FutureNow
Creative and Leisure Industries Training Council

Sport and Recreation

Communities and governments are rethinking the role of sport, fitness and recreation in the physical and mental health of individuals, and society overall, placing demand on the services provided by the sector.

Current industry environment

Over 90% of Australian adults have an interest in sport. The sport, fitness and recreation sectors have grown over the past five years as consumers increase their expenditure and activity.[1] Sport Australia estimates that fourteen million Australians participate in sport annually, with 1.8 million volunteering 158 million hours each year, and 200,000 employed, generating approximately three per cent of the national gross domestic product (GDP). Sport delivers $83 billion of benefits to Australia each year, a return of seven dollars for each dollar invested.[2]

Sport motivates Australians to be active and teaches resilience, teamwork, collaboration and leadership. It builds self-esteem and promotes social inclusion and cohesion. The rise in women's sport and para-sport is helping to change community perceptions.[3] The success and media coverage of high-profile women's sporting teams in football, rugby, soccer, cricket, basketball and netball motivates young Australians to participate in sport and champions broader issues of equality.

Sport and recreational activities in rural and regional areas contribute to the social fabric and vibrance of communities, enhancing their amenity and making them attractive places to live. Volunteering has always been a key feature of rural life. Sport attracts numerous volunteers to run clubs and skill development programs, underpinning the day-to-day social, economic and environmental functions of rural communities.[4]

There are more than 5,500 sport and active recreation clubs and 100 State Sporting Associations in Western Australia. One hundred and thirty seven local governments invest heavily in providing public open spaces like parks and ovals, and community infrastructure facilities like leisure centres and club rooms. These facilities allow some 500,000 in WA people to play sport.[5]

Communities and governments are rethinking the role of sport, fitness and recreation in the physical and mental health of individuals, and society overall, placing demand on the services provided by the sector. There is a strong overlap between sport and recreation activity and the health and wellbeing industries as Australia experiences a rise in obesity levels and an ageing population with chronic health conditions. Outdoor recreation activities and facilities attract tourists and this overlap is increasingly being considered by Government when setting policy and providing funding for either sector.

To this end, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSCI) undertook the Sport and Recreation Strategic Funding Review in 2018, to assess the Department's investment in WA's sport and recreation industry.[6] DLGSCI also developed a framework, *More People More Active Outdoors*,[7] that recognises the value of outdoor recreation in increasing physical activity, improving mental and physical well-being and reducing health costs. The *Bigger Better Safer Report 2017-2018*,[8] Western Australia's Aquatics Industry report, provides an in-depth insight into the resources that make up the aquatics industry in WA and benchmarks safety stands.

A snapshot of
Sport & Recreation

Sport | Fitness | Outdoor Recreation
Community Recreation and Aquatics

90%
The number of Australians with an interest in sport

Each year in Australia:
14 million participate in sport
1.8 million volunteer in sport
220,000 employed in sector

Sport: motivates Australians to be active and teaches resilience, teamwork, collaboration and leadership.

Sport & Recreation in WA

5500 sport and active recreation clubs
100 State Sporting Associations
137 local governments invest in community infrastructure facilities

500,000
people play sport in WA each year

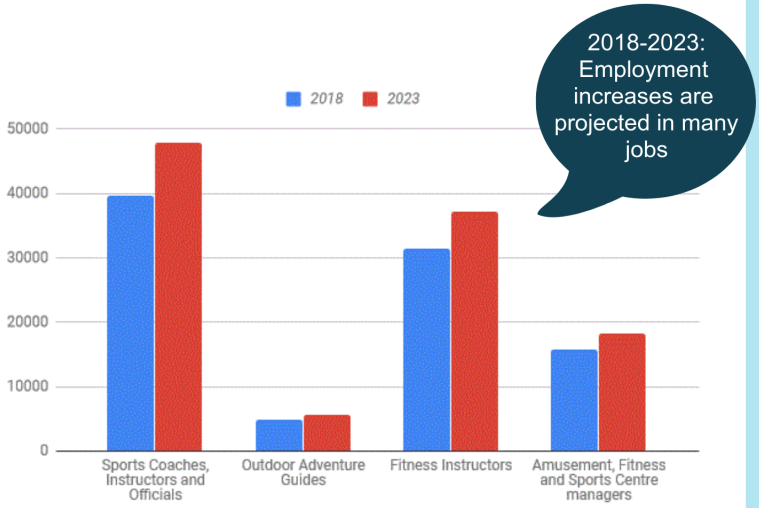
Sport: Builds self-esteem and promotes social inclusion and cohesion.

