

“TAFISA Sport For All Certified Leadership Course”
Venue: Monash University (Peninsula), Australia
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“PROMOTING HEALTHY ACTIVE COMMUNITIES --
Getting the right mix: community & business planning, marketing and fundraising

The Hon Brian Dixon
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Founder‘, Life. Be in it.’

Sporting activity, both elite and community based, is crucial to the vitality and productivity of every society. All ages, racial and ethnic groups, all ability levels, every social strata and both genders share an interest and the opportunity to benefit from active involvement in sporting, recreation and cultural activities of their community,

Let me briefly set the context for an appreciation of Sports for All in the Australian context before looking more specifically at the steps required to get the right mix of community involvement, business planning, marketing and fund raising activity. I am particularly pleased to acknowledge the direct assistance in this respect of the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and the City of Launceston in establishing one of the pillars of our “Active World” campaign in the beautiful (and very active) City of Launceston.

The Australian Context

Sports for All is a major national initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and ‘Life. Be in it’. Life Be in it has been running Sports For All Programs in all Australian States and Territories for thirty years and is now a US\$15 million dollar a year sporting life and lifestyle program initiative across the nation.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is Australia’s primary national sports administration and advisory agency, and the cornerstone of a wide-ranging sports system. It is funded by the Australian Government and is the other TAFISA member in Australia.

All Australian Governments appreciate that sport provides valuable opportunities to promote 'Active Healthy Communities' for people of all ages to improve themselves, display team work and become more engaged in community activities. The centrepiece of their policy is a strategy to increase community participation in sport. While it is true that more players mean more winners in the sporting arena, there are wider community benefits and long-term health results of being involved in sport

The Australian Federal government's aim is to see more sport played at the grass roots level, particularly amongst school aged children and in rural areas, where sporting groups are often a vital factor in the cohesion of local communities. To this end the Government has increased the funding to encourage participation and has introduced new programmes directed at young Australians

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) promotes an effective national sports system that offers improved participation in quality sports activities by all Australians and helps those who are talented and motivated to reach their potential excellence in sports performance. The ASC does this by administering and funding innovative national sporting programs on behalf of the Australian Government and providing leadership, co-ordination and support for the sport sector.

The ASC's work is guided by the Australian Government's national sports policy, [*Backing Australia's Sporting Ability – a more Active Australia*](#). The ASC's commitment to developing a strong base of grassroots involvement in sport, as well as providing opportunities for developing elite excellence, means the ASC:

- * manages the internationally acclaimed [Australian Institute of Sport](#) – the national centre of sports excellence for the training and development of elite athletes and teams. The Institute gives athletes access to expert coaching, world-leading sports science and sports medicine services, state-of-the-art sports facilities, and opportunities for travel, work and study.

- * supports the development of the Australian sport system from the grassroots community level to high performance sport through our [Sport Performance and Development Group](#), which gives national sporting organisations access to advice and resources, including funding, policy

development advice and management models, education, emerging information technologies and evaluation frameworks.

National sporting organisations rely on the ASC for support and advice that helps them to encourage more community participation in sport by making sports safer, more inviting and better managed so that all Australians – including those with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, juniors, women and girls, volunteers, coaches, officials and older people – have opportunities to be involved.

The area of '**Sports For All**' presents a large area of information including inclusive practices in sport, cultural awareness, education and creating equal opportunity for all Australians to participate in sport. Listed below are some resources that deal with some of these issues:

- * [Codes of conduct](#) - dealing with parents, teachers, coaches, officials, the media, spectators and administrators.
- * [Child protection](#) - Children have a fundamental right to be safe from any form of abuse while involved in sport or associated activities. This is a legal requirement as well as a moral obligation. Child protection requires a commitment from all levels in sport to ensure sporting environments are safe for all children. This includes an awareness of the requirements and risks, a commitment to practices that minimise the risks, and the ability to appropriately respond to incidents of child abuse.
- * [Harassment-free sport](#) - this is the Australian Sports Commission's key initiative to address harassment and abuse issues. The Strategy comprises a range of components to assist sporting organisations to create safe and harassment free environments in sport.
- * [Member protection](#) - this is a term used by the Australian sports industry to describe the practices and procedures that protect an organisation's members – both individual members such as players, coaches and officials, and the member organisations such as clubs, state associations, other affiliated associations and the national body.
- * [Cross- Cultural Awareness](#) - developed by the Indigenous Sport Program this is a sport-specific cross-cultural awareness training package that aims to improve understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. The package includes a one-day training course that provides information about Indigenous people and offers a practical guide for working with Indigenous communities.

* [Traditional games package](#) - this package provides the opportunity to learn about, appreciate and experience aspects of Aboriginal culture. They also provide essential training in social interaction. It is possible to include traditional games in classroom lessons, outdoor education and adventure activities, physical education classes and sport education activities.

