

June 2006

Launceston City Council

# *Recreation* planning guide



an initiative of the  
Parks and Recreation Department

LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

2006

*A Leader in Community & Government*

---

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Launceston City Council Recreation Planning Guide is an initiative of the Parks and Recreation Department of the Launceston City Council.

It has been written through a partnership with Sport and Recreation Tasmania and the Council.

The commitment and support of Linton Kerber, a consultant of Sport and Recreation Tasmania, is greatly appreciated.

Thanks are extended to associated Council Officers and Sport and Recreation Consultants.



## DISCLAIMER

All due care has been taken in the preparation of this document to encompass what is known of best practice in recreation planning for local government in Australia.

Anyone using this document should use reasonable care in interpreting the information according to their own circumstances and needs. The Launceston City Council should not be held responsible for any such interpretations and subsequent use of the material.

## COPYRIGHT

Printed and published in Australia by the Launceston City Council June 06.

Intellectual property is shared between the Launceston City Council and The State Government of Tasmania.

## **FOREWORD**

I commend and endorse this document as the Recreation Planning Guide for the City Of Launceston.

This document will give future direction to our council for making decisions in regards to the provision and management of recreational opportunities in Launceston.

Furthermore it will act as a basis for the preparation of a recreation strategy for the City.

Recreation plays a very important part in our lives and appropriate planning is essential for council to meet the needs of the entire community.

I endorse this report and further acknowledge the contributions of those previously listed.

**MAYOR**

**Ivan Dean**

## **CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction .....	5
2.	Launceston .....	7
3.	Recreation Industry.....	12
4.	Recreation Planning .....	14
5.	Benefits of Recreation .....	22
6.	Recreation Demand and Community Analysis.....	25
7.	Participation Research.....	29
8.	Recreation Management .....	34
9.	Management aims .....	48
	Appendix: Influences on participation.....	54
	References .....	57

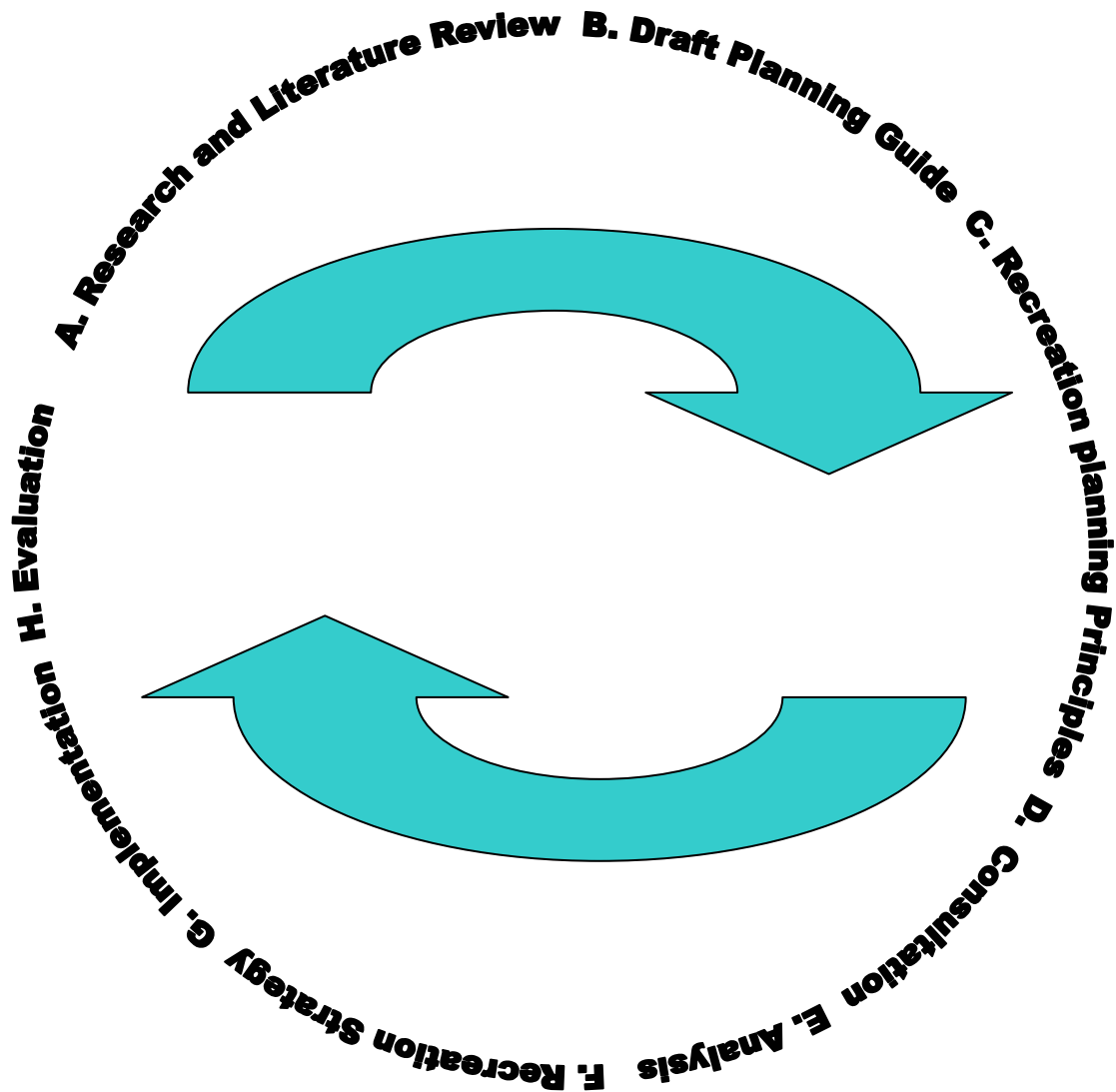
## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose

This planning guide provides a summary of contemporary recreation planning and management information in Australia. It aims to provide a framework for understanding this information: identifying community recreation needs and considering Councils management response to recreation provision, with the hope that adequate planning is put into place to provide sustainable recreation opportunities for Launceston.

The planning guide has also been prepared in such a way that it is hoped that it will not go out of date quickly. Generic planning information is the basis of the document. Contextual information and statistics are contained as appendices, or will become part of the next planning phase. This planning guide therefore encompasses parts A), B) and C) from the following diagram.

Figure 1 – Recreation planning process



Community recreation provision and development is a large and complex area for local government. There is no single pre-determined role for local government when it comes to recreation provision.

Instead, there are a number of possible roles depending on the needs of the community and the overall environment in which they are operating.

The previous Launceston City Council's recreation strategy was prepared in 1987/88 and now requires upgrading. This guide provides much of the preliminary work required in preparation for a new strategy, and will assist in raising issues to be analysed in this process.

### **1.2. Scope**

Recreation is a broad term that encompasses a wide variety of physically active and passive opportunities for the community. The extent of influence of the planning guide therefore is broad in covering community recreation opportunities, and also in its potential impact upon Council operations.

In recognising the benefits of community recreation participation, it is a primary aim to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of Councils provision. The planning guide explores the role of local government in provision, advocacy, leadership and coordination.

To this extent, a wide variety of Council operations have influence over community recreation opportunities. This document aims to integrate these operations under the term recreation.

Launceston City Council spent \$14,588,127 in the last financial year on recreation and culture. This makes up 13.38% of Council's total budget. For councils across Australia, this expenditure is second only to roads, and constitutes the largest involvement in community provision. This demonstrates the extent of influence on recreation across Council and the need for adequate planning for financial accountability and maximising community benefits.

#### **Recreation definition**

Leisure can be defined as a state of mind or an experience. It is often seen as the emotion, or feeling, experienced as a result of an activity. For example: status, self satisfaction, enjoyment, adventure, achievement, failure, creativity, sense of community. Recreation can be defined as an array of activities which provide the means by which leisure experiences are achieved.<sup>1</sup> Recreation is achieved by involvement with settings or activities which are freely chosen, which provide an array of benefits to participants (personal intrinsic reward) and others, and which are not unduly detrimental to the wider community.

'Physical activity' in the context provided by this guide, is any human activity that involves significant movement of the body or limbs.<sup>2</sup> The term is generally used to define these activities as being separate from sedentary activities. Therefore it involves activities that provide health benefits to the individual due to adequate exercise for fitness.

Although sedentary and cultural activities are broadly included as recreation activities in this guide, there is a focus on physically active recreation activities. The 'five sector model' describes the role of sport within the broader term of recreation later in this guide

---

## 2. LAUNCESTON

Launceston is the nation's third oldest city, having been established around 1806 after Sydney and Hobart. Launceston is a major regional economic and cultural centre, servicing Northern Tasmania. The region's population of approximately 134,000 (28% of the state) is concentrated around the Tamar Basin and Launceston (60,833 people, 2001 census). Launceston is visually characterised by its historic streetscapes, century old parklands, and significant natural features in the Cataract Gorge and Tamar River.

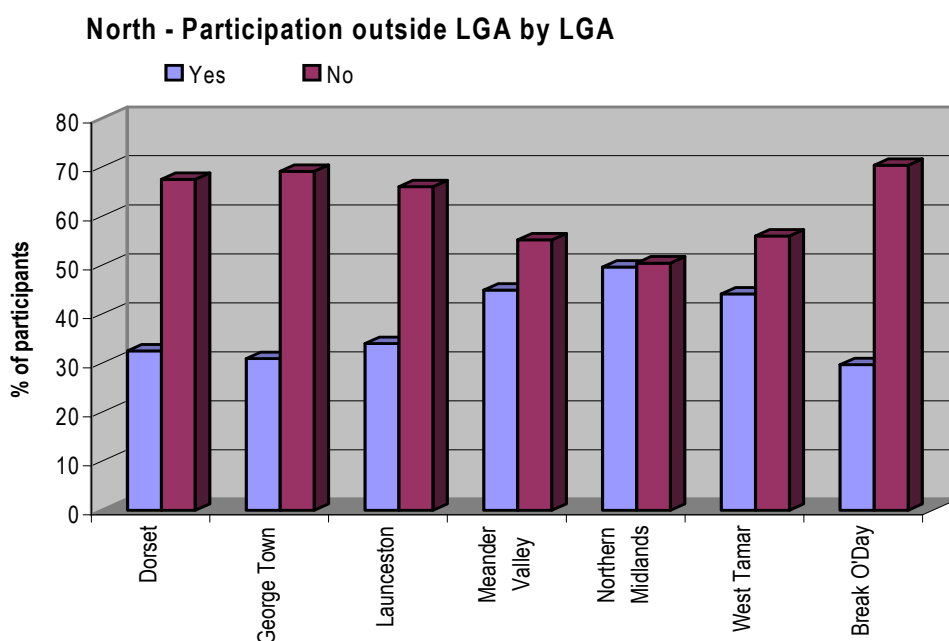
Launceston has benefited from the wisdom of a surveyor and architect, Henry Smythe, and his work in designing the parklands for the city. In 1835, Smythe drew a plan of Launceston that was perhaps some 122 years ahead of its time. Smythe's map was distinctive in that he provided the first land use survey, with a classification of buildings and open space that you would normally find in modern land use plans.<sup>3</sup>

In May 1985, the City of Launceston amalgamated with the neighbouring councils of St. Leonards and Lilydale to become the largest municipal area in Tasmania. Launceston's municipal boundaries dissect the areas of Riverside (West Tamar Council) and Prospect (Meander Valley Council), so that a visitor could not differentiate these areas from the municipal area of Launceston itself. Launceston's municipal area of 1,414 square km includes some 17 sports fields, 15 halls, and 57 parklands.

Launceston's urban area joins directly to the suburbs of Riverside (West Tamar Council) and Prospect (Meander Valley Council). Launceston is also in close proximity to the towns of Legana and Exeter, Westbury, Evandale, Perth, Longford and Hillwood. This means that it has direct geographic relevance (proximity) to quite a large population base.

As the participation information in the planning guide suggests, residents and visitors move freely between council areas to participate in their preferred activities without regard for municipal boundaries. Launceston gains from being the regional centre in regards to economic activity and economies of scale (more people to support a diversity of opportunities), while other council areas benefit through their proximity to Launceston and its activities: from visitor movement into their local areas for unique features and assets. Refer to **Figure 2** on the following page.

