



INITIATIVE for BUDGET 2026-27 CONSIDERATION

CONCEPT:

- The establishment of a sector representative entity for community sport in the ACT to improve and sustain the scope and capability of the sector.
- An entity that has the remit to represent and advocate for all individual sporting associations in the ACT, yet supportive to individual sporting associations in approaches Government for sport-specific projects and/or initiatives.
- An entity that is enabled to have a dynamic working relationship with Government and the Legislature – a relationship that can be conducted in an open, honest and co-operative manner.

Who is the Community Sport Alliance of the ACT?

Community Sport Alliance of the ACT (CSA) has evolved from the Coalition of Major Participation Sports ACT (COMPS ACT) - formed in 2018. The CSA is a group of ACT-based sporting organisations that strive to support, promote and advocate for improving community sport in the ACT and surrounding region.

The current membership of CSA is:

ACT and Southern NSW Rugby Union	AFL NSW/ACT	Basketball ACT
Canberra Region Rugby League	Capital Football	Cricket ACT
Hockey ACT	Netball ACT	Tennis ACT

CSA, as a collective of like-minded organisations, has engaged on the topic of the value of community sport in the ACT with other ACT-based sporting organisations, elected representatives in the ACT Legislative Assembly over the course of this year, and in previous years. The group has previously undertaken discussions with other ACT-based sporting organisations as to what a collective entity might be able to do and how best to do it.

Our Alliance seeks to advocate for three priority areas that are imperatives for gaining improvement in community sport in the ACT:

- Implementing a long-term and detailed Sport Facilities Plan
- Establishing a formal representative body for Community Sport.
- Valuing Community Sport.

The community ‘reach’ of member organisations of the Community Sport Alliance of the ACT: 93, 194 participants; 4,843 teams; 69,391 school program participants; 5,044 accredited coaches; 3261 volunteer officials; 399 community clubs; and 127 employees (measured in September 2024).





Philosophy of our Alliance

As an alliance, CSA firmly believes that sport plays a vital role throughout the nation and the ACT by:

- enriching the social and cultural fabric of the community
- reducing the disease burden of physical inactivity
- creating opportunities for social connection and a sense of belonging, and helping to reduce social isolation and loneliness
- developing physical, mental and social skills, and
- enabling capability and capacity development beyond the sporting domain.

CSA strives to elevate the conversation to improve what's happening for the sector and its vast number of contributors, in particular how can community sport best be valued and supported. We think having a system that supports incremental improvements for the sector is key to providing shorter term operational support and optimism for a shared longer term vision.

The enduring nature of the CSA group is based upon:

- a preparedness to build and maintain trust
- a willingness to contribute to something beyond each organisation.
- being open to sharing insights and knowledge.

Contributions of CSA to public forums

Since 2019, our group has undertaken to contribute to public discourse on a range of community and sport issues including:

1. written articles for the press on
 - protecting the well-being of officials.
 - the need for continually maintaining and improving sporting facilities.
2. undertaken collaboration with organisations such as:
 - Volunteering ACT.
 - Audrey Fagan Traineeship.
 - University of Canberra (on internships).
 - Clubs ACT.
 - Marymead.
 - Canberra Regional Tourism Forum.
3. Publicised lobbying material for elections at ACT (2020 & 2024) and the Federal level (2022).





4. Made submissions to a range of ACT Legislative Assembly and ACT Government inquiries consultations including:
- Community Contributions scheme.
 - Pandemic support requirements for the sector.
 - ACT Well-being Indicators development and implementation.
 - Beyond Active 2020.
 - Non-potable water.
 - Discrimination Law Reform.
 - Loneliness and Social Isolation.
 - Unpaid Work.
 - Planning Reforms.
 - Licensed Clubs Industry.
 - Barriers and opportunities for community sport.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS:

- The introduction of a representative entity can guide and assist the community sport sector to forge a symbiotic relationship with Government and its objectives by:
 - fulfilling the aims of the ACT Wellbeing Indicators and the ACT Government's Next Moves Strategy 2023-28.
 - complementing the ACT's preventative health strategies and priorities.
 - enabling greater social connection within the ACT.
 - embodying, and adding to, the overall liveability of Canberra.
- There are a number of contemporary challenges that a sector representative entity could help address/improve including:
 - elevated expectations on Government to deliver better services and meet greater needs/demands across the community, including cost-of-living pressures.
 - providing advice for cost-effective solutions to the community and government.
 - Having a common understanding the scope of pressure on infrastructure, particularly:
 - with declining quality in ageing sporting facilities and
 - enabling equitable access for all citizens to public facilities and amenities in growth urban areas.
 - declining numbers of volunteers to support ongoing interest in community sport, coupled with increasing reliance on volunteers and paid employees to set the prevailing societal and sporting standards in community sport settings.





