

Response ID ANON-5JQZ-BEX2-U

Submitted to National Sport Plan - Shaping the future direction of sport in Australia
Submitted on 2023-12-06 20:15:35

National Sport Plan public consultation

i Are you responding to this survey on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?

On behalf of an organisation

Organisation

ii What type of organisation are you representing?

Educational or research institution

Other (please specify):

iii What is the name of your organisation? (Optional)

(Optional) :

Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University including the Centre for Sport Research (CSR)

iv What is the organisation's postcode?

Postcode:

3125

v Please tell us how you are currently involved in sport. Select all that apply.

Other

Other (please specify) :

Research / Tertiary Education

vi How long have you been involved in the sport sector?

10+ years

Overview

1 What benefits and opportunities do you see in having a new National Sport Plan?

(Max 1,500 characters):

Having a new National Sport Plan has the potential to unite organisations and individuals and assist in harnessing energies to work towards a common goal. We strongly recommend providing clear definitions of terms in the document. For example, sport and physical activity are often mentioned conjointly, but they encompass quite different concepts and contexts. The World Health Organisation defines physical activity as "all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work". Physical activity also incorporates incidental movement and varies in context across the lifespan (e.g., in childhood active play, physical education, as well as sport are all different types of physical activity).

The opportunity with a new National Sport Plan is to offer a more inclusive environment for sport, to maximise participation in sport, and to ensure economic and environmental sustainability. However, there is a missed opportunity to also develop an inaugural National Physical Activity Plan alongside a new National Sport Plan. Over 50 countries globally have a National Physical Activity Plan, but Australia does not. Australia may consider itself a global leader in sport but is very behind most developed and many developing countries when it comes to a coordinated physical activity plan beyond sport.

Vision

2 Do you agree with the intent of the proposed vision?

Yes

3 Are there any key elements missing?

(Max 1,500 characters):

The Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University, broadly agrees with the intent of the proposed Vision, however, do not agree with the terms sport and physical activity being used concurrently. Sport is an important subset of physical activity. It is not clear how this Plan addresses

other domains of physical activity including non-organised active recreation and travel. The National Sport Plan should sit alongside a National Physical Activity Plan.

We recommend increased clarity throughout the document regarding the definitions for sport and physical activity. That is, a definition of sport, and the levels of competition it refers to (i.e. high-performance, community, non-organised sport etc). Rather than using the term physical activity (see WHO definition) perhaps the term 'active recreation' would be better used throughout. This would help readers to differentiate between the two terms. Using the separate terminology in a consistent way throughout the document will emphasise the importance of both, and reduce confusion in use of the term physical activity which includes active travel and many non-sport domains.

4 Do you see yourself/your organisation reflected in the proposed vision?

Yes

Please elaborate:

Yes - partially.

The focus on sport aligns with the research vision of our Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) at Deakin University with a focus on healthy active communities. We also align with the emphasis in the vision on inclusivity and the link to health and social wellbeing, as well as sustainability.

Guiding Principles

5 Are the proposed principles relevant and contemporary?

Yes

6 Is there anything you would add or remove?

(Max 1,500 characters):

It is encouraging to see Diversity, Inclusion and Equity reflected in the plan as a Priority Area. We recommend adding diversity in skill level to ensure the plan truly focuses on sport for all.

Under Leadership and Capability we would like to see the expansion beyond the "sport sector" to incorporate active recreation more broadly. For example, re-word it to "strengthening the capability of the sport and active recreation sectors and the system more broadly".

We feel all four Principles are equally important and they are all integral to each other to achieve the vision of the Plan.

7 Which do you feel are the most important principles? (rank 1-4)

Ranked principles - Leadership and Capability:

4

Ranked principles - Diversity, Inclusion and Equity:

2

Ranked principles - Safety:

3

Ranked principles - Education and Development:

1

Priority Areas

8 Do the proposed priority areas identify the most important areas of strategic focus over the next decade?

Yes

9 Is there anything missing?

(Max 1,500 characters):

In the participation area – we recommend adding a link to the importance of education with regard to physical literacy skill building or building other skills relevant to sport and active recreation participation.

