



The Coalition of  
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**PROFESSIONAL**  
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## THE COALITION OF MAJOR PROFESSIONAL AND PARTICIPATION SPORTS INCORPORATED

### SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

### FOREIGN POLICY WHITE PAPER



## INTRODUCTION

COMPPS consists of the following organisations:

- Australian Football League (**AFL**);
- Australian Rugby Union (**ARU**);
- Cricket Australia (**CA**);
- Football Federation Australia (**FFA**);
- National Rugby League (**NRL**);
- Netball Australia (**NA**); and
- Tennis Australia (**TA**).

These sports play a huge role in developing, promoting and presenting sport in Australia from the grass roots through to the international level. They are not-for-profit bodies and are responsible for the long-term development and sustainability of their sports. Between them, they have 8.95 million participants and 16,000 clubs.

Each of these organisations is the governing body and custodian of a major professional sport in Australia.

Each sport has a wide portfolio of international events that are played in Australia and overseas.

COMPPS members provide a wide range of public benefits through a self-funding business model. A large portion of the revenue of COMPPS members is devoted to enhancing, promoting and developing sport for all Australians both at national and 'grassroots' level.

One of COMPPS' roles is to provide a collective response on behalf of its member sports where their interests are aligned.

## FOREIGN POLICY WHITE PAPER CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS AND AREAS OF FOCUS

1. The Australian Government is calling for public submissions as it prepares a new foreign policy White Paper. There are six key issues in respect of which submissions are sought. This submission deals with issues 4 and 6, as they are most relevant to the COMPPS' members.

### 2. Issue 4

#### **AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO BE AMBITIOUS IN GRASPING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

*What steps should be taken to maximise our trade and investment and expand commercial opportunities for Australian business? How can we ensure Australia is positioned to take advantage of opportunities in the global economy? What are the key risks to Australia's future prosperity and how should we respond?*

The COMPPS' sports seek a well-resourced sports trade and diplomacy policy that will assist in Australia achieving global leadership status.

This is the first White Paper on foreign policy since 2003. In the last decade Australia's position in world affairs has changed significantly. There is less focus on Europe and greater focus on Asia. India and China account for 36% of the world's population. The focus of Australian professional sports has increasingly turned to Asian markets. It is noted that there has been rapid expansion in the middle class in India and China and this creates opportunities for Australia.

Australia has a proud sporting history and it is part of our national identity. Sport provides a "common language" in several important markets.

Trade and business are competitive environments. There is an opportunity to leverage our sporting identity to gain an edge in markets that are important to Australian businesses. Sport is an important tool to support international relations.

The seven professional sports under the COMPPS' banner can deliver tangible trade and economic benefits for Australian business and the national economy. There is an opportunity to leverage high profile sporting identities and teams to promote trade and diplomatic relationships between our bilateral partners.

While there has not been a formal strategy to use sports identities, programs and activities, there are many examples of how this has occurred in practice. These are listed below in a separate section.

We respectfully suggest that there is a need for a dedicated resource to be made available to co-ordinate the focus of the sporting bodies so as to maximise the focus on international affairs.

### **3. Issue 6**

#### **AUSTRALIA USES A RANGE OF ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES TO PURSUE OUR INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS**

***What assets will we need to advance our foreign policy interests in future years?***

***How can we best use our people and our assets to advance Australia's economic security and other interests and respond to external events?***

***How can government work more effectively with non-government sectors including business, universities and NGOs, to advance Australia's interests?***

COMPPS' members support the Australian Government's Sports Diplomacy Strategy (released June 2015).

The introduction to the Strategy includes the following:

*"The strategy focuses on the goals of connecting, developing, showcasing and sustaining new and existing channels of sports support, sports industry partnerships and international sports networks. It will establish Australia's sports 'brand' in the Indo-Pacific region. It will also demonstrate that Australia is outward looking and 'open for business' in the sports arena."*

The sports are involved in the Asian Sports Partnerships, The Pacific Sports Partnerships and the DFAT Australia Awards Fellowships program.

Additionally, Australia and its sporting bodies have a strong role to play in promoting gender equality across the region.

While many of the existing programs internationally include equal numbers of male and female participants, Australia can utilise its expertise and actively promote its female athletes as role models in both a sporting and business context. To best support this, existing programs need to continue to focus on:

- More women in decision making roles
- Supporting professional development of women in sports, to move through the pathway from coaching to program management to CEOs and Board Members
- Consideration around the safety of women and girls, particularly when they are being encouraged to participate in sport or travel internationally that takes them away from their duties at home
- Safety plans and protecting female athletes when they travel away from home (particularly with coaches)

There is much more that sport can do to maximise its global reach and the strong reputation of Australian sport.