- greater need for sporting organisations to diversify the offerings of organised and recreational sport to meet the changing demands of the community.
- aligning of strategic planning of Government and the community sport sector.
- The increasing operational expectations placed upon sporting organisations by Government and by constituent participants, coupled with the varying relationship models with respective national sporting organisations, means there is less scope locally to address gaps in government policy.
- There is an increasing number of smaller groups within the sector that are lobbying government, thus adding a layer of demands and expectations of government on needs specific to each interest group.
 - This adds to the layer of individual sporting organisations relating with government yet lacking scope to address broader contextual and strategic issues of the sector and the ACT.
 - this representative body can assist with the co-ordination, advocacy and streamlining of any engagement and negotiation with Government –
 - while accepting that each individual sport organisation will want to approach Government on key initiatives, such as those that impact on tourism, specific infrastructure projects, community-wide or high-level sporting events.??

SCOPE of ENTITY:

The primary activities that the representative entity should undertake to address the identified needs should be:

- Advocating in a positive, productive and informed manner for and on behalf of the sector.
- Placing common and public interest at the forefront of its philosophy and operations.
- Supporting the endeavours of the sector in striving to improve the 'liveability' of Canberra and the lives of Canberrans.
- Undertaking policy development, consultation and coordination, and strategic input into infrastructure.
- Enabling better governance and capability support across the sector.
- Acting as a conduit or concierge for interaction with government services.
- Consolidating data collection for offering evidence-based information for sector and broader research insights.
- Strengthening the participation and capability of the volunteer base and workforce development.





GOVERNANCE MODEL

The governance of a representative entity would be integral to its operations and impact. The proposed governance model would be underpinned by features including:

- An independent board structure, which would be both skills based and sectoral understanding.
- Board composition of seven to nine members depending upon skill, knowledge and experience.
- An independent Nominations Committee to conduct process for Board appointments.
- A sector based advisory leadership group.
- A transparent and tiered membership model.
- Relevant fit-for-purpose policy framework, including addressing conflicts of interest and fulfilling regulatory requirements (for reporting and performance).
- Having a non-partisan advocacy and operating charter.
- Being an entity that will be recognised as an incorporated entity.

ADDING VALUE TO THE ACT

The benefits to the ACT of introducing a sectoral wide representative entity include:

- Reducing duplication of consultation costs for Government.
- Ensuring that sector-wide measures validate and improve Territorial wellbeing indicators.
- Guiding and supporting efforts in volunteer recruitment and retention.
- Providing a cohesive contribution to Territory, urban and community facility planning.
- Undertaking independent efforts towards greater leveraging of Commonwealth grants
- Advocating towards sustained and consistent contribution to long-term cost offsets for health system.
- Being an independent contributor to the promotion of social well being initiatives.





TOTAL BUDGET INVESTMENT

This investment would be linked to a six-twelve month transition strategy in the initial year of funding.

Financial Year	Priorities	Funding Required
2026/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interim Board to establish a new entity. ➤ Transition to new governance model. ➤ Undertake consultation with sector stakeholders. ➤ Interim staff to guide and lead transition, and for establishing operational components. ➤ Consolidate and provide baseline data and research on and for the sector. 	\$200,000.
2027/28	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposal for total annual cost ➤ Recurrent year forward estimate, including membership contribution component. <p>Gain support and funding to engage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CEO (experienced sector leader) ➤ Policy/Research Officer ➤ Administration. ➤ Office & operating costs. 	\$400,000.
2028/29	Introduce recurrent funding model	To be negotiated.





Yours sincerely

Michael Brady
Executive Officer

on behalf of members of the Community Sport Alliance of the ACT

Cricket ACT & Chair of Community Sport ACT – Olivia Thornton	AFL NSW/ACT – Steven Mahar
Basketball ACT – Nicole Bowles	ACT and Southern NSW Rugby Union – Craig Leseberg
Canberra Region Rugby League – Mark Vergano	Capital Football – Samantha Farrow
Hockey ACT – Rob Sheekey	Netball ACT – Katrina Roff
Tennis ACT – Mark La Brooy	

