteers are becoming more difficult to attract and retain. The COVID-19 pandemic has also disrupted operations and created additional work for sport and recreation organisations.

Despite these challenges, Tasmanian sport and recreation organisations are resilient and enduring cornerstones of the communities they serve. Their volunteers are committed and passionate. They are good at making the best of available resources and with a little creativity, can find new ways to work. These strengths will underpin our efforts to increase participation across the sector, especially if they can be united through stronger partnerships and networks across the sector that enable resource sharing, collaboration and cross-sector learning.

Support pathways to high performance

Support talented Tasmanians to succeed on the world stage and inspire local participation.

High performance sport both supports community participation and relies on it to identify and develop emerging athletes. Elite sporting competitions showcase extraordinary human abilities and achievement, which provide opportunities to motivate and inspire increased participation. This in turn provides a pipeline of talent and builds a community-wide appreciation of sport and active recreation achievements. The challenges facing community level participation also impact high performance sport, but also indirectly threaten its foundations.

Modern high performance sport is placing new demands on athletes, which will require new types of support and services in the face of technological change. Models for leveraging high performance success to increase participation are also changing—with social media providing new opportunities for athletes and role models to engage with fans and the next generation of talent. Pressures that come with these technologies, financial challenges and the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic bring athlete wellbeing sharply into focus. At the same time, the rise of new and potential Olympic sports, may provide new opportunities for developing local talent.

Provide access to infrastructure, facilities and spaces

Ensure Tasmanians can access spaces that meet their interests, are accessible and safe.

The Tasmanian Government, local governments and the Australian Government all invest in sport and active recreation infrastructure. Currently efforts to understand what communities need and where are fragmented, creating inconsistency in the availability of facilities across regions and sports.

A big picture view of sport and recreation infrastructure across all levels and funding sources is needed to enable

community needs to be prioritised using evidence-based approaches. Access should be considered at regional and community levels, including through land use planning, in relation to transport networks and to provide all ages and abilities equal access to buildings, facilities and spaces. Future investments to develop and maintain facilities and open spaces should consider community needs state-wide and for the long term.

Improve how we work

Develop collaborative relationships and networks across the sector.

Communities, Sport and Recreation within the Department of Communities Tasmania supports the sport and active recreation sector through the provision of funding, governance, and organisational development support, developing facilities, programs to support participation and supporting high performance athletes. We want to broaden current relationships beyond providing funding, minimise the impost of processes and explore new ways of facilitating cross-sector engagement at all levels. At the same time, we want to increase our engagement with local government, commercial providers, recreation organisations and other parts of the sport and active recreation sector who can all play a role in achieving our vision and increasing participation.

Evaluate our success

Understand the sector and ensure we are continuously improving and learning.

Monitoring and evaluating our efforts will enable the Tasmanian Government to learn from experience and continuously improve. The Strategy will include a new approach to evaluation against identified strategic directions and outcomes.

Data sources to support evaluation and track progress over time are currently limited, and feedback and reports we receive could be better collated and organised to inform future projects. Improved data sources and evaluation processes must be efficient and achievable, as we recognise collecting and analysing information and data is time consuming.

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Department of Communities Tasmania
Communities, Sport and Recreation
GPO Box 65, HOBART TAS 7001

Phone: 1800 252 476
Email: sportrec@communities.tas.gov.au
Visit: www.communities.tas.gov.au