

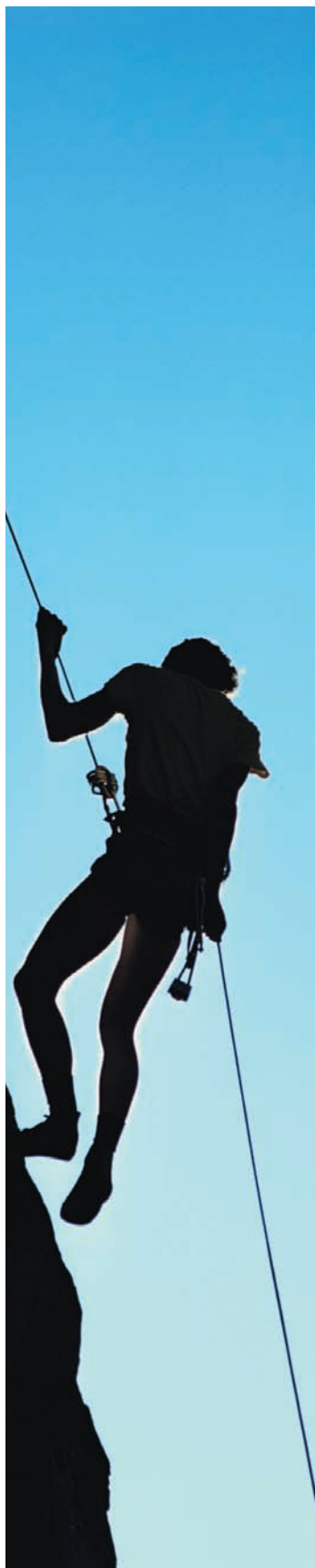
Recreation Strategic Reform Agenda

May 2006



Department of Sport and Recreation
Government of Western Australia

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Background

The Department of Sport and Recreation is committed to enhancing the quality of life of Western Australians through their participation and achievement in sport and recreation. This commitment has seen the development of a range of recreation initiatives. Several of the most recent major initiatives include:

- \$18m camps redevelopment program
- policy advocacy to retain recreational use of water catchments
- trails planning, funding and marketing initiatives
- advocacy in urban and town planning portfolios as “livable neighbourhoods” and open space provision policies
- contribution to the Adventure Tourism Taskforce initiated by the then Tourism Minister, Mark McGowan
- establishing the Community Grants Program to improve physical activity participation in target groups.

The department strives to improve the quality and level of recreation services and in 2005 committed resources to undertake an analysis of its services and programs for the Recreation Sector.

In January 2006 the department contracted an experienced practitioner to ascertain the market’s current status across a range of key strategic areas.

Throughout March and April 2006, more than 85 stakeholders with special expertise attended one-on-one interviews and industry focus group workshops to provide input on the state of the Recreation Sector.

The results have been assessed against the current strategic planning format, Strategic Directions 3. The Corporate Executive at DSR has developed a strategic reform agenda and allocated appropriate resources to implement the key strategies.

Recreation in Western Australia can be defined as those non-competitive physical activities that take place for leisure purposes in our community and can be categorised into the following areas:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Aquatics | Outdoor Recreation |
| Camps | Outdoor Adventure |
| Community Recreation | Parks |
| Fitness | Tracks and Trails |

Active recreation plays a vital role in our well being.



Introduction

Creating a Healthier Population

Active lifestyles improve our health and well being. Physical activity plays an integral role in reducing stress, improving mental health, helping to prevent heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, colon cancer and depression.

Public investment in active recreation services and infrastructure to assist building a sustainable industry sector will increase physical activity and save millions of dollars in health care spending.

The Recreation Sector has exceptional potential to help Western Australians to become more physically active.

Active Recreation has no demographic barriers. The Recreation Sector can provide opportunities for the entire community, including people with disabilities, children and youth, the elderly and the disadvantaged, to participate in activities.

Building recreation capacity in Western Australia requires a cooperative and coordinated approach from public, private, commercial and community entities.

Building a Stronger Economy

A healthy Recreation Sector that strives to increase the population's desire to undertake active pastimes adds to the State's economy. Service providers can build quality commercial operations; retail providers can sell more products; manufacturers can produce more products and invest in product research and development.

