
ONE SPORT - THE FUTURE COURSE
*Independent Review of
Athletics in Australia*

2015

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GLOSSARY

AA	Athletics Australia
AA Tour	The Australian Athletics Tour
ACGA	Australian Commonwealth Games Association
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
AWE	Australia's Winning Edge 2012-2022
AMS	Athlete Management System
AOC	Australian Olympic Committee
APC	Australian Paralympic Committee
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
ATFCA	Australian Track and Field Coaches Association
CAGR	Compound annual growth rate
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
Event Coach	Responsible for single events such as 100m or shot put
Event Group Coach	Responsible for groups of events such as sprints or throws
Glasgow Review	Athletics Australia's internal high performance review into the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games
HP	High Performance
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
ICT	Information Communications and Technology
LAA	Little Athletics Australia
MA	Member Association

Major Competitions	Includes Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships, age championships and national championships
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NASS	National Athlete Support Structure
NSO	National Sporting Organisation
Oversight Committee	Representatives from the ASC, AIS and AA to monitor progress for a period of at least 18 months
Pro League	Professional Leagues
Rio	The Rio 2016 Olympic Games
SIS/SAS	State Institutes of Sport/State Academies of Sport
SSSM	Sports Science/Sports Medicine

EXECUTIVE *Summary*

Following the recent 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Board of Athletics Australia Limited, in partnership with the Australian Sports Commission, commissioned an independent review of the design, delivery and administration of Athletics in Australia to gather and evaluate evidence about their strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations to AA on how best to address them.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the recent 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Board of Athletics Australia Limited, in partnership with the Australian Sports Commission, commissioned an independent review of the design, delivery and administration of Athletics in Australia to gather and evaluate evidence about their strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations to AA on how best to address them.

The Panel examined aspects of Athletics Australia's (AA) High Performance (HP) Programs, and its relationships with Member Associations (MA), Little Athletics Australia (LAA) and other key stakeholders. The Panel also looked at the administration of AA and the support provided through the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), State Institutes and Academies of Sport (SIS/SAS) and many other providers in and around the sport. Finally, it considered how these programs and support linked to the broader athletics community to create the conditions for sustained high performance and grassroots success.

Consultations occurred with identified stakeholders including individuals, groups and organisations broadly covering the athletics community, supported by an open submission process. The Panel worked closely with AA and other organisations to identify these stakeholders and create opportunities for them to meet with Panel members.

In addition a desktop analysis of internal financial and competition results data as well as policy documentation was undertaken. This information, along with the consultations and submissions, was used to formulate a gap analysis and subsequently supported the Panels recommendations.

The Panel appointed an external consultant to carry out a financial analysis of AA, and its related entities' revenues and expenditure and other related activities over the previous Olympic and Paralympic cycles. This analysis has been used to further support several of the recommendations.

As AA has oversight of both Olympic and Paralympic programs, the Panel examined both programs throughout the Review and, unless otherwise specified, the findings of this Review apply across both programs.

The Panel also recognises the work of the Wardlaw Glasgow Review conducted following the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. The Glasgow Review was commissioned by AA in parallel with this Review and the Panel has benefited from its findings in finalising its recommendations.

This Review steps through a logical sequence, starting at governance and leadership and systematically working through management and operations, coaching, officiating, high performance and the delivery of athletics broadly, setting out good practice against evidence-based analysis as a basis for its recommendations.

The sport of athletics encompasses a complex system of organisations, processes and people, all of which can have an effect on outcomes. Hence, it is important to consider the interactions between them when implementing change. Although each of the recommendations refers directly to the subject area within which it appears, it is intended that all recommendations be considered as a package. The Panel has made 16 recommendations on how AA and in some cases other related organisations can implement changes to the way AA carries out the business of achieving its desired goals.

The Panel formed the opinion early that the high profile issues associated with both the London 2012 Olympic Games and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games reflected a much broader systemic problem in the sport of athletics.

Equal time was spent looking into the governance and administration of athletics. These are an integral part of delivering high performance and business success. While it is ultimately the athletes who achieve success, their performances are the final link in a chain which begins with the Board and executive management as a result of strategic decisions that impact down through the sport.

The Panel recognises that during the course of the Review a number of changes to personnel, resourcing and strategy were made and continue to be implemented within AA. Athletics holds an important place in the national landscape as both an iconic and foundation sport and we are reminded of this every four years when Australians look to our high profile athletes to achieve success on the world stage.

In this Review, the Panel has outlined a series of circumstances that culminated in the sport of athletics becoming in many people's views fragmented. The common thread linking these circumstances is a culture of non-strategic business practices and a governance system that has exacerbated the fragmentation of the sport.

At various levels of the organisation there is evidence to suggest strategic planning was not followed or assessed. As a result, lack of transparency in decision making led to a growing disillusionment in AA and a general misalignment of stakeholders. Ultimately this played out in the failed attempt to address the structural relationship between LAA as the junior body and AA in 2013.

Also, over much of the recent Olympic cycle the HP system, athletes, service providers, coaches, AIS, SIS/SAS network and MA's did not have a clearly visible national direction to guide them in applying a vast range of resources in a way that could best ensure success in the context of elite sport.

The Panel has provided a proposed Implementation Plan for its recommendations to assist athletics in the roll out of the changes it feels are required.

Ultimately, a ONE SPORT structure from club centre level through to states and a national organisation provides the best environment to deliver quality athletics that retains participants.

In order, to attain broader success for the sport, AA and its stakeholders, through the application of the recommendations, must address issues by striving to place athletics in a place where it is considered a pinnacle of Australian Olympic sport and a vibrant foundation sport at the grassroots community level.

For AA to achieve this success, the Panel has made an overarching recommendation placing AA accountable to the ASC and its stakeholders while undertaking the reforms required. This open accountability will be an important step in AA regaining trust in the community and demonstrating cultural change in the sport.

Overarching Recommendation

The Panel considers implementation of the recommendations in this report the most critical outcome of the Review. To achieve this, oversight and reporting systems need to be established to ensure AA implements the recommendations in line with the proposed Implementation Plan set out in the report. This must be done in an open and detailed manner, and key elements of the oversight and reporting systems must include:

- a Joint Oversight Committee (the "Oversight Committee") comprising representatives from the ASC, AIS and AA to closely monitor progress initially on a monthly basis until the committee is satisfied by AA's progress for a period of at least 18 months
- the development of an Implementation Plan by the Oversight Committee for the recommendations to which AA will be held to account (the starting framework of the Implementation Plan is attached at Appendix A for use by the Oversight Committee)
- the ASC to guarantee only 60 per cent of total AA funding in 2015-16, with the balance to be provided only upon satisfactory implementation of the recommendations as assessed by the Oversight Committee (any withheld funding must not impact on direct athlete support)
- quarterly reporting from AA to its MAs, LAA and its MAs, and other key stakeholders identified by AA and the Oversight Committee on progress against the recommendations and subsequent actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overarching Recommendation

The Panel considers a controlled and transparent implementation of the recommendations in this report the most critical outcome of the Review. Oversight and reporting systems need to be established to ensure AA implements the recommendations in line with the proposed Implementation Plan set out in the report. This must be done in an open and detailed manner, and key elements of the oversight and reporting systems must include:

- a joint Oversight Committee (the Oversight Committee) comprising representatives from the ASC, AIS and AA to closely monitor progress initially on a monthly basis until the committee is satisfied by AA's progress for a period of at least 18 months
- the development of an Implementation Plan by the Oversight Committee for the recommendations to which AA will be held to account (the starting framework of the Implementation Plan is attached at Appendix A for use by the Oversight Committee)
- the ASC to guarantee only 60 per cent of total AA funding in 2015-16, with the balance to be provided only upon satisfactory implementation of the recommendations as assessed by the Oversight Committee (any withheld funding must not impact on direct athlete support)
- quarterly reporting from AA to its MAs, LAAs and its MAs, and other key stakeholders identified by AA and the Oversight Committee on progress against the recommendations and subsequent actions.

Recommendation 1

AA must hold two forums (a strategic forum and a coaching forum) within the next six months as the centre pieces of a stakeholder engagement plan.

These forums must build momentum and support for AA through a clear plan of engagement. They will also need to lead to ongoing high levels of engagement beyond the six months and to an associated solid foundation of trust. This engagement plan must include direct strategies with MAs, ATFCA, SIS/SAS, ASC, LAA, Masters, Pro League and Park Run, to drive greater exposure with sponsors, broader government, fans of athletics, and mass running promoters. This will begin to address the current lack of engagement between AA and its stakeholders.

Recommendation 2

AA must analyse, review and refine its vision and key overarching strategies for both the immediate term between now and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games (Rio), and also post-Rio. This will require input from all key stakeholders, at the strategic forum as well as through input received before and after this forum. The vision and strategy should reflect Athletics as a 'foundation' physical activity as well as a forefront brand of Australian sport.

This vision must accelerate progress towards a ONE SPORT future.

AA management and each of its departments, in close consultation with relevant key stakeholders, must then produce costed and budgeted business and operational plans for the next three years.

The Strategic Plan and costed and budgeted Operational Plans must then be reviewed and refined post Rio.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT)

Recommendation 3

AA must undertake a detailed and independent Board performance review, supported by the ASC, within the next three months to identify skill gaps and required structural and procedural improvements.

Within six months this performance review will be used as the basis for Board rejuvenation, with a minimum of two of the existing nine Board Members to be replaced by new Board members who can provide a new level of independence, crucial Board experience and needed skills.

The Board review must include an assessment of the Chair as AA needs a Chair who is able to drive positive cultural change, commercial growth, lead the organisation towards the ONE SPORT objective and gain business and media support for athletics.

Recommendation 4

AA must establish appropriate reporting mechanisms for its interim and longer term strategic and operational plans.

This must include greater accountability on senior management, specifically the CEO, reporting to the Board directly on performance of the strategic and operational plans as opposed to through committee structures.

Reporting of performance against key planning documents must be included in detail in the AA Annual Report, and in summary through a regular reporting mechanism with the MAs and key stakeholders.

Given the critical need to streamline AA governance arrangements, an immediate audit of all AA committees must be undertaken by the interim CEO. Only those AA committees serving a genuine strategic purpose are to be retained, following a review of their purpose, terms of reference and composition. This review should include a focus on each committee's governance arrangements to ensure they are consistent with ASC standards.

Recommendation 5

AA must develop and implement a risk management plan, with a review following each Major Championship.

The risk management plan must be communicated to all key stakeholders, and the AA Board, on the advice of its Risk and Audit Committee, must communicate clearly any instances where the plan has been modified along with justification for doing so.

Recommendation 6

Following the development and adoption of the new Strategic Plan, the Board of AA must empower the CEO to restructure the business so it can directly address its most important strategic challenges, implement the appropriate structures and employ staff with the skills to address the strategic needs of the sport. Simultaneously, the Board must create the operational environment for the CEO and staff to achieve the strategies set out in the plan by providing appropriate leadership through the CEO.

Recommendation 7

The CEO must lead the adoption of appropriately sophisticated human resource management tools and policies to enable the business to effectively manage its staff and provide the expected levels of staff accountabilities to the organisation.

Recommendation 8

The Strategic Plan and aligned, costed and budgeted Operational Plan, adopted from Recommendation 2 must provide direct accountability to individuals' activities in the organisation. As a result of this planning, staff (in particular senior management) must then be performance managed in line with these plans to ensure the sport achieves its desired goals.

Recommendation 9

Athletics must develop a vibrant, relevant and valued brand for the sport built on a strong understanding of what the sport offers and what the customers, fans, participants, members and stakeholders want from the sport as a brand. The resulting brand architecture must inform all of athletics' marketing, communications and property management enabling the sport to attract investment from government and the corporate sector.

Recommendation 10

AA, MAs and key stakeholders must begin to build a suite of commercially driven properties that provide a high level of value to the corporate sector. These properties must be informed by detailed consumer research and provide innovative solutions leading to more diverse revenue sources for the sport.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT)

Recommendation 11

AA must develop financial strategies that create growth in the sport through targeted investment. These strategies must also achieve growth in participation, commercialisation and improved results at the HP level of the sport.

These financial strategies must be included in the costed and budgeted Operational Plans.

Recommendation 12

The coaching forum in Recommendation 1 must be used as a catalyst for clearly defining roles and responsibilities in coaching oversight and support, and a clear delineation between the three components of a coaching framework: accreditation, professional development, and HP.

- Coaching accreditation will remain the responsibility of AA, but AA must work with ATFCA to reach agreement on the consolidation of all existing and proposed accreditation, including content, resources, delivery arms and methods, as well as schedules. There can be no dual accreditation offering by ATFCA beyond 2015.
- AA must dedicate sufficient resourcing to appropriately deliver coaching accreditation, or look to outsource it. Any AA outsourcing should consider using ATFCA as a delivery arm, but AA must retain full control of intellectual property and quality assurance.
- Coaching professional development, support and creating a coaching profession will be the province of ATFCA. ATFCA will provide a business plan for AA's consideration, outlining how it will deliver services to all AA coaches to assist them in developing, improving and refining their craft.
- This business plan should stand alone in these areas, and only include accreditation support upon agreement with AA. AA will work with the ATFCA to finalise a business plan based on available resources given AA's overall financial capacity.
- HP Coaching will be the province of the AA HP Director, who must establish and communicate a HP coaching pathway, including a selection methodology with clear criteria and metrics for progression.

Recommendation 13

AA must complete the Officials Development Framework once it has a new Strategic Plan in place. This framework must give clear direction to increasing the numbers and experience of officials and provide guidance of how officials fit into the overall growth strategies for the sport.

As a support to this framework the AA participation plan must address the following issues:

- courses
- continuing professional development
- resource materials
- competition schedules
- selection criteria for major competitions
- uniforming.

Recommendation 14

The HP Director is to review the current HP Plan and then spend time educating and delivering clear answers for all athletes, coaches, SSSM providers, SIS/SAS, and other relevant stakeholders around their roles and expectations in delivering this plan.

Key elements to be addressed will include:

- athlete and coach support, specifically explanation around NASS and other forms of support available and the criteria for receiving such support
- investment and resourcing in SSSM and what is required to achieve objectives
- competitions - specifically the program for the domestic and national series, and the international program through each of the Youth, Junior, u23 and open age categories
- measures of accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT)

Recommendation 15

In reviewing and refining the HP Plan, the HP Director must articulate how AA will develop a leading edge HP culture. This will require stated positions on the:

- relationship between an athlete's personal coach and an Event Coach
- potential movement of athletes if required, from their personal coach to a centralised training program
- role of training pods/hubs
- priorities for the 2015 World Championships and 2016 Rio Olympic Games
- management of unexpected emergence of elite talent (e.g. current junior male sprinter and similar cohorts) will be program managed over future Olympic cycles
- coordination with SIS/SAS to maximise use of finite resources
- selection criteria for coaches, team management and SSSM staff for major events
- benchmarking as outlined in the Glasgow Review Report.

Recommendation 16

The sport of athletics must begin the process of aligning its delivery systems by adopting nationally driven products and programs of quality and consistency. To achieve this AA along with LAA must also bring together both AA and LAA Member Associations along with their clubs and centres as the grassroots delivery agencies of their respective current and new product lines. These products must have clear connection and provide best practice in participant delivery irrespective of any notional ownership.

This alignment of the system must also lead to an environment where children and their parents are well informed and encouraged to seek out adequately designed and delivered products which directly address the transition and retention issues currently experienced across the entire athletics landscape.

To enable this alignment AA, LAA and their respective MAs must work towards the vision of ONE SPORT to ensure sustainable growth of the sport, as these stakeholders are accountable for the entire athletic pathway.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

What an incredible experience myself and fellow Panel members have had over the past four months or so, as we have been given the privilege by the Australian Sports Commission to be involved with a detailed review of one of the iconic sports in Australia, in particular the National Sporting Organisation Athletics Australia.

I firstly would like to thank all Panel members - Lynne Williams, Melinda Gainsford-Taylor, Mark Bartels, and Matt Favier for the huge commitment each have given to the project. Their insights, knowledge, questioning and determination to produce a report that is meaningful, impactful and a clear blueprint to future success for AA has made not only the review process a much easier task as Chair; but also, will provide great confidence to all stakeholders involved in athletics that the investment in this project has been well spent.

Secondly, on behalf of the Panel, I would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to the members of the ASC Secretariat who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support the review.

And thirdly, but not in order of importance, I should like to thank the 'athletics family'; all those persons and organisations who are so passionate about the sport of athletics. We received 51 submissions and undertook 136 interviews across all states and territories. We received numerous phone calls and emails from volunteers, administrators, current and former athletes and coaches, state governments and their respective academies, media, and organisations which have close or arms-length association with AA (such as LAA, Australian Track and Field Coaches Association (ATFCA), Masters Athletics, Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), Australian Paralympic Committee (APC), Australian Commonwealth Games Association (ACGA), Park Run and the Professional Athletics League (Pro League) to name but a few). The response was huge. It was critical. It was optimistic. It was factual. It was supportive. It was from a broad cross section of interests. Above all, the interactions spoke to the Panel about the love of the sport; the need to find ways to bring all elements of the athletics family together as One Sport; and the overwhelming desire for athletics to be some part of everyone's life from early childhood to the aged, irrespective of ability.

But why should we have undertaken such an extensive review? Why did we receive so much invaluable feedback? In short, why do so many people care?

Well apart from many of the reasons given below, the real object of this review is about the athlete - from early participant to gold medal winner at the Olympics, Paralympics and World Championships.

Through improved governance procedures, improved commercialisation of the sport, improved coaching, officiating, competitions, facilities and sport science/ sports medicine (SSSM), a ONE SPORT structure from club level to state to national organisation, the ultimate purpose is to provide the best environments for the nurturing, development and retention of each participant whatever their level of ability and capability is.

I believe strongly in the value of physical activity to the health and well-being of an individual, and therefore the health and well-being of a nation. I also believe that sport, which is a competitive extension of physical activity, is critical to a nation's health. It is a very visible means of how Australia presents itself on the global stage.

The response was huge. It was critical. It was optimistic. It was factual. It was supportive. It was from a broad cross section of interests.

Australians take great pride in and confidence from our performances internationally whether that is through industry, politics, the arts, research, education or sport.

Athletics is central to most sports. Add in the ability to swim and to catch, and therein lies the foundations to lifelong physical activity or development in sport. That is to say, athletics through its wide variety of events provides important skilling in balance, coordination, agility, power, speed, endurance, running, throwing, and jumping. Athletics also teaches values such as:

- dealing with winning and losing through competition
- personal discipline
- hard work
- relationship management (for example between coach and athlete)
- planning performance through setting goals and measuring progress
- teamwork.

In addition to providing a foundation set of skills for most sports, athletics in Australia has a long and proud history. The legendary feats of Edwin Flack were part of my education on Olympic history. My memories of athletics go to Herb Elliott in Rome 1960. Without wanting to overlook the many wonderful performances before and after Herb, some of the athletes that come to my mind who have helped put Australian athletics on the international map include Betty Cuthbert, Shirley Strickland, Marjorie Jackson, Pam Ryan, Maureen Caird, Ralph Doubell, Ron Clarke, Peter Norman, Rick Mitchell, Glynnis Nunn-Kearns, Raelene Boyle, Rob de Castella, Debbie Flintoff-King, Melinda Gainsford-Taylor, Cathy Freeman, Louise Sauvage, Steve Moneghetti, Kurt Fearnley and of more recent times, Steve Hooker, Evan O'Hanlon, Mitchell Watt, Sally Pearson, Kim Mickle, Alana Boyd, Jared Tallent, Michael Shelley, and Dani Samuels.