Figure 2 – Participation outside LGA, by LGA. Northern Tasmania. <sup>4</sup>



For example, a range of recreational settings and venues for the people of the greater Launceston area includes:

- Major outdoor sporting reserves. Aurora Stadium, Youngtown Oval and the NTCA complex (Launceston), Windsor Park (West Tamar), Longford sports ground (Northern Midlands).
- Tamar River (Aquatic, commercial and nature based activities), Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils.
- Aquatic centres. Windmill Hill, the basin pool and Lilydale pool (Launceston), Riverside swimming centre (West Tamar).
- Indoor Stadia. The Silverdome (State Government), Elphin sports centre (Launceston), St. Patricks High School, school gymnasiums (state government), Deloraine community sporting complex (Meander Valley)
- Outdoor sports courts. St. Leonard's Hockey Centre (Launceston), Hart St. Tennis Centre (Launceston), Riverside Tennis Centre (West Tamar), numerous club courts and private facilities (i.e.: Launceston Indoor Sports Centre and the Country Club Resort).
- Snow Skiing. Ben Lomond.
- Bushwalking. Mt. Arthur, Ben Lomond, the central plateau, Mt. Barrow, the Tamar River.
- Kayaking. The North and South Esk Rivers, Macquarie River, Tamar River and nearby lakes (central plateau and Four Springs).
- Caving. Mole Creek area.
- Surfing. Northern coastline and East coast.

- Parks and reserves. Many situated throughout the various councils and those managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania.

Launceston is therefore fortunate in its location and proximity to a large variety of recreational settings and facilities that support a diversity of experiences for the population and visitors. Certainly the natural attractions of the Tamar River, the Cataract Gorge, and surrounding rivers, coastline and mountains, provides an attractive lure to residents and visitors alike

## **2.1. Previous recreation strategy**

In 1987, Launceston City Council conducted a strategic recreation planning exercise to cope with the subsequent increase in management responsibilities due to amalgamation. The previous study on the provision of facilities was conducted in 1974. The 1987 study focussed on the following key areas:

- A recreation inventory. Listing facilities under the headings: parks, pools, indoor facilities, outdoor sporting facilities, indoor facilities, potential development sites and facilities outside the greater Launceston area.
- A community Survey. A survey on community participation.
- A social atlas. A socio-demographic review of the community.
- Community consultations.

Launceston City and Flinders are the only two councils of Northern Tasmania that do not have a municipal recreation strategy. Certainly in the allocation of state Sport and Recreation Tasmania grant funds, such a strategy would be beneficial in the justification for funds and the prioritisation of allocations.

A strategy would also assist Council in providing a clear philosophy and policy based from which to analyse and evaluate decisions affecting recreation provision in Launceston.

It is clear that there is a need to revisit the 1987 strategy and to prepare a new recreation strategy for Launceston. This planning guide can be used as a framework for determining an appropriate approach to this planning.

## **2.2. Demographic features**

Overall population growth for Northern Tasmania has been observed between 1976 and 1996, with a levelling of population growth in 2003. The population balance in the region increased by approximately 20,000 between 1976 and 2001. All council areas except George Town and Flinders Island indicated population growth over the period 1976 to 2003. The highest rates of growth have been in Meander Valley and West Tamar Councils. This growth has largely been due to the urban growth in areas closely linked to Launceston (i.e.: Prospect, Hadspen, Riverside and Legana). Therefore, while the recent population figures suggest a decline in Launceston's population, the reality is that the wider urban areas of 'greater' Launceston are increasing.<sup>5</sup>

The northern region featured slow growth of approximately 1% per annum from 1971 to 1991, and an approximate increase of 0.5% from 1991 to 1996. The Northern Tasmanian Integrated Transport Plan (2003) refers to Australian Bureau of Statistics projections for the region being a fall to 129,000 by the year 2017, a decrease of 4%.

Recent ABS figures show an increase in Launceston's population of 670 people over 2003-2004. The total population is now 64,057.<sup>6</sup> This has been against population projections, and possibly reflects the current economic situation of the state. This suggests that previous projections will need to be revised according to economic figures, which may fluctuate and modify population projections in return.

Prior to this recent population information, the demographic trends for the northern region were:<sup>7 5</sup>

- There will be minimal growth of the population base overall, an ageing of the population, and a continued trend of rural to urban migration.
- Decline in terms of young children because the total number of women in the fertile age brackets (20 to 39 years of age) is likely to decline;
- Decline significantly in terms of young adults (20 to 34 years of age) due largely to out migration; and
- Increase significantly, in terms of older adults (55+ years of age) due to the combined affects of in migration, greater longevity and the current age structure.

There is an obvious need from the research gathered, for the provision of a wide variety of recreation opportunities that will cater for the needs of a diverse population base. As is common in other similar sized municipalities in Australia there will be a particular need for specific population groups such as older people, young people, single parents, lone householders, low income earners, people with disabilities, households without a car, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds - if they are to have fair and equitable access to a range of attractive and interesting recreation opportunities.

It is equally important to note and accommodate:

- Variations in the distribution of the City's population and in the age make-up of different parts of the city. Consideration may be given to periodic/cyclical provision of recreation opportunities in outer areas to ensure that access barriers do not exclude some groups/areas.
- Any planning information from Council regarding prospective growth areas (already planned subdivisions), or constraints to growth (i.e. planned medium density housing growth), may have an impact on enhancing existing opportunities rather than creating new ones.
- On fringe areas of the city (perhaps Ravenswood, Rocherlea, Lilydale, Dilston, Relbia and Youngtown) a wider and more complete mix of opportunities should be considered.
- There should be integrated planning with neighbouring councils to understand and consider the recreation behaviours of people more holistically: where their participation does not recognise municipal boundaries. The mix of recreation opportunities to this wider population base should be

considered as a total picture and not isolated by municipal boundaries and therefore limited planning.

- Launceston will remain a centre for the northern region. As such it contains regional, national and international standard recreation assets and their equivalent events. Discussions at a regional and state level should seek to determine support for this, and the greater costs of provision as an impost on Launceston ratepayers.

### 3. RECREATION INDUSTRY

There is growing recognition of the size and importance of the Recreation Industry to the Tasmanian and Australian economies. In whatever way the Recreation Industry is defined, it is a substantial and growing industry. Large numbers of people are employed both directly and indirectly because of sport, fitness, outdoor recreation and community recreation opportunity provision.

For example, Future Game Plans, The Northern Tasmanian regional recreation planning report conducted in 2000, suggested that there were approximately 1050 paid employees and 3,680 volunteers in the recreation industry in Northern Tasmania. The gross turnover in recreation business per year (2000) was approximated at \$55 million.

The industry has great potential to stimulate the economy, but it also is part of our national and community consciousness: our national pride, community cohesiveness and individual well being. The Recreation Industry has comprehensive links to many other facets of our everyday life: Health, education, transport, media, manufacturing, construction, finance, research and technology to name a few. Participation in any facet of the industry is being actively pursued by Federal, State and Local Government and by industry representatives across Australia.

#### 3.1. Defining the industry – ‘Five Sector Model’

In 1989, the Federal Government created the recreation “industry” model through a statistical advisory group. The group followed an ‘international framework for cultural statistics’ devised by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). This provides a simple structure to study, monitor and evaluate aspects of the recreation industry.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1: Five Sector Model**

Culture and Leisure Industry	Sectors	
Tourism	Travel and hospitality	
Community	Education, festivals, welfare services	
Environment	Zoos, national parks, botanic gardens	
Arts and Culture	Museums, libraries, music and performing arts	
Recreation	Sport, Health & Fitness Outdoor Recreation Community Recreation Racing and Gambling	Racing and gambling are excluded from the definition used in this guide

In many instances, the industry is defined by Australian and State Government perspectives: mainly through sport focussed departments and structures. Local government however has a much broader outlook related to local community needs. This will be explored in relation to the true extent and breadth of the recreation industry throughout the planning guide. Stakeholders in this industry include both government and non-government, profit and not for profit agencies – at national, state and local levels. It is important to consider commercial provision, and the many related industries of health, education, transport, media, manufacturing, construction, finance, research and technology, tourism and the retail trade.

## **4. RECREATION PLANNING**

Driver in Marriott<sup>1</sup>, suggests that planning is “the systematic, collection, analysis, organisation and processing of technical information to facilitate decision making” A simple generic planning process can be explained by the following three questions.

- **Where are we now?** (Situation analysis)
- **Where would we like to be?** (Opportunity analysis)
- **How will we get there?** (Strategic, business and/or action planning)

Recreation planning follows the same process, but naturally includes aspects specific to recreation. This includes information relating to the socio-demographics of local communities, issues relating to supply and demand, participation rates and social trends across Australia, issues affecting user groups and land management agencies, and the impact of recreation upon the environment.

Recreation planning seeks to maximise the benefits to individuals, the community, the economy and the environment. It is a particular focus of attention because evidence is now suggesting that traditional practices have not necessarily been effective in doing this. In particular, recreation planning seeks to maximise:

- Local ownership and control through community participation. Evidence based decision making is built from the provision of sound information. Therefore decision making processes must be open and accountable to the people they impact on.
- Optimum recreation benefits are provided to the whole community. This should avoid ad-hoc decisions to ensure efficient and equitable use of resources: reducing and avoiding duplication of effort.
- Linking government functions to increase the scope of integrated planning. Long term orientation and commitment is a feature of good planning.

### ***4.1. What happens if we don't plan successfully?***

A lack of appropriate planning can maintain a situation where decision making stays with a small but powerful minority in the community. Without effective dissemination of information enabling a realistic appraisal of the current situation, the status-quo cannot be challenged and possible opportunities to benefit the community are missed. Planning processes can be threatening to those who benefit most from the status-quo, or those who, with limited information from which to base their judgements, judge the status quo to be suitable without much thought for how things could be better. The greatest threats to development are often negativity, cynicism and change resistance. Considering this, well founded analysis and argument are often seen as threats when in fact they should be applauded for their role in fostering development. <sup>18</sup>

The following table identifies some problems associated with unplanned approaches. The suggestion is that previous, uncoordinated and unplanned approaches have led to a situation where community

recreation benefits are not being maximised. If Councils cannot demonstrate that they have a set of policies, guidelines and recreation systems in place to ensure that column two items are achieved, then it is likely that column one reflects the current situation.

**Table 2: Planned versus unplanned recreation provision**

Unplanned Development	Recreation Service	Planned Development	Recreation Service
Some people's needs are met but others are neglected		Attention is given to trying to meet the total range of needs	
Expenditure decisions are largely based upon the personal choices of decision makers or the demands of vocal minorities		Expenditure is based on broad consideration of community needs & rational priorities & action.	
Some kinds of facility are in short supply while others are over-supplied or not fully used.		A balance is maintained between various kinds of facilities & the demand for each of them.	
Facilities become redundant as tastes & needs change.		Flexibility in development of facilities minimises redundancy.	
Diversity/quality of leisure opportunities limited.		Diversity/quality of leisure opportunities maximised.	
Quality of the environment is subject to deterioration & destruction.		Quality of the environment is maintained & where necessary, restored.	
Involvement & community interest of citizens is limited.		Involvement & community interest of citizens is fostered.	

## **4.2. Coordination and integrated planning**

Integrated planning is a common theme reflected in government planning across Australia. It is reflected in the 'triple bottom line' approach (community, economy, and environment), and fits well with a discussion regarding a coordinating role for local government. Certainly it is reflected in the principles of 'Tasmania Together': a long term social, environmental and economic plan for the development of Tasmania until 2020. Dr. Ken Marriott, a highly respected leisure and recreation planner in Australia, summarised some key issues regarding integrated planning in his paper, 'The future of recreation planning in Australia'<sup>1</sup>. Some points to consider include:

- Most current municipal recreation planning is focussed on facility planning. This is not recreation planning, rather it is project planning and asset management. This often comes from the pressures of individual sports clubs that are politically astute but unfortunately, parochially inclined.

- The focus on facilities as the end point of provision means that quite inadequate attention is being given to programming, servicing, educating, promoting and marketing. This raises serious concerns regarding the quality and extent of opportunities that are essential to improving participation outcomes for the community.
- There is serious under-resourcing by virtually all levels of government. Often councils and governments do not generally have the skills or number of staff needed to implement appropriate actions. This is further complicated by the continual pressure of local government being pressured to do more with less.
- As part of the previous points, there is a continuing dominance of one or more of engineers or town planners on recreation issues. Well meaning though these people are, they do not have a leisure or community focus and often use grossly outdated planning tools.
- There has been inconsistency in support for recreation planning and provision by successive federal governments. The current Australian Government has shown clear support for elite based sport, to the detriment of wider recreation participation.
- There is generally a lack of agreement on or consistency of approaches to recreation planning within local government. Most plans prepared for local government are inconsistent across municipal boundaries.
- There is almost a universal view that the wider recreation concept does not need to be considered. Often the focus is on narrow sports participation, while there are huge numbers participating in gardening, walking, cycling and sightseeing.
- Ad-hoc decision making and provision is a response to political and pressure group demands. This leaves the discretion regarding community provision to a process that is largely uncoordinated and unplanned. It leaves councils responding to the demands of individual sports and clubs, often without regard to holistic community planning and strategic approaches to provision.