The future workforce

Future Skills:

- Technical/Job-Specific Skills
- Self-Management
- Teamwork and Communication
- Problem Solving

$7 return on investment for every $1 spent on sport and recreation (economic, health and education benefits)



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Industry developments

Sport

Job roles in sport include sports coaches and instructors, sports officials, sports managers, team managers, sport event managers, sport development officers and managers.[9] In the 2019-20 Federal Budget, the Australian government provided a funding package of $385.4 million for sport and physical activity to deliver the priorities of the Commonwealth's Sport 2030 plan.[10] The plan supports Australians to be more active, more often and embraces diversity and inclusivity, integrity, innovation and technology.[11]

A large volunteer workforce is essential to support sporting activities. This is especially so in regional areas and those employed in the sector need skills in training and managing the volunteer workforce to ensure this contribution is used effectively.[12]

Employees and volunteers increasingly need skills and knowledge in governance as sport and recreation organisations move to improve the way they operate. Effective governance helps maintain public confidence and impacts participation and strategic direction.[13] In Western Australia, incorporated associations are subject to governance requirements set out in the Associations Incorporation Act 2015.

Fitness

The fitness sub-sector is comprised of health clubs, fitness centres and gyms that provide a range of fitness and exercise services to a diverse client base. Job roles include; aqua instructor, gym instructor, group exercise instructor, personal trainer, personal training manager and fitness services coordinator.[14] In 2016 Fitness Australia had registrations for 25,521 fitness instructors and personal trainers, with a further 1,904 sole traders in the industry.[15]

This sub-sector grew strongly over the past five years, with more affordable 24-hour gym chains stimulating the majority of growth, and is expected to continue to grow over the next five years.[16] Fitness instructors are increasingly working with a broader spectrum of clients, client needs and limitations, creating a growing need for skills which enable them to deal with and deliver suitable programs to children, adolescents, older participants and those with medical conditions.

Industry report that there are few jobs available to graduates at at Certificates II and III level. Employers prefer graduates at Certificate IV.

Outdoor Recreation

The central component of an outdoor recreation activity is the natural environment. Outdoor recreation includes nature-based tourism, camps and outdoor education, adventure therapy, and a full range of outdoor recreational activities, such as cycling, fishing, bushwalking, canoeing, surfing, climbing and many others. A difference between the 'sport' and 'outdoor recreation' sectors is that many individuals participate in outdoor recreation without a team, club or competition.[17]

Job roles in the outdoor recreation sub-sector include: outdoor activity assistant, outdoor activity guide, outdoor activity instructor, outdoor recreation assistant, outdoor leader and outdoor recreation program manager.[18] Nationally, employment increases of 18% are projected for Outdoor Adventure Guides between 2018 and 2023 (from 4800 to 5700)[19] although a recent study found that numbers working in the outdoor recreation are being underestimated.[20]

This sub-sector is growing with increasing opportunities for employment, particularly from tourism, but industry has difficulty attracting and retaining qualified workers. Employment is often short term and seasonal. Graduates at Certificates II and III are generally not seen by industry to have the technical skills nor the depth of experience to work effectively in outdoor recreation jobs. Employers prefer Certificate IV graduates who have the maturity, skills and requisite level of judgment to assess risk and make decisions.

There is an increasing emphasis on the way outdoor recreation operators interact with Indigenous communities and heritage and cultural sites. Training package products have recently had relevant content added to existing units related to planning and implementing outdoor recreation.[21]

Community Recreation and Aquatics

Aquatic and community recreation involves community-oriented activities such as sport, aquatics, personal development programs, rehabilitation programs and government initiatives. They promote aquatic skills development, recreation, sport and healthy activity lifestyles and also play a role in social cohesion, especially in rural and remote communities. In 2017-18, there were approximately 4729 staff employed within the WA aquatics industry including 614 pool operators, 1176 lifeguards, and 2404 swim instructors as well as a volunteer workforce. On average, Western Australians visit a public aquatic facility 4.2 times a year with a total patronage of 11.4 million in 2017-2018.[22]

Providers of facilities are mainly state and local governments, commercial leisure centres and community-focused organisations like the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

