



20 February 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

Community Sport Australia Ltd (CSA) welcomes the opportunity to input to this Senate Inquiry, given the importance of government support for the development of new and refurbishment of existing facilities at local community, largely not for profit sporting clubs.

CSA was incorporated in 2013 by Australian State Sports Federations (after years as an unincorporated collective) to:

- Nationally represent the State and Territory sports federations.
- Advocate and gain support for community sport.
- Recommend ways for improving the sustainability of community sport.

Its Directors currently are the CEOs of State federations Sport NSW, Vicsport, QSport, SportWest and Sport SA who meet two to three times annually in pursuit of the above mentioned objectives.

In 2019, one of those meetings was held in Melbourne in March in conjunction with Sport Australia officers to further collaboration and communication on issues of mutual interest.

One topic discussed was the Community Sport Infrastructure Grants Program, Sport Australia officers providing detail on the first round and an imminent second round, with funding totally \$60M.

CSA Directors were not involved in the development of actual guidelines but acknowledged the Commonwealth's decision to allocate funding to complement State and local government fiscal support of varying quantum.

CSA member State federations have 393 State sporting organisations / associations as members and 172 other bodies involved in sport and recreation as associates.

The combined State sporting organisation membership across the nation have as affiliates over 42,000 local community, largely not for profit sporting clubs, run by volunteers with minimal paid worker support, balancing home and work commitments to play an essential part, the major share, of the delivery of the sporting experience for millions of Australians young and old.

Comment on the points this and other submissions are asked to address is as follows:

- i) CSA Directors cannot comment with any authority on the program design and guidelines developed and signed off for public promulgation in late 2018, not having been involved by those responsible for such development.
- ii) We understand members of the Committee of Australian Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO) comprised of Commonwealth and State / Territory Government sport and recreation agency senior officers were aware of the program's developments but not necessarily involved in design or the guidelines.

Clearly the funding could have been rolled out differently e.g. to priority projects already identified by State agencies holding data on already identified unmet needs for which State funding allocations had been exhausted, saving sporting club volunteers another time intensive application process.

All three levels of governments investment in community sport infrastructure is greatly needed to encourage an "active nation", evidenced by oversubscription to funding program rounds.

The significant, ongoing need to upgrade existing facilities due to aging stock and the requirement to accommodate the growth in female participation makes collaborative planning between national and State governments in prioritising requirements after identifying local community needs vital, a process that needs local government and State sporting organisations to be consulted and one that does exist in some State jurisdictions.

- iii) & iv) It appears that Sport Australia staff carried out the assessment of applications received in line with the program guidelines. CSA Directors have no evidence to the contrary.
- v) CSA Directors' views are, like the great majority of other interested parties, based largely on media reporting. There is, though, much to disappoint, given fairness and merit appear to have been sacrificed for political expediency and trust in government has been deteriorated as a result.
- vi) CSA Directors advance there is a clear, even desperate need for ongoing sporting facility grant programs. Oversubscription in this and other similar programs at State level confirm the need for the funding and also the collaboration that is desirable between the levels of government consulting adequately with sports.

Best informed by local communities, needs can be prioritised and progressively met, via annual and recurrent funding separating the funding from the perception of being linked to election cycles / proximity.

All conflicts of interest must be eliminated, at least much better managed as a minimum at the political and bureaucratic levels. This would optimise economic and social aspects whilst restoring trust and credibility, let alone integrity.

CSA as monitor of community sport – through its State sporting organisation structure, its links with Sport Australia, State sport and recreation agencies and local government - would want to see this recent episode evolve into a more collaborative approach and would be interested in assisting, where possible, to see that happen.

-3-

Should the Committee wish to clarify any of the above, please let me know.

Yours faithfully

PETER CUMMISKEY OAM

Secretary / Director

CEO, QSport

Community Sport Australia

cc: Darren Simpson, Sport NSW

Leah Cassidy, Sport SA

Lisa Hasker, Vicsport

Rob Thompson, Sport West