### **4.3. Local Government recreation planning**

Councils have a responsibility under the Local Government Act 1995 for maximising resources and community benefit. The three key aspects underlining the role of local government are:

- Community representation and participation,
- Development of community resources, and
- Effectiveness in service delivery.

The largest investment in sport and recreation venues, grounds and facilities across Australia is through local government. This overall contribution by far outweighs the commitment by state and federal governments, community and private sectors. The current situation places local government at the forefront of community recreation planning.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, local government's provision is largely characterised by 'roads, rates and rubbish', an infrastructure based approach. This perception is largely unfounded, as councils now have a wide agenda of meeting community needs through advocacy, leadership, planning, coordination and consultation. In recreation planning and facility provision however, some traditional perceptions may be well founded.

In the past, recreation services often came under the responsibility of the city engineer. Leisure and recreation were interpreted in terms of grounds and facilities and the technical aspects of provision. Although community planning has been evident in local government for some time, it is still widely debated and often takes second place to the provision of infrastructure or economic development. The historical origins of recreation services were also tied to the changing nature of councillors themselves. Often the personal interest of councillors in particular sports dictated council support for certain clubs and their facilities. This level of support was based on reciprocal support around election time, and the naming of parks, playing fields and equipment. Since the 1960's, there has been a shift in the nature of people seeking election to local government. Often called 'progressives', many have professional backgrounds and concerns for the quality of community service being offered.<sup>10</sup>

*Over the past decade, a number of factors have made the implementation of sound corporate planning and management critical (for local government). Probably the greatest importance amongst these are:*

- *Resident's demands for services have increased as the population has become more interested in issues of health, quality of life and participation in activities.*
- *The community expects that rate increases will be kept to a minimum, but costs of providing services continue to increase. This means that local government is faced with growing challenges and growing resource problems in the planning of recreation services.*
- *The devolution of a number of state and federal government responsibilities to local government: often without adequate financial support. Therefore the need to plan efficient and effective use of resources.*
- *The distribution of resources between groups within the community and across different neighbourhood areas is often inequitable. Commonly, a disproportionate share of a council's recreation budget is tied up with maintaining facilities for sport and active recreation while the demand for more diverse recreation and cultural activities is steadily increasing.*
- *The recent local government reforms, particularly the competitive tendering requirements aim to increase cost efficiency and accountability. Therefore, more than ever, the planning process will need to provide sound and cost effective justification for the provision of services by councils.*
- *One way for local government to be responsive to changing needs is for its planning to be based on a program of regular consultation with the community. An advantage of this approach is that, by involving members of the community, awareness is raised*

*and resources within the community are tapped. Planning should be seen as a continuous process and central to the fulfilment of local government's role.*<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.4. Determining the role for Local Government<sup>9</sup>**

There is no doubt that sport and recreation participation enhances the quality of life of communities and of individuals within those communities. Equally, there is no doubt that local government is one of the major providers of sport and recreation infrastructure and services in this country, and has a major role to play in maximising the accompanying benefits.

We also live in a rapidly changing world, with pressures on sport and recreation organisations and local government authorities to respond to change. Many of these changes are driving a push for greater efficiency – the doing more with less approach, and for greater accountability.

Additionally, sport and recreation in Australia is delivered by a complex system of inter-relationships between many groups and organisations: public, voluntary and private sector groups at federal, state and local levels. However, often the system 'breaks down' through under-developed links and a lack of communication, consultation and coordinated planning.

There is a need for clarification of the respective roles and objectives from local government. A more planned and coordinated approach covering the wider municipality that clearly defines the role and place of each 'player' without any singular organisation holding power beyond their ability to achieve community benefits.

The information provided suggests the need for an integrated planning approach, involving consultation with the community regarding issues, priorities and actions. It also requires integrated planning with other spheres of government, between agencies, between local councils and providers.

Any integrated plan should address equity issues such as access to resources and the costs (pricing and fees) of services and facilities. This requires a well formulated pricing and budget structure that reflects sound financial planning, linked clearly to issues of fairness, social justice and equity. Importantly, any planning must reflect the nature and aspirations of the local community.

Proper management of facilities is essential if the benefits to the community are to be maximised. A management plan and structure should be developed for each facility, and clear links made between the functioning of the facility and the successful conduct of programs and services operating through these facilities. Without support for outcomes (the programs and services that actually provide opportunities for the community), the facilities themselves quickly become obsolete. This suggests that the end benefits (availability of recreation experiences and opportunities) become the starting point for assessing supply and demand, not facilities themselves.

Finally, leadership is required by all the 'players' in the sport and recreation system in cementing linkages and exploring cooperative approaches and partnerships. This is undoubtedly a major challenge but it is a challenge that must be met if a smooth functioning, interdependent system is to be achieved.

#### **4.4.1. Aims of local government recreation planning**

- To undertake a planned, coherent and equitable approach to recreation provision based on a consultative, needs-based approach.
- Ensure equitable access to a diversity of quality recreation opportunities for the community.
- Enhance community: health, well-being, values, quality of life and social development.
- Balance individual, community, economic and environmental benefits.
- Recreation planning should be strategic, integrated (internally and externally), and include long term thinking.
- Recreation provision should be flexible in order to meet the changing needs and preferences of the community.
- Recreation provision should be culturally relevant to Launceston's diverse community.
- Community representatives should be involved in the planning and management of recreation services.
- Council structure and decision making processes should reflect the complex nature of recreation provision.
- Outcomes are realistic according to the ability of council and community to provide for them.

#### **4.4.2. Principles of recreation planning<sup>13, 11</sup>**

##### **Achievable**

Council will endeavour to work in accordance with the adopted Recreation Principles and Policy Positions within budget restrictions. All provision should be made with regard to the ability of Council and community to provide, operate and maintain opportunities.

##### **Organisational Capacity**

Develop internal organisational and financial capacity to actively plan, manage and assist with the delivery of facilities, programs and services which enhance opportunities for all members of the community to benefit from pursuing recreation activities.

##### **Access for All**

Council will endeavour to take action to ensure equitable access to recreation opportunities regardless of the age, gender, sexual preference, mobility, ethnicity, distance or economic capacity of the community.

##### **Fairness, Equality and Balance**

Ensure that there is fairness, equality and balance in the provision of recreation facilities, programs and services.

### **Beneficial Outcomes**

Preference to be given to supporting those facilities, programs and services which deliver the widest range of beneficial outcomes to the widest cross-section of the community. Assessment of all initiatives should be based on an analysis of need and expected benefits. Evaluation will measure these beneficial outcomes against the provision of opportunities. Research conducted over the past 20 years has demonstrated that recreation is as central to the well-being and happiness of the community as are work, food, housing and education. The benefits can be categorised into the following four areas:<sup>12</sup>Personal, Economic, Environmental, Community and Social.

### **Quality and Safety**

Seek to ensure that the community has access to a high standard of recreation opportunities which are provided in accordance with contemporary standards and practices for health, risk management and public safety.

### **Continual Improvement**

Commit the resources needed to continually upgrade the provision of recreational facilities, programs and services. Seek to improve internal operational capacity to provide these, and to facilitate initiatives in the community and commercial sectors which improve recreation opportunities.

### **Sustainability**

Work towards ensuring the sustainability of recreation opportunities. Ensure that environmental impacts are carefully considered and managed with respect to protecting and conserving the built and natural environment.

### **Multi-use and Efficiency**

Work to achieve multi-use (shared use) and efficiency in the provision of recreation opportunities. Efficiency is measured in terms of the costs incurred in the running of programs, maintenance, improvement or replacement of facilities against the benefits to the whole community in terms of recreation opportunity.

### **Community Building and Social Capital**

Use recreation as one means of contributing to the strengthening of community and the development of social capital. Measures of community development and social capital will be used to evaluate the extent of success in the provision of recreation opportunities.

### **Community Health**

Pro-actively pursue opportunities which support the objectives which enhance the health and well-being of residents and visitors. Measures of community health and well-being will be used to evaluate the extent of success in the provision of recreation opportunities.

### **Partnerships and Shared Responsibility**

Actively pursue opportunities for the joint development of facilities, programs and services with other providers. Encourage community and commercial initiative in the provision and management of recreation opportunities.

## **4.5. Evaluation**

If planning is considered important in ensuring that recreation benefits are maximised, then evaluation techniques are essential in validating the effectiveness of management decisions. Any evaluation should determine the worth of strategic actions, whether they are for programs, services, facility provision etc. Most evaluation techniques come down to some basic questions:

- What were we trying to do?
- What did we do?
- What happened?
- What was successful and what didn't work?
- What do we do next?
- The evaluation process can be used in a variety of situations. Evaluation could be:
  - The process of determining the extent to which the objectives of an action are being obtained.
  - A means to applying rigorous social science methods to the study of programs or actions.
  - A way of comparing the relative cost and benefit of two or more programs.
  - Judging the value of an action.
  - A problem solving process that provides information for decision making.
  - A means of providing information to specific people.

Evaluation of a recreation strategy requires specific and measurable objectives to be set first. A benefits based approach will assist in setting clear goals and priorities for a council and community.

*For more detailed information on evaluating recreation planning, the 'Community Recreation, municipal recreation planning guide' provides a valuable reference on suitable methods for local government.<sup>10</sup>*

## **5. BENEFITS OF RECREATION**

Research conducted over the past 20 years has demonstrated that recreation is as central to the well-being and happiness of the community as are work, food, housing and education. Recreation gives people an opportunity to express themselves, to test and develop their skills and to gain recognition and esteem amongst family, friends and the wider community. For many, it is simply a means for enjoying oneself, for socialising and for relaxing, or a wider need to associate with others, understand oneself and interact with the natural environment. People also pursue recreation as a means of restoring or retaining their health and for overcoming illness and injury. The benefits can be categorised into the following four areas:<sup>13</sup>

### ***Personal benefits***

Physical activity can assist in the development of life skills, personal health and well being (physical and psychological health), self-esteem and mood. People who are physically healthy and have a high level of self-esteem and positive self image are able to function effectively to make the most of their opportunities in life, and to contribute to the social and economic well being of the community.

- Recreation trails provide opportunities for people to be physically active. Adequate levels of physical activity have been shown to benefit individual health in the following ways<sup>14</sup>:
- Reducing the risk of all-cause mortality.
- Cardiovascular disease prevention.
- Diabetes prevention and control.
- The primary prevention of some cancers.
- Injury prevention and control. (ie: injurious falls to the elderly).
- The promotion of mental health.

### ***Community and social benefits (social capital)***

Participation makes a unique contribution to Australia's national identity and social infrastructure. The true value cannot be counted in dollars as it is an intangible asset that directly relates to the human and social wealth of our community.

Activities involving groups can assist in developing social relationships with others and improved self awareness. Further community and social benefits include:

- Enhanced non-family support networks.
- Decreased anti-social behaviour.
- Increased community self-reliance, pride and identity.
- Increased family relationships.
- Improved personal productivity, decreased absenteeism and a reduction in work accidents.

## ***Economic benefits***

There are direct and indirect benefits through recreation activities and their provision. For example:

- Retail, wholesale and manufacturing of goods and equipment.
- Recreational tourism and special events attracting visitors and investment to the region.
- Direct and indirect (i.e. services) in the industry.
- Consumer spending on equipment, activities etc.
- Capital expenditure, investment and construction in the industry.
- Reduction in the health budget as a result of more physically active and healthy individuals.
- 'Active communities' (planning the residential environment to be conducive to physical activity), suggests that reducing traffic noise, traffic speeds and vehicle generated air pollution can increase property values. Values can also be increased through areas being more scenic and amenable to walking and cycling.<sup>26</sup>

## ***Environmental benefits***

Environmental benefits can include:

- An increased demand for street scapes, parks and reserves that encompass natural resource management objectives: the protection of habitat and biodiversity.
- Leafy and green commuter routes can increase the look and amenity of residential areas, raising property values and increasing the 'liveability' of areas.
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution as a result of increased alternative means of transport: i.e. walking and cycling.
- Personal contact with the environment can increase awareness and affinity with natural places – building an appreciation for sustainable recreation.
- Managing participation impacts.
- Providing opportunities for community participation in conservation, weed eradication and revegetation work incorporated with recreation management objectives.