Active recreation opportunities, infrastructure, events and adventure tourism create jobs and attract tourists.

Quality community development and recreation infrastructure increase property values. Studies have indicated that properties with easy access to health, fitness and leisure outlets generally sell for up to 30 per cent more than properties farther away from these facilities.

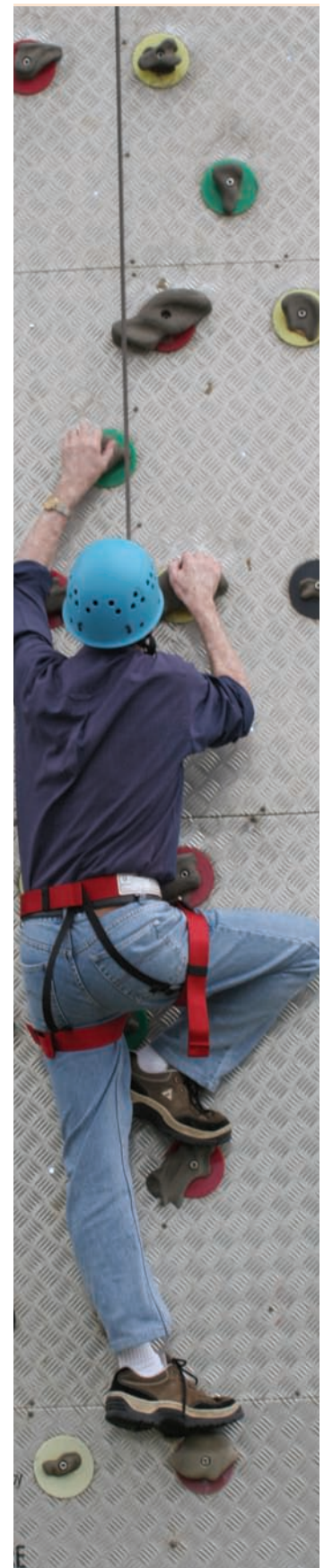
Developing Stronger Communities

Active recreation builds stonger communities and brings people and communities closer together.

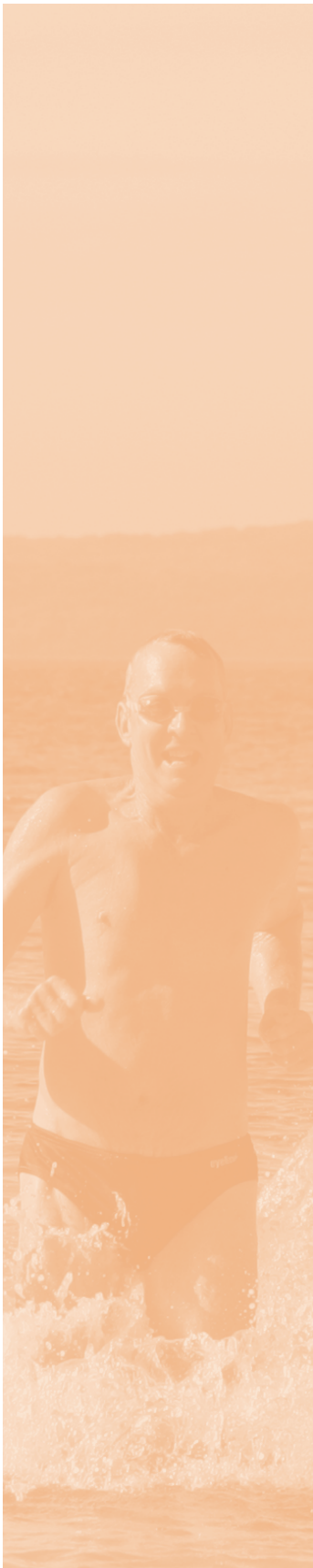
Recreation planning and implementation form the adhesive that holds communities together. They play an integral role in community formation, local development, local employment generation, community engagement and stakeholder input.

Appropriate outdoor recreation can improve people's appreciation and awareness of environmental issues and assist conservation measures. Active Recreation can enhance environmental consciousness, support environmental sustainability and help develop a public commitment to environmental conservation.