So it is very important to get the delivery of athletics to the Australian community right.

As mentioned earlier, the Panel undertook an extensive and detailed review process. In addition to the interviews, submissions and other communications, we looked at previous and current reports into athletics. Principal among these were the Elliott Report, the Glasgow Review Report, the ASC Annual Sport Performance Review summary, numerous statistical analyses of international performance trends, KPMG financial report, AA annual reports, relevant documents from other sport reviews and benchmark reports from overseas.

The breadth of Panel experience which included Board and organisational management, high performance sport and coaching, financial and commercial management, grassroots coaching and development, volunteer management, governmental and inter-governmental relationships enabled us to explore athletics from a whole-of-sport perspective, understanding the significant investment that is made by Australians into the nation's sporting fabric - in this specific case, AA.

And so what did we discover? In essence, the findings are:

- there is a wealth of opportunities to develop and expand athletics in Australia at school, local, community, regional and national levels
- there is a wealth of athletic talent in the community and with proper nurturing will deliver outstanding results on the world stage
- there are so many skilled people across all aspects of athletics on-field and off-field, who with proper direction and support, will drive a culture of success. At the same time it is recognised the sport relies heavily on its massive volunteer base for support and delivery
- with stronger communication and trust as part of athletics' future, the commercial possibilities are very exciting.

However, these exciting possibilities and opportunities have been blocked by:

- lack of accountability throughout AA
- lack of transparency in decision making by AA
- poor Board management of the sport due to lack of proper processes
- poor organisational culture which has allowed, created or maintained a fragmented approach to the delivery of athletics
- poor HP systems around coaching, officiating, selections, team support personnel selections and analysis
- a lack of relevance of the product offerings in the community and competition from other sports and leisure activities
- AA becoming increasingly dependent on government for its finances in contrast to other organisations that make up the athletics family that are predominantly financially self-sufficient (e.g. MAs, LAA, ATFCA, masters and professional associations).

All of the above factors have combined to produce an overarching lack of trust in AA.

In conclusion, the future is very bright for AA if it is prepared to unite across all elements and delivery arms of the sport. While this is not necessarily a new position for AA to find itself historically, its revenue base which now relies predominantly on taxpayer funding, is.

No longer should, and will the taxpayer, through fund-provider ASC, be prepared to invest in a sport that ignores the need to change a range of its practices, policies and procedures so that on-field and off-field performance significantly improves.

This Panel has been cognisant of what has happened with previous reports and reviews. Consequently, while there is a set of recommendations which provide overall direction to AA, there is also a more specific proposed Implementation Plan which includes elements of public accountability and will enable all stakeholders to measure ongoing progress. For the sport of athletics to re-establish itself as a premier brand in the Australian landscape, the only course to run is ONE SPORT.

REVIEW PROCESS

Purpose and Scope of Review

The key priorities of the review were to:

- Identify actions to ensure that all parts of athletics in Australia are unified, inclusive and working effectively together and there is agreement on the respective roles and accountabilities of AA as the sport's national body, its MAs and other athletics organisations and groups. This includes analysis and recommendations on how the role of the national body could most effectively ensure unity of purpose and structure for the whole sport.
- Consider and make recommendations on the optimal structure and investment approach for athletics' HP program (for both able-bodied and para disciplines) that increases Australian international success and competitive depth in the sport. A particular area of focus was how to enhance the relationship between AA and its HP athletes and coaches, and identify the mutual obligations of all parties.
- Identify opportunities to improve and integrate pathways in the sport across age groups, and address current attrition from the sport for teenage athletes.

Methodology

Members of the Panel were assembled on the basis of their wide range of skills, knowledge and experience to provide a comprehensive, independent and credible evaluation of athletics.

It was the Panel's responsibility to conduct the Review under the guidance of its Chair, Mr John Buchanan. This included agreeing to and carrying out the consultation process, seeking independent professional advice where appropriate, and drafting the final report. The ASC provided the Secretariat to the Review.

The methodology of the Review is set out in the Terms of Reference (see Appendix B) under which the Panel was formed. This Review employed the gap analysis method to:

- describe the current governance, program management, and structural situation (what is)
- describe the preferred alternatives (what should be)
- compare these two steps (the gap)
- describe the recommended approach to bridging the gap, considering options for priorities in relation to what should be best practice for the specific challenges and needs of athletics in Australia.

The Panel agreed the report would, where possible, be evidence-based. To achieve this, the Panel consulted key stakeholders of AA and relevant opinion leaders in the governance and program delivery of the sport.

The Panel was required to present the final report and recommendations to the Boards of AA and the ASC.

Consultation process

Before commencing consultations, the Panel conducted a desktop audit of AA. This involved reviewing key governance and planning documents, reports, high performance results and previous reviews.

The Panel adopted a broad methodology for the consultation process, comprising a combination of:

- one-on-one interviews
- small group interviews
- public submissions.

All interviews and submissions were confidential. Interviews were with persons identified as key stakeholders of the sport. In determining whether an identified stakeholder was consulted individually or as part of a group, the Panel considered the particular individual and their relationship to the sport.

During consultations, some interviews were conducted by one Panel member only, while other interviews were conducted by either more than one Panel member or in some circumstances, the full Panel. A member of the Secretariat was present and provided support at all consultations to assist consistency in the reporting process.

Given the geographic spread of Panel members and stakeholders, and the timeframe for the Review, most interviews were conducted by one or two Panel members with one member of the Secretariat team.

It was important for the Review to get input from the full range of stakeholders involved in athletics to give greater transparency of the process, assist in gaining stakeholder buy-in, and provide accuracy for recommendations and implementation. The Panel is confident the recommendations reflect input from discussions with and evidence presented by stakeholders.

These stakeholders represented all parts of the sport and its partners, covering Olympic and Paralympic athletes, the AA Board, AA senior management, MAs, clubs, other deliverers of athletics (LAA, LAA Member Associations, Masters, ATFCA, Pro League, Park Run etc.), the ASC, the AIS, the AOC, the APC, the SIS/SAS, state and territory departments of sport and recreation, current and past coaches, athletes and other members of the public and athletics community. Interviews were conducted with 136 individuals.

A Review website was created to provide information and facilitate the lodgement of public submissions. To promote confidentiality, submissions could be made anonymously. Over 50 submissions were received by the end of December 2014.

External consultants

The Panel sought independent external advice for certain aspects of the Review. KPMG provided financial auditing services, while M+K Lawyers provided legal advice.

FINDINGS AND *Recommendations*

Athletics is made up of a number of different sports. Each sport, or discipline, is gradually grouped with similar disciplines until they eventually fall under the broad title of athletics. The result is a number of different activities, with their own unique characteristics and cultures, operating as a collective.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Alignment of a disparate sport

Vision and Purpose of AA

Athletics is made up of a number of different sports. Each sport, or discipline, is gradually grouped with similar disciplines until they eventually fall under the broad title of athletics. The result is a number of different activities, with their own unique characteristics and cultures, operating as a collective.

It is therefore not surprising the sport of athletics can be fragmented. This is by no means a recent phenomenon. The history of the sport and the views of its long-time servants lament its failure to be ONE SPORT. There has and continues to be a strong will for change, but this has not been able to overcome the various obstacles in its path.

For too long leadership in the sport has not been courageous, consistent, collaborative or transparent. For too long personal interests have been prioritised ahead of the sport's greater good. Throughout the review the Panel heard athletics repeatedly referred to as the foundation sport. This may be the case, but if these issues cannot be overcome, it will never be one sport.

AA is the national sporting organisation (NSO) recognised by the ASC and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). It manages HP and participation of athletics in Australia, with a historical focus on track and field among adults. AA is the focus of this review.

Although AA is recognised as the peak body, there are a number of other key stakeholders operating within the sport of athletics:

- AA has eight MAs, with one operating out of each Australian state and territory. The MAs generally focus on participation through competition, with the intent being to operate in line with AA's strategic and national participation plans. Each athlete is registered with and pays a registration fee to an MA.
- LAA operates a large portion of the junior participation aspect of the sport through its state member associations.
- Little Athletics Member Associations have oversight of clubs and centres in their state, with a LAA member organisation in all jurisdictions except the Northern Territory.
- ATFCA historically ran the athletics coaching accreditation scheme, and continues to play a role in delivering coach education and publications.
- Pro League operates across Australia, conducting handicapped running events for prize money.
- Masters Athletics is an affiliate member of AA and oversees masters level competition.

- Park Run is an independent organisation which delivers organised weekly participation runs across Australia.
- Private event operators deliver mass participation events such as fun runs, charity events, half marathons and marathons.
- SIS/SAS fund some athletes, coaches and programs in their states in partnership with AA.
- School Sport System (School Sports Australia, Private schools etc.) run school athletic carnivals and competitions.
- AOC, APC and ACGA fund and manage the Olympic, Paralympic, and Commonwealth Games teams representing Australia in athletics.
- Agents who manage athletes and have access to IAAF sanctioned events.

The foundation of any successful organisation begins with a clearly articulated vision and mission, and a stated purpose about why the organisation exists and where it is heading. Throughout the review process it became evident that there is no clear understanding of AA's vision (including within the organisation). Nor can the various stakeholders agree on, or define, AA's purpose. It was also made clear to the Panel that the Board has not been accountable to its MAs and has been overly focussed on operations at the expense of strategy.

The one view about AA constantly expressed was AA is solely concerned with the HP part of the sport.

With so many groups seeking to own and operate different elements of the sport, it is perhaps understandable that the role of AA and its purpose might become clouded.

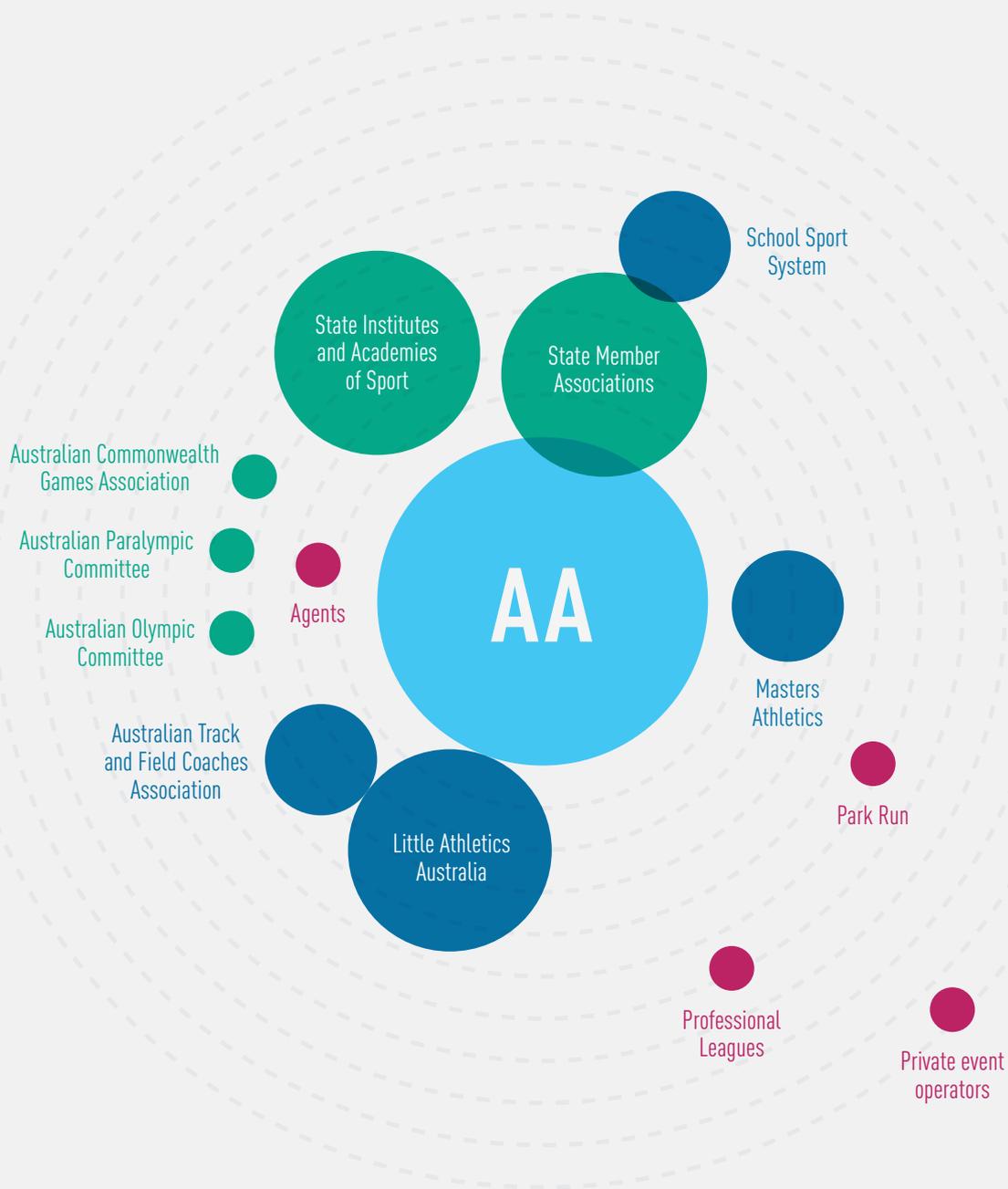
It is the Panel's view AA's role should focus on bringing the various bodies together to deliver the sport of athletics. This does not involve dictating to others, but rather facilitating collaboration to have the various elements working in harmony, under a clearly articulated and widely understood strategy for the sport. The sport needs leadership and AA can provide this.

AA's purpose should reflect the duality of HP and participation. Accordingly, AA's vision should comprise two parts, addressing its core activities.

Much of the feedback received throughout the Review discussed in part the concept of athletics being the 'foundation sport'. The Panel understands this to mean athletics comprises the fundamentals of basic human activity (i.e. running, jumping and throwing which requires balance, speed, coordination, power and endurance). These skills combined with gymnastics (for control of movement patterns), swimming and catching form the basis of Australia's daily physical education program.

Consequently, it is the Panel's view the first part of AA's vision should focus on this foundation sport concept and address athletics' role in lifelong physical activity. This could be expressed as *athletics to be recognised as one of the fundamental activities for lifelong well-being and health* or words to that effect.

FIGURE 1: CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA



● CONNECTED

● PARTIALLY CONNECTED

● NOT ENGAGED FULLY

--- PROXIMITY TO AA = ENGAGEMENT

The second part of the vision should provide those participants who wish to pursue excellence in the sport with pathways, support and encouragement to be the world's best. This could be expressed as a statement which sets an aspirational goal for AA in its HP activities therefore creating a challenge to the athletics community.

Alignment of the Members Associations

The eight MAs were unanimous in their view of AA; there is a lack of engagement, communication, accountability and transparency between the national body and its members.

Part of this can be attributed to the manner in which Board Members have been elected on the AA Board. The lack of member engagement in the election process has contributed to the lack of accountability from the Board. A by-product of this has been the Board's perceived low level of transparency, engagement and communication with AA's membership. When decisions are made without transparency or engagement, the motives are often not understood and they are frequently resisted. The result is a breakdown in trust.

A consistent example cited to demonstrate the lack of trust in AA decisions centred on the adoption of a new whole-of-sport Information Communications and Technology (ICT) platform. A process was undertaken whereby an agreed recommendation was put forward and then a different outcome was implemented.

Unfortunately, as with almost all major complex system implementations, there have been challenges with the roll out of the system. MAs have subsequently become frustrated as their original willingness to collaborate for the greater good of the sport has instead become a focus on the lack of transparency and implementation without engagement.

Comments from MAs regarding the leadership of AA were varied, including:

- compliments for AA's willingness to listen to the MAs and hear their concerns following recent key changes in leadership
- questions as to whether this translated into action
- criticism for a lack of engagement and propensity to cut short conversations when challenged.

It was clear the sort of stakeholder engagement that is valued and AA would do well to leverage this foundation in fostering a collaborative working relationship with the MAs.

Following the 2012 Smith Review into Swimming Australia, the NSO expanded its Participation Manager role to take on stakeholder relationship management. Many other NSOs also have a dedicated management role responsible for managing key stakeholder relationships. A similar approach in AA would be beneficial and welcomed by the MAs.

Notwithstanding this, stakeholder relationship building and management does not reside with a single role in an organisational structure.

This should be an immediate issue for all AA Board Members to address, both as a strategic priority and the manner in which they engage with stakeholders in the sport. The CEO (both interim and incoming) and executive management must also have relationship building as a clear and prioritised function in their roles. Both the Board and management should measure stakeholder satisfaction as part of their performance management process.

Alignment of the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association

Established in 1974, ATFCA is the representative group for athletics coaches. Its key function historically was to develop and deliver coaching accreditation. This responsibility was adopted in ATFCA's infancy when AA had no formal training or accreditation schemes in place. Additional outputs of its work, both historically and currently, are the publication of journals and newsletters.

Post the 2004 Elliott Review, AA adopted the model present in most other professional and Olympic sports and took responsibility for developing coaching accreditation. This was, however, done before AA had the full range of accreditation (Levels 1 through 5) ready to offer coaches. Since AA has adopted the accreditation role in 2005 it now delivers up to Level 2 Advanced Courses and is awaiting IAAF sign-off to deliver Level 3 Courses as new blended residential/online environments in 2015. Levels 4 and 5 are still under development using the new blended learning environment and the IAAF is awaiting the results of the Level 3 methodology before AA can roll the courses out.

Because ATFCA no longer has a role in accreditation, both its relevance and sustainability have been compromised. ATFCA is now offering member insurance on top of access to coaching materials but would like to be part of the accreditation process. While the NSW branch of ATFCA has been granted status as an accredited coaching education provider by AA, such status has not been afforded to the national body.

ATFCA remains more closely aligned with LAA and is involved in coaching accreditation under the LAA umbrella at the entry Introduction to Coaching level.

While AA used the Elliott Review to take responsibility for coaching accreditation, to date there has been no agreement on how best to use the other ATFCA assets such as skills in professional development, and the well-respected journal. In contrast most other sports have embraced coaches associations as part of the sport. Some include their coaches association as part of the membership hierarchy (e.g. Swimming Australia), while others have strategic alignments (e.g. Golf Australia and the PGA).

ATFCA has significant intellectual property through its manuals and coaching resources, coaching knowledge through key personnel and members, and a loyal network of coaches and supporters who help promote and develop athletics.

The Panel sees a role for ATFCA moving forward, which is discussed in more detail on page 37.

Alignment of Little Athletics Australia

LAA was established 51 years ago in response to what was viewed at the time a failure to provide a participation offering for children by the peak body. Over the last half century LAA has grown to become one of the most iconic junior participation products in the Australian market.