A benefits approach is a more specific method of identifying targeted outcomes: the basis of goal setting, planning and evaluating the success of implemented approaches. In being able to separate different benefits, we can make decisions regarding community priorities and the distribution of resources towards these priorities. Some examples of benefits can include:

- Obtaining greater economic use of major municipal facilities, such as sports grounds and facilities, swimming pools, tennis courts, bowling greens, public parks etc.;
- Improving promotion and awareness of existing programs and facilities and thereby facilitating gains in the social and economic, health and well-being of the community;
- Encouraging and motivating more volunteers to be involved in organising and delivering community recreation programs to the community;

- Attracting resources into the community from various sources, ranging from the public to private sectors, and generating a range of improvements to recreation provision; and
- Gaining higher quality recreation services through establishing strategic plans and policies that increase the professionalism and quality of management, planning and developing local sport and recreation.

Often in the past, the level of support for recreation has also been assessed in regards to the number of facilities provided and the expenditure in this area. These are in fact inputs: they are not outcomes at all. They ignore the purpose of the provision. Outcomes (as suggested, benefits), focus on the long term health, leisure, family, community well being and social benefits gained by all.

Some recreation activities have disbenefits which can substantially reduce their overall net benefit. For example, four wheel drive activities can seriously impact on the enjoyment of others and be detrimental to protecting or conserving the environment. The excessive use of alcohol in some sporting clubs is another disbenefit when considering the growth and development of young people's attitudes towards personal health and well being. Sports injuries are a disbenefit from particular activities, and an over emphasis on tourism can negatively affect the recreation experience for local users. Too much provision in one area can have disbenefits in that resources that could otherwise be used for other activities are not available.<sup>13</sup>

A net benefits approach to recreation provision has strong synergies with 'triple bottom line' accounting with its concern for social, economic and environmental outcomes. It therefore provides integration between various Council activities and the recreation field.

## **6. RECREATION DEMAND AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS**

To realise the benefits of recreation, there is a need to unravel the complex picture of recreation demand: what people and communities want in regards to recreation.

- Why they want it,
- When they want it, and
- Where they want it, (and all the factors that influence their behaviour and subsequent demand).

To assist us in understanding recreation demand, we often focus on two key characteristics of demand: Identifiable community characteristics, and the nature of desired opportunities (recreation experiences).

### **6.1. *Identifiable community characteristics***

This involves creating identifiable sections of the community, and understanding their recreation behaviours. For example: demographics such as age (children, older adults), gender, culture (migrants or Aboriginal Australians), geographic area (urban or rural), socio-economic (marital status, employment level, nature of work, disposable income) etc.

Part of this approach will initially focus on socio-demographic profiling. Population and community profiles help to understand how one community compares with others, and what their needs might be compared to nationally collected information. Community consultation techniques are also used to get a closer understanding of local needs. This can assist with specific issues related to a specific context and environment.

#### **6.1.1. Community consultation**

Community consultation is an important part of community recreation planning for a number of reasons:

- It allows for collecting better information about the nature and level of community needs, identifying potential users and informing users about opportunities available.
- It becomes part of a social marketing approach that can diffuse opposition and improves community support. It can encourage implementation and create partnership approaches with community members.
- It is arguably the most accurate source of information on local needs.
- The community, council and council officers become educated on recreation issues.
- Community development and social capital are improved.

A range of community consultation techniques are available from a variety of sources both nationally and internationally. The key is to engage communities in a manner that will correctly reflect the true breadth of a community's diversity, and not in a manner that supports only those who know what they want and know how to achieve getting it.

## **6.2. Nature of desired opportunities**

This involves an understanding of the nature of the desired recreation opportunities - often coupled with grouped sections of the community as described above. Understanding exactly what people want and why they want it, so that provision can actually meet their needs.

This approach utilises the ideas within a 'Recreation Opportunity Spectrum' (ROS) approach: sometimes referred to a 'demand hierarchy' approach. This is a conceptual framework designed to help clarify the relationships between recreation settings, activities and experiences. In this framework, the biophysical, social and managerial attributes are used to describe recreation sites. The basic assumption of ROS is that quality recreation experiences are assured by providing a diverse range of recreation opportunities, catering for various tastes and user group preferences. The opportunity based approach aims to match setting attributes with preferred recreation experience outcomes. Careful analysis of the 'recreation opportunity' needs to identify three separate elements:<sup>15</sup>

- Participation in desired activities.
- Use of specific settings.
- The achievement of a particular recreation experience.

This approach also helps us to understand some of the influencing factors that can detract from the recreation experience. Changes in the recreation setting may have consequences for individuals: there are 'limits of acceptable change' where once the limit is reached, they will become dissatisfied with that setting and they will seek another. Recreation shift describes the movement of individuals and groups to other settings and opportunities when this displacement occurs. Disbenefits (described previously), can relate to these concepts, as significant disbenefits may become barriers to participation: causing displacement or potentially negative experiences that stop participation.

A fundamental principle of ROS is to provide a diversity of experiences in which people are free to choose. This freedom comes within a 'framework' of social and legal expectations and management controls. This framework provides a basis from which acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and activities are judged, management responses are determined in accordance within resource constraints, and conflicts are settled according to community priorities. The aim is to provide a diversity of opportunities to meet the diverse nature of our communities, with management procedures designed to maximise benefits without constricting people's freedom.

## **6.3. Interpreting supply and demand**

Understanding the nature of demand is important, but understanding the nature of supply is critical in determining management responses. A traditional management approach tended towards impact minimisation strategies or controlling participant behaviours. A contemporary 'supply oriented' approach aims to understand the market forces that impact upon demand, and to address management strategies that influence visitor behaviours before they become a problem.

A social marketing approach combines well with this contemporary thinking. It is designed to plan, price, promote and distribute appropriately identified opportunities for the benefit of the target market to achieve the organisation's objectives. These approaches aim to achieve positive environmental, economic and social outcomes by changing user behaviours and attitudes towards use and demand.<sup>16</sup> Social marketing and supply oriented approaches rely on the following principles:<sup>17</sup>

- Understanding the carrying capacity of an area/facility is crucial to a supply approach. The objective is to match identified visitor needs and target groups to available and sustainable opportunities.
- There is an emphasis on sustainable recreation, through strategies that proactively manage demand. Therefore natural resource management and asset management principles and strategies are paramount.
- Understanding participant needs, groups and behaviours is crucial in achieving customer satisfaction and understanding impacts. It also recognises the evolving and sophisticated nature of needs and management responses.
- Social capital is to be supported through community development approaches. Appropriate consultation techniques are therefore important as they support a needs based approach, and are central to community partnerships that support social marketing.

#### **6.4. *Methods for research and analysis***

The following information is essential in determining characteristics of supply and demand, and therefore planning for recreation provision.

- **Individual recreation preferences.** By grouping sections of the population we gain a 'community profile', making the task more manageable.
- **Demographic/community profiling.** Identifying sections of the community and determining characteristics. It involves community consultation for local contextual information.
- **Representative samples.** Comparisons can be made between local communities and what is known from national data. Including participation patterns, behaviours, levels of satisfaction, barriers etc.
- **Range of provision / diversity of opportunities.** An assessment of location, distribution, catchments and levels of service provision, often requiring inventories of facilities, services and programs.
- **Trends** in recreation behaviour and social change provide an understanding of the complex environment in which provision takes place.
- **Management approaches** in recreation settings from a broad international perspective are important to find alternatives that meet changing demands.

Amongst other things, social trends can be expected to lead for a demand for higher quality and more targeted opportunities; greater programming for key groups in the community, the provision of

high standards of facilities, the provision of more informal recreation resources and a continued and strengthened focus on natural settings for recreation activities. A wide range of training, support, risk management, health and promotional initiatives will also be required.

## **6.5. Community development**

Community development and social capital are concepts strongly supported within local government across Australia. Possibly the biggest challenges are negativity, cynicism and change resistance. Certainly, among those traditionally benefiting from poor planning may certainly feel their power base or resources threatened by new approaches.<sup>18</sup> This approach fits with a benefits based approach to recreation provision.

- A quick checklist for community development and developing social capital.
- Identify stakeholder's needs and seek to satisfy these needs.
- Accept responsibility for change, and build the capacity for change.
- Shared vision for the best possible future. "Redesign the future".
- Broad based participation and ownership of the plan.
- Lateral idea generation.
- Long term orientation and commitment.
- Planning and action with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) objectives.
- Leadership and an active committee with broad representation and commitment.
- Local institutions providing support. State and local government, community and private sector.
- Communicate and keep people informed and included in decision making.
- Commitment to building competencies. Fostering leadership renewal.

## 7. PARTICIPATION RESEARCH

If we use a benefits approach to recreation provision, it suggests that we are concerned with ensuring that we have more people, participating more often, especially in more physically active opportunities. To assess this, we need data on the level and quality of participation in our community.

Professor Veal, of the University of Technology, Sydney, has raised significant concerns regarding the collection of leisure participation data in Australia.<sup>19</sup> He lists these as:

- **The links between government policy and data collected.** Suggesting that the Australian Government may have a clear need to link positive participation data and the outcomes from the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Institute of Sport. This may also be reflected in states and territories across Australia.
- **The lack of consistency.** Research techniques have been inconsistent and therefore comparisons between reports are next to impossible. That defies the ability to track trends over any significant period of time, and it leads to confusion regarding the real picture of participation in Australia.
- **The fragmentation of data surveys.** Little long term planning has occurred to provide an accurate analysis.

Leisure research is comprehensive, but includes a range of information that is not specific to physical activity and recreation. Instead, most information is gained from either a) physical activity research, or b) sport participation research. Because these two forms of research differ, it is important to understand these differences and therefore any possible conclusions we can gather from them.

### 7.1. Physical activity research

Much of the current Australian research is limited to studying leisure time physical activity (PA), but this only represents a small amount of the total energy expended by humans each day. Most PA research is focussed from a health perspective: primarily because as a society we are concerned about the declines in health of Australians that is clearly linked to declines in physical activity.<sup>20</sup>

Overall, the analysis of research suggests that physical activity participation in Australia has decreased in recent years and remains low: only 57% of the Australian population met the criterion for sufficient physical activity in 2000. As a result, National Physical Activity Guidelines have been established to help to promote minimum levels of physical activity. Adequate levels of physical activity have been shown to benefit individual health in the following ways<sup>20</sup>:

- Reducing the risk of all-cause mortality.
- Cardiovascular disease prevention.
- Diabetes prevention and control.
- The primary prevention of some cancers.
- Injury prevention and control. (i.e.: injurious falls to the elderly).

- The promotion of mental health.

Unfortunately, there are clear relationships between reduced levels of physical activity and some sections of the Australian community:

- Women are 20% less likely to report leisure time physical activity than men, especially married women and those with children at home.
- Older adults.
- People with lower levels of employment and education.
- Single parents and children of single parents.
- People who do not speak English at home.
- Indigenous Australians.
- People lacking appropriate social support mechanisms.
- People with disabilities

A benefits based approach to recreation, that recognises the value of physical activity for individuals and communities, should demonstrate clear priorities on improving participation. The research suggests that we must address the decline in physical activity amongst our community. If we also take an equity or equal opportunity approach, then we should be supporting those people who have high needs.

Current research has a range of recommendations that can be implemented in our communities, with a specific role for local government in creating environments for physical activity, and advocacy, leadership and coordination. There are a range of resources available from which to determine a range of strategies to suit the diversity of experiences for specific communities.

## **7.2. Sport and Recreation participation research**

Research in this area has been fragmented and ad-hoc in its approach for some time. As a result, it is impossible to make comparisons between the three primary research sources available for Tasmania. These are;

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),
- The Australian Sports Commission (ASC), and
- Sport and Recreation Tasmania (SRT).

These sources of information vary considerably in their assessment of overall participation rates, which raises serious questions regarding the validity of such 'absolute' figures for participation, and questions whether such measures for participation should even be used.<sup>19</sup>

There are two main categories within sport participation research: a) Sport & physical activity and b) organised sport. Many previous sport and physical activity surveys have focussed predominantly on

organised sport, and involved a limited list at that. More recently, recreation activities have been included.

The discrepancies between survey results suggest that no single source can be touted as the most valid measure. Instead, careful analysis of areas of agreement between sources, use of physical activity research and trends research can uncover a realistic picture of participation.