To maximise the potential of Australian sport as a global resource, there needs to be a well-resourced sports trade and diplomacy policy that will assist in Australia achieving global leadership status, and provide additional incentives for sports to deliver the sort of returns to Australian trade and investment that we know are possible.

#### **4. EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROGRAMS**

##### **CRICKET**

Numerous former Australian cricketers have been part of trade delegations to India where their presence has facilitated meetings and assisted in deals being concluded. Given that Cricket is the common language of India, the instant point of connection, Cricket is uniquely positioned to help support greater trade relations with India.

The Sri Lankan cricket team played in Australia this month. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka visited Australia specifically to attend the Prime Minister's XI cricket match and meet with the Prime Minister of Australia to commemorate 70 years of formal diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Australia. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka engaged in several meetings during his visit with the message that "Sri Lanka is open for business". Other Ministers including the Minister for Ports and Shipping, the Minister of Sports and the Minister of Provincial Sports accompanied him.

Further evidence that sport is not just about soft diplomacy, but quantifiable economic benefits is the success of the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup, which was worth more than \$1 billion to the Australian economy, and the 2020 World Twenty20 will capture similar revenue.

## **TENNIS**

The Australian Open (AO) Grand Slam event is one of the biggest annual sporting events in the world, hosted by Tennis Australia each January and has great appeal throughout Asia. The 2017 AO achieved a record 728,763 attendances and directly generates more than \$300 million within the Victorian economy each year.

In 2017, the men's singles final was aired live in more than 220 territories on more than 65 different TV channels, reaching more than 900 million homes. In Japan, Kei Nishikori's matches were broadcast live by free-to-air broadcaster NHK and generated a market share of over 20 per cent. It peaked higher than Japan's most watched event, the New Year Grand Sumo Tournament. In China, up to Day 10, the main terrestrial channel CCTV5 reached over 400 million households and aired more than 32 hours of coverage. During this January, there were 1,184,597 million downloads of the Mandarin Scoreboard.

The AO hosts an annual Wildcard playoff within Asia each year. The winning player from that region is granted a direct AO main draw entry with the event televised nationally.

Tennis Australia has offices in Hong Kong and Shanghai and is active in the region through partner brand promotions as well as exporting event, broadcast and development expertise. AO Ambassadors such as Rod Laver, Rafael Nadal and Li Na continue to build relationships across governments within Asia and raise the profile of the event.

## AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The partnership between the AFL and Port Adelaide FC continues to support the development of the game in China (southern & Shanghai regions). Port Adelaide and Gold Coast Suns are fixtured to play in China on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 at Jiangwan Stadium, Shanghai.

Announcing the match, Port Adelaide Chairman David Koch said:

*"The AFL will become the first elite foreign competition to play a regular season game for points in China, beating the likes of the NBA, English Premier League, Major League Baseball and NFL. That is a monumental achievement in itself and speaks volumes of the strength of the relationship between our two nations.*

*This is so much more significant than just playing a game for premiership points on foreign soil. This is a landmark moment in the development of Australia's sporting, cultural, political, economic and tourism ties with China."*

Participation in offshore AFL matches totalled more than 130,000 people in programs and competitions, with another 35,000 attending promotional activities.

The AFL Asia National Championships were held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in October with a record 520 players (including 70 local players) from 18 teams and, for the first time, included a women's exhibition match between Vietnam and the Rest of Asia.

The AFL partnered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Pacific Sports Partnership (PSP) program to increase participation, build capacity, promote health and gender equity outcomes and contribute to Australian public diplomacy objectives in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Nauru, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

The South Pacific was once again represented at the Queensland U16 State Championships in May.

Over 100 South Pacific coaches received Level 1 accreditation throughout the year and the Nauru Stars were champions at the Oceania Cup held in December for U15 boys.

The NAB AFL Academy Level 1 squad toured New Zealand for the fifth time in April and played a match against the New Zealand Hawks at QBE Stadium in Auckland.

Live free-to-air AFL games were televised each week in NZ through a broadcasting partnership with TVNZ.

International Combines were held in Dublin, Los Angeles and Auckland to search for new talent for the AFL competition.