The delivery of Little Athletics is in most instances through what are referred to as centres. These centres are direct members of their relevant state association and in turn of LAA.

At the grassroots, centres operate the weekly program delivery of the core Little Athletics product. Many centres also deliver training and competition programs. These centres rely heavily on volunteers and this is seen as a strength of the program. There are many more centres in existence than MA-registered athletics clubs, but this is due to two main factors:

- access to facilities where the centres require less formal or technical space (like a synthetic track)
- more centres being located in rural and regional areas due to the participation of juniors in athletics being higher.

There is a spectrum of alignment between LAA centres and AA clubs, ranging from no co-location of centres and clubs, to co-location but no/limited relationship, through to centres and clubs operating under one organising committee affiliating with both MAs and LAA Member Associations.

LAA operates under the same governance structure present in most sports 50 years ago. This system is a congress, or fully representational model, resulting in a national board of state presidents with strategic control despite inherent conflicts of interest.

LAA presented a view of athletics to the Panel which highlighted athletics' importance as a foundation sport and LAA's role in delivering the junior element. It is LAA's view its governance model is one which gives the organisation an advantage. This view is counter to the overwhelming evidence in the industry and recommendations from a number of highly respected experts such as Colin Carter and David Crawford who have been extremely critical of representative federated governance models in the modern sports industry.

All other successful sports, most notably cricket, AFL, football and recently rugby league have adopted modern and efficient best practice models of independent governance, where in particular Board Members are skilled rather than representative based. This leaves LAA and its Member

Associations as governance structure outliers in the sport sector and impacts on their ability to drive innovation and change. It is likely this influenced the decision making processes within LAA's Member Associations during the merger process.

Although actual participation figures have remained at about 100,000 for the last decade (refer figure 2) and the organisation continues to be financially viable in its own right while receiving no funding from the Australian Government. LAA recently secured a significant commercial partnership with Jetstar to further boost its revenue.

There are a number of issues stemming from the AA-LAA split structure. The most significant plays out in the transition of athletes between Little Athletics and senior athletics. The delivery and experience of athletics is quite different, and in many instances the lack of support networks around the athlete in the senior environment can be confronting.

Little Athletics now offers a product that goes through to under 17's in some centres, purely at the determination of the local deliverer (the MA product starts at 13 years of age). This overlap of age groups was consistently raised as a significant alignment issue in the sport. While there are different arguments around the best timing to transition athletes from Little Athletics into senior athletics, the consistent message was the current situation is confusing and damages the sport.

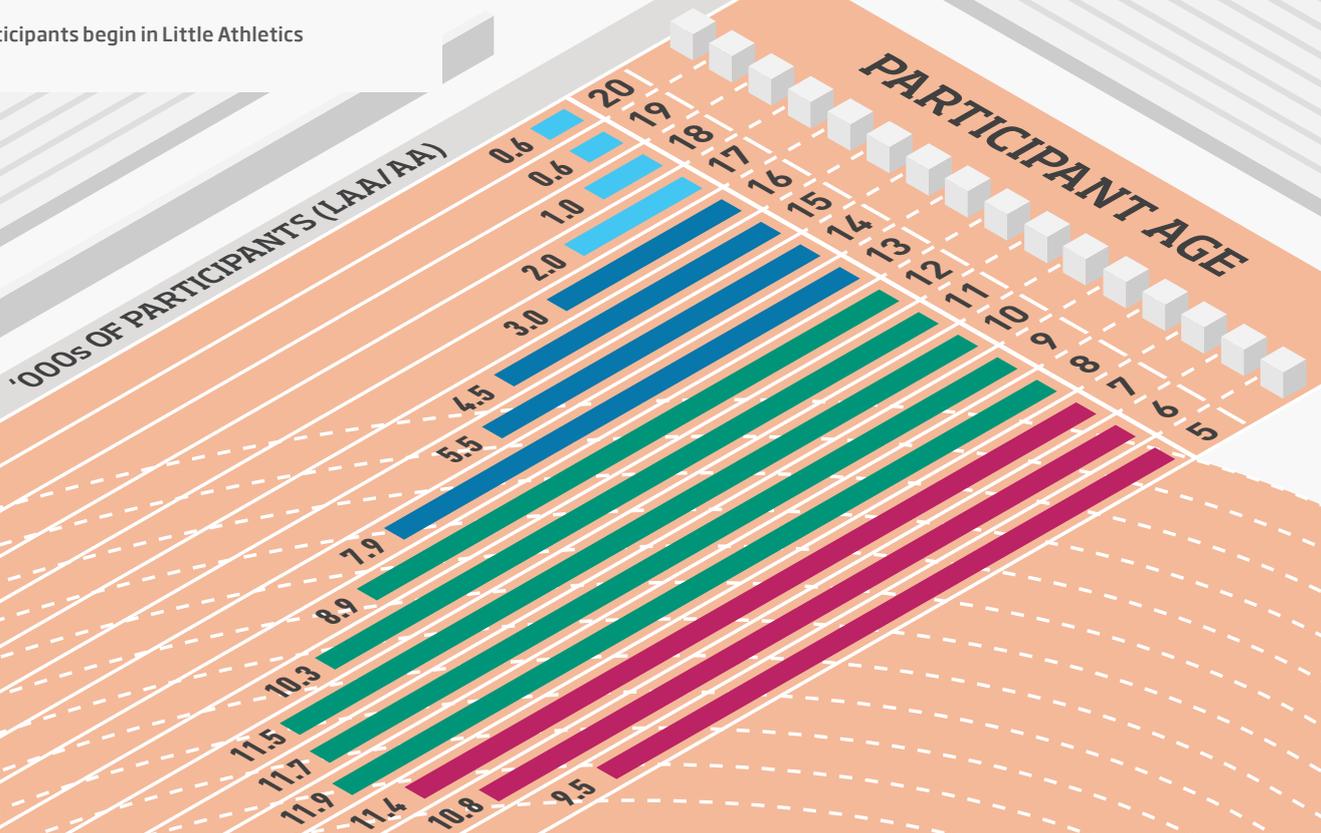
The disharmony between the two organisations has left athletics with the lowest performing retention rates in Australia

This has led to territory disputes occurring between the entities, and claims of encroaching on the other's age groups. This played out in the introduction AA's kids program, which would increase the number of children exposed to athletics, but is seen by LAA as an aggressive move. The disharmony between the two organisations has left athletics with the lowest performing retention rates in Australia, which is highlighted in figure 3. This is untenable for a sport that purports to be the foundation sport.

Athletics is the only sport to have two separate organisations managing different elements, and there have been numerous discussions over a number of years around unifying the sport of athletics. This has occurred at both national and state level and focussed on informal solutions (such as strategic partnerships) and formal solutions (including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on competition structures and technical aspects of the sport for children, as well as merging). These in the most part failed due to a critical lack of strategic alignment in the way these solutions have been approached.

FIGURE 2: THE ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION CURVE

- Participants find Senior Athletics too intimidating, or too focused on elite performance. Most leave the sport.
- Participants confused about the pathway and whether to continue with Little or senior athletics. A large proportion churn out
- Some participants become tired of program content and leave Little Athletics - these are replaced by new participants.
- Participants begin in Little Athletics



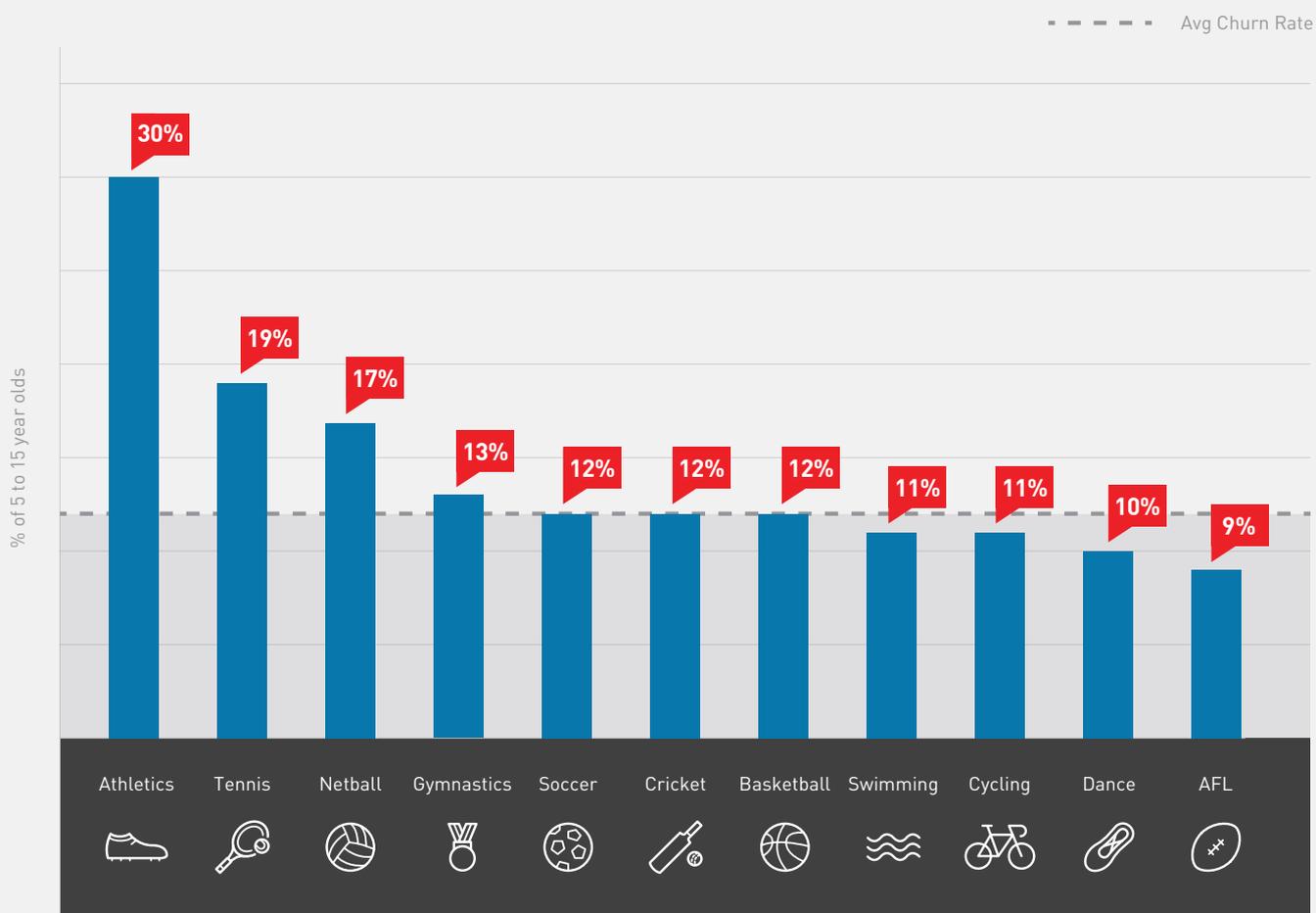
The most recent merger discussions took place in 2013 under the direction of the ASC, representing the first time the bodies approached a merger from a whole-of-sport perspective. The ASC offered a financial incentive for the organisations to explore a merge and engaged external consultants to develop a Business Case to articulate the benefits of merging. The reports showed the sport of athletics would benefit through increased participation, as the aligned brands of LAA and AA could be better used to improve retention rates. In turn, these aligned brands would have been a significantly more attractive investment prospect for brands in the banking, insurance, supermarket or airline sectors.

The aforementioned Business Case showed by addressing products, volunteering, coaching, administration and marketing through greater alignment, with little material change to either the community or state levels, the sport would see immediate benefits.

This has been proven to some extent through LAA signing its recent major sponsorship deal with Jetstar by leveraging data and recommendations from the report.

While not asking AA and LAA members to vote on a merger in the first instance, the ASC pushed an ambitious timeframe to have the parties sign a non-binding heads of agreement. This heads of agreement would only have committed the bodies at a national level to investigate, over the following 12 months, a merger by producing a detailed governance and business plan which articulated the timeframe and obligations of a merger. Only once this detailed plan was completed would the members of AA and LAA be asked to vote on a merger. Despite broad acceptance a merger would benefit the sport, the details of the final merger and what it would look like got in the way, along with perceptions of a takeover and a belief that there was too much to lose.

FIGURE 3: GEMBA ACTIVE SPORTS PARTICIPATION (GASP) AND ATHLETICS' REGISTRATION DATA



The MAs voted in support, including Athletics Queensland who voted in good faith although disagreeing with the process. Despite some positive signs along the way, only three of the seven LAA Member Associations voted in support of signing the non-binding heads of agreement. While this was not enough to progress the merge, it was in no way a clear rejection of the concept and on this basis further work should continue.

Throughout consultations there was consistent criticism of the ASC and the speed in which the process was undertaken. This caused uncertainty in both factual information and motives. Equally there was criticism of both AA and LAA around their dissemination of information about the proposals. Ultimately this caused the LAA members to adopt a safe position of keeping the status quo.

Despite voting against the heads of agreement, through consultations LAA Member Associations broadly agreed the current structure of the sport is not the best structure to maintain growth and relevance. They also remain positive about the need to merge with their AA equivalents. The key message delivered to the Panel was to let this occur at a club/centre level first, then state level and work from the bottom up; leaving the leadership to continue to negotiate their positions through the joint working party.

Strong relationships already exist in some states, with New South Wales well-progressed with the respective bodies fully engaged and a large number of community groups not identifying exclusively as either a little's or senior centre/club. Imposed by their state government departments of sport and recreation, the Queensland and Western Australian athletics organisations operate under a joint council arrangement comprising representatives from both sides of the sport. All other jurisdictions do engage in regular meetings and some have MOUs in place, but these for the most part just articulate rules of engagement when attracting participants rather than building stronger business models to expand and grow the sport.

A positive outcome from the failed merger has been the establishment of a joint working party comprising representatives from AA, LAA, MAs and LAA Member Associations. This group met twice in 2014 and will be crucial in progressing alignment of the two organisations.

Despite some strong relationships, the stakeholder interviews identified much work is needed to get LAA and AA operating together at grassroots and state levels. However a national level merger, or even an agreement to work under one banner while maintaining some form of 'independence' (e.g. LAA operating as a delivery arm for AA in its specialist area), will not happen until AA clearly demonstrates it is an organisation that can be trusted and respected by its stakeholders.

The Panel acknowledges that operating as a single national entity from juniors to high performance is a Mandatory Sports Governance Principle. As a sport funded by the ASC, athletics is expected to meet this requirement. Once athletics has addressed the alignment and trust issues, it must revisit the merger process, no later than June 2016.

An immediate focus should be simplifying the athletics product offering from cradle to grave. One solution put forward during consultations, which the Panel considered had merit, comprised:

- modified athletics (three to seven years)
- Little Athletics (seven to 13 years)
- transition program/targeted teen product (13 to 17 years)
- club program (17 years and above).

This simple suite of products would be available for all athletics clubs/centres to deliver based on location, demographics and resources. AA and LAA would collaboratively develop the overarching strategy as part of an outcome of the strategic forum outlined below in Recommendation 1.

Alignment of other key stakeholders

Despite a relatively low participation base with 31,000 members and a number of interviewees indicated inter-club athletic competition numbers are in decline, AA has not been able to harness other organisations providing athletics participation opportunities.

Masters Athletics is an organisation which AA has no strategy in place to engage despite it being an affiliate member and operating under a signed MOU with AA (which outlines Masters Athletics' roles and responsibilities). The Panel believes the MOU has not been adhered to. This stands out given the approach of many other NSOs in recognising the importance of a close relationship with Masters. In some sports (e.g. cycling) Masters represents the highest proportion of registered members. Other sports, such as swimming, netball and hockey have spent time and effort in bringing stand-alone masters organisations back into the fold.

Pro League is a small but rapidly growing set of loosely connected organisations with some level of representation in most states and territories. The two main bodies are based in South Australia and Victoria and are responsible for the Bay Sheffield and Stawell Gifts respectively as their main products. Essentially these organisations are financially self-sufficient event groups running very lean and efficient events all over Australia. Most notably they have seen a considerable increase in athletes competing in Pro League events with some of the growth attributed to the introduction and expansion of a Junior League which has proven popular with athletes between the ages 15 to 18 years of age. The attraction seems to be attributed to the handicapping approach which allows participants of all abilities a chance.

During the interview process the various representatives identified a number of benefits for a more formal relationship between Pro League and AA, and athletics as a whole. Many of the athletes competing in their events are also Athletics Members (MAs, Masters and LAA) and this is seen as an advantage for the sport as a whole by providing alternative, and highly competitive running events. There is also a major benefit to Pro League as it could leverage the status and recognition of AA to provide greater integrity measures around the Pro League events.

At the same time this greater alignment would create a larger audience for both entities and result in sponsorship growth and greater brand relevance in the community.

The School Sport system has long provided athletics competition to children through school carnivals and more structured competition (such as the private school system and state/national school championships). AA has limited, if any, involvement in the majority of athletics delivered at school level as in the most part MAs are merely service providers rather than drivers of participation transitioning school athletes into clubs and centres.

Park Run was the most interesting organisation the Panel came across in the athletics landscape. The movement began in the UK and has spread its very simple model of providing a support system for like-minded people to participate in a free, weekly, timed and recorded 5km run through a concise and simple set of supporting resources (much of which is delivered through technology). The Australian arm of Park Run is experiencing rapid growth with approximately 100 sites, 150,000 registered participants and weekly participation around 13,000, operating across Australia. Park Run's rapid growth has allowed it to secure Suncorp as a commercial partner.

Park Run did approach AA on a number of occasions, like Pro League, as the leaders in Park Run immediately saw the advantages for themselves and AA in a closer relationship. Again the leadership within AA either could not or did not capitalise on this.

The greatest benefit, but also the most pressing strategic challenge, is the opportunity for AA to partner with a large recreational running organisation. This is imperative for the sport given the lack of connection with most other recreational running organisations and events. Through a greater connection to these types of movements AA would be able to directly market their HP athletes and events to the recreational running community as there is good evidence this is where athletics could build an engaged fan base in the same way as surfing, football and netball are targeting recreation as a fan base.

Some engagement with large mass participation running events (i.e. fun runs) has occurred, with AA offering insurances to competitors in events like the Gold Coast marathon and Mitchell Street Mile. These arrangements are inconsistent however, and some MAs have been more successful than others in capturing this market.

Summary

The Panel formed the view that each of these sectors provide specific delivery arms of athletics to various target markets. There is a relationship between the provider and customer which does not need to be unnecessarily complicated by AA, but needs to be embraced by AA as part of the overall sport of athletics in Australia.

AA needs to establish its credibility with these groups which in return will provide an opportunity for AA to expand its contact points with the public and create a far more diverse range of engaged participants, fans and HP Athletes. This will provide an additional benefit of enabling AA to create growth which will lead to increased commercialisation of the sport

To achieve these goals, AA needs to immediately engage with its key stakeholders. Central actions to this engagement strategy are two forums.