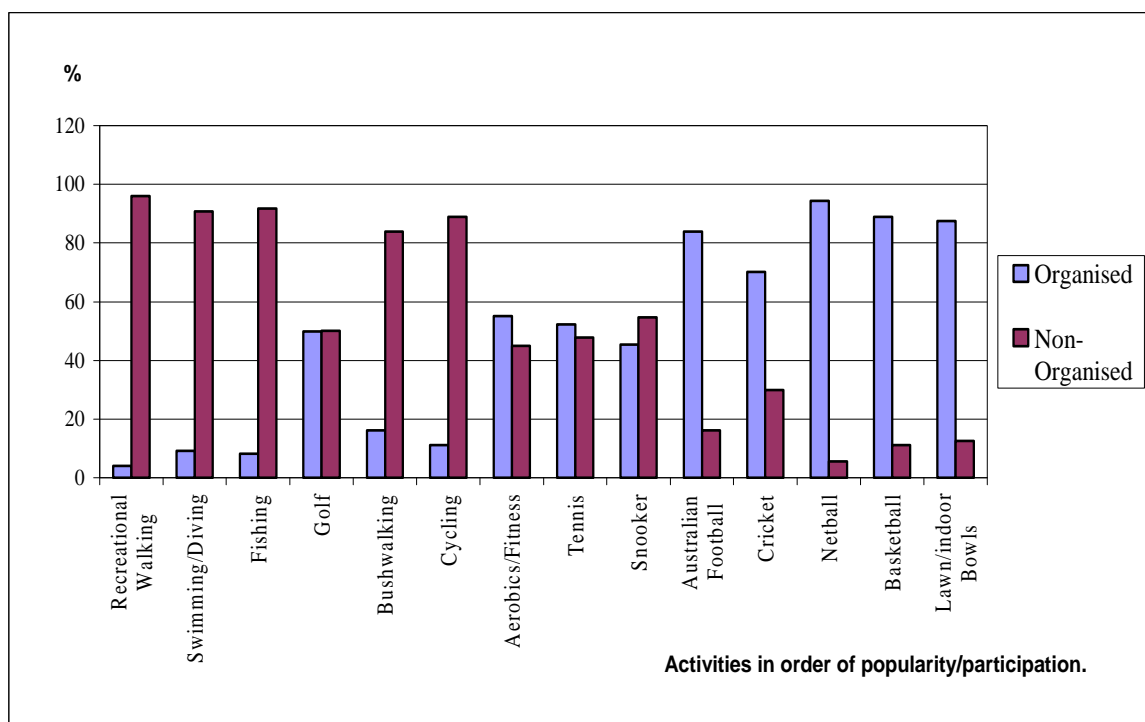
Analysis of this information suggests that there are declines in traditional sport participation. I.e. regular (frequent and structured) participation in a sport through a club roster or competition, or via school based competitions. However, the nature of participation has changed significantly in our society. A more recreation focussed basis of participation is now evident: so it is important to find areas of common agreement in the research that can guide our understanding and management decisions.<sup>21</sup>

### **7.2.1. Research suggests:<sup>19, 21, 13</sup> Refer to Figure 3**

- The majority of the population, who participate in physically active sport and recreation, participate in unstructured recreation activities as opposed to traditional sport.
- The most popular activities are recreational walking, swimming, fishing, golf, bushwalking, cycling, aerobics and fitness exercise. The majority of these are predominantly non-structured, non club based activities.
- As with physical activity, there are clear relationships between low levels of participation and distinct groups within our community. If we take an equity based or opportunity approach, then there is a clear need to identify and support participation opportunities for high needs groups.
- The decline in participation should be an area of concern, especially for children (for our future generations), but equally for the increasing older population group in our communities. Any strategies to target increases in participation should not be narrowly focussed on sport, and there should be a clear understanding that increasingly targeted approaches to developing elite sport have little or no impact upon participation by the general population.<sup>19</sup>
- Sport development approaches should be well planned, and considered in the context of wider community needs. Providing a diversity of experiences allows for elite development, but not at the expense of wider participation. An over emphasis on elite development can produce disbenefits for some sections of the community.
- Clearly, providers of participation opportunities need to change and adapt to the needs of an evolving society. It is highly likely that traditional methods will not satisfy the needs of the modern participant. These providers may require support and assistance in modifying their approaches. Local government may need to consider the nature of its support, if these providers are not successfully meeting the needs of the community.

- The nature of recreation participation is changing continually with a developing society. Partnerships between local and state government and with industry stakeholders are necessary to plan for current and future provision.
- If the most popular recreational activities are non-structured, non club based activities, local government may need to look at recreation planning priorities to reflect community demand and supply.
- Research is clearly suggesting that establishing active communities is a critical area of concern for local government. This involves the careful design of the environment so that it is conducive to physical activity.
- There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that local government needs to take a more directed approach in recreation planning and provision for its community. Leadership and coordination are key issues that need to be addressed, as recreation providers cannot be left to dictate demands towards inefficient and ineffective ways of meeting wider community needs.
- Recreation policy outcomes should be as public and accountable as health and education policy outcomes. Increasing child and adult obesity should be linked closely to exercise and recreation policy, and evaluation of such policies should question current declining levels of participation.

Figure 3 – Main activities: organised and non-organised participation. <sup>4</sup>



### 7.3. Maximising participation benefits

The aims of a benefits based approach can be listed as:

- Aim to have more people, more active, more often.

- Aim for lifelong participation in physical activity.
- Provide suitable opportunities to encourage people to participate.
- Provide a diversity of opportunities that reflects our diverse community, with particular attention on high needs groups.
- Use contemporary recreation planning and management techniques to meet community needs.
- Reinforce these principles in any partnerships with key stakeholders.

## **8. RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

The following topics relate to management systems and practices that influence recreation provision.

### **8.1. *Financial management***

Care should be taken when drawing conclusions from an analysis of financial information. Performance cannot be measured on financial data alone. For example, comparatively high expenditure on recreation facilities and services may not equate with equity of provision if the majority of expenditure is on a narrow range of services, such as facilities for formal sports. Additionally, comparisons between councils are difficult if financial reporting accounting systems are different.

Recreation planning cannot be successful if council finances are not given adequate attention during the planning process. Resource allocation and pricing policies are critical components of a successful recreation plan. Profit may not be the primary agenda, but the benefits of recreation cannot be achieved without due regard for the economic situation of a council and the state. It requires an understanding of the ability of council and residents to pay for services and the identification of alternative sources of revenue.

Accrual accounting is commonplace in local government, replacing cash accounting practices. The local government act requests that local government reports on depreciation of assets, including future replacement and refurbishment costs. In matching a benefits based approach to these accounting practices, it is important to consider issues of asset development and replacement to maintain appropriate levels of service to meet community expectations.

#### **8.1.1. Pricing policy<sup>22</sup>**

In taking a benefits based approach to recreation provision, councils need to ask the question 'why?', before applying user fees. The benefits of participation can often outweigh the 3 to 20% returns that most councils obtain from fees. However, there are good arguments in favour of fees for recreation services. Councils need to determine the right mix of these as principles that underpin a pricing policy. A rationale for developing a pricing policy should be the starting point for discussions: for example, consider:

- Offsetting cost squeezes on Council. Generating some returns on investment.
- Achieving greater equity of opportunity.
- Generating respect for, and appreciation of, what is provided.
- Rationing use by the community.
- Assisting in covering operating costs.
- Demonstrating good governance and the financial capacity of the resource.
- Offsetting competitor claims regarding competitive neutrality principles.

There are a range of alternative pricing models that councils are using across Australia. There are positives and negatives for each model. It is important that councils consider the

principles for determining an appropriate policy first, and then considering the best model that suits their needs and circumstances. For example:

- **No fees** can be charged under a number of circumstances: for certain types of facilities (i.e.: playgrounds), for venues with high levels of community input, and for certain types of users. However it bears no relation to costs, it may bear no relation to the ability of users to pay, it loses an income source, can be subject to political whim, and has no basis of financial accountability.
- **Going rate pricing.** An average of what everyone else uses. It can be easily implemented and avoids conflict with users (avoids loss from users going to other venues). However it bears no relation to costs, is not financially accountable, bears no relation to an ability to pay, and may lose significant levels of income.
- **Equity, fairness, ability and willingness to pay.** Based on an assessment of what someone thinks is fair and equitable and/or what users say they are able to afford to or willing to pay. It avoids conflict with users, but bears no relation to costs, has no basis for financial accountability, and is difficult to assess and ability and willingness to pay are not fixed rates.
- **Cost based pricing.** Based on some element of the cost of provision. Fees can be related to the cost of provision, it is financially accountable, and adjustments can be made according to CPI. However, it may not account for social benefits of provision, it can be politically sensitive, it may penalise some users simply because of poor design faults (not their issue), it can be complex (significant collection of data and financial determinations) and lead to loss of users to other venues. It can also penalise those groups that need encouragement. One benefit from cost based pricing is the scheduling of use for user groups. In facing possible high rates for hire for exclusive use of a facility, it can induce sharing (half the cost) and reduce usage down to only required times.
- **Public, merit and private goods.** Using a 3-tiered range of pricing: public (free), merit (subsidised for community benefit), and private (high cost recovery for single users or corporate rates). A useful concept but somewhat subjective in determining the categories.
- **Corporate contribution.** A recent approach by councils due to a desire to achieve a return but a lack of time, data or skill to determine what it should be. It establishes a politically acceptable fee which is then applied to users. It is easy to apply and defend, but bears no relation to costs, is not financially accountable, and can impact badly on venues with low income capacity.

The amount of returns will vary therefore according to the benefits from community provision and public/political expectations. Football and cricket ovals are lucky to achieve 5-10%. Golf courses may provide 120-150%. Modern aquatic leisure centres can often reach 80-100%.

The level of fees should be evaluated on the following:

- If it contributes to the agreed purposes of having fees
- The extent to which they cover collection costs

- Making a useful contribution to Council recreation budgets
- Getting at least as much or more back than you got in the past
- Being achievable. Don't set fees that kill activities or cause a political backlash
- Being equitable across different activities.

## **8.2. Asset management<sup>23</sup>**

The performance of a recreation facility cannot be solely judged in economic terms. Asset management should be instigated in an integrated management system that is accountable to community needs and included in strategic planning. The Tasmanian Asset Management Improvement Program (TAMI – 2002) was instigated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania in recognition that the infrastructure assets within Tasmanian councils were deteriorating to a point that will become an unreasonable burden on future generations.

Integrated asset planning should consider:

- **Standards.** Delivery that is consistent with an agreed level of service or participation by user groups.
- **Utilisation.** Maximising the number of users.
- **Maintenance.** Achieving useful functional life at optimum service delivery standards, in addition to minimising (recurrent) operating expenditure.
- **Investment.** Ensure adequate funding is identified to support maintenance standards, use and eventual replacement.
- **Legal obligations or regulator standards.** Meeting both stated and prevailing legal obligations and regulatory standards.

### **8.2.1. Demand and supply techniques**

**User demand** is a fundamental component of any asset provision and management analysis. **A demand/gap analysis** is an effective way to determine current and projected use of a facility and any shortfall. This will involve a trend analysis, demand and supply analysis, and gap/deficiency analysis.

**Critical success factors** are those issues that are fundamental to the successful running of the facility or asset. They are closely linked to risk management strategies, and therefore can include a wide range of issues. **Scenario planning** is a useful tool to consider the key factors that will influence asset planning in the future. It assists in forecasting how different forces can manipulate the future, and can assist in understanding and preparing for this.

**Service level agreements** are common between councils and community based organisations or commercial providers who are engaged to deliver services associated with the asset. These agreements should align to management principles.

Programming is often limited, with many facilities managed on a maintenance only basis. A benefits approach focuses attention on the programs and services actually provided through the asset. Usually this may require not only monitoring of the asset's performance, but of the

performance of the provider themselves. Councils can then determine a range of possible alternatives to obtain better use of the asset and therefore more benefits to the community.

### **8.2.2. Hierarchy of recreation assets**

A hierarchy of built, outdoor and natural recreation opportunities refers to the scale of the area served or the catchment from which the resource attracts users. A common hierarchy in local government is local, district, regional and state resources. Another typical hierarchy may list sports grounds as A, B or C class grounds: indicating the level of competition they service. Hierarchies are invaluable planning tools for councils. They provide a clear understanding of service levels to a community and specific user groups, and support an asset management structure that is integrated with overall community provision.