* [Junior Sport Framework](#) - this framework supersedes the 1994 National Junior Sport Policy, and will support the delivery of fun and safe junior sport and, as a result, encourage young people to make a life-long commitment to sport.

* [Inclusive practices for junior sport programs](#) - a short factsheet offering points to ponder when developing a sports program for junior athletes.

* [Disability Education](#) - this program (DEP) supports the promotion of a physically active lifestyle for all Australians, including Australians with disabilities. It provides training and resource material for teachers, coaches and community leaders to help them include people with disabilities in what they do.

* [Inclusive Coaching factsheet](#) - from the Coaching website offers links and tips for getting involved.

Wider Community involvement

In the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the range of local, community based and non-elite sporting events that help build cohesion and communities of interest. This wider level of interest reflects the fact that people now have a wider range of Sport options and there are new and different sporting outlets that are not necessarily based on professional competition. Sport for All events linked to Sport industry promotions create opportunities for cross-cultural and cross community involvement that makes our cities more personal and more interactive, reducing the sense of isolation and disadvantage that builds tension and social problems

TAFISA is committed to the belief that Increased physical activity has a role to play in reducing the threat of three fundamental; challenges to community wellbeing:.

- Increased obesity and weight related illnesses
- An explosion of health costs in ageing societies
- Increasing divisions between rich and poor

Urban settings provide a decisive source for improving citizen's quality of life and participation rate in physical activity and sport. Strategies to increase physical activity are the most effective weapon to combat obesity“ Smaller communities tend to retain stronger local links and direct involvement in sporting activity that is the foundation of a healthy life style provided that there is sufficient economic and social infrastructure to support ;local sporting clubs and societies.

TAFISA is developing an ,Active World' program that aims to

- Fulfill our mission to increase physical activity throughout the world, establishing new global, national and community alliances and meet existing demand from people for a more active satisfying lifestyle.

Community and Business Planning to develop Sports for All

I would now like to turn to the fundamentals of community and business planning, marketing and fundraising that has made this result possible. Nearly three decades ago I launched a campaign more than three decades ago that had the encouragement to people to “Walk over here and turn off the telly. ‘Life. Be in it’™ is still working with health and community organisations to get communities interested in over a hundred different Sport for all events under the banners of Come 'n Try™, Stay 'n Play™ and The Place to Be.™ and running Kids Try-athalons across the nation. All of this relies upon careful and consistent community based planning, business partnerships, media promotion and marketing and sponsorship efforts that support these initiatives.

Come 'n Try™ is a branded campaign that links nearly a hundred diverse physical sport and activity programs under a single promotional banner that enables business leaders to reach out to local communities in a region. It aims to convert interest in new experiences into a recruiting device for the associated sporting organisations to encourage new members to literally come and try a range of sporting and recreational activities. For a corporation, this means that their brand reaches every small community of interest in a region over the year, as most households have an interest in knowing about at least one free sporting program.

Stay 'n Play™ is another branded campaign that is developed with the clubs and associations interested in building their financial and membership base in order to grow their footprint within the community and

achieve wider support in the community. Each participating organisation creates a Sport for all culture that supports social rather than competitive sport as the foundation for a conversion of initial visitors into longer term memberships.

Sport for All centres have been located on school premises, gymnasias, spa centres and community halls can be converted in this manner to become sources of commercial investment that achieves fourteen to twenty hours a day of participation in a range of physical and social activity. Our former Minister for Sport, Senator Rod Kemp worked with the Australian Sports Commission to promote a very successful series of after-school programs called "Active for Life" with direct funding for physical activity programs for children on the Scholl premises with active games leaders. This program is continuing under the incoming Rudd Labor Government and its Minister for Sport, Kate Ellis.

Community Planning for Sports for All

Any successful Sports for All program must start with a firm foundation that builds up a systematic and interrelated mix of practical programs namely

- 1. Policy planning
- 2. Event planning
- 3. Volunteer planning
- 4. Infrastructural planning
- 5. Communication planning
- 6 Partnership program planning
- 7 Finance and fundraising planning
- 8 Active Healthy Community promotion

1 Policy Planning

- Is there a long term sport development plan existing?
- Is there a specific policy paper existing?
- What is the current status of physical activity (infrastructure, budget etc.)?
- What is the representation in the city government?
- Is there an appropriate budget available?
- Are there investments for new projects?
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2 Event Planning

- Has everybody access to appropriate activity?

- Is there a regular scheme of „open“ programs?
- Are there any special (annual) programs?

3 Volunteer Planning

- Is there a systematic approach to recruit amateurs and volunteers?
- Do they receive special qualification and awarding?

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4 Infrastructural Planning

- What is the current state of infrastructure in a particular city for encouraging physical activity e.g. cycle paths, walking trails, swimming pools, gymnasiums?
- Is there easy access to facilities?
- Rediscovery of public spaces?