- Strategic forum - this will focus on governance and strategy and involve the AA Board and CEO, MA Boards and CEOs, LAA Board and CEOs (not all but representatives of each), and the ASC. A high calibre, external facilitator should be brought in to drive this process. The outcome of this forum would be to deliver consensus on governance behaviours and structures for the whole sport, and the strategic direction of the whole sport. A Strategic Plan for athletics in Australia signed off by AA and its MAs and LAA and its Member Associations would be agreed within six months of the forum. There may be need for additional forums as part of the facilitator's process that would engage with stakeholders such as ParkRun, Pro Leagues, schools and recreational events.
- Coaching forum - the Strategic Forum would be followed with a Coaching Forum attended by AA's CEO, Head Coach, HP Director, and Coach Education Manager, ATFCA CEO, Chair, Board Members, selected senior coaches and the ASC. A high calibre facilitator would be brought in to drive this process. The outcome of this forum would be to deliver consensus on athlete pathways, coaching pathways, the link between Little Athletics through to international athlete, coach education, coach accreditation, coach development, and the HP and Participation Plans.

Recommendation 1

AA must hold two forums (a strategic forum and a coaching forum) within the next six months as the centre pieces of a stakeholder engagement plan.

These forums must build momentum and support for AA through a clear plan of engagement. They will also need to lead to ongoing high levels of engagement beyond the six months and to an associated solid foundation of trust. This engagement plan must include direct strategies with MAs, ATFCA, SIS/SAS, ASC, LAA, Masters, Pro League and Park Run, to drive greater exposure with sponsors, broader government, fans of athletics, and mass running promoters. This will begin to address the current lack of engagement between AA and its stakeholders.

GOVERNANCE AND *Administration*

AA has a Strategic Plan in place which runs from 2013-16, feedback to the Panel suggested the plan was developed with limited input from the stakeholders, with a near-final version presented for consideration rather than a collaborative whole-of-sport planning approach.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Strategy and planning

AA has a Strategic Plan in place which runs from 2013-16. Feedback to the Panel suggested the plan was developed with limited input from the stakeholders, with a near-final version presented for consideration rather than a collaborative whole-of-sport planning approach.

Well-performing NSOs go through a strategic planning process that brings together all of the key stakeholders to achieve best ideas and buy-in. In a sport as fragmented as athletics, this approach is a critical step to building trust across the system and must be adopted.

AA's current Strategic Plan has four key pillars: participation, HP, competition, and commercial. The plan builds these pillars on a foundation of systems, policies and people, under the guidance of strong leadership.

These pillars sit below AA's vision "Athletics is a strong, vibrant and growing sport" and mission "Leading, fostering and encouraging participation in athletics in Australia and promoting excellence in performance".

The strategy is based on an exhaustive list of organisational values:

- leadership
- respect
- integrity
- inclusion
- fairness
- excellence
- accountability and transparency
- commitment.

The Panel's view was that AA's vision lacks precision. There is no context or definition of what is meant by "strong" or "vibrant". Similarly, "growing" lacks clarity and aspiration when the sport is coming from a low base.

The lack of clarity of AA's vision was echoed repeatedly through the Panel's consultation process. Stakeholders struggled to identify what it actually was, or the role of AA in the sport. This is concerning given the very essence of the vision is based around the whole sport of athletics, not simply AA the organisation.

The Panel has discussed recommended changes to the vision. Regardless of the final wording, the most significant aspect of the vision is to have all members of the athletics family/system working towards a ONE SPORT vision and strategy.

The strategic pillars are fairly common to NSOs, but lack depth in their application through an Operational Plan.

While it is only one of the four pillars, AA has an obvious focus on HP. A HP Plan sits beneath this pillar, and this is discussed in depth later in the Report.

Through fragmentation of the sport, formally organised participation is a critical weakness for athletics and will continue to be until there is greater alignment of the sport's other bodies engaged in delivering participation offerings. The success indicators in the Strategic Plan lack depth and merely identify increases in areas such as accredited coaches, school competitions and member registrations. There are no actual targets.

Competition is an interesting pillar as it encompasses a range of strategies from an elite national series obtaining sustained commercial support, through to developing new and exciting participation products and a national Officials Development Framework. The Panel questions this pillar's relevance as it considers domestic competition and international events to naturally fall within HP, while many of the other strategies fall neatly into participation.

The Commercial pillar has strategies based around increasing funding from government and the private sector, providing value-add to its members in areas like public relations, marketing and branding, and boosting the profile of athletics generally. Increased government funding appears the only strategy achieved successfully to date.

Recommendation 2

AA must analyse, review and refine its vision and key overarching strategies for both the immediate term between now and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games (Rio), and also post-Rio. This will require input from all key stakeholders, at the strategic forum as well as through input received before and after this forum. The vision and strategy should reflect Athletics as a 'foundation' physical activity as well as a forefront brand of Australian sport.

This vision must accelerate progress towards a ONE SPORT future.

AA management and each of its departments, in close consultation with relevant key stakeholders, must then produce costed and budgeted business and operational plans for the next three years.

The Strategic Plan and costed and budgeted Operational Plans must then be reviewed and refined post Rio.

Organisation and Board

It is the Board's responsibility to clearly define the organisational vision (following consultation with its key stakeholders) and guide the organisation towards it. The Board should be in control of where the sport is heading, know what success looks like and how to get there, and put people in positions then let them get on with the job. It does this through appropriate oversight functions best summarised by Robert Tricker in his 1984 book *Corporate Governance*:

- providing accountability to stakeholders through transparent reporting and communication
- monitoring and supervising the organisation's strategic, financial and operational performance
- setting the strategic direction (following stakeholder consultation) and approving the Strategic Plan
- developing policies to drive improved Board and organisational performance
- appointing and then working through the CEO in delivering the above.

While the Board Members are generally well-credentialed with some experienced in business, most have little board experience. As a result, many have developed their knowledge of the role of a Board Member through their experience within the AA board room.

The Panel formed the view that Board Members' focus was too often on the HP aspect of AA's business. Rather than providing oversight through traditional Board roles and responsibilities, some Board Members get involved in the operational detail of HP. Their focus is on the track, not the board room.

The result is a culture of direct Board involvement in management decisions, with Board Members routinely contacting AA staff and immersing themselves in the day-to-day operations of the business. Board Members hold portfolios, and AA staff members are expected to liaise directly with the Board Member given oversight of that area of the business, undermining the roles and responsibilities of management and blurring accountability.

Adding to the lack of clarity around Board and management roles is the presence of around 16 committees. This seems to be an operational behaviour of the sport and its administration in which it uses committees as a strategy to both consult and control operational matters. This is most evident in the formation of the Commercialisation Committee as an answer to growing criticisms of the organisation's lack of ability to attract sponsorships.

The existence of committees can undermine the work of AA staff and provide greater opportunity for the Board Members to become even more operational without providing any real outcomes which address the sport's needs or any accountability. Essentially this governance strategy is leaving the sport paralysed by committees with an extraordinary number of stakeholders being given licence to become directly involved in the

ongoing strategic direction and sometimes day to day management of the sport. This practice is more consistent with smaller organisations operating under a board of management. Given AA is a \$12.3 million business with approximately 40 staff, this style of board oversight is inappropriate and outdated.

The Board needs to entrust its CEO with the responsibility of running the organisation under the strategic direction it has set. It is the CEO's responsibility to build a management team that can deliver the key strategies. At most the Board should only work with the CEO in approving the recruitment of key personnel such as the HP Manager and Head Coach (given their profile, large financial delegations, and their significance to achieving strategic outcomes).

Contributing to the Board's practice of delving into operations has been a lack of confidence in the previous AA management. While the culture of direct Board involvement was already prevalent, this lack of confidence has magnified the issue.

While the performance of senior management was often called into question by stakeholders, there was also an acknowledgment senior managers were given no chance to perform given the Board's willingness to second-guess management decisions. In such an environment success is very hard to achieve.

The culture of direct Board involvement and second-guessing is not limited to Board/management interactions. There was also consistent feedback on the lack of solidarity in the boardroom. This plays out in practice through information leaks.

Information regularly leaking out of Board meetings demonstrates a lack of commitment from some Board Members to stand by decisions, and a culture of self-interest in others. While Board Members should challenge decisions in boardroom discussions, once a decision is made it needs to be accepted, supported and promulgated as the collective view.

Board decisions are also routinely questioned by the MAs. The Panel believe the cause of this to be a lack of accountability from the Board to its MAs, highlighted by poor transparency and communication between the organisations. These are merely symptoms however of a deeper underlying issue.

As discussed earlier, the manner in which Board Members have been elected has played a considerable role in the dynamic of the AA relationship with its MAs. Until the most recent AGM, the AA constitution allowed the Board to effectively regenerate without any input or approval of the MAs. As Board Members retired, casual vacancy provisions were used to replace them. At no point were MAs formally consulted or given input.

An effective nominations process should focus on getting the best candidates for a role based on the Board's needs. However, if this is done in a manner which does not at some point engage the MAs, a culture is created where Board Members have no connection to their membership.

The MAs in turn should respect the assessment of the Board capability and the process undertaken by AA's nominations committee in identifying preferred candidates. The symbolism of having the members elect their Board Members is important in creating a line of accountability.

The Panel was presented with views on the performance of the Board, including specific feedback regarding the Chair. The Panel notes that the current Chair along with a majority of other Board Members have been part of the decision making team for some time. Hence, there is an expectation among AA's stakeholders this review will lead to some changes in leadership. The Panel believes this is a reasonable expectation.

There has already been a change in the CEO role, and the Panel has formed the view there also needs to be change on the Board. However, this must be through the right systems and processes. Change should be managed so it does not further destabilise the organisation. To this end a Board evaluation process and skills audit should form part of the process in identifying how the Board should best regenerate.

In the next 12 months the Panel recommends there should be at least two changes to the current Board of nine, while retaining the most recent appointees. A mechanism to achieve this is required.

Any review of Board requirements and capability should also consider the role of the Chair. The Panel heard differing views on the current Chair. There is uncertainty in the athletics community as to whether the current Chair has the right skills for the role.

In considering the views of the athletics community and looking at where the organisation is at with respect to the challenges ahead, it is the Panel's position the sport needs a leader of the Board that has extensive commercial networks and strong commercial acumen, proven strategic leadership and extensive board experience who can drive positive cultural change within the AA boardroom and sport at large. Additionally, a Chair must be able to unite the Board, address Board confidentiality, manage the relationship between the Board and management and lead the organisation towards the ONE SPORT objective. The AA Chair, Board, and MAs must determine if the current Chair fulfils these needs.

Whilst it is acknowledged AA's current Chair inherited challenges, it must be noted he has been part of the decision making team for some time (as a Board Member since 2006, Vice President since 2011, and Chair since 2013).

Following a review of the board and Chair, if the current Chair is endorsed, within the next six months he must be able to clearly demonstrate he has:

- ensured AA's Board processes adhere to the ASC and Australian Institute of Company Directors guidelines
- rigorously undertaken, along with key Board members, commercial networking for AA

- put in place measures to ensure AA management is accountable for operational matters and provide reporting that is regular, accurate and aligned to strategy
- actively engaged all AA stakeholders.

The Oversight Committee must be engaged in assessing both the Board Members' and the Chair's performance against these requirements.

Recommendation 3

AA must undertake a detailed and independent Board performance review, supported by the ASC, within the next three months to identify skill gaps and required structural and procedural improvements.

Within six months this performance review will be used as the basis for Board rejuvenation, with a minimum of two of the existing nine Board Members to be replaced by new Board members who can provide a new level of independence, crucial Board experience and needed skills.

The Board review must include an assessment of the Chair as AA needs a Chair who is able to drive positive cultural change, commercial growth, lead the organisation towards the ONE SPORT objective and gain business and media support for athletics.

Performance Management

Staff members within AA have not been subject to structured performance management processes, highlighting the lack of accountability from the Board and senior management.

This was exemplified by the most recent re-appointment of the CEO around the time of the London 2012 Olympic Games whereby the process was managed and completed without any broad Board input or awareness. The Board was only made aware of the re-appointment after it had been finalised.

More broadly, the Board's operational focus has meant it is dealing with issues in minute detail rather than viewing performance holistically in a structured manner. The lack of adequate performance management systems is not surprising given the vague indicators set out in the Strategic Plan and the way these were applied to performance measures.

One of the immediate priorities of the interim AA CEO should be to develop appropriate performance management systems, both in the context of staff performance and organisational performance. At least one AA Board Member indicated this was a personal objective to drive at Board level, and this should be supported by the full AA Board.

Reporting of performance against the Strategic Plan, as well as the HP and participation plans, needs improvement. Strategic Plan reporting should be imbedded internally through the CEO's report to the Board at its meetings, and be made available to stakeholders in summary through the annual report and other appropriate reports. It is a requirement of ASC funding for AA to report against its Australia's Winning Edge (AWE) targets and how the HP department is performing against these plans.

Due to the structure created by AA where the HP department reported directly to a Board Sub-Committee largely made up of AA Board Members with limited HP expertise and knowledge, a performance management process has developed which fails to adequately identify key issues and recommend strategic changes. This has made any critical assessment of the HP Plan's performance through the ASC driven processes less valuable.

Systems and Policies

Another by-product of the Board's operational nature has been a break down in systems and policies. While policies exist, and are reportedly carefully crafted, feedback suggests these are not followed in practice.

Policies are only as effective as the Board and AA's preparedness to follow them. AA has demonstrated a history of making decisions in a reactive manner, despite having agreed on how to deal with issues through the policy framework.

A prime example of this regularly raised in consultations was around national team selection for major competitions. There have been a number of high profile instances of AA changing its position regarding selection criteria and policy when challenged such as those leading to the finalisation of the London 2012 Olympics team. This issue was also at the essence of a number of 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games incidents, and demonstrates a reactive organisation.

The Panel was unable to get clarity on which policies exist and for those that do exist:

- how workable and valid they are
- how they fit into strategy
- how they are reported against.

It is the Panel's view this can be addressed immediately by the interim CEO conducting an audit of all policies, including their content, implementation and associated and reporting procedures them. This audit and associated recommendations should be reported to Board for actioning.

The AA constitution has undergone some change over the past 12 months and is now in line with the ASC's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles*. The most recent change was in relation to the nomination of AA Board Members (discussed previously).

The nomination process should follow from a skill gap analysis of the Board to identify deficiencies.

Currently there is no Board self-evaluation process. This is a notable gap and is required by the ASC's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles*. Such an evaluation at this time would be highly beneficial in driving accountability within the AA Board by promoting a culture of self-improvement, both for the Board collectively and for individual Board Members. This Board self-evaluation process has been recommended at Recommendation 3.

This evaluation should be communicated to the MAs (and relevant key stakeholders) at a high level, with an outline of the process undertaken and an overview of the outcomes. Transparency in the process is an easy win for the Board towards restoring the trust of its MAs.

The current Board and management structure has developed over many years. A decline in some aspects of HP results has been one indicator but there were undoubtedly other signs the organisation was experiencing some challenges, including reduced revenue streams, stagnant membership growth and declining sponsorships. This poses the question as to what actions have been taken to date to reverse these trends.

The introduction of the ASC's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles* provided the catalyst in identifying governance challenges, but more critical assessment earlier may have prevented some of the perceived erosion of AA's brand and reputation. Unfortunately it generally requires a crisis to trigger a review. Good internal processes managed by strong leadership should provide a continuous mechanism for review and regeneration.

The committee structure within AA is surprising in its complexity and demonstrative of the operational focus of the Board. A plethora of committees, 16 in total reported in the 2014 AA Annual Report, operate with a lack of clarity around:

- their source of power and associated authority (are they sub-committees of the Board or management committees?)
- reporting lines and accountability
- connection to strategic outcomes
- responsibility for determining composition
- purpose
- terms of reference
- evaluation of effectiveness.

The Panel saw little evidence of any process to determine the effectiveness of committees and whether they exist for a specific purpose or simply because they always have. The culture within AA appears to be one of dealing with any issue by establishing a committee (most commonly from the same group of people inside the sport).

The Panel strongly recommend the interim CEO conduct an immediate audit of all committees within AA. Each committee should be reviewed for relevance, with those determined necessary for the future to have their terms of reference revised to reflect their purpose. A clear reporting line

to the Board or relevant AA executive member should also be established. Committee composition should be reviewed to have appropriate expertise (both internal and external) and be a manageable size.

The systems in place to manage organisational risk are lacking, and there is no whole-of-organisation risk management policy in place. This is surprising for an organisation of AA's size, and concerning from a governance perspective.

The risk management policies that are in place are not always followed by the Board. A case in point presented to the Panel from various stakeholders is the crisis management plan. A plan was developed prior to the London 2012 Olympic Games. When controversy broke out in the wake of public criticism from an athlete, it took only a few days for the process outlined in the plan to be discarded.

In response to this, the plan was reworked ahead of Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. When the Hollingsworth-Pearson controversy ensued it took only one day to deviate from the plan.

Recommendation 4

AA must establish appropriate reporting mechanisms for its interim and longer term strategic and operational plans.

This must include greater accountability on senior management, specifically the CEO, reporting to the Board directly on performance of the strategic and operational plans as opposed to through committee structures.

Reporting of performance against key planning documents must be included in detail in the AA Annual Report, and in summary through a regular reporting mechanism with the MAs and key stakeholders.

Given the critical need to streamline AA governance arrangements, an immediate audit of all AA committees must be undertaken by the interim CEO. Only those AA committees serving a genuine strategic purpose are to be retained, following a review of their purpose, terms of reference and composition. This review should include a focus on each committee's governance arrangements to ensure they are consistent with ASC standards.

Recommendation 5

AA must develop and implement a risk management plan, with a review following each Major Championship.

The risk management plan must be communicated to all key stakeholders, and the AA Board, on the advice of its Risk and Audit Committee, must communicate clearly any instances where the plan has been modified along with justification for doing so.

Management and Operations

Structure to deliver

It appears AA is not structured to deal with the challenges it faces. Alignment of the organisational structure to the Strategic Plan is patchy with only the HP department being reasonably resourced, and this is more a result of the funding source being directly attributed to the department's output than strategic.

The Competitions department, whilst providing a major function for the organisation given the Australian Athletics Tour (AA Tour) and event focus, only has two-and-a-half full-time equivalent staff within its department.

There is no fully resourced commercial department within AA to answer the direct challenge of generating income from commercialisation; most of this function sits within the Communications and Marketing department. This department operates with a team of five staff, two of whom are allocated to marketing with the remainder focussing on communications. The Panel was told the previous CEO retained significant oversight of any commercialisation operations but was provided with little evidence of realistic commercial prospects for the sport.

It is not surprising there has been a noticeable decline in performance across these areas given their limited resourcing.

Finance and Administration has six staff including the Chief Operating Officer (COO), accounts, ICT and reception. It is worth noting that many of the departmental heads have some expectation on them to also report through the COO further blurring the accountability lines.

It was also clear to the Panel the organisation does not have adequate management practices and processes in place. A business with approximately 30 employees must have more sophisticated business management systems.

There is much ambiguity in the lines of reporting at AA, due to both the governance structure between the Board and management, and an overly operational Board. While Board involvement in operations has been discussed at length, the structure itself is a significant cause in blurring reporting lines. The Panel found evidence of Board Members becoming involved in operations outside of any formal lines of accountability. This is further impacted by an excessive number of Board Committees again dealing with operational decisions, mostly without staff input.