A hierarchy of facilities has been adopted by Northern Tasmania Development in the Northern Region Aquatic Strategy. A hierarchy has also been adopted through the Northern Region Soccer Strategy. Hierarchies have also been adopted in the Statewide Walking Track Strategy and the Regional Open Space Strategy by Northern Tasmania Development.

### **8.2.3. Classifying by type**

Categorisation by type helps to define the role they play and the opportunities they offer. This is a central position to a benefits based approach, and incorporates the principles of a recreation opportunity spectrum approach (mentioned earlier).

Example:

Small local parks are often referred to as playgrounds. Perhaps because they are local, frequent in provision, accessible and unable to support other activities. As a result, councils spend millions of dollars providing the venues with play equipment. In reality they are simply parks – which could serve a variety of uses. This might include a community garden, outdoor chess, half-court basketball for young people, or a pleasant parkland setting for older residents to sit, read and relax. If branded inappropriately, these alternative uses are excluded. Older residents in Melbourne have recently asked for sites to have play equipment removed so the atmosphere can better suit the needs of the aged.

#### **Displacement**

Central to this example, as explained earlier in discussing the recreation opportunity spectrum, is the concept that displacement can occur when recreation settings do not match participant needs (desired experiences). The example above provides a solid rationale for understanding participant needs and relating supply and demand principles to meeting these needs. Classifications should be clearly associated with the desired recreation experience, otherwise the benefits from recreation are clearly not being maximised due to poor management practices.

Common reasons for displacement are:

- Sensitivity to the number of other users
- Sensitivity to the behaviour of others
- Perceptions of environmental degradation
- Opposition to increased tourism
- Strong views (positive or negative) about the presence of domestic animals
- Perceptions of over-development or under-development
- Perceptions of overbearing management controls
- Perceptions regarding quality, cleanliness and safety.

#### **8.2.4. Indoor stadia and aquatic facility trends**

A summary of trends material is contained in the appendices of the main planning guide. Indoor stadia and aquatic facilities are significant areas of local government asset provision, and therefore require some discussion regarding contemporary planning information. Some issues regarding this are:

- There is growth in multi-purpose stadium provision in Australia, with increasing use of integrated leisure venues. Stand alone, single purpose stadiums are now rarely built as a range of other elements attract a wider/increased number of users.
- There is an increase in facilities being built on the condition that they are shared. These sites are increasingly independently managed to ensure an appropriate and equitable mix of programs and services are delivered.
- There is growing recognition of the strong links between aquatic centres and the associated health benefits to a wide cross section of the community. The significant benefits (number of and wide range of users, and wide range of benefits) associated to aquatic centres places them in high regard as a community asset.
- This diverse market has led to the increase in the nature of provision at these centres. Learn to swim, rehabilitation and therapy, competition and training and recreational play spaces. The packaging of programs and services can make pools attractive to groups, especially schools.
- There is a desire for facilities that can be used all year, regardless of weather or time of the day. Much of this is related to maximising the use of the facility according to the market demand.
- More people are swimming. It is commonly ranked as the second highest participation activity across Australia and in Tasmania. In Tasmania, research has indicated that rates could easily be improved if facilities were upgraded to allow year-long use.<sup>24</sup>
- New and improved facilities lift expectations of standards. As a result, old facilities find it harder to attract new visitors.
- Shade and cover are sought by users to protect from skin cancer. Indoor pools are often favoured over outdoor facilities.

### **8.2.5. Natural resource management**

Contained within the concept of supply and demand, is the fact that sustainability is reliant upon the carrying capacity of the area or asset. Natural Resource Management (NRM) principles therefore are fundamental to good recreation planning. The Northern NRM Strategy is derived from the Australian and Tasmanian Government initiatives, regulations and policies. They take into account local government implications and priorities.

#### **Cultural Heritage Protection**

There are significant cultural values held by various groups and communities within Tasmania that must be recognised and upheld to protect their heritage and our cultural diversity.

Aboriginal people have lived on the islands that make up Tasmania for many thousands of years (upwards of 40,000 years), living inter-dependently with the land throughout that time. Many of the values Aboriginal people hold as important exist within and across the wider landscape, and respect, management and protection of these values is seen as a broad Tasmanian community responsibility.<sup>25</sup>

A primary value of this planning guide is to promote the views, needs and aspirations of all Tasmanians in relation to sustainable recreation opportunities that ensure protection and enhancement of culture and heritage.

### **8.2.6. Public open space**

*The Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* states that councils have discretion in negotiating for the provision of public open space in new subdivisions. Councils can request of the developer: either the provision of appropriate public open space or an amount of money equivalent to that provision (based on calculations set out in The Act). The legislation aims at ensuring that councils plan appropriately for public open space in new subdivisions.

Many councils across Australia do not adequately plan for appropriate public open space, and are therefore left with inadequate parcels of land that are of no value for community recreation purposes, and become a liability in regards to maintenance. The public may also be left with urban environments that are not conducive to physical activity and recreation: a significant problem considering that once lost, public open space is almost impossible to regain. This is of significant concern, considering that recreation trends indicate that communities highly value open space areas for their visual and recreational amenity, and 'active communities' (environments that are conducive to physical activity) are becoming increasingly warranted.

### **8.2.7. Inventories**

Asset inventories are essential for a council to be able to account for what it controls. Without them, councils cannot effectively insure, cannot adequately cover a capital works or

maintenance program, and cannot account for public allocation of funds according to benefits provision. Asset inventories are also essential where community groups have built part or whole facilities on council owned or state government leased land. In this situation, councils are the legal owners and have responsibilities for the overseeing of these community assets.

### Example

The Dorset Council's Sport and Recreation Study (2002) by Pitt and Sherry consulting engineers, used a predominantly asset management approach to recreation provision. The hall inventory used a qualitative assessment of usage, social value, alternative venues, depreciation, cost to repair, income capacity, and existing condition. A qualitative rating could then provide a form of assessment regarding the overall value of the facility to the community and council. From this, priorities can be directed towards rationalisation, upgrading and maintenance works.

### **8.3. Town planning**

Town planning schemes are the primary systems of planning control used to by local government to manage the development of local communities. Through planning, communities identify what changes are needed: new homes, places to work, transport and community facilities – and where and how these should be developed and located. Planning seeks to ensure that there is a balance between the need for new development while conserving what communities value about the environment: green spaces, natural areas, historic buildings, culture and heritage.

Town planning integrates a variety of council services in either community service provision, community planning or development applications and controls. Each council has a planning scheme that interprets state legislation related to the role and function of local government in providing community services, management and protection of resources. Each scheme is also prepared with community consultation to reflect the specific needs of each community. Topics generally within local planning schemes include:

- Commercial and property development, including the provision for housing development and urban centres, industrial development.
- Land use planning, including rural residential, agricultural development, landscape and scenic amenity.
- Economic development: commerce, tourism, business, industry, manufacturing, agriculture, employment and retailing.
- Environmental planning: nature conservation, natural resource management.
- Heritage and conservation: townscape and cultural protection
- Health, education and community services
- Recreation and leisure, arts and cultural provision
- Infrastructure: water, power, sewerage, communications.

- Integrated transport: roads, transport systems, parking, pedestrian and cycling.
- Waste management and control: pollution monitoring and measurement

The primary issue for local government is the extent and breadth of issues affecting communities, as evidenced by the list above. Integrated planning between departments, and between other agencies and community bodies, is a difficult task. In many instances there are difficulties in integrating the distinct provision of engineering/architectural services, community development, and planning controls within local government.

### **8.3.1. Liveable communities**

There is a growing body of research that suggests the need to look at the concept of liveable communities as a part of integrated town planning. It involves the influence of town planning (urban design – the physical environment), on physical activity patterns for individuals. By identifying specific features of the built environment that are important in influencing rates of physical activity, and making changes in local land use and transportation policies that shape the built environment.

An important measure of liveability is how physically active and healthy people are. Walkable, bicycle friendly communities provide opportunities for regular physical activity – which is important in preventing chronic health problems and improving quality of life.

Some suggestions to create liveable communities include:<sup>26</sup>

- Through streets and paths that connect to multiple destinations encourage walking up to 3 times more than no through streets.
- Compact development makes walking possible by reducing distances and making walking more interesting.
- Windows from residential / shop street fronts help to create security.
- Road crossings are well marked and located to create pedestrian safety.
- Short blocks with mid-block road crossings make walking more convenient.
- Landscaping: use of trees, lawns, plantings and wide street verges help to make walking and cycling more pleasant and desirable.
- Narrow shaded streets actually slow cars, and can make streets up to 10 degrees cooler: therefore making walking and cycling more pleasant in summer.
- Local shops and local shopping precincts can induce more people to walk in the vicinity of these services.
- Schools integrated into neighbourhoods and road/path systems can increase walking and cycling to school. Stranger danger and road safety are important aspects to consider.
- Neighbourhood parks increase physical activity for young people near their homes. These parks need to consider recreational play space and ranges of provision for a variety of activities and age groups.
- Cycle lanes either on-road or off-road assist in increasing cycling for transport purposes as these areas are safer for cyclists.

- Traffic calming techniques are used in residential and central city areas to provide greater safety and amenity for walking and cycling.
- Provide accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in transportation programs.

There are also strong connections between active environments and economic viability. Reducing traffic noise, traffic speeds and vehicle generated air pollution can increase property values. Tourists are attracted to areas that are more scenic and amenable to walking and cycling. Walkable streets are good for retail areas and subsequent sales. Reductions in pollution from vehicles increases the marketability of areas: to tourists, residents, potential businesses – attracting investment and economic prosperity.<sup>26</sup>

## **8.4. Community recreation provision**

Not for profit, volunteer based, recreation clubs and associations provide many participation opportunities in the community. The Australian media tends to perpetuate the dominance of sport in our consciousness: upholding images of the great sun-bronzed Australian sportsman and woman, our gold medal hauls where we ‘...punch above our weight’ on the world arena, and our individual athletes as heroes and champions. Clearly, the evidence provided in this planning guide suggests that there is more to recreation planning for our communities than a focus on elite based sport and the clubs that provide traditional sporting competitions.

A benefits based approach suggests that we look at the wide diversity of available opportunities based on their merits in meeting community needs. In this context, we must review community recreation providers according to how efficient and effective they are in delivering recreation opportunities, according to accepted standards of provision, and specific needs in our community. While such a review may be threatening to some organisations, those that are providing a valuable community service in an acceptable manner should be recognised and supported for their important role in our community.

Understanding the environment in which these organisations are operating is important in such a review. It may also challenge traditional approaches by local government in terms of the manner of support required to sustain these organisations, against the wider variety of opportunities desired by the community.

### **8.4.1. Challenges for community providers**

Community recreation clubs and associations are under a variety of pressures in their daily operations: all relating to social changes that are impacting upon their activities. Some of these issues include:

- A decline in volunteer numbers to administer and conduct activities.
- Declines in traditional club membership.
- Decline in the number of spectators to support the club/activities.
- Limited club resources for programming of facilities and activities.

- Lack of funds for facility maintenance and development.
- Increasing legal liability pressure and rising insurance costs.
- Increased operational costs by declines in fund raising capacity.
- Increasing needs for strategic and business planning.
- Limited education and training support for officials.
- Increasing legal pressures for member protection strategies.

The environment in which these organisations are operating is changing at a fast pace. Many of these organisations are struggling to understand and cope with these changes. This has an impact on councils across Australia: how to adequately support community organisations, while also continuing to develop their capacity to be more accountable to contemporary standards of provision and operation.

The traditional system of community recreation provision that appeared to work well is now understood to not be delivering the benefits it once did. The disbenefits of poor planning and provision are becoming more apparent: sexual misconduct by coaches, violence in sport, clubs lacking insurance policies to cover the loss of equipment, parochial fighting for resources, duplication of resources and inadequate provision for people with disabilities. For example:

- Individual facilities tended to be developed for specific user groups, often in isolation from other facilities and activities. There has been an expectation that facilities should and will be provided for sport in priority to recreational use.
- Sole purpose/use groups have tended to consider themselves as sole owners (occupiers) of the facilities, even though councils are the legal owners on behalf of the wider community.
- There has been little assessment of sharing, other potential uses and long term financial management.
- Vocal minority groups tend to focus attention on their needs, and they tend to receive most of the resources. This is in opposition to any strategic focus on wider community needs and priority based provision.
- There has been a lack of feasibility and master planning for facility provision.
- Wide based community consultation has been generally overlooked.
- There has been a failure to evaluate future trends.
- There is a perceived lack of technical advice.