5 Communication Planning

- Is there an awareness campaign launched?
- Has everybody access to information about respective programs?
- Is modern information technology used?
- Is there a magazine holding all the relevant information available?
- Consulting Service available?

6 Partnership Planning

- Is there a close cooperation between the various bodies offering Sport for All and physical activity?

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7 Finance Planning

- Is there an appropriate budget available?
- Is there an investment program?
- Are there private sector partners included?.

8. Active Healthy Communities Promotion

Are there defined local targets on a medium and long term plan to build an active, healthy local community.

- Is there a clear plan to increase participation rate in physical activity?
- Does this plan increase participation of all types of people?
- Have local media been engaged to raise general physical activity mindedness of citizens?

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Business Planning for Sports for All

Sport is increasingly accepted as a key to business success , both within the business environment and in the wider community. Successful Sports for All program must establish a network of business sponsorships with firms that are directly involved in the sports and equipment supply chain, and community business interests that rely upon sporting events and sporting media for their commercial activities.

As in the community planning process there must be a firm foundation that builds up a systematic and interrelated mix of commercial programs namely

- 1.Business planning
- 2.Sporting Association planning
- 3.Enterprise planning
- 4.Infrastructure planning
- 5. Marketing and Promotion

1. Business Planning

Each city and local community of any scale will have a business leaders organisation that must be encouraged to identify the benefits to be gained through an Active Healthy Community Plan. Just as business success flows from sound business planning, Sports for All initiatives rely upon wider longer term business planning.

2. Sporting Association Planning

Every major sport and community association has an overarching national sporting association that must be encouraged to identify the benefits of engaging more people in active sporting endeavour and the creation of an Active Healthy lifestyle as a basis for recruitment and retention of sports participants and active sporting audiences.

3. Enterprise planning

Active cities and active communities need to work with tourism and community associations to develop and sponsor Sports for All Enterprise initiatives that maximise the commercial and community viability of community sports arenas, facilities and local parks. The wider utilisation of resources increases active participation levels.

4 Infrastructure planning

As the level of community engagement increases, there is a parallel increase in the necessity to upgrade community and sporting infrastructure beyond the capacity of voluntary capital raising. This means that Government and enterprise budgets need to be set aside for the maintenance and development of Sports for All facilities. This longer term planning determines the sustainability of the Healthy Active communities initiatives that deliver a life time benefit to the sustainable prosperity of the city beyond short term profitability.

5 Marketing and Promotion

Early engagement of a marketing and promotions unit to design a five year publicity and public relations effort that includes effective branding of the Active Healthy City effort (Like the Launceston City promotion effort). A substantial sponsorship and promotion budget and support of all local media is a key success factor for this entire Sports for All initiative.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Developing an effective marketing plan and communications plan is an essential element for the promotion of greater physical activity. It is a known fact that a proportion of the population is relatively over active - the elite sports community and another is relatively inactive - those who are already obese. The key to successful marketing communications is therefore the capacity to reach beyond these two extremes to the middle two thirds of the community who need to be encouraged to live more of their lives and be more active.

To this end, as discussed in Dr Jane Shelton's presentation yesterday, the key is a systematic marketing effort that identifies a specific problem, develops an intervention program, marshalls resources and communication efforts and delivers superior benefits to the community of interest. The most successful strategies are those that are SMART - Simple, Measurable, Actionable, Responsive and Targetted to sections of the community that are likely to take up the message and become more active.

FUND RAISING PROGRAMS

It is a reality of life that there will never be sufficient funds to meet all of the legitimate claims for funding of recreation and sporting endeavours, especially for those on low incomes, in remote communities and those with special needs. Our fund raising efforts must be coordinated within our strategic marketing plans to reach out to commercial sponsors, community organisations, philanthropic trusts and government to finance access and equity programs.

The more clearly we are able to define our programs and the health benefits for greater physical activity, the greater the prospects of successful fundraising efforts. The key to success here is to clearly define who is going to be encouraged to be more active, what activities will be undertaken, where these programs will be made available, why the campaigns for greater participation are likely to gain community and target audience acceptance and which elements of the program will deliver the greatest bang for the buck for the source of funds.

Fund raising therefore needs to be seen as a communication vehicle for the "Be Active" message as much as a source of finance for preferred and desired Sport for All and Sporting endeavours. Sporting activity, both elite and community based, depends upon an effective combination of fee for service funding, government support, private donations and ultimately the contribution of family and friends who believe that this effort is worthwhile.

In conclusion, as I said at the outset, all ages, racial and ethnic groups, all ability levels, every social strata and both genders share an interest and the opportunity to benefit from active involvement in sporting, recreation and cultural activities of their community, Our marketing and fundraising efforts need to find a similar broad approach to building a more Active World.