Within the Participation department there are two National Managers (participation and coaching development), both of whom have reporting lines to the CEO. They have one full time staff member between them (along with four part time and three casual employees). Again this has provided a confused reporting structure.

Within the HP Department, both the HP Manager and Head Coach have reporting obligations to the CEO and the Board. This in itself has caused

major accountability, trust and clarity issues leading from a multitude of decision making origin points. To the outsider this appears uncoordinated and non-strategic. This was a major cause for concern for the majority of interviewees with firsthand contact with the HP department.

It is evident the current structure does not fully reflect AA's Strategic Plan and comprises a seven person executive management team managing 29 positions (20 full time, six part time and three casual). This alone could be seen as excessive, and where not properly coordinated, directly impacts on strategic challenges.

The lack of dedicated commercial resources is alarming given its strategic importance to the sport and the sharp decline in AA's commercial revenue over the last eight years. With limited resources, AA should be prioritising investment into those areas delivering strategic outcomes and additional revenue into the sport.

An organisational structure better reflecting AA's strategic priorities, under a simplified executive management structure would be far more effective. Fewer managers with clear lines of accountability would be the preferred model. Under the current Strategic Plan, this could comprise a CEO with three General Managers: HP (HP Director), Corporate (COO) and Sport Development (Participation, Commercial, and Competitions).

However, the structure must follow the strategy, and the Panel has recommended a new Strategic Plan be agreed and adopted. Until the new Strategic Plan is agreed there should not be drastic structural change, but any changes should reflect AA's immediate strategic priorities. It is the Panel's view these are:

- a focus on achieving the best possible results at Rio
- implementing an appropriate governance model (principally Board composition and its operation)
- building and restoring relationships with key stakeholders
- clarifying the coaching framework
- restructuring AA finances to meet these immediate and medium term priorities
- gradually developing AA's commercial offerings so that new revenues can help drive growth in the business of athletics.

Recommendation 6

Following the development and adoption of the new Strategic Plan, the Board of AA must empower the CEO to restructure the business so it can directly address its most important strategic challenges, implement the appropriate structures and employ staff with the skills to address the strategic needs of the sport. Simultaneously, the Board must create the operational environment for the CEO and staff to achieve the strategies set out in the plan by providing appropriate leadership through the CEO.

Leadership and culture

The MAs were consistent in their criticism of some elements of AA leadership, particularly the lack of engagement. This sentiment was echoed by other stakeholders in the sport. As a result, difficult or challenging conversations were routinely shut down, causing issues to fester and trust with AA to disappear.

Deficiencies were not addressed either by individuals or by the Board responsible for managing performance, which is symptomatic of AA's lack of adequate performance management systems and professional development within the organisation.

No formal personal or professional development opportunities seem to exist within AA for staff. As a result there is a clear sense of frustration among AA staff at the lack of clarity in their role.

There was strong evidence of a poor staff culture, demonstrated by a 52.5 per cent staff turnover in the last financial year. This high turnover has a hidden cost to the organisation including severances, training, and information transfer to name a few. Given the already noted lack of sophistication in managing information within the sport, it is likely that AA has lost unacceptable levels of knowledge in the past five years as a result of high staff turnover. A consistent complaint from stakeholders during the Review was the inability to get any traction out of AA due to this revolving door of employees. It often became easier simply not to deal with AA at all instead choosing other channels, such as social media and other public forums.

AA has no human resources structure or capability. Employees have limited or outdated job descriptions, and there is a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. Staff members do not have clear performance measures and there is no process, formal or informal, for staff to receive performance feedback. The AA Board has already acknowledged this deficiency and has recently begun a process to address this.

The Panel observed that AA management did not have the authority to represent the organisation, even when it would seem to be both appropriate and strategically advantageous. This practice was also complicated by the noted over operational nature of the Board with Board Members making decisions or representing operational areas of the business with little to no coordination or appropriate authority internally.

AA's leadership needs to identify quality individuals and provide an environment that will build their personal and professional capability. Creating a more contented and stable workplace will not only drive improved performance, but also go some way in building relationships with stakeholders. Staff, in particular the senior management team, needs to be provided the environment by the CEO and the Board that empowers significant personal investment in the business which in turn will drive strategic outcomes.

Recommendation 7

The CEO must lead the adoption of appropriately sophisticated human resource management tools and policies to enable the business to effectively manage its staff and provide the expected levels of staff accountabilities to the organisation.

Planning and performance monitoring

The lack of engagement in the strategic planning process is reflected in what appears to be a general lack of planning within AA. This was highlighted in the decision making processes, which can best be described as reactionary.

The Board's operational focus means it has not spent sufficient time at a strategic level or developing program management improvement. Key planning documents have been poorly prepared, and although they technically satisfy ASC requirements, they lack substance. Planning appears to have been treated as a luxury AA has often not been able to afford.

In any organisation, much less an NSO running HP sport, planning is critical for success. The process of looking forward and identifying an outcome, then developing strategies and actions to achieve this outcome, is at the very essence of effective leadership. By treating planning as a luxury rather than as essential, Board and management did not fulfil a key aspect of their roles.

The Panel recommends the Board and management prioritise the development and implementation of appropriate planning documents, with a reporting framework established to monitor performance against them. It was clear to the Panel that many inside and out of AA did not understand the plan and could not demonstrate how activities were attributed and measured.

Recommendation 8

The Strategic Plan and aligned, costed and budgeted Operational Plan, adopted from Recommendation 2 must provide direct accountability to individuals' activities in the organisation. As a result of this planning, staff (in particular senior management) must then be performance managed in line with these plans to ensure the sport achieves its desired goals.

Brand development

Brand is perception, the attribution of ideals and characteristics people place on an organisation. Organisations with strong brands evoke desirable responses in large sections of society, or in large sections of desirable socio-economic groups. In many sporting organisations, brand is confused with a logo. Although an important communications tool, a logo is simply the recognisable visual representation of a brand.

There is no clear evidence of any brand development within AA other than the adoption of logos. Without a clear purpose, and a lengthy list of aspirational yet unimplemented values, the brand of AA appears to have been an afterthought.

Based on the perceptions of AA's stakeholders, and the public reaction to the issues at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, the Panel is of the opinion that the brand of AA is severely damaged.

Within AA, there is no real brand architecture. Some elements of the business have potential as commercial assets, but the lack of any AA brand or brand architecture and therefore value proposition to investors will make commercialising these next to impossible.

In contrast even with high turn-over of participants and a variety of management systems Little Athletics represents a much stronger brand in the public psyche. Even so, many stakeholders and the public at large perceived a large disconnect of these two brands and could not understand the links between either. This breakdown in the public's understanding of the brands was well-researched during the proposed merger in 2013 and the results showed it would be mutually beneficial for both AA and LAA to work together to build a stronger brand of athletics overall.

Irrespective of any joint brand coordination between these bodies AA must develop its own architecture and build a strong suite of recognisable attributes within the sport of athletics. This will not only provide benefit directly to the organisation, but also have positive impacts on the commercial value of its top athletes and other closely aligned organisations.

A strong brand is no longer what an organisation tells consumers, a brand is now dictated by consumers. The forums in Recommendation 1 are an important element of allowing everyone in the athletics family to be engaged in the development of the new brand identity and become ambassadors who live and breathe the brand values.

To rebuild a strong brand, athletics needs high profile individuals such as former athletes, current athletes, the AA Board, administrators at all levels, and the media being strong and supportive about AA. There are so many good stories in the sport; these need to be shared through social media and other relevant channels while the brand is being re-built. There are many proactive things which can be done while systems and processes are being rectified

Recommendation 9

Athletics must develop a vibrant, relevant and valued brand for the sport built on a strong understanding of what the sport offers and what the customers, fans, participants, members and stakeholders want from the sport as a brand. The resulting brand architecture must inform all of athletics' marketing, communications and property management enabling the sport to attract investment from government and the corporate sector.

Commercial diversity

AA, like many Olympic sports, benefited from the vibrant commercial landscape pre Sydney 2000 Olympic Games with many corporates looking to leverage this time. Telstra was aggressively sponsoring Olympic sport properties to entrench their brand in a changing telecommunications industry. It was the perfect storm of a home Olympics and a deregulated telecommunications market at the beginning of an industry boom.

In this environment, AA benefited by originally having a naming rights deal with Optus for its National Grand Prix Series. Leveraging this competitive tension in the market place, a significant new deal was signed with Telstra in 1999 to support what has become the AA Tour.

Following the Sydney Olympics, Telstra had established market share, so it began pulling back investment in Olympic sports between 2000 and 2004. Telstra's agreement with AA expired in 2007 and was not renewed. Like a number of Olympic sports, AA had been receiving money while providing minimal return to Telstra, having had no real concept of how to add commercial value to existing or prospective partners.

Combined with the reduction and ultimately, the conclusion of the Telstra deal, AA's overall commercial revenues steadily declined over the past decade as sponsors fell away. In fact between 2004 and 2009, AA's sponsorship income decreased from \$3.7m to \$100,000 (see figure 4. Sponsorship income). In the period from 2009 to 2014, AA's sponsorship income has not exceeded \$600,000 and generally remained flat at \$100,000.

AA's commercial revenue collapse has effectively been replaced by ASC funding, which has increased from \$3.1m to \$7.8m per annum over the 10 year period (see figure 5. ASC funding increase). ASC funding now represents 63.2 per cent of AA's annual revenue as compared to 36 per cent in 2004 (see figure 7. ASC contribution to total AA revenue). This does not factor in APC funding which comes indirectly from the ASC but is calculated as part of Games Association and Committee funding (AOC, APC and ACGA). This has increased from \$1m to \$2m over the same period.

AA has not had significant financial sponsorships since Telstra. As well, its property offering has not changed markedly despite changes in the broader competitive sporting environment.

The Australian national team, the National Series, and iRun are all potential assets, but the lack of any brand attributes, no coordinated selling point leveraging the community of athletics and a general apathy by the Australian public towards the sport of athletics make these difficult sales.

The very nature of athletics is a collective of individuals competing in different disciplines in different areas inside and out of the stadium. This does make it extremely difficult to create a team culture, much less a team as a commercial property but may provide a point of difference in the market place.

Individual athletes are far more marketable as a commercial property, yet AA has made little to no effort to use them in this regard.

FIGURE 4: SPONSORSHIP INCOME

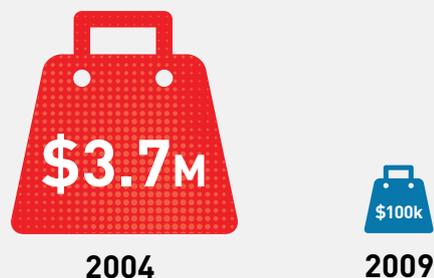


FIGURE 5: ASC FUNDING INCREASE

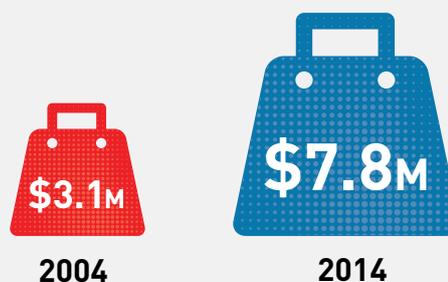


FIGURE 6: APC FUNDING INCREASE

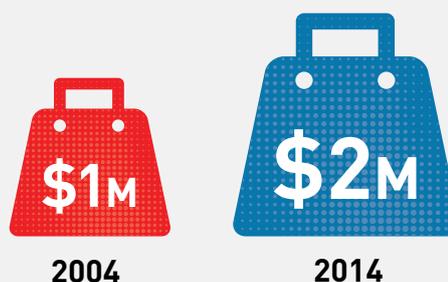
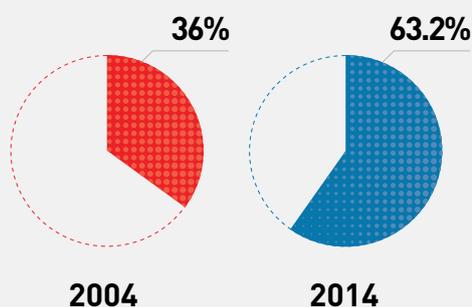


FIGURE 7: ASC CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL AA REVENUE



Athletes further advised the Panel they are rarely approached by AA and instead are more often engaged by their relevant MA to promote inter-club or even LAA to help promote the Little Athletics program. Given there are generally three or four athletes that shine at each Major Competition, AA should devise appropriate strategies to capitalise on this.

While it is difficult to attract mainstream media attention for athletes, appropriate planning and strategies would go some way in pre-empting success and leveraging it. The evidence is in sports such as swimming, surfing and triathlon which have taken individual athletes and assisted them to build valued brands with the proviso the sport also benefits. For a sport such as athletics, which is struggling internationally for sponsorship dollars, a joint strategy between the athletes and the national organisation would be beneficial for all.

The AA Tour has dwindling attendances. The typical response from many in the athletics community is to look back on the 'old days' with nostalgia, longing for a return to the past.

Developing iRun has been AA's attempt to capitalise on the recreational running community by creating a database of recreational runners. This sits at about 350,000 and stems from relationships AA and its members have forged with private event operators. Although much of the data is not accurate this potentially represents the best immediate commercial opportunity for AA, but there is no current strategy in place to optimise this potential.

A contributing factor to the decline in commercial growth is an organisational structure not reflecting AA's strategy. There is no Commercial department and AA has not dedicated appropriate resources to drive growth. The Communications and Marketing Manager has been tasked with this responsibility, despite a lack of experience and appropriate support personnel.

There is also an AA Foundation to source donations and tax-deductible financial gifts but no strategy to promote it, nor how any subsequent funds might be used. This has been sitting dormant until recently, with some work with the Australian Sports Foundation to investigate appropriate structures and legal frameworks. The Panel did come across a number of individual athletes who were attracting members of the public looking to donate and support their careers, but there was a uniform lack of knowledge of how to leverage these approaches or any understanding of AA's role in helping athletes either generate or receive such offers. Olympic sports in Australia have recently been building their philanthropic capability and the ability to be able to provide the right structure to meet the needs of individuals looking to support the sport is paramount.

In the short term AA should invest in developing its commercial strategy and capability. This should include improved insights into consumer perceptions of athletics and the brand. AA should continue to leverage expertise from the ASC in the development of commercial properties, as it currently is with a project aimed at providing a consumer styled product for teenage participants, largely informed by research.

In its current shape, AA should exercise caution in going to the marketplace with any new product unless it is in line with the new commercial strategy. This would include re-designing existing properties, or reshaping competitions. The Panel received a number of other ideas in the submissions and interviews which it will separately pass on to AA for consideration by its commercial team.

Finally, the MAs through their open lack of trust and limited willingness to allow AA to drive the commercial strategies for the sport, have left athletics well behind the more aggressive non-professional sports. Netball, gymnastics, surfing, swimming, hockey, triathlon, bowls, and basketball are each working nationally as a collective to provide greater value to commercial partners. The Panel acknowledges AA's role in creating this environment but the MAs, being small businesses, have a core responsibility to provide competition pathway opportunities meaning they have little capacity commercially. It has now become common place in other NSOs for MOUs with MAs to exist which enable the governing body to negotiate national deals with large brands looking for maximum and effective exposure. In step with the positive industry trend, the sport must agree to a national sponsorship strategy to combine and leverage assets right across the sport.

None of this can be achieved without the sport adopting a far more mature set of policies and procedures and aligned strategies with MAs when developing commercial properties.

Recommendation 10

AA, MAs and key stakeholders must begin to build a suite of commercially driven properties that provide a high level of value to the corporate sector. These properties must be informed by detailed consumer research and provide innovative solutions leading to more diverse revenue sources for the sport.

Finance

AA is currently a \$12 million per year business, deriving the vast majority of its revenue from ASC funding (see figure 7. ASC contribution to total AA revenue). Other revenue from sponsorship and membership affiliation contributes to the AA bottom line, but for various reasons previously addressed these are now insignificant in the context of AA's overall operations.

The Panel commissioned an independent provider to carry out financial analysis of AA for the period FY04 to FY14. The following summarises the detailed report provided to the Panel.

The analysis found that AA has become a significantly larger organisation since 2004.

The report confirmed that all of AA's financial growth has occurred since FY10 with AA revenue increasing from FY10 to FY14 by 60 per cent to \$12.3m (+\$4.6m) and expenditure increasing by 61.8 per cent to \$12.2m (+\$4.7m). Over the six year period FY04 to FY10 AA's annual revenue had in fact declined by \$1.1m to \$7.6m. As discussed in the Decreased Commercial Investment and the Increased Dependence on Government sections, the significant changes to AA's finances over the period since FY04 have been the decline in sponsorship revenue (\$3.7m in FY2004 to \$0.1m in FY10) and increased government funding.

In conjunction with recording significant financial growth since FY04, AA has achieved a relatively small net surplus for each of the past 10 years which is seen by AA as a key corporate objective for maintaining a sustainable and secure financial position. Although, in the case of a sustained loss of revenue or a significant unbudgeted increase in expenditure the Panel believes the current surplus of \$2.6m (including a property investment of \$1m) would not be sufficient to protect the sport in the long term.

Decreased commercial investment

The significant factor in AA's revenue growth has been an increase in funding by the ASC and various other bodies such as the AOC, APC (see figure 6. APC funding) and ACGA. As a result AA has become heavily dependent on these sources for income, which accounted for more than 80 per cent of AA's FY14 revenue. Also, unlike the majority of other sports in Australia AA does not generate an income from the MAs.

Between FY04 and FY09, the increase in mainly ASC funding (see figure 7. ASC contribution to total AA revenue), although not related, offset an equivalent decline in AA's sponsorship revenues (see figure 4. Sponsorship income). Since FY10, new government initiatives impacting on areas such as participation and HP resulted in even greater levels of funding for AA that has continued to drive up the total income received by AA from \$3.1m to \$7.8m, which equates to a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) increase of 8.8 per cent over the past four years. The additional ASC funding has meant as mentioned earlier AA is now almost completely reliant on the government to undertake its core activities.

FIGURE 8: TOTAL INCOME

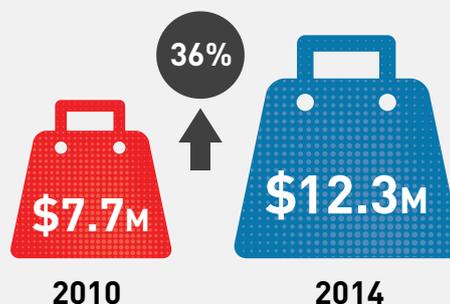


FIGURE 9: TOTAL EXPENDITURE

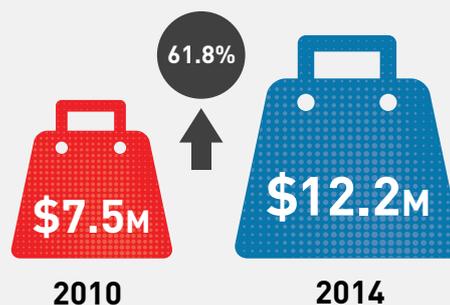
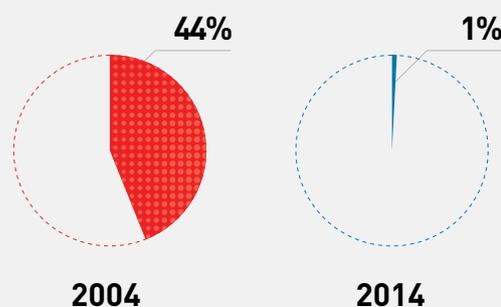


FIGURE 10: SPONSORSHIP% OF TOTAL AA INCOME



Impacting on this reliance has been the situation where AA has been unable to generate any significant sponsorship income since the expiry of the Telstra agreement in 2007. Sponsorship now accounts for only 1 per cent of AAs total income in FY14 compared with 44 per cent in FY04. This significant change in revenue streams now leaves the funding from the APC having increased 2.7 times since FY04 as the second largest source of income behind ASC funding. Although, it must be noted the APC funding is passed on to AA as it is largely derived from government sources also.