It is important here to focus on the benefits of community recreation provision. Certainly volunteer clubs and associations are necessary in community recreation provision. There are key questions that councils need to consider in evaluating these benefits, and avoiding the disbenefits from poor planning, parochial attitudes and a lack of support that undermines their effectiveness.

Councils need to balance several distinct viewpoints when considering their role and relationship with community providers:

- Community providers are an important community asset. They provide direct participation experiences for the community, and should be supported in their endeavours to maintain the diversity of recreation opportunities available. Varying levels of support may include technical planning advice, strategic and business planning, education, financial support etc.
- Community providers however work predominantly in isolation from each other, and do not necessarily have a strategic or integrated approach to planning for community recreation provision. Therefore councils should carefully consider requests for support, as these may not necessarily be in the best interests of the wider community, or they need to be balanced with a wider perspective.
- Councils have a role, through appropriate community planning and coordination, to establish an understanding of holistic community needs and a plan for sustaining and improving provision. Without an understanding of the bigger picture, councils will have little ability to analyse individual requests for assistance on the basis of a community benefits approach.
- Community providers are part of a wider diversity of recreation experiences required by communities. As such, each provider's level of service should be considered based on their merits: how effective they are in meeting community needs, against accepted standards of provision.
- Councils support for providers is therefore balanced against their ability to meet community needs: their efficiency and effectiveness in doing this according to accepted standards of provision.

### **8.5. Sharing recreation resources**

One of the significant concerns identified throughout Australia was the extent to which individual groups have developed their own exclusive facilities. While this is a real strength from one perspective, from another it is a significant weakness: assets are frequently of a lower than appropriate standard, they are often duplicated and clubs struggle to balance the running of activities with the resources required maintaining facilities. A looming issue is that of the cost of future asset maintenance and repairs, especially considering that many community based organisations and councils have not adequately considered replacement and refurbishment costs, and allocated funds for these works.<sup>13</sup>

As mentioned previously, the predominantly uncoordinated approach to recreation planning has resulted in duplication and under-utilisation of many facilities. There is now general recognition that a more efficient and effective approach is necessary. Joint provision is an arrangement between two or more parties to cooperatively plan, design, and in some cases manage a recreation facility. Shared use often relates to the sharing of a facility by two or more organisations, but management responsibilities are not necessarily assumed. In this situation, the facility is termed as 'multi-use', in that it facilitates shared use from multiple organisations – sometimes where they conduct quite separate activities.

There are significant challenges of moving from a single-use, uncoordinated and unplanned system of provision, dictated by individual clubs and sports, to a coordinated system that evaluates proposals based on a benefits approach. Change resistance is coupled with conflict over having to share resources and justify the ownership and use of these community assets. There are enough examples across Australia and Tasmania to indicate that this change is appropriate and effective: but careful planning and leadership is required.

### **8.5.1. Benefits of joint provision and shared use**

#### **Increase in use.**

Shared use will result in facilities being used by more people, more often. This might involve alternative seasonal users, or it may mean that a management authority matches periods of down-time (The facility is not being used) are matched with other potential users.

#### **Less duplication.**

Joint provision and shared use will ensure that the unnecessary and costly duplication of facilities is avoided. This is a major cost benefit to local government, where cost savings can be handed back down to community groups in regards to lower fees and charges.

#### **Cost sharing**

Participating organisations can share the burden of capital works, replacement, maintenance and operating program costs. Depending on the nature of the management system, all organisations can potentially benefit from cost efficiencies in management responsibilities and human labour.

#### **Increased recreation opportunities**

With cost savings from a reduction in duplication and sharing of management costs, there is the potential for a greater range of facilities and a higher standard of facilities. In some cases, local government has taken control of community facilities to oversee joint provision and sharing principles: to secure wider community benefits. In this case, community organisations can focus on their core activities (provision), and enhance direct participation opportunities to the community.

## **8.6. Risk management**

Risk assessment and minimisation is becoming a key element in the management in any organisation. Risks to a council can come from two distinct sources - threats to its customers and threats to its business practices. However risks in a recreation context may come from relationships, human factors, natural events, equipment/technology failure and from the activity itself. It is important to distinguish between the organisational context of risk management, that for a council as opposed to the provision itself.

Low awareness of risk and the resultant claims against an organisation will increase insurance premiums paid by that organisation. Unfortunately the increases happen quickly and any reduction takes a long period of time to be felt.

Councils are complex organisations that are operating in an environment of increasing litigation. Elected members, executive officers and staff at all levels must be aware of risk and be committed to reducing risk to both the business of Council and its customers.

As well as insurance claims there is the issue of overall community safety. As a leader in community development Council should take a lead in having a sound risk management strategy to ensure its actions are taken in the interest of public safety. This is also relevant when considering the extent of community recreation provision through community providers using council owned assets.

### **8.6.1. Risk management process**

An accepted risk management process for Australia is defined in the 'Risk Management Standards' (Aus/NZ 4360:1999), and the Standards Australia, 'guidelines for managing risk in sport and recreation' (HB246:2002). In addition, Sport and Recreation Tasmania has prepared 'A sporting chance. A risk management framework for the sport and recreation industry'.<sup>27</sup>

In adopting appropriate risk management systems for local government, it is important to understand the context of risk in society and the implications that our judgements might have on community recreation provision.

Our perceptions of risk are born from our personal experiences and understandings, and are therefore as diverse as the people in our communities. We perceive risks differently, and we judge risks differently. For example: Rock climbing is often perceived to be extremely dangerous, so as a result, many people with this understanding would select not to rock climb. The same people however, might choose to talk on a mobile phone while driving, or engage in smoking or binge drinking: both being far riskier (more hazardous) activities than climbing. The real risk of rock climbing has been analysed to be far less hazardous (i.e. risk of personal injury or death) than the risk of driving to and from the climbing site!

It is therefore important to use appropriate risk management processes rather than judge risks by personal viewpoints. Management decisions can negatively impact on people's freedom to participate in their chosen activities, especially when these are challenging and adventurous. In return, it is important to consider community's perceptions of risks as potential barriers to participation. For example: parent's perceptions of stranger danger and road safety are often barriers to allowing their children to walk or cycle to school.

### **8.6.2. Public liability**

Much has been written of the recent public liability crisis, resulting in increased insurance premiums and negative impacts on community recreation provision.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's fourth report monitoring public liability and professional indemnity insurance costs and premiums was issued by the Australian Government recently. The report shows that for the first half of 2004, the average premium for public liability insurance fell by 15%, the average claims cost decreased by 11%,

and insurers' financial performance from underwriting public liability insurance declined. This would appear to be the first signs of downward movement in premiums. They appear to counter previous upward trends, and could be caused by a range of factors, including tort law reforms across Australia.<sup>28</sup>

The Civil Liability Amendment Bill, 2003, ensures that Tasmanian legislation is complimentary and consistent with Federal legislation and that in other states and territories. The reforms deal with foreseeability, standard of care, obvious risk, dangerous recreational activities, contributory negligence, threshold and cap for damages, protection for public authorities, protection for volunteers, and amendments to the Fair Trading Act.

Provisions for volunteers exempt them from civil liability for their actions if they are acting in good faith when undertaking work for a community organisation. The organisation for which the volunteer undertakes the work is liable for any harm arising from a breach of duty by the volunteer. This removes any disincentive to a volunteer from taking part in community activities but still provides an avenue of redress for a plaintiff if negligence can be established.

The Bill includes principles that apply in determining whether a public or other authority has breached a duty. Courts are to consider the limited resources of the public authority and the broad range of functions of the authority. This reform was recommended so that a Court was required to take into account the 'real world' of finite budgets and large responsibilities of public authorities.

Public authorities are exempt from liability arising from the materialisation of a risk associated with a recreational activity for which a risk warning has been given. There is protection in the Bill for incapable persons who are not able to understand risk warnings, but not if they are in the care of someone who is able to understand the warning. This reform is again to emphasise the need for individuals to take personal responsibility for their actions and to recognise the impossibility of a public authority removing all foreseeable risks in its jurisdiction.<sup>29</sup>

## **9. MANAGEMENT AIMS**

A summary of possible aims for recreation provision by local government are:

- Efficiency, quality and effective delivery.
- Value for money. Allocation of priorities. Cannot provide everything for everybody, but need to consider a hierarchy of provision to meet diversity of needs.
- Viability, feasibility, sustainability.
- Accountability and transparency.
- Facility design and development guidelines.
- Asset management guidelines.
- Management plans.
- Fee and pricing guidelines.
- Maintenance and management guidelines
- Joint development and shared access principles.
- Skilled staff, educated and informed council and community.
- Pursue opportunities for joint development and shared access.
- Provide coordinated management and planning.
- Asset maintenance and replacement/divestment program.

### **9.1. Policy position**

The following Policy Positions reflect the present and desired direction of local government involvement in the recreation industry in Australia.<sup>13</sup>

1. Major recreation developments initiated or supported by Council will only proceed where they are the outcome of a 'whole-of-Council' process of planning, review and approval.
2. Council will endeavour to facilitate the provision of recreation programs/projects for the community when deemed appropriate, where there is an identified 'gap' in provision.
3. Council will consider the provision of recreational programs and services where they are essential for the viability of a major Council recreation facility.
4. Council will only provide or support new facilities, programs and services which reflect researched community needs, which help achieve optimal use, which offer a diversity of measurable beneficial outcomes and which maintain or broaden the base for participation in recreation activities.

5. Recreation provision proposals should meet the proposed project assessment criteria. The criteria encompass the following questions; Does the proposal meet the current and future needs of the community?; Does the proposal Incorporate a planned and well managed approach?; Will the proposal be financially viable?
6. Council will continue to provide or support the provision of a diversity of open space and built recreation facilities to allow the opportunity for an equitable range of both structured and unstructured recreational experiences. Unless a strong case to the contrary can be demonstrated, open space and built facilities will only be developed where this supports multiple uses and users.
7. Council will encourage a transition to a shared or multiple occupation of existing grounds, facilities, clubroom and social facilities.
8. Council will endeavour to provide and maintain recreation facilities, programs and services in a condition which is appropriate to the standard and level of use. Maintenance schedules will comply with contemporary standards for competition, safety and risk management.
9. Council will aim to continuously review the existing provision and use of recreation facilities, programs and services for the purpose of determining need and in order to respond to emerging trends.
10. Where deemed appropriate, Council will endeavour to refurbish, redevelop and/or rationalise recreation assets or restructure their management and use to ensure current and emergent needs are satisfied and that duplication or over-provision does not occur.
11. Council will only deal with sporting and recreation associations or parent groups (as opposed to individual clubs) on matters of strategic planning relating to the development of recreation facilities, programs and services. Major capital works initiatives will only be undertaken when they are supported by an acceptable feasibility and/or business plan.
12. Council will seek to promote the availability of recreation facilities, pro-grams and services in the community for a broad range of uses, and will encourage individual, associations and clubs to provide events and sporting fixtures on Council reserves whether on a regular or occasional basis.
13. Council will strive to facilitate, support and/or develop and maintain recreation facilities, programs and services at a hierarchy of standards in order to ensure a sustainable array of opportunities for participation at all appropriate skill levels.
14. Fees and charges will be established on the basis of facility, program and service maintenance costs, facility, program and service types, user types and market acceptance.
15. Fee subsidies and concessions will be considered as part of a specific council funding initiative or referrals will be made to the Council Community Grants scheme.
16. Recreation facilities, programs and services on Council land or land for which Council is responsible will be managed, maintained and programmed in keeping with the principles of Councils Recreation Strategy and other relevant Council policies.

17. Council will endeavour to monitor the implementation and impacts of these policy positions and review and revise them on a 5 yearly basis or as deemed appropriate. Additional items will be added depending on changing and new circumstances. Council will seek to prepare a report to the community on the revision.

---

## 9.2. Proposed guidelines for evaluating initiatives

The following questions can be used in determining the value of any development proposal by community organisations in relation to a benefits approach to recreation provision. It is a guide only, and would require further information and analysis according to the specifics of the project and the area of provision.<sup>30</sup>

### 9.2.1. Meet the current and future needs of the community

- Is the project identified as a priority in council's recreation strategy?
- Has the project included a needs assessment, which clearly justifies and substantiates the need for the proposal?
- Is there evidence of community consultation and input?
  - Is the nature of input satisfactory to represent the wider needs of the community?
  - Is further consultation recommended to substantiate the decision to proceed?
- Does the project identify benefits in regards to individuals, the community, the economy and the environment?
- Does the project proposal consider alternatives: that demand may be met through existing facilities, programs or services? Or that an alternative and more appropriate solution can be found?
- Has a cost/benefit analysis been conducted? Consider the cost of the proposal against the outcomes proposed in comparison with other similar projects.
- How does the project create new or increased recreational opportunities for residents?
  - Does it enhance the quality of the participant's experience?
  - Does it broaden the range of opportunities for the wider community?
  - Will it provide for a broader range of community members, especially those with high needs?
  - Will it increase participation or the number of participants? (new, existing, in frequency or duration)
  - Will it increase physical activity opportunities?
  - Does the project maximise access to the wider community?