Recreation can bring people together for the good of their community. People sharing and developing together, volunteering their time and expertise in positive social settings and undertaking meaningful activity help to develop stronger communities.



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Recreation Consultation Summary

The Department of Sport and Recreation initiated an extensive consultation process with key individuals and stakeholders from across recreation, local government, fitness, outdoor recreation and camps interest areas. The aim was to establish a strategic assessment of the policy, planning and service delivery performance outlook for non-competitive, active recreation.

The industry's assessment of current recreation positioning is:

Complex arena

- Recreation is a complex and dynamic industry sector.
- Involvement is generally informal, unstructured and casual, rather than membership- or club-based.
- The range of activities is diverse and varied.
- Interests are generally not voiced or organised for representation and lobbying.
- The sector covers an emerging fraternity of interest.
- There is a complex combination of commercial, public and community based service providers.
- Generally involvement is low profile and participant funded.
- There are difficulties for service provision, engagement, coordination and facilitation by the public sector.

Research/Data

- The capacity to deliver applied research and quality information to industry is modest.
- The sector wants research summaries disseminated (local, national and international).
- The sector wants 'benefits' data summaries (social/health/economic).
- The sector wants cross-portfolios/disciplines content (i.e. health, planning, education and training, sport and recreation, tourism).

Education and Training

- There is an adequate framework at technical education levels for the training of competent technical and operational level employees, i.e. certificate level practitioners.
- There is a high turnover in entry level/practical roles.
- There is only one specialist recreation tertiary/graduate option.
- Few graduates are emerging through career pathways to take up senior roles in the recreation sector.
- There is a perceived gap between graduate training and industry needs.
- There are limited numbers making a transition from program delivery roles through to management/executive roles.

Planning

- At the local, regional and state level there is a lack of integrated recreation planning, facilitation and leadership.
- A coordinated approach to recreation matters is required:
 - Across State Government agencies including Conservation and Land Management, Tourism WA, Department of Education and Training, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Department of Sport and Recreation, Water Authority and Department of Industry and Resources.
 - Across levels of government, i.e. local and state.

Policy

- There is minimal capacity to influence government on recreation issues.
- There are insufficient consultation mechanisms.
- Current multiple peak or representative bodies
 - have limited strategic capacity
 - have limited financial viability.
- Cross organisational resources and quality partnerships could add value to government policy and planning of service delivery.
- There is limited ability to advocate or represent member and/or constituent needs and aspirations.

Organisation Development

- Many service providers are struggling to meet compliance and generic contemporary business reforms such as GST, Tort Law reforms, Child Protection applicable to commercial and community based organisations.
- There are recreation activities that still have inadequately developed operational frameworks to support 'best practice' service provision and/or participant safety outcomes, e.g. adventure activity standards.



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Developing meaningful partnerships, espousing common goals and sharing responsibility for implementing a strategic direction for the recreation sector will enhance the lifestyles of all Western Australians.

Establishing a Recreation Reform Agenda

Having identified a range of perceived issues for active Recreation the challenge now is to develop an agenda of reforms, initiatives and developments that will achieve improvements over the medium term.

Underlying characteristics of the recreation sector likely to persist include:

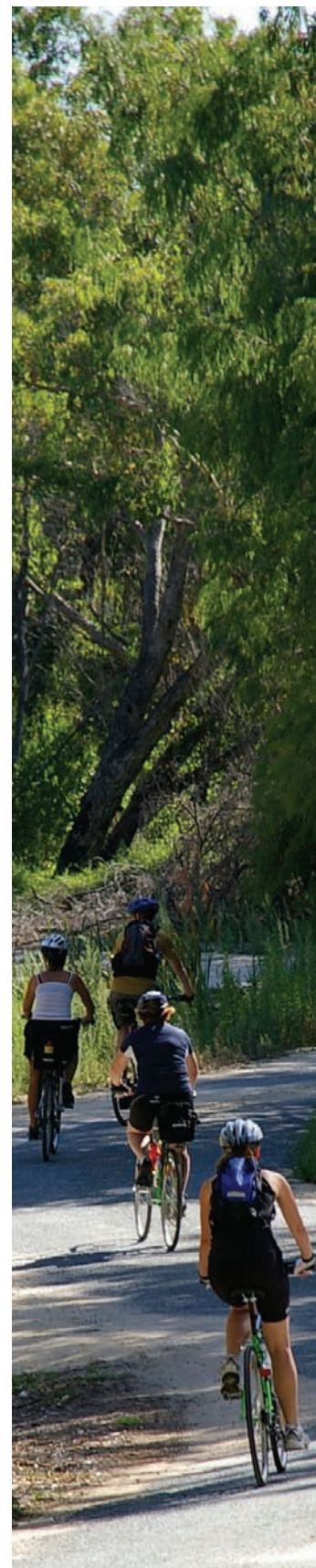
- Physical activity provides many benefits to our community.
- Activities are more frequently undertaken on a casual or informal basis rather than being membership based. Further, most activities will remain participant-funded.
- Activities cover a wide spectrum of interests.
- Interests across public, private and community based sectors will occur.
- Interests will cross multiple government portfolios and/or disciplines.
- The advocacy capacity of recreation practitioners is generally limited.