Increased dependence on government

The increase in total income over the 10 year period has been predominantly allocated to the HP program meaning the cost of the program has steadily increased by 5.6 per cent per annum since FY04 and now accounts for more than 55 per cent of AA's total expenses. Much of the increase in HP expenditure has been targeted at the Paralympic program, international competitions and HP Coaches. In contrast the total expenditure for AA since FY04 grew at 3.4 per cent per annum.

Within AA, investment in elite athletes has increased whereas the average expenditure per non-HP participant has decreased from \$243 in FY04, to \$163 in FY14. The greater impact of the growth in HP expenditure has been the decline in grassroots development of the sport, which has fallen by around \$400,000 since FY04.

Whilst there has been a significant increase in HP spending over the past decade and in particular since 2009 there has not been a corresponding increase in world class performance for the sport at identified benchmark events such as World Championships. These changes have left athletics with a disproportionate concentration of available funds being allocated to elite outcomes with little focus on the future growth of the sport typically seen in other successful Olympic and League sports such as basketball, netball, swimming or gymnastics.

Under AWE, investment into HP sport is prioritised to sports demonstrating success. Noting AA's increase in funding without a parallel increase in performance, AA's future HP funding is currently on track to decrease.

Excluding HP expenses, other expense areas grew at a CAGR of only 0.8 per cent over the period. While in other categories expenditure did

FIGURE 11: ASC FUNDING VERSUS OLYMPIC & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL OUTCOMES



fluctuate between FY06 and FY14 administration expenses increased 82 per cent at a CAGR of 6.9 per cent, this most notably represents a faster rate of growth than income.

Consequently, the organisation is spending a similar proportion today, around 20 per cent of its revenue, on administration as it did in FY06, despite the significant income growth it has received from government funding. Finally, from a productivity perspective, the average salary per employee has remained flat, as has the revenue generated per employee.

Increased investment during the recent Olympic cycle

Between the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the London 2012 Olympic Games, income and consequently expenditure increased by 17 per cent with the main contributor being government funding, leading to the HP program expenditure increasing by 27 per cent and outstripping the revenue growth. This increase was mostly due to government initiatives and programs funding available to NSOs generally during the London Olympic Games cycle rather than innovative spending by the sport. The other major beneficiary of expenditure over the cycle was administration, which similarly increased by 27 per cent whereas expenditure on grassroots sport development between the Games increased by only 2 per cent. Again, this increased investment has not seen any comparable increase in results between the two Olympic Games.

Lack of innovation in sport investment

AA has strengthened its balance sheet position over recent times and since FY04 the businesses' net asset position has improved from \$0.4m to \$2.6m. This is a result of the 10 consecutive years of net surpluses in financial results. AA has also consistently achieved or exceeded its annual budget targets with actual performance exceeding budget in all but two of the past 11 years. In five of the past six years, the net results have been within 1 per cent of budget which illustrates an ability of the organisation to predict and control revenues and expenditure. From the documentation cited and discussions with management the Panel did not identify any key areas of concern with regards to budget preparation and monitoring.

What this result does highlight is the lack of innovation in the sport to develop its business. AA has an accounting behaviour based on simple investment strategies and a highly risk averse practice of budgeting well within its capacity irrespective of the indicators showing inverse trends for revenue and expenditure. This leaves the sport of athletics nationally with a one dimensional business model.

Summary

Although the financial analysis shows AA applying diligence to its annual budgeting and revenue management, it demonstrates that both the Board and its senior management have failed to identify significant changes in the revenue streams and apply timely and effective strategies to address these deficiencies. Most notably the Board Members oversaw a fast declining commercial and sponsorship income and yet continued to approve short term strategies which have led the sport to become almost solely reliant on government revenue.

This means the AA Board has continued over the period since FY04 to allow the sports income and revenue to become highly dependent on government funding and has failed to react to the highly visible indicators of dramatically decreasing revenue streams such as commercial sponsorships. Essentially the sport's leadership has delivered the key elements of the sport in the same manner irrespective of the changing HP and economic environment they were operating in - it appears that they were essentially doing the same things in the same way and hoping for different results.

This has left the sport with a product that is of currently questionable value to sponsors, broadcasters and general audiences as well as a HP system solely dependent on government funding.

While the sport needs to be accountable for these results, it highlights the weakness in the ASC's pre-AWE performance management of sports that such a situation could continue without raising alarm until now.

Recommendation 11

AA must develop financial strategies that create growth in the sport through targeted investment. These strategies must also achieve growth in participation, commercialisation and improved results at the HP level of the sport.

These financial strategies must be included in the costed and budgeted Operational Plans.

Coaching

Development and delivery of coach accreditation

Until 2003, ATFCA was responsible for the design and delivery of coaching accreditation and coach development. This role changed following the Elliott Review which put forward a position that AA must accept responsibility for and be accountable for coaching. It must develop a vibrant coaching system which, with the support and guidance of ATFCA, will produce coaches at all levels that provide inspiration and establish an environment where athletes learn and improve their performances. This is particularly critical at club level.

The effect of AA taking a greater leadership position in coach accreditation has been the disintegration of the relationship between AA and ATFCA, and a coaching accreditation system which is confusing and incomplete due to the lack of application of sufficient resources. As a result many coaches have had their development stunted.

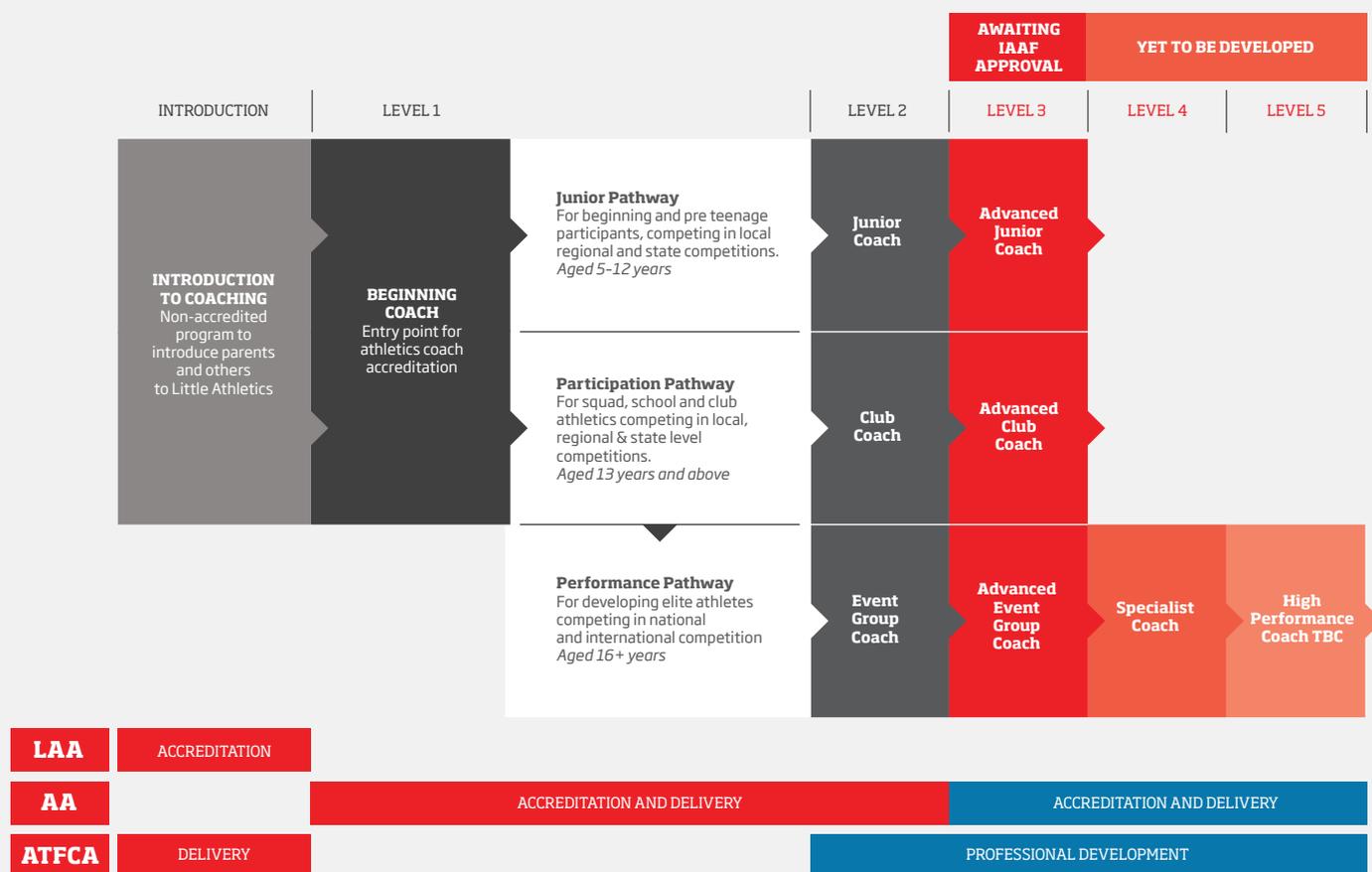
The breakdown in the relationship between AA and ATFCA has been detrimental to the issues in the coaching accreditation system.

Coach accreditation is the province of AA with the ASC and the IAAF only recognising one accreditation body per country, and ATFCA needs to work closely with AA to help streamline ATFCA's beginning coaching and AA's Level 1 accreditation. ATFCA then, in conjunction with AA and other coach educators, needs to complete the accreditation content, delivery method and accredited providers of Levels 2 to 5 for AA. Beyond this support and integration function, ATFCA could become the Track and Field Coaches Association, similar to other sports that incorporate coaches associations (see 5.2 Coaching development, support and the coaching profession).

While progress has been made in developing a single coaching framework across both AA and LAA, the roll out of the accreditation was widely criticised throughout the consultation process. At present, AA has only fully implemented Level 1 through to Advanced Level 2, creating a scenario where many coaches technically cannot yet progress beyond these levels.

The Athletics Coach Accreditation Framework is set out below.

FIGURE 12: ATHLETICS COACH ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK



■ CURRENT ■ PROPOSED

Those coaches at the elite end are unable to obtain a Level 4 or 5 accreditation from AA as these have not been developed (although ATFCA have these levels in place).

A bottle neck occurs below the elite coaching level as developing coaches receive little support or opportunity to advance along the pathway.

There is only one-and-a-half full-time equivalent staff member within AA to manage all facets of coach development. The Panel believes this insufficient to coordinate and deliver coach accreditation much less put together all the resource materials for online and blended learning purposes. Resources must be found immediately to begin to deliver coaching accreditation as well as coach education and development.

If AA is unable to allocate sufficient resources internally to develop and deliver coaching accreditation, it may consider outsourcing this to a third party while retaining ownership of the accreditation system. The Panel understands ATFCA have provided AA with a costed and budgeted proposal to develop and deliver coaching accreditation, and this should be considered in any outsourcing discussion.

Coaching development, support and the coaching profession

Beyond the coaching accreditation system, the lack of any strategy to support coaches was often highlighted as an area needing attention.

Within the AA organisational structure, the clear focus is on coaching accreditation. The strategies and operational activity around broader coaching development remain unclear. Once coaches have been accredited, the relationship with AA essentially finishes after the payment of an annual fee covering insurance.

There is a significant difference between coaching accreditation and professional development of coaches. No one is currently servicing professional development for athletics coaches in this country in a systematic or well-considered way.

There is an opportunity to utilise the most experienced coaches in Australia to help develop up-and-coming coaches in the HP pathway, and assist young coaches operating in LAA centres, athletics clubs (or simply with athletes), and school teachers responsible for school athletics programs. Coaching forums, information sharing, mentoring and coaching talent identification are all realistic short-term activities which could be implemented in the sport.

There is significant expertise within ATFCA and an opportunity for this body to be better utilised. A collaborative whole-of-sport coaching accreditation system bringing in the expertise and capabilities of AA, LAA and ATFCA would be a better model.

The traditional role played by coaches associations in other sports is that of an industry body providing ongoing, valued professional support to coaches

to improve their craft. This presents an opportunity for AA to reengage ATFCA to augment its capability in the coach development space.

The significant difference with these sports is the coaches associations are more focused as professional development bodies for the coaches in those sports, offering mentoring and support to build the most experienced and successful coaches in the world through connected strategies articulated in the sport's HP Plan. Their role in accreditation will generally include input into the development and/or delivery of accreditation programs as a registered training provider. The NSO, appropriately, owns the accreditation program and is accountable for its delivery.

Athletics stands alone as an individual sport with a limited professional coaching market. Sports like swimming, golf, tennis, triathlon and combat sports have established markets where coaches are paid for their expertise. This is not limited to elite athletes, and is a concept which is being increasingly embraced by broader society; the rise of personal training as a career is evidence of this.

Within athletics, there is a clear culture of reluctance among coaches to charge for the services. This results in a number of unintended and largely negative outcomes:

- Athletes expect to get coaching for free, which affects their perception of value
- Athletes do not drive greater accountability and performance from their coach; the coach is donating their time
- Coaches do not drive greater accountability and performance in themselves; they are giving away or volunteering their time

Coaches do not receive appropriate recognition for their services, which can result in:

- Latching on to any successful athlete who comes into their tutelage, as this can be a ticket onto national teams
- A reluctance to pass athletes on to other coaches who may be better placed to maximise an athlete's potential
- A reluctance to be too hard on athletes for fear of driving the athlete away

Some coaches who charge for their services have been able to establish solid businesses. Getting their athletes to pay for their time is understood, accepted, and drives a professional relationship between the two.

High Performance pathway

The lack of progression and development for coaches was regularly identified as an issue. With only a small number of AA-employed coaches, there is a ceiling many coaches reach with no prospect of progressing. The current HP Plan has actually resulted in less coaches being employed through the SIS/SAS network. While the rationale behind this is accepted by AA's HP partners (the AIS and SIS/SAS), it contributes to a coaching pathway bottle neck.

The current approach to athletics coaching must change over time. Athletics coaching needs to become a profession. This could be through:

- employment by clubs to run Little Athletics and junior programs (much like learn to swim)
- coaches buying into national participation products offering consumer outcomes (much like the tennis examples of hot shots and cardio tennis)
- employment by schools, especially primary, to run PE/athletic skills programs (daily PE).

Coaches would then have the capacity to develop talented young athletes who pay for their professional skills.

A coach then needs to make a decision whether they also want to become an HP coach which will require:

- obtaining all coaching accreditation levels (noting AA is yet to provide all levels)
- specialising in one or two events
- satisfying AA criteria about how they would fit within the AA HP program.

It is only in this way they would be eligible to be part of a national team and go to major championships under the AA banner. To this end the AA HP Director plays an important role in overseeing HP coaching. HP Coaching needs to be the province of the HP Director, who should be tasked with:

- 'professionalising' coaches
- establishing a clear pathway
- setting criteria for being considered to be eligible for progression along the pathway
- developing a selection methodology
- creating metrics for coaches who wish to pursue coaching athletes to national and international events.

In summary the current coaching system is fragmented and has several stakeholders looking to control and at times, overlap elements. The Panel recognises many of these stakeholders have significant experience to offer the sport. In order for AA to lead in this space they must facilitate bringing these elements together with the clear outcome of ensuring athletics has a world leading coaching system.

Recommendation 12

The coaching forum in Recommendation 1 must be used as a catalyst for clearly defining roles and responsibilities in coaching oversight and support, and a clear delineation between the three components of a coaching framework: accreditation, professional development, and HP.

- Coaching accreditation will remain the responsibility of AA, but AA must work with ATFCA to reach agreement on the consolidation of all existing and proposed accreditation, including content, resources, delivery arms and methods, as well as schedules. There can be no dual accreditation offering by ATFCA beyond 2015.
- AA must dedicate sufficient resourcing to appropriately deliver coaching accreditation, or look to outsource it. Any AA outsourcing should consider using ATFCA as a delivery arm, but AA must retain full control of intellectual property and quality assurance.
- Coaching professional development, support and creating a coaching profession will be the province of ATFCA. ATFCA will provide a business plan for AA's consideration, outlining how it will deliver services to all AA coaches to assist them in developing, improving and refining their craft.
- This business plan should stand alone in these areas, and only include accreditation support upon agreement with AA. AA will work with the ATFCA to finalise a business plan based on available resources given AA's overall financial capacity.
- HP Coaching will be the province of the AA HP Director, who must establish and communicate a HP coaching pathway, including a selection methodology with clear criteria and metrics for progression.

Officiating

Development

Throughout the consultation process officiating was not a topic discussed in length by stakeholders, but one which was consistently highlighted as in need of attention.

The development of officials is contemplated within AA's plan under the pillar of Competition. Specifically, AA identify as a success indicator more officials recruited and developed nationally through the Officials Development Framework.

Management of this rests with the Officials Administrator, a part time position within the Competition section of AA. An Officials Advisory

Committee also operates, and this group provides oversight. Although this again demonstrates confused lines of responsibility for driving strategic outcomes and to some extent has impacted on AA ability to achieve its aims in this area.

It is the Panel's understanding, based on the interviews, the Officials Development Framework is yet to be completed.

Based on previous commentary around a more strategic and rationalised organisational structure, officiating would fit more appropriately in the Participation section of AA. This is critical given the requirement for MA engagement in the roll-out of a national participation plan with a transition for those identified as potential High Performance officials.

The Officials Development Framework needs to be structured to leverage the MAs in course delivery. MAs are an integral link in delivering official education courses given the lack of internal resources within AA.

More important is the need for AA to build a network of officials which can perform both the traditional task of adjudicating competition (with all of its complex skills and requirements) and also be able to provide, at the appropriate levels, officials who can ensure participants not on the HP pathway enjoy the sport. It is recognised that Australia has and still does produce some of the world's most respected officials but consistent commentary during the review highlighted at certain levels and particularly at the junior ranks these same officials become a barrier.

Like many sports in Australia officials become brand ambassadors at the community level and play a critical role in the sport being seen as an inclusive and attractive proposition.

Systems and Support

Without an operational Officials Development Framework, it is not surprising there is little structured support in place for officials in the sport. Training is lacking, with the current official accreditation scheme reflective of traditional structures used in other sports historically.