## **FOOTBALL**

As ‘The World Game’, football is played and watched by more people, and is ingrained in the culture of more nations, than any other sport on Earth.

Football Federation Australia is one of 211 member associations of world governing body FIFA, and in 2006 joined the largest supranational organisation, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

Australian teams participate in numerous men’s, women’s, senior and youth competitions at a national level, and club sides participate in Asian club competitions such as the AFC Champions League. These memberships and regular competitions provide unique opportunities for all levels of the Australian Government, business and society to engage with Asia and the world, and the benefits, which stand to be made via engagement through football, are immense and wide-ranging.

Australia hosted, and won, the AFC Asian Cup in 2015, delivering positive economic, tourist, employment, cultural and football development results to the nation.

## **NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE**

NRL hosts Pacific Test Matches in Australia each year featuring PNG, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Prime Ministers and Ministers from the participating countries often travel to attend the games, providing soft diplomacy opportunities.

October-December this year will see Australia and NZ co-host the Rugby League World Cup. We anticipate foreign Ministers, especially from the Pacific and UK to travel to Australia for the game.

Each year the Australian PM’s XIII travels to PNG for a game against the PNG PM’s XIII. NRL hosts a big networking function each year as part of the lead up at the Australian High Commissioner’s residence – sport is used as the means to bring businesses, diplomats and government officials together. At one of these functions an agreement was struck to use the Digicel platform to deliver prevention of domestic violence messaging direct to customers’ phones.

Last year the NRL organised the Samoa v Tonga game in Samoa. NRL hosted a networking function in the lead up again at the Australian High Commissioner’s residence – rugby league bringing businesses, diplomats and government officials together. It was attended by the Samoan PM and a number of Ministers, as well as numerous Australian businesses

## **AUSTRALIAN RUGBY UNION**

Rugby is a truly global sport, played by men and women, boys and girls, in more than 100 countries across five continents. In 2015, the total number of registered players increased to 2.82 million.

The Rugby World Cup is the third largest sporting event in the world and the 2015

RWC Final featuring the Wallabies and All Blacks was watched by more than 125 million people worldwide, including 20 million people in Japan.

The Wallabies brand especially has international renown and is synonymous with Australia, competing annually in almost all of Australia's major export and foreign direct investment markets. In each of these markets Rugby enjoys a high degree of connectivity within business and government circles and the Australia diaspora. Australia's Rugby Sevens teams compete at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games, with the Aussie Women's team having won an historic Gold Medal in Rio last year.

## **NETBALL**

Netball is played by more than 20 million people in more than 80 countries worldwide and is most popular in Commonwealth nations. This reach allows netball to develop valuable partnerships with the Australian Government and local organisations to use netball as a vehicle for social impact, sport for development and sports diplomacy, particularly in engaging with women and girls.

Netball's traditional rivalries continue with New Zealand, South Africa, Jamaica and England. International tests are played each year with most of these countries with longstanding relationships with Australia.

Netball Australia plays a key role within the International Netball Federation's Asian region and is working to promote key relationships in this region. Netball is played throughout the Asian region including: Brunei, China, Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Abu Dhabi, Afghanistan, Bahrain and Dubai. There are many opportunities to use netball's reach to promote participation, events and role models and use netball as a vehicle for social change in these regions.

The Netball World Cup was hosted in Sydney in 2015 and showcased the best female athletes from all over the world, reinforcing Australia's track record in creating and hosting successful, premier sporting events to a global audience. Countries participating in the World Cup included Australia, New Zealand, England, Jamaica, Malawi, South Africa, Wales, Scotland, Fiji, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia. The Netball World Cup is being hosted in Liverpool in 2019.

There are many other events held in Australia and internationally to showcase netball's pathway and reach that can be better leveraged. Netball has key relationships across many countries that can strengthen the Australian Government's relationships.

## 5. CONCLUSION

There is an opportunity for the sports to be used more often and more effectively as partners in diplomacy with other Australian entities, whether they are government or private entities.

It is respectfully suggested that there are opportunities to better co-ordinate activities such as trade missions where six state governments are all trying to unlock the potential of India and China.

There are opportunities for sporting bodies to collaborate better with arts, culture and educational activities (either with or without government involvement) in relation to events held within Australia.

There is a need for a dedicated resource to be made available to co-ordinate the focus of the sporting bodies so as to maximise the focus on international affairs.

For further information please contact me on 0400 115 487, at [mspeed@compps.com.au](mailto:mspeed@compps.com.au) or at:

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Yours sincerely



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