A reform agenda has been developed by converting presently identified shortcomings into ideal strategic shifts to be pursued over the medium term.



Industry feedback summary

1. Improved understanding of the nature of recreation interests such as:
 - Better appreciation of the diversity and extent of recreation service providers.
 - Better acknowledgement of the unstructured and informal nature of recreation interests.
 - Acknowledgement that most recreation activities are participant funded.
 - Appreciation that commercial, public and community based interests all have interdependent roles to play in recreation service provision.
2. Stakeholders want a stronger identity for recreation, acknowledging many interests must work together to achieve positive outcomes.
3. Continual dissemination of summaries of relevant local, national and international research, information and data.
4. Improved communication formats to promote better advocacy outcomes for recreation interests.
5. Improved influence on public policy.
6. A strategic review, involving key stakeholders, of the education and training framework for recreation. The review to address perceived service gaps in current training outcomes and industry needs.
7. Improved recreation planning outcomes, especially involving:
 - a. Planning across disciplines and portfolios such as planning, tourism, health, sport and recreation, education and training.
 - b. Planning across various levels of government (local and State).
8. Better support and recognition that recreation based peak bodies can add value to policy and operational outcomes.
9. More support for recreation service providers to meet contemporary business reforms in complying with community standards such as child protection, accreditation and registration protocols.
10. Strengthened alignment of recreation service provision in the overall community and government response on physical (in)activity.
11. Expedited development of operational frameworks to support best practice approaches by recreation service providers. This effort to be focused in areas without adequate existing coverage, e.g. adventure activity standards.



DSR's commitment to progress the 'Recreation Reform Agenda'

The Department of Sport and Recreation is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals, groups and the Western Australian community through participation in sport and active recreation.

1. Developing **new consultation modes** with recreation interests to:
 - Improve communication flow between recreation stakeholders
 - Improve advocacy on recreation interests.
2. Partner recreation interests to **improve the profile and recognition** of organisations, programs and personnel which are performing well.
3. Enhance the **dissemination of relevant data and research**. Further, DSR will endeavor to increase the amount of applied research in partnership with key stakeholders, i.e. tertiary institutions, government agencies.
4. Seek to initiate a **strategic review of the current education and training framework for recreation**. Partners to include Department of Education and Training, tertiary institutions, TAFE and FutureNow.
5. Continue **working partnership agreements with peak recreation organisations** identifying issues and projects that are barriers to service delivery improvements.
6. Devising, in partnership with recreation peak bodies and service providers, **strategies to support business improvements**. These strategies must focus on supporting service providers to meet the range of compliance and operational reforms in community and business standards.
7. Partnering recreation interests to **strengthen recreation planning** and influence other portfolios and disciplines.
8. Expediting the **development of adventure activity standards** in Western Australia in partnership with CALM, Tourism WA and pertinent activity interests.
9. Developing business development linkages with CALM, local governments and Tourism WA for **improved product development and promotion of recreation and adventure activities**. Target markets include both domestic and in-bound participants



Success in achieving a truly robust and healthy Recreation Sector will be a commitment by all stakeholders to develop coordinated partnerships in undertaking strategies that will enhance the quality of life of Western Australians.