AA with an Officials Development Framework must refine the training needs for officials by defining the roles and training required while cognisant of the resources available for delivery and implementation. Currently AA are utilising a blended learning approach i.e. combining in classroom and online approaches for the development and education of officials. This strategy will meet the needs of volunteers and would efficiently deploy the resources of the organisation.

Recognising this is a sector-wide issue for sport, athletics officials are poorly remunerated, making attraction and retention more difficult. Hence, without adequate training and recognition in place, there are no real signs of any investment in officials by AA.

A complicating barrier for AA is its disconnect from LAA and Masters in this area. All other sports in Australia with a connected junior-senior pathway have very similar parallel systems in place that collect, develop,

and encourage those involved in the junior levels to continue their roles as officials often as their children grow and move into senior sport. The obvious issue is the extremely high level of participation drop off between the organisations which has a direct impact on officials and for that matter coaches.

High Performance pathway

The lack of investment into officials is not consigned to grassroots, with officials required to self-fund the accreditation needed to advance along the officials' pathway. This approach is not conducive for developing elite officials in the HP part of the sport.

Despite this, Australian officials have been able to navigate the pathway and reach the elite level. Of the 45 International Technical Officials on the IAAF panel, Australia has four which is the equal highest of any country (equal only with Portugal). From these 45 approximately 20 are appointed to each major championship, with the remainder made up of local officials. Australia regularly has appointments, sometimes multiple, at these events.

There is only one International Technical Delegate and one International Photo Finish judge appointed at each major championship. Bill Bailey and Janet Nixon have been appointed in these roles for every major championship since the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games and London 2012 Olympic Games respectively and this must be commended. A challenge for AA is to develop the framework which encourages these types of results for officials as well as providing a growth strategy and succession plan overall in the sport.

Recommendation 13

AA must complete the Officials Development Framework once it has a new Strategic Plan in place. This framework must give clear direction to increasing the numbers and experience of officials and provide guidance of how officials fit into the overall growth strategies for the sport.

As a support to this framework the AA participation plan must address the following issues:

- courses
- continuing professional development
- resource materials
- competition schedules
- selection criteria for major competitions
- uniforming.

HIGH *Performance*

AA developed its most recent HP plan in 2013 in response to the launch of Australia's Winning Edge. As identified earlier, planning within the sport is often reactionary, and the most recent HP Plan is another case in point. In the context of the short timeframes set by the ASC for NSOs to develop HP Plans in response to AWE, there was a lack of stakeholder engagement in the development of the AA HP Plan.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Planning to perform

As referenced in the Governance and Administration chapter, AA must follow the examples of best practice in the industry where the Board sets strategic direction and the CEO drives operation. In relation to HP, the HP Director must be accountable to the CEO for driving HP outcomes, and the Head Coach in turn must be accountable to the HP Director. AA will need to consider how to manage this governance relationship between the Board, CEO, HP Director, and the Head Coach. The review and clarification of sub-committee responsibilities (discussed in Governance and Administration chapter) will play a key role in this arrangement.

AA developed its most recent HP Plan in 2013 in response to the launch of AWE. As identified earlier, planning within the sport is often reactionary, and the most recent HP Plan is another case in point. In the context of the short timeframes set by the ASC for NSOs to develop HP Plans in response to AWE, there was a lack of stakeholder engagement in the development of the AA HP Plan.

This is not an issue exclusive to AA, as other NSOs faced the same issue. The difference noted by the Panel through consultations has been the lack of engagement through the HP Plan's implementation. Specifically, there was a noted lack of buy-in and understanding among coaches and athletes of the HP Plan and its connection to AWE.

Those to understand the HP Plan were largely positive towards it and believed it was, generally, appropriate for delivering the objectives set out in AWE.

The HP Plan's vision is for AA's HP program to:

- identify athletes with the potential to contribute to the program's aims
- provide levels of increasing status and support for those athletes most likely to meet the program's aims
- provide appropriate opportunities, experiences and performance management at each level of the program so that, should they progress within the sport, athletes are prepared to succeed at the highest level.

The stated philosophy of the HP Plan is an investment in performance, not a reward for past success. The keys to success in the plan are (in order):

- athletes
- coaches
- support services (e.g. medical services and the sports sciences)
- facilities
- competition structure.

In parallel to this review, AA conducted an internal HP review into the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (the Glasgow Review). The Glasgow Review did not use the HP Plan as its basis of assessment. It is not this Panel's place to make this assessment, however there are clearly some elements of the HP Plan which have been achieved and others which have not. As flagged earlier, the Panel believes an assessment of AA's performance against its HP Plan should be an immediate priority.

One of the key planning documents to complement a HP Plan is the national team selection policy. The Panel found evidence that while a clearly articulated selection policy is in place, the Board has diverted from it and involved itself in selection issues. This has manifested into consistent issues for AA both internally and externally. Where the policy is found not to be working, the Board should review and modify it as needed.

While one of the HP Plan's strategies focusses on HP coaching, the Panel found little if any recognition of personal coaches (current and past) in the HP system. Further, there is a lack of transparency on which coaches do get paid and how much.

While this forms part of the broader issues around coaching which have been discussed earlier in the report, there is a specific aspect of the coaching element of the HP Plan needing further consideration. The HP Plan provides for two coaches for each discipline, located in different states.

The Panel believes this approach to be overly bureaucratic considering the resources available to AA; put simply there is one layer too many. It is the Panel's view an optimal approach would involve a Head Coach, Event Group Coach and an Event Coach, but this is beyond the resources of AA.

Given AA has just advertised for the Head Coach role, the obvious layer to disappear is the Event Coaches. This would leave the Event Group Coaches to report directly to the AA Head Coach, noting this will result in a lot of direct reports. Initially there will not be the ideal number of paid Event Group Coaches; however, it will provide time for the coaching structure to evolve.

The HP Director must have the ideal structure to which they are working, as this will be the foundation to their HP Plan. The Panel understands the following athletics event groups exist:

- running short distance (sprints, relays, hurdles, and middle distance events)
- running long distance (3km, 5km, 10km, marathon, steeple and cross country)
- jumps (high, long, triple, pole vault)
- throws (shot, discus, javelin and hammer)
- walks.

These may well be broken up in different ways, but essentially the proposal is six or seven coaches of event groups who would report directly to the AA Head Coach.

The Panel could see many models working effectively in the right circumstances. AA will select the model it deems the most suitable. Whichever model AA chooses, it must be clear and transparent with clarity around the processes, it must use the Event Group Coach as a mentor to coach-the-coach. This will complement an athlete's daily training environment with an existing personal coach.

International performance

International performance results for Australian athletes have been largely stagnant in able-bodied athletes across multiple Olympic cycles. Under AA's HP Plan there is a focus on developing junior athletes at the under 17 and under 19 level, and then investing in open age athletes who are achieving performance benchmarks.

Para athletics is an integral part of AA, and is therefore accountable to many of the same outcomes as able-bodied athletics. Para athletics has seen the developing National Athlete Support Structure (NASS) process lead to a greater performance focus and subsequent results than in the past. This element of the sport has also effectively engaged with the AIS notably leading to the deployment of a para-engineer who is positively impacting upon podium athlete projects through innovative design of equipment.

The nature of the sport means most athletes do not begin achieving significant international results at senior level until they are at least 23 years of age (later in some disciplines). Under the current HP Plan this creates an issue for athletes in the 19 to 23 age bracket as they are outside of the AA junior development program range but are not yet achieving international results to warrant significant investment.

This was identified as an issue in both retention and development of athletes. Common feedback from stakeholders suggested athletes are largely left to their own devices in navigating this period of their development. Some are able to obtain support from their relevant SIS/SAS, but this is at times at odds with the strategy of AA.

While acknowledging the finite resources of AA and its HP budget, the use of those resources should be critically analysed. Based on results data, international success at under 17 level has proven to be a poor predictor of success at senior level. Under 19 success is a better indicator, but conversion is still relatively low demonstrated by data provided during the review showing less than a 10 per cent conversion from the Under 19 program athletes between 2005-2010 into A Qualifier athletes in the senior ranks. In fact more than 50 per cent of males and 36 per cent of females become inactive in the system post junior representation.

A common recommendation to the Panel was to establish an under 23 program to continue development of athletes through to the formative years of senior competition. This seems sensible and should be considered.

This was often accompanied by a suggestion of under 23 athletes having increased competition in the Asian region. This would serve the dual purpose of improving under 23 competition, but in a more cost-effective means than sending athletes to Europe and/or North America.

There are issues in simply redirecting resources from the junior development programs. Athletics is already a sport that has emerging athletes poached by other professional sporting codes. More efficient use of development funding from under 17 through to under 23 is the solution.

The Panel believe the HP Director should facilitate further thinking on the most efficient and effective use of resources, but offer the following for consideration:

- Attracting/retaining young talent - It is difficult for any sport trying to compete with the professional football codes or other sports/occupations which offer money at an early age and attach some glamour around it. However AA does have the Pro League which, with some tweaking, may provide a partial solution no other sports have. The idea of 'virtual' competition also has merit, presenting another way for young athletes to be rewarded. This could be fortnightly, monthly by way of a points table with recognition, possibly attendance at a special event/discipline camp, or inclusion in a nearby coaching hub.
- Building on current success - The Junior and Youth programs in themselves are important activities and AA has invested much time and energy in creating positive environments. This must continue and become part of the overall holistic approach to identifying and nurturing talented athletes with increased results and participation through the under 23 ranks and into opens.
- Under 23 concept - There are various events which cannot all be blanketed with the same style program. It will be up to the Event Group Coach, (along with the Event Coach depending on the structure) to map out the ideal program for each event. These are then approved by the AA Head Coach and passed through to the HP Director to make final decisions on which programs can be supported and the athletes within each program. This pathway should begin as early as possible for the athlete, but should almost be a standard program from year to year pending resources and domestic, national and international competitions.
- Developing cohorts - When and where possible, gathering a group of young talented athletes who can train and live together at certain times during a year combined with a strong domestic competitive season may be just as effective as a structured program.

Leading edge systems and processes

Effective HP programs are built around leading edge systems and processes. The Panel did not observe this in place within AA, largely due to the fragmented nature of athletics and its HP program.

In particular, SSSM within athletics is not leading edge. It is the Panel's view this is in part a by-product of the ineffective coaching pathway in the sport, which results in a lack of understanding among coaches. The existing coaching system allows inexperienced personal coaches to continue through to the elite level without any intensive professional development. As discussed earlier, athletes are given the freedom to stay with a coach who may have no alignment to AA's HP systems and processes.

AA has access to the AIS' Athlete Management System (AMS), an online platform which allows for information sharing among different elements of a HP program (e.g. coach, physiotherapist, strength and conditioning, nutrition). The level of sophistication in the use of AMS within athletics is questionable. The system is only as valuable as the information being put in to, and taken out of it. Where coaches do not use or understand the AMS, the SSSM needs of the athlete are being compromised.

Similarly, if AA is not driving compliance with AMS use, they are not creating an appropriate HP environment. This results in a higher incidence of preventable injuries. Evidence presented to the Panel by several stakeholders demonstrated how Australian athletes suffered injuries where coordinated management would have prevented them.

SSSM support for athletes is generally improved when they train with an AA employed coach in a daily training environment with close proximity to quality SSSM services (a SIS/SAS or the AIS). This is not revolutionary, but worth highlighting.

Some stakeholders believe strongly in the concept of elite training hubs, while others strongly support the ability for athletes to stay in a home environment with their coach of choice. Regardless of the training environment, cutting edge SSSM support is needed. Three main barriers to access are:

- a lack of coaching development to upskill those coaches with little to no touch point with AA
- a system which offers no incentive to coaches to progress athletes into an AA-coordinated coaching environment
- no consequences for athletes not complying with the SSSM program, especially the self-managed online system.

On the third point, the system must be closely linked to NASS funding, and for those not receiving NASS funding currently, their records, or lack thereof, will be stored and when consideration for NASS funding occurs, the athlete's management of the AMS will be a significant consideration.

As has been discussed, these are not easy things to fix but essential for the growth of Australian athletics. A possible delineation of responsibility within coaching was discussed in Chapter 5 Coaching.

Once in competition, another critical element of athlete support services is team management. The process of selecting team management should be reviewed to ensure the right individuals are selected to best serve athlete needs. A particular aspect of this should include gender equity in team management positions. Given the 50-50 gender balance of athletes in representative teams, the female representation in team management roles should be more reflective of the gender composition of teams.

All AA programs, but especially HP pathways, should reflect an increasing gender balance and diversity. Coaches, officials, team management, and selectors must be targeted to enter pathways, and if already in the pathway, targeted for professional development, education and opportunities.

Athlete support

Like most Olympic sports, the vast majority of athletes do not derive significant income from athletics. Without access to funding support from the ASC through AA, most cannot afford to compete in the sport beyond university age (which, as noted earlier, is often prior to the age where athletes will be achieving peak performance). Even those to receive support struggle to make ends meet without outside income.

A common statement in stakeholder interviews was you don't go into athletics to make money.

Aside from direct funding support, athletes and coaches also receive other in-kind support in the form of SSSM servicing, training camps and competition attendance.

AA's NASS outlines a tiered approach based on time to podium. Where possible, support is to extend to coaches of these athletes.

With such a heavy reliance on AA support among athletes, but limited AA resources, it is obvious there will be athletes and coaches dissatisfied with their level of support. This is inevitable, but can be managed with strong communication from AA around how and why decisions are made. The rationale for NASS funding decisions exists, so AA need to focus on sharing this rationale and standing by decisions.

If there is any flexibility once an athlete has improved dramatically, this should form part of the process and also be communicated. Based on the feedback received through stakeholder consultations, part of this communication should include a clear and transparent plan on how athletes and their coaches are supported in all ways. As outlined above, support extends beyond direct athlete funding. This needs to be better documented to improve understanding of what athletes and their coaches actually receive.

Aside from providing a key stakeholder group with information, in conjunction with improved benchmarking, it may also be of benefit to AA in determining any areas in which they may be under-investing.

As NASS is generally insufficient to solely support AA's elite group of high performing athletes (for 2014 NASS provided a range of funding to 65 able-bodied and 37 para athletes), most look for alternate streams of income. This includes part-time work and support from family. Some have the performance levels to get earnings from the IAAF Diamond League and other commercial sponsorship deals. The role of agents was often cited during consultations on this point, with some questioning the imbalance of power towards agents caused by the IAAF accreditation system. Essentially, some athletes (generally younger and less established) have felt compelled to go with agents for all of their management needs in order to have access to IAAF events. This seems undesirable to the Panel and something which should be further investigated by AA.

One thing seems certain; this issue is intricately connected to the coaching structure, AWE and the HP Director's HP Plan.

An athlete should plan their training and competition schedule with his or her personal coach, and depending on the model AA chooses, also the Event Group, and the Event Coach if applicable. It should be approved by the AA Head Coach and targeted to achieve success for the coming major event. Mapping out this plan will involve all the necessary training, national and international events required. This plan is submitted to the HP Director to make final decisions based on resources and strategic HP planning. The HP Director will then direct AA logistics personnel to make all appropriate arrangements, including negotiating with the Head Coach on what can or cannot happen.

Domestic competitions and pathways

One of the most regular pieces of feedback the Panel received was in relation to domestic competitions and pathways. Stakeholders had particularly strong, but inconsistent views on the national series. Many simply hoped for things to return to the glory days.

The current competition structure involves the domestic calendar through the Australian summer, with HP athletes needing to peak again through the Australian winter for the European summer season. This in itself is a debated approach, with some believing it detrimental to performance at benchmark events which take place during the Australian winter. Supporters of the dual peaking model point to the indoor season in Europe which occurs across the Australian summer period, and the belief more competition and hard racing results in better fitness, understanding competition and understanding how to race.

The Panel received many suggestions on how to improve the domestic competition. The Panel accepts that Australia needs a domestic competition structure during the Australian summer, but there is room for improvement. The HP Director must influence the future direction of domestic competition as a key component of the revised HP Plan.

There is an apparent lack of strategy in place around the domestic competition structure; this is despite competition being a strategic pillar of AA. The national series is the highest form of domestic competition, and AA has incorporated participation in these meets into its selection policy to ensure its best athletes compete.

The 2015 AA Tour commenced on 25 January in Hobart, with events running almost weekly through to the national series final at the Sydney Track Classic and Melbourne IAAF meet on 14 and 21 March respectively. This is followed by the National Championships in Brisbane one week later.

The 2015 AA Tour encompasses eight event visits to all capital cities (except Darwin) as well as Newcastle. Generally those in the sport thought it was a good thing athletics gets a showcase moment in each major market across the country. This is despite an acknowledgement of dwindling crowds and media interest in these events.

The importance of the AA Tour to athlete development varied depending on the stakeholder and their interests or needs. Among athletes, the AA Tour's importance depended largely on the depth of competition and how the timing worked into their performance plan. There was always the balance between needing to qualify and not overworking or peaking several months out from a major event.

A particularly contentious issue is bringing international athletes out to Australia. The original rationale for this was to increase competition, particularly in events where Australia has a stand-out athlete with little domestic depth. Over time the promotional value of having internationally recognised names compete became the primary motivation.

Most recently the calibre of athletes brought out do not seem to be hitting either mark. International athletes of mass appeal are generally in sprint events where Australia does not have world best talent. Conversely, the HP Director has had little to no input in decisions around international athletes, suggesting competition for our local elite athletes is not high on the agenda.

While the motive is blurred, the reality is the funding of international athletes comes from AA's HP budget. The ASC's view on this has been made clear; it has recently questioned the value of this as an appropriate use of AWE investment into the sport. This should give some indication to AA on its future direction in this area.

For multiple reasons ranging from commercial through to HP outcomes it is clear to the Panel the domestic competition structure requires significant change. This could be the sport's most important innovation and, if managed well, should change the brand of athletics in Australia.

Recommendation 14

The HP Director is to review the current HP Plan and then spend time educating and delivering clear answers for all athletes, coaches, SSSM providers, SIS/SAS, and other relevant stakeholders around their roles and expectations in delivering this plan.

Key elements to be addressed will include:

- athlete and coach support, specifically explanation around NASS and other forms of support available and the criteria for receiving such support
- investment and resourcing in SSSM and what is required to achieve objectives
- competitions – specifically the program for the domestic and national series, and the international program through each of the Youth, Junior, u23 and open age categories
- measures of accountability.

Recommendation 15

In reviewing and refining the HP Plan, the HP Director must articulate how AA will develop a leading edge HP culture. This will require stated positions on the:

- relationship between an athlete's personal coach and an Event Coach
- potential movement of athletes if required, from their personal coach to a centralised training program
- role of training pods/hubs
- priorities for the 2015 World Championships and Rio
- management of unexpected emergence of elite talent (e.g. current junior male sprinter and similar cohorts) will be program managed over future Olympic cycles
- coordination with SIS/SAS to maximise use of finite resources
- selection criteria for coaches, team management and SSSM staff for major events
- benchmarking as outlined in the Glasgow Review Report.

The delivery of athletics

Role of the Member Associations

While the role of MAs was discussed in depth earlier, it is worth revisiting with a specific participation focus. MAs deliver club-based competition within their state, with AA having a more strategic role in developing and growing participation in athletics.