### 9.2.2. Incorporates a planned and well managed approach

- Is there evidence of strategic planning by the applicant: how the project fits within the overall direction of the organisation?
- Is there evidence that this planning aligns with strategic planning by Council? Does the project comply with Council's planning requirements, for example:
  - Asset management (ie: facility planning and management) for the site, municipal area or region. Possibly encompassing an inventory analysis and gap analysis of provision.

- Community planning (incorporating holistic needs analysis and understanding of social and recreational trends).
- Environmental planning.
- Is there evidence of feasibility planning to examine the viability of the project? This will depend on the complexity of the project. For example:
  - Has any impact assessment been conducted, that includes scenario planning? Consider impacts on other facility, program or service providers in the area.
  - Feasibility planning may include location rationale, design, management planning, capital costs and sources of funding, analysis of financial viability, ongoing operational strategies and future development.
  - Has some level of management planning been conducted? Consider financial planning (see below), management authority, target markets, fees and asset management strategies.
- Does the design meet accepted standards to maximise benefits? Consider:
  - The brief reflects the needs and aspirations of potential users.
  - The brief focuses on the purpose of the project, site details and any planning constraints and regulations necessary.
  - Flexible design allows for multi-use of spaces, potential for modification to meet changing needs, and future development.
  - Energy efficient and low maintenance products and design are maximised to reduce the environmental impacts and ongoing maintenance costs.
- Does the project meet Council's principles/regulations for development?
  - Will the project increase multi-use and cater for a broader range of users?
  - Will the project provide increased safety and security to users? (incorporating occupational health and safety requirements)
  - Does the project meet Building Code and Disability Discrimination Act requirements?
  - Does the project meet Public Assembly requirements?
  - *Additional points here to meet Council requirements.*
- Have coordination and partnership issues been analysed?
  - Consider co-location or joint provision between other groups, the Education Department and Council.
  - Cooperation between local groups, agencies and neighbouring Councils.
  - Is there a clear management agreement between council and the organisation, or should there be?
  - Has land/asset ownership been clarified and are leases and licences correctly in place?
- Does the organisation follow best practice guidelines for the management and administration of all activities, for example:
  - Member protection
  - Legal obligations

- Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination
- Guidelines (minium standards) for activity operation
- Etc.
- Is there support for the proposal by the regional or state affiliated body?

**9.2.3. Be financially viable.**

- Is the organisation financially able to manage the project?
- Will the project increase operational self sufficiency or improve financial viability?
- Will the development reduce the level of maintenance costs to council?
- Is the club/organisation able to fund its required capital contribution?
- Does the organisation exhibit self-responsibility and a secure and viable future through appropriate financial and management practices?
- Have the capital costs been correctly calculated to include completion requirements, contingency planning and scenario planning?
- Have long term operational costs been considered with an appropriate management plan to meet this and future developments, maintenance and replacement schedules?
- Will the project have minium impact on other facilities, programs and services in surrounding areas?

## Appendix: Influences on participation

Unless directly referenced with endnotes, the information is from:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004), Non participants in sport and physical activities – characteristics and drivers, Informal draft paper for the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport, Research Group. Unpublished data. <sup>31</sup>

Factor	Description
Age	Increasing age corresponds with declining participation, especially for those over 35 years of age.
Gender	In most cases, females have lower rates of participation than males. However, a range of other factors influence this: the physical and competitive nature of activities (and differences in male and female motivations), constraints upon time etc.
Health Status	Strong relationship between self-assessed health status and participation. Recent or long term ill health or injury can be a barrier to participation.
Work & Family	<p>Casualisation of the work force, longer working hours, contribute to less available time for recreation.</p> <p>Generally higher rates of household income relates to higher rates of participation.</p> <p>Child care responsibilities, work commitments, domestic activities contribute to less available time for recreation. Closely linked to work issues.</p> <p>However, some families are highly motivated and manage their time to create opportunities for active leisure. Children in families are a motivator.</p> <p>Children in single parent families have lower rates of participation.</p> <p>Children with unemployed parents have lower rates of participation. <sup>32</sup></p> <p>Those in full-time employment have higher rates than those in part time employment.</p>
Population mobility	<p>The incidence of changing jobs and moving to another region negatively influences participation: through stress, reduced social networks, reduced time etc.</p> <p>Internal migration however can also be a catalyst for becoming involved in new activities.</p>

Factor	Description
Costs	Cost of participation is a barrier for some people, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This may apply to membership and fees, clothes and equipment.
Facilities and access	<p>Lack of facilities or transport are barriers to participation. Often related to rural/isolated communities that do not have the range of opportunities normally found in larger urban centres.</p> <p>Transport is often cited as a problem for people living in fringe areas: affected by a lack of public transport or travelling times/cost for private transport. Transport is often cited as a reason for lower socio-economic groups and young people – related to their access to public transport (routes, efficiency of service, cost of service, times for service) and access to private motor vehicles.</p>
Motivation.	<p>Personal preferences play a major role in determining participation patterns. There are a range of factors to consider:</p> <p>Personal skills and abilities. (can't play, don't know the rules etc)</p> <p>Personal circumstance (time, work, family, gender, age, income, etc)</p> <p>Environment (family and other role models, opportunity provision, urban/natural setting etc), and</p> <p>Personal confidence and body image. Mainly related to social factors, but can also be linked to uniforms and dress standards affecting participation. I.e.: young women may not wish to participate if they are forced to wear lycra or body-hugging uniforms.</p> <p>Personal preferences. Don't like sweating or physical activity, don't want to get hurt, do/don't like competition, do/don't like outdoor activities etc. (most people motivated by wanting to have fun, be fit and healthy, and socialise with friends).</p>
Social	<p>Social inclusion, friends and peer support is a major factor in assisting with participation, especially for young people.</p> <p>Feelings of safety are crucial to participation. Neighbourhood safety is important (lighting, perception of crime or violence, risk of dog attack etc), as are concerns regarding harm in non-supportive environments (bullying, harassment etc.) A definite correlation: declining feelings of safety and declines in participation. This does not correlate with age: therefore young people have problems related to feeling safe as well as older people.</p>

Factor	Description
	<p>People living alone have lower rates of participation: this also combines with age – lower rates with living alone AND increasing age.</p> <p>People with less social contact (family and friends) have lower rates of participation. A definite correlation between decreasing contact and decreasing participation.</p>
Cultural	<p>People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) have lower rates of participation than those people born in Australia (English speaking background). Therefore, non-English speaking people born overseas have the lowest participation rates in this category.</p> <p>Language, social networks, access to information and culture itself all influence participation patterns. There is a definite correlation between people who are not proficient in English and low participation rates.</p> <p>Australian Indigenous people have lower rates of participation than non-indigenous Australians.</p>
Weather and climate	<p>Weather has been cited as a reason for non-participation (too hot/cold, or wet). However this does not show a consistent pattern across Australia. There are other influencing factors here.</p>
Education	<p>People with higher education levels generally have higher levels of participation. Students have the highest rates of participation.</p>
Disability.	<p>Generally lower rates of participation.</p>
Index of socio-economic disadvantage	<p>There are declines in participation that correlate with lower socio-economic status. As defined by the socio-economic index of disadvantage.</p>

---

---

## References

---

- 1 **Ken Marriott**, (2004), The future of recreation planning, HM Leisure Planning Pty Ltd.
- 2 **Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care**, (2001) National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians, Australian Government.
- 3 **The Saturday Evening Express** (1957) newspaper article, 'Century ahead of his time', 14/9/1957.
- 4 **Office of Sport and Recreation**, (2002), Northern Tasmania, Participation in Sport and Recreation Activities, Department of State Development.
- 5 **Inspiring Place Pty Ltd** (2004) Northern Tasmania, Regional Recreation Trails Strategy, prepared for the Northern Tasmania Development – Recreation Committee.
- 6 **The Examiner**, (2005), Saturday March 26, page 9.
- 7 **McKenna, B** (2000) Report No. 2 – Participation in regional sport and recreation, Northern Tasmanian Municipal Organisation, recreation committee.
- 8 **Office of Sport and Recreation Queensland**, (1997) Information paper 1, defining the Recreation Industry
- 9 **Carroll, J.** (1995) Local Government Sport and Recreation Provision in Australia, Confederation of Australian Sport, Canberra.
- 10 **Sport and Recreation Victoria**, (1995), Community recreation: Municipal recreation planning guide, 2nd Edition, Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, Victoria
- 11 **Inspiring Place Pty Ltd.** (2000), Meander Valley, Strategic Sport and Recreation Plan 1999-2008, Meander Valley Council, Tasmania
- 12 **Ken Marriott**, (2003) Ballarat City Council, Recreation Study and Strategy, HM Leisure Planning Pty Ltd, Conceptz Pty Ltd, C. Leisure Pty Ltd.
- 13 **Ken Marriott**, (2003) Ballarat City Council, Recreation Study and Strategy, HM Leisure Planning Pty Ltd, Conceptz Pty Ltd, C. Leisure Pty Ltd.
- 14 **Bull, F. Bauman, A. Bellew, B. Brown, W.** (2004) Getting Australia Active II, an update of evidence on physical activity for health, National Public Health Partnership (NPHP), Melbourne, Australia
- 15 **Richards, G.P.** (1999), A territory-wide application of the opportunity spectrum approach using marketing techniques, In the Journal of Australian Parks and Leisure, June 1999.
- 16 **Wearing, S. and Archer, D.** (2001), Towards a framework for sustainable marketing of protected areas, The Journal of Parks and Leisure Australia, March 2001
- 17 **Kerber, L** (2002) Launceston City Council, rock climbing and abseiling management strategy, appendices. Arete Training and Solutions Pty Ltd. Tasmania.
- 18 **Kenyon, P. The Bank of IDEAS** (2000), Building healthy, vibrant and enterprising communities, overhead presentation notes. Initiatives for the Development of Enterprising Action and Strategies (IDEAS), Western Australia.
- 19 **Veal, A. J.** (2003), Tracking Change: Leisure participation and policy in Australia, 1985-2002, University of Technology, Sydney [Published in Annals of Leisure Research, Vol. 6 No 3, pp. 245-277].
- 20 **Bull, F. Bauman, A. Bellew, B. Brown, W.** (2004) Getting Australia Active II, an update of evidence on physical activity for health, National Public Health Partnership (NPHP), Melbourne, Australia

- 
- 21 **Australian Sports Commission**, (2000), *The Numbers Game*. A description of organised sport and physical activity participants in Australia. Australian Sports Commission, Canberra.
- 22 **Marriott, K.** (2004), *The Pricing of Leisure Facilities, programs and services*. Northern Tasmanian Development pricing workshop, Launceston.
- 23 **Sport and Recreation Western Australia**, (1997) *Joint provision and shared use of sport and recreation facilities*, Ministry of sport and recreation.
- 24 **King, M.** (2002), *Northern Tasmanian Regional Aquatic Strategy, final report volume 1*, Northern Tasmanian Municipal Organisation, Recreation committee.
- 25 **Natural Resource Management North** (2004) *Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy, 2004-2007*, 'consensus statement developed Risdon cove 256/2004'.
- 26 **Local Government Commission** (2004) *Why people don't walk and what city planners can do about it*, web based resource. [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)
- 27 **Sport and Recreation Tasmania**, (2002), *A sporting Chance, A risk management framework for the sport and recreation industry*.
- 28 **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** (2005), *Media release, February 27, 2005*.
- 29 **Tasmanian Government** (2004), *Summary of provisions of the Civil Liability Amendment Bill 2003*
- 30 **Simply Great Leisure Consulting Group** (2003) *Glenorchy Sport and Recreation Strategy 2003-2006*.
- 31 **Australian Bureau of Statistics** (2004), *Non participants in sport and physical activities – characteristics and drivers*, Informal draft paper for the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport, Research Group. Unpublished data.
- 32 **Australian Sports Commission**, (2004), *Children and Sport*, a research report by the University of South Australia. Australian Government, Canberra