This sub-sector has a strong focus on increasing participation, maintaining facilities, participant safety, reducing injuries, and environmental considerations like reducing water usage.[23]

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission will have implications for sport and recreation organisations in Western Australia who have contact with children. The State Government has outlined priorities for 2019-20 including the introduction of a new criminal offence for failing to report suspected abuse, supporting institutions to implement child safe standards, and improving working with children check screening.[24] Organisations like the WA Sports Federation are assisting members to understand and comply with the ten Child Safe Standards set out in Recommendation 6.5 of the Commission's Final Report.[25]

Technology

Technology is impacting all areas of sport and recreation with developments like smart outfits that track physiological data from the body, camera systems and drones to make umpires', referees' and other officials' decisions more accurate, fitness trackers and computerised workout equipment to enhance the workout experience and mobile phone apps to enable booking, check-in and payment processes. Smaller, lighter and more accurate location devices and emergency beacons for outdoor recreation mean outdoor adventurers can be more self-sufficient.[26] Drowning detection devices identify distressed swimmers in pools and alert swimmers and surfers in the ocean to the presence of sharks.

Social media is an integral part of interacting with customers in many sport and recreation organisations. Members now expect organisations to have a digital presence and to engage with them.

Current and future opportunities

Increases in employment are projected by the Australian Government Job Outlook across all sub-sectors between 2018 and 2023: 20% for Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials (from 39,700 to 47,800), 18% for Outdoor Adventure Guides (from 4800 to 5700), 18% for Fitness Instructors (from 31,400 to 37,200), and 15% for Amusement, Fitness and Sports Centre Managers[27] (from 15,700 to 18,200). The Department of Jobs and Small Business projects Sport and Physical Recreation Activity jobs in Australia for the five years from May 2018 to May 2023 to increase from 106,500 to 121,600, up 15,100 jobs or 14.2%.

Strong enrolment numbers in 2018 in WA for sport and recreation, fitness, outdoor recreation and aquatics and community recreation qualifications (8,907 at secondary schools and 1,275 at public providers) go some way to addressing the growth forecast above. Although Certificates II and III are seen by industry as important steps on the path to employment, jobs are not readily available to graduates at these levels. The exception is traineeships where students become work ready by virtue of time spent in the workplace.

In Western Australia, the aquatics and community recreation sub-sector experiences seasonal skills shortages, mainly in regional areas, and is under constant pressure to attract, train and retain workers. The outdoor recreation sub-sector is experiencing increasing demand for workers qualified at Certificate IV level but there are no registered training organisations (RTOs) offering

this level in WA. Graduates at Certificate IV have a range of enterprise skills like decision-making, problem solving and ability to work independently, that mean they succeed and remain in the workplace. Industry values employees who can work at multiple levels across a range of tasks, who have specialist technical skills but also the capacity to attend to the day to day operation of an organisation.

Skills and training strategies

Government policy is targeting sport, fitness and recreation activity to achieve a range of health, social and economic benefits. In 2018 the Australian Sports Commission was rebranded to Sport Australia and released a national sport plan titled Sport 2030. It sets out a strategy based on strengthening partnerships with Australia's sporting, physical activity, technology, education and corporate community.

Recent research shows that future workforce skills will revolve around science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and 'soft skills' like communication, teamwork and problem-solving. The Sport and Recreation Training Package is being updated to reflect these changes and to align qualifications more closely with current job roles, remove unused content and qualifications, and to reduce duplication.[28]

The introduction of a set of standards for Outdoor Recreation, Australian Adventure Activity Standard (Aust AAS) and Good Practice Guides, is scheduled to be launched in 2019 to help the outdoor recreation sector to develop effective, responsible, sustainable and safe practices for the delivery of adventure activities.[29]

As mentioned above, sport and recreation organisations are heavily reliant on a large volunteer workforce. Industry reports that training activity targeted at specific volunteer outcomes are met through statements of attainment in specific units of competency, and to a lesser extent, skills sets, rather than full qualifications.

In aquatics in 2017/2018, there was an adequate supply of accredited pool operators, but pool lifeguards and swimming instructors both experienced high turnovers. There is a need to address shortages of swim instructors, particularly in regional areas, to ensure the availability of swimming and water safety programs.[30]

Please get in touch

FutureNow is seeking regular input from stakeholders about workforce matters in the Western Australian Sport and Recreaton industries. If you are interested in providing further information about the workforce in these sectors, the Industry Manager would like to hear from you.

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