AA's Strategic Plan has Participation as its first pillar. The overarching strategy is the implementation of AA's Participation Plan, which includes five key priorities:

- club capability
- junior pathway
- AA and LAA joint venture
- recreational running
- targeted groups.

At present there is no clear national plan for the role of MAs in developing and growing the sport of athletics. MAs generally continue to offer the same core product of inter-club athletics as their primary participation offering. There appears to be differences in how this is delivered depending on the MA, reflecting the lack of an overarching strategy.

The Participation Plan was drafted in the same vein as the HP Plan. Unlike other sports, it was produced quickly to satisfy a funding application from the ASC and the Participation Manager was employed as a result of the funding received from the funding proposal. It is also evident the plan was constructed with little to no input from the MAs which are the primary deliverers for participation. The current Participation Plan does not reflect the needs of the organisation.

Sports with strong participation growth have plans that are highly sophisticated and provide detailed guidance to the organisations, and the MAs responsible for its delivery. Like the HP Plan this plan needs to dovetail into the sport's Strategic Plan and provide the detailed accountabilities required to promote success.

Furthermore, internal reluctance to move away from the Strategic Plan, the (eventually failed) merger with LAA, and the review period has meant there have been several false starts in developing a new Participation Plan. AA has held off pushing ahead with a revised plan pending the outcome of this review, but have put thought into a high level framework which could feed into the proposed whole-of-sport Strategic Plan.

The high level overview identifies two broad strategies:

- capable work force
 - » coaches
 - » officials
 - » volunteers
- capable participation channels
 - » clubs, schools and centres
 - » private provider network.

This would be a much simpler and effective strategic direction for athletics participation, and should be used as the starting point of discussions on participation in the recommended whole-of-sport planning forum.

Gaps in the participation pathway

Aside from the LAA disconnect, AA has not been able to successfully fill other gaps in the participation pathway. It has largely missed the opportunity for significant growth in the recreational running market, with private event operators and Park Run dominating. AA's iRun strategy is a reasonable attempt to offer relevance in this space, and leverage existing players but does not provide any strategies to achieve participation growth in the sport.

School athletics competition is widely considered a missed opportunity by the sport. With every school in Australia staging an athletics carnival, AA is largely disengaged from school athletics until the National All-School Championships and at best only a service provider to schools outsourcing the running of carnivals to the MAs. Schools operate largely at arm's length to the sport, despite the need for officiating and coaching.

There is a particular opportunity in the metropolitan private school sector, where the athletics season runs for several weeks and comprises a number of meets.

The opportunity missed here is the fact nearly every single Australian school child is exposed to athletics at some stage, but this exposure is inconsistent and in many cases provides a negative experience.

The other significant opportunity in the pathway which AA is not currently exploiting is the teenage market. While Little Athletics runs through to under 17s in some centres, feedback and more importantly the data shows this is not a sustainable structure. For a number of other participants, they simply drop out of the sport when they finish Little Athletics at the end of primary school.

To this end AA should be commended for the work they have begun in developing a product offering for the teenage market. Currently named 'Brand X' while in development, the product represents an opportunity in teen engagement, which will not only fill a void in the athletics pathway, but address a broader sport issue of participation drop off among 13 to 17 year olds. The product will leverage the key motivators teens are looking for when considering athletics as a choice building on elements such as inclusive engagement, social interaction, gamification and a brand that appeals to its target market. The key to success is if AA can develop and the states can deliver a product which is different.

Little Athletics as a product and LAA as an organisation present more issues for gaps to occur in the sports pathway. Irrespective of the positive dialogue occurring at both the national and state levels since the merger discussion in 2013, the real challenge is the LAA centre to MA club level where the participation gaps are most evident. Without a clear and coherent pathway which not only operates efficiently but also promotes a positive brand the sport will not address its record levels of participation drop-off between the ages of 12 and 16 (see figure 2).

The Panel notes recent work in New South Wales which shows when centres and clubs are either closely aligned, or in some cases the same organisation, the transition of participants is positive and provides overall growth. This demonstrates that until the sport of athletics can adopt a mature and sophisticated pathway system, irrespective of who owns what, participation will continue to stagnate as other sports become more aggressive in recruiting juniors.

As discussed previously in Alignment of a disparate sport, it is expected that the merger towards a single national entity be revisited by June 2016.

Club development

Despite it being AA's first strategic participation priority, the Panel found little evidence of any club development programs in place. This is significant, as the lack of vibrant clubs was regularly identified by stakeholders as a contributing factor to many of the other issues in the sport.

Although coming from a history of club and inter-club competition, the nature of athletics makes club culture different from most sports. As a result of facility development and centralisation of athletics tracks in particular, many clubs do not have their own club rooms or home grounds which is so important in other sports. Additionally, a disconnect with LAA and its centres, as discussed earlier, leaves many clubs with no true junior pathway. On this point, the Panel heard many examples of MA 'clubs' made up of predominately masters athletes with a small number of juniors or younger athletes dual registered with LAA.

There is also no substantial practice in Australia of employed professional coaches at the clubs like in swimming or tennis to build a business around despite this being identified by many stakeholders as a lucrative opportunity. In many instances an athletics club is nothing more than an incorporated association and a singlet.

This has obvious implications on the attainment of AA's strategic priorities in this space. Member growth and retention, coach and official development, and improved club administration are all extremely difficult to attain without a strong club base at the grass roots level.

Club development is not an issue exclusive to athletics. According to the CSIRO Megatrends, commissioned by the ASC in 2013, sport participation trends are showing a whole-of-sport movement away from club participation. The ASC would be well positioned to advise AA on work being undertaken among other NSOs to support club growth.

The Panel saw evidence of strong club development in New South Wales, North Queensland and Victoria. AA should be looking at the successful, well-managed club development programs and seek to encourage their emulation nationally.

The club offering also needs to be revisited and tied into the broader strategic initiative of tapping into recreational athletics such as running, and creating far better junior environments. While investing in club development will create better environments for growing the traditional delivery of the sport, clubs also need to be equipped with the ability to deliver new participation product offerings designed to meet changing consumer needs. But this in turn will need buy-in from the clubs to embrace change.

AA must lead this process strategically and deliver through its MAs. Athletics requires a united strategic position with clear roles and responsibilities and direct measurable accountabilities for those responsible for delivery. This includes all of the layers involved in the delivery of Little Athletics irrespective of any formal merging.

If the sport of athletics does not control and align its club and delivery systems the sport will continue to suffer culturally, economically, internationally and most importantly athletics as a sport will become less relevant in the Australian sports market place.

Recommendation 16

The sport of athletics must begin the process of aligning its delivery systems by adopting nationally driven products and programs of quality and consistency. To achieve this AA along with LAA must also bring together both AA and LAA Member Associations along with their clubs and centres as the grassroots delivery agencies of their respective current and new product lines. These products must have clear connection and provide best practice in participant delivery irrespective of any notional ownership.

This alignment of the system must also lead to an environment where children and their parents are well informed and encouraged to seek out adequately designed and delivered products which directly address the transition and retention issues currently experienced across the entire athletics landscape.

To enable this alignment AA, LAA and their respective MAs must work towards the vision of ONE SPORT to ensure sustainable growth of the sport, as these stakeholders are accountable for the entire athletic pathway.

APPENDIX
A-B

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE / RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	RECOMMENDATION ALIGNMENT
Governance	AA Board evaluation to be undertaken to ascertain skill gaps, personnel fit, structure and procedural improvements including Board interaction with management.	May 2015 AA Board	ASC to assist in identifying and managing appropriate deliverer of the evaluation.	3
	AA may require, based on the evaluation, a Chair who is commercially networked and who can gain business and media support for athletics at least for next two-to-four years till the sport recreates its brand. If so the existing Chair may be retained to provide legal knowledge & experience to AA Board and AA.	June 2015 AA Board	Internally resourced by AA.	3
	Minimum two new Board Members who provide Board experience and needed skills post Board review.	June 2015 AA Board	ASC could provide assistance in sourcing suitable candidates.	3
	Immediate engagement strategy to disseminate report and what will be happening, by all Board Members to all MA Boards, LAA Boards, SIS/SAS, ATFCA, Masters, and other key stakeholder groups identified by the Oversight Committee.	March 2015 AA Board	Where appropriate face to face meetings with significant stakeholders such as MAs, LAA and ATFCA.	1, 4
	There needs to be clear Board policy, consequences and information disseminated in relation to member protection issues. Part of the Member Protection Policy (MPP) must include increased representation by women in touring teams across admin/management, coaching and SSSM to reflect the gender representation of athletes.	June 2015 AA Board/AA Management/MA Board and Management	Internally resourced by AA.	3, 4, 5

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CONT)

THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE / RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	RECOMMENDATION ALIGNMENT
Vision & Strategic analysis	Via the utilisation of a sport wide summit AA will analyse, review and assert AA vision and key overarching strategies for immediate term, to Rio, and post-Rio which will require all key stakeholders either in attendance, or having contributed to analysis pre-summit and ideally both. The vision and strategy should reflect athletics as a 'foundation' physical activity as well as aspiring to be a forefront brand of Australian sport, and provide the direction to a ONE SPORT pathway from Little Athletics and beyond.	June 2015 AA Board and Management LAA Board and management	AA will need to look at a sophisticated planning system and process which can build out in to a costed operational plan. Ideally this summit would utilise an independent facilitator and/or professional strategic management deliverer.	1, 2, 6
	AA management and each department in close consultation with relevant AA stakeholders to then produce business and operational plans for the next three years including detailed costing leading in to Rio.	June 2015 AA Management	Internally resourced by AA.	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8
Leadership - Management & systems	Interim AA CEO to provide AA Board with audit of and solutions for change to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> board relationship with management structure staff and skills management systems including finance, IT, HR, performance management. 	April 2015	Internally resourced by AA.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	All departments within AA to review relevant Report recommendations for inclusion into business and operational planning.	June 2015 AA Management	Internally resourced by AA.	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
	Immediate engagement strategy by AA management to disseminate the Review and how management will address the recommendations with MA, LAA, SIS/SAS, ASC/AIS, ATFCA, Masters CEOs and staff and other key stakeholder groups identified by AA management.	March 2015 AA Management	Internally resourced by AA.	1, 2, 4, 6, 7

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CONT)

THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE / RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	RECOMMENDATION ALIGNMENT
Coaching	<p>There are three parts to coaching;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coach accreditation coach continuing professional development, support and 'professionalising' HP coaching. <p>Each of these need specific planning, resourcing, monitoring, and coordination.</p> <p>For this to occur effectively, a coaching summit is required which must explore solutions to the following challenges.</p>	AA Management	ASC to provide guidance and advice.	1, 2, 13, 14, 15
	<p>1. Coach accreditation: must be the province of AA requiring agreement with ATFCA about how all existing and proposed accreditation levels will be delivered in alignment with IAAF requirements including content, resources, delivery arms and methods and schedules. Dual accreditations with ATFCA would not be acceptable.</p>	June 2015	Coordinated by AA via Coaching Department and involving HP and Participation.	1, 2, 13, 14, 15
	<p>2. Coach Professional Development: A clear plan for the support and 'professionalisation' of coaches is required and will be the province of ATFCA.</p> <p>ATFCA will provide a business plan of how it will deliver professional development services to all AA coaches under the AA accreditation and coaching framework.</p>	June 2015	Internally resourced and coordinated by AA and ATFCA in partnership.	1, 2, 13, 14, 15
	<p>3. HP Coaching: will be the province of AAs HP Department and involves 'professionalisation' of coaches, establishing a clear pathway, criteria for being considered to be eligible for the pathway, selection methodology, and clear metrics for coaches who wish to pursue coaching athletes to national and international events</p>	June 2015	Internally resourced by AA HP.	1, 2, 13, 14, 15

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CONT)

THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE / RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	RECOMMENDATION ALIGNMENT
HP	<p>The HP Director to review HP Plan and then effectively educate and deliver clear messaging for all athletes, coaches, SSSM, SIS/SAS and other relevant stakeholders. The messaging must include clear transparency and policy frameworks for at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NASS event and event group coach movement of athlete training pods or hubs priorities for World Championships and Rio how will junior talent be program managed over the next two cycles the domestic and national series competition program the international program from Youth to Junior to under 23 to open age the inclusion of greater SSSM support the coordination with the SIS/SAS and AIS selection of coaching and SSSM staff for major competition benchmarking as outlined in the Glasgow Review. 	<p>June 2015</p> <p>AA Board and Management</p>	<p>Internally resourced by AA HP.</p>	<p>1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15</p>
Sport delivery	<p>AA must undertake evidence based research to underpin a detailed process of redeveloping the sport's brand and assets to provide greater commercial opportunities including competition structures, athletes, programs and other materials.</p> <p>The sport is to agree to a ONE SPORT sponsorship strategy to combine and maximise the value of commercial assets.</p>	<p>July 2015</p> <p>AA Management</p>	<p>Internally resourced by AA with assistance and advice from the ASC.</p>	<p>1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 16</p>
	<p>LAA-AA relationship will emerge once AA begins delivering greater accountability, transparency, consistency to all stakeholders.</p> <p>However to continue to develop the good work begun, the Joint Task Force to continue and to address how the sport will strategically work together over the next 12 months leading to the re-introduction of the investigation of a merged sport - the ONE SPORT vision.</p>	<p>Continued meeting schedule of the Joint Taskforce</p> <p>AA Board</p> <p>Sport alignment investigation complete by June 2016</p>	<p>Internally resourced and coordinated by AA and LAA in partnership.</p>	<p>1, 2, 12, 16</p>

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CONT)

THEME	ACTION	TIMELINE / RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	RECOMMENDATION ALIGNMENT
Sport delivery (cont.)	LAA to demonstrate to the Oversight Committee how it is improving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coaching in clubs formats that are more relevant to clientele relationships with senior clubs where this does not already exist for transitions from LAA to seniors. 	July 2015/March 2016 LAA Board	Internally resourced and coordinated by AA and LAA in partnership.	Overarching
	All AA-LAA Clubs to provide a suite of athletics programs for its respective clients from modified, through LAA, school, youth, juniors, seniors and masters.	Review every 3 months fully delivered by June 2017 AA/MA Management	Internally resourced and coordinated by AA and its MAs and LAA and its MAs (and where appropriate other stakeholders) in partnership.	1, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16
Athletes	AA to put in place a process aligned to the AA MPP and other relevant policies to internally accept, process and provide transparent outcomes to athletes (and other members of the community) with grievances. These policies must be clear and have easy to follow guidelines of how and who is to handle various issues raised to ensure all AA members are afforded appropriate due process.	April 2015 AA Board and Management	Internally resourced and coordinated by AA.	1, 5
Officials	Through the development of the Officials Development Framework a detailed plan of support to be constructed for officials including issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> course structures and delivery methods professional development resource materials competition scheduling selection criteria for major competitions uniforming standards across the sport 	April 2015 AA Management	Internally resourced by AA.	1, 2, 4, 13, 15

APPENDIX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Independent review of Athletics

Background

Athletics is a truly international sport which is rightly seen as core to the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games. Success in athletics is always celebrated by the Australian public. Australia has a proud history in the sport at the Olympics starting in 1896 with Edwin Flack and maintained to this day by Sally Pearson. In between, names like Herb Elliott, Cathy Freeman, Steve Hooker, Louise Sauvage, Marlene Matthews and Shirley Strickland are legendary. At a junior level athletics is a popular foundation sport, enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of young children who often go on to pursue other sporting endeavours.

Over the past 10 years a number of internal and external reviews (most notably the Elliott Review in 2004) have been undertaken in athletics with recommendations on high performance, administration, governance, athlete pathway and club structure among them. Despite this, the sport is not achieving its potential. It is arguable that in a highly competitive sporting marketplace both internationally and within Australia, the sport is struggling to hold its position. This is not to say that progress has not been made over the years however, significant challenges remain.

The failed merger between Athletics Australia (AA) and Australian Little Athletics in 2013 means that there is continuing disjointed governance and athlete pathways from junior to senior. This, together with high performance program management and cultural issues, reflect broader systemic issues in the sport of athletics. Greater unity of purpose across athletics will help the sport achieve its potential.

Purpose and Scope of Review

The key priorities of the review are to:

- Identify actions to ensure that all parts of athletics in Australia are unified, inclusive and working effectively together and there is agreement on the respective roles and accountabilities of AA as the sport's national body, its Member Organisations and other athletics organisations and groups. This will include analysis and recommendations on how the role of the national body can most effectively be undertaken to ensure unity of purpose and structure for the whole sport.
- Consider and make recommendations on the optimal structure and investment approach for athletics' high performance program (for both able-bodied and para disciplines) that increases Australian international success and competitive depth in the sport. A particular area of focus will be how to enhance the relationship between AA and

its high performance athletes and coaches, and identify the mutual obligations of all parties

- Identify opportunities to improve and integrate pathways in the sport across age groups, and address current attrition from the sport for teenage athletes

The Review will:

- examine the sport's governance, administration, pathway and high performance programs as well as the support provided by various Governments, sports institutes and agencies
- identify the common objectives of athletics and consult widely with the sport's stakeholders to analyse the current arrangements for design and delivery, to ensure athletics can achieve best practice outcomes for the whole sport; and
- examine the strategic governance of the sport to analyse the broader impact on decision making, revenue growth, pathway investment and greater system alignment from grassroots to high performance

Work to be undertaken will include:

1. Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of athletics' administrative and governance structures around high performance (able-bodied and para disciplines), including strategic planning, resource management, performance reporting and monitoring and risk management including:

- the domestic, national and international competition structure
- the participation pathway and community level governance structures
- effectiveness of talent identification and development programs
- coaching support, investment and development to ensure Australian athletes have access to the best coaching possible
- current and previous Olympic, Commonwealth Games and Paralympic teams including current team leadership
- high performance management, coaching and athlete support services
- relevant competitor country analysis
- any additional matters considered necessary by the Review Panel.
- Analyse and identify opportunities for athletics to address athlete participation pathways and address member attrition to enable the sport to increase participation and optimise whole-of-sport commercial partnerships.

2. Consider any opportunities relevant to ensuring that the sport of athletics is positioned to capitalise on high performance, industry and community changes into the future.

- Stakeholders to be consulted include: AA Board and staff; state members: coaches; athletes; high performance personnel; Australian Little Athletics and its community; appropriate government agencies (including Institutes of Sport); commercial partners and operators in the 'running events' market; other related parties in sport including the AOC, APC, and ACGA; and any other relevant persons from athletics or the broader Australian sport system.
- In seeking stakeholders' views, the Review Panel will instigate a process to ensure that participants can submit their views confidentially if required in order to receive frank and open input to assist in the Panel's deliberations.

3. Benchmark athletics' high performance programs (able-bodied and para disciplines) and administration against other leading athletics nations. It will also consider the approaches of other leading Australian sports.

4. Other factors that may be considered within the review:

- any impediments to athletics' ability to deliver the recommendations of the review, including applicable transition requirements for the Panel's recommendations (if required)
- any differences in aims, objectives or pathway between AA and its member states
- use of ASC funding
- any risks and opportunities.





