



**Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants
Australian Sports Commission
21 February 2020**

On 13 February 2020, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) was invited to make a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants and welcomes the opportunity to provide input into this Inquiry.

The ASC is the Australian Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sport at all levels. The ASC plays a central leadership role across the sector to increase participation levels in sport and physical activity, and through its high-performance arm the Australian Institute of Sport, builds sustainable winning systems for Australian athletes. The operations of the ASC are extensive, and the ASC has a long history of delivering on the expectations of Government. Each year the ASC administers over 22,000 grants supporting athletes, national sporting organisations and the community.

The Community Sport Infrastructure (CSI) grant program was a new program announced by the Government in the 2018-19 Budget. The ASC was identified as the entity responsible for implementing the \$29.7 million initiative. The CSI program was originally designed to be delivered in one round of funding across a 12-month period. The ASC, in collaboration with input from sport sector experts including State Agencies of Sport and Recreation and the Commonwealth Office for Sport, designed the program and shaped the program guidelines. In January 2019, the Government announced an increase of \$30.3 million for the program and in March 2019 a further \$42.5 million was announced. The CSI program became a \$102.5 million program, designed and delivered over three rounds of funding in a 12-month period.

In March 2019, the ASC was invited to provide representations to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) for the purpose of informing the ANAO's audit of the award of funding under the CSI program. The ASC worked cooperatively with the ANAO as it undertook this audit throughout 2019. As outlined in the Auditor-General's report (the ANAO report, tabled in Parliament on 15 January 2020), the ASC accepted the three recommendations relevant to the ASC and has acted on each of the recommendations as follows:

When designing competitive, applications-based grant programs, Sport Australia [the Australian Sports Commission] identify strategies to manage the expected level of demand for the amount of funding that is being made available.

The ASC will consider limiting applicants to one application and undertake additional research to better understand the experience of other national organisations running similar programs. The ASC will also ensure alignment with similar State-based grant programs and share the experience and analytics from the CSI program to shape future ASC programs accordingly.

Sport Australia [the Australian Sports Commission] require declarations be made as to whether or not employees involved in the design and oversight of funding programs have a conflict of interest.

The ASC acknowledges the ANAO finding that a strong conflict management approach was evident and in place for all ASC employees who were directly involved in assessing individual CSI grant applications, but that the approach for those with program oversight and design responsibilities



could be strengthened. All employees involved in the design and oversight of funding programs will now be required to declare whether or not they have a conflict of interest. The ASC has also revised its conflict of interest policy, guidelines and declaration form to strengthen its approach to managing all conflicts of interest and has updated its Grant Management Framework to strengthen the conflict of interest component and management obligations around conflicts of interest.

Sport Australia [the Australian Sports Commission] strengthen its assessment records for grant programs by concisely recording the reasons for the assessment score that are awarded (in addition to the assessment score).

The ASC has embedded a step in its grant management system where notes on reasons for assessment scores must be recorded.

The ASC has committed to ensuring that any application-based grant program which it administers in the future will be conducted in accordance with the Auditor-General's recommendations.

The ASC looks forward to appearing before the Senate Select Committee.