Considering the impacts of sport (including participation and event attendance) on the environment, sustainability is a welcome inclusion as a priority. Further, ensuring the climate resilience of the sport sector will be crucial. The most severe indicators of climate change are global warming, sea level rises, and higher occurrences and severity of natural disasters. Extreme heat, poor air quality and destruction of infrastructure due to extreme weather events will impact the capacity for people to undertake sport safely (Bernard et al., 2021). It is likely that these impacts will not be experienced equally as people of lower socioeconomic status will have less adaptive capacity, thereby exacerbating existing inequities in sport participation.

Reference:

Bernard et al. Climate change, physical activity and sport: A systematic review. Sports Med 2021;1041 – 1059.

10 Which do you feel are the most important priorities? (rank 1-6)

Ranked priorities - Inclusion:

2

Ranked priorities - Participation:

1

Ranked priorities - High Performance:

3

Ranked priorities - Integrity:

4

Ranked priorities - International Engagement:

6

Ranked priorities - Economic and Environmental Sustainability:

5

Alignment to other strategies

11 Do you have any comments about the alignment of the Plan to sector strategies?

(Max 1,500 characters):

We commend the inclusion of other plans and strategies that align with the Plan, to promote cross sector collaboration and whole of government approaches to achieve the vision.

We believe now is the ideal opportunity to develop an inaugural National Physical Activity Plan which could sit alongside this new National Sport Plan. We support the inclusion of the National Preventive Health Strategy, and we recommend linking to other relevant Strategy documents such as the National Obesity strategy. Given the focus on environmental sustainability, it would also be good to align with the Climate and Health Strategy (release on 3 December 2023).

It would also be good to highlight key international guiding documents here, such as the World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan for Physical Activity, which incorporates sport and active recreation and also calls for all countries to have a National Physical Activity Plan.

Measuring Success

12 What are your views on the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation of the Plan?

(Max 1,500 characters):

Further detail should be provided on the evaluation process. There is a general lack of information provided on the different measures, and further information could be given on the different evaluation stages and time frames.

Additionally, further thought into the metrics used to measure achievement of the plan is required. A focus on measuring quality sport participation, rather than sport participation per se is recommended as is a greater focus on understanding the diversity of participation. For example, in Figure 3 – in the first column, what data will be used for participation rates? How will we investigate the rates of certain groups? (e.g., LGBTQI+, CALD).

Further, it is not clear that any of the measures included will adequately assess environmental sustainability and the climate impact of the sport sector. The focus here seems to be on economic viability. Consider the inclusion of metrics that can adequately determine environmental sustainability.

We recommend working with partners in academia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to ensure population wide, validated measures are used to measure the success of the Plan. These stakeholders will also be able to provide advice on the proposed measures included in the consultation paper.

13 Are there any additional measures of success that should be included in the Plan?

(Max 1,500 characters):

An additional measure for success to include would be physical literacy population levels - especially in children (see Barnett et al. 2023).

An improved version of AusPlay would help the government to determine the Plan's success in young people. Data on sport drop out would also be important to collect.

We recommend working with leading measurement experts nationally to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

Reference:

Final comments

14 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Plan?

(Max 1,500 characters):

As stated above, our main recommendation would be to define sport and reframe the plan from physical activity to active recreation in the document.

The role of research and academia as a key contributor to the Plan should be considered. Currently the role of research is only mentioned in relation to performance, however, research in all priority areas is also needed. Research plays a critical role in innovation. It can also leverage opportunities for international engagement, as prioritised in the Plan.

Linking the Plan to funding support for research in the areas of sport, active recreation and economic and environmental sustainability issues in sport and active recreation would be an important addition to the long-term vision for Australia. Funding partnerships between the sport and recreation sectors and the system more broadly, industry and academia will bring important benefits for all Australians, especially if the focus is on translating research into practice for true impact.

Our team at IPAN, Deakin University would be pleased to contribute to further consultation about the Plan.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate our call to develop an inaugural National Physical Activity Plan alongside the new National Sport Plan. Over 50 countries globally have a National Physical Activity Plan, but Australia does not. Australia is very behind most developed and many developing countries when it comes to a coordinated physical activity plan